

**The Black African Educators' Work-life Balance: A Hermeneutic
Phenomenological Inquiry**

By

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been clearly indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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IMPORTANT NOTE

1. This dissertation of limited scope comprises of four chapters:

- Chapter 1: Scientific Orientation to the Study
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Research Article
- Chapter 4: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations.

2. A composite list of references is found at the end of this dissertation.

3. The editorial style and references are based on the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition.

4. Chapter 3 consists of a research article which is based on the qualitative research guidelines as specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (SAJIP) and it has a separate reference list.

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“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”

(Proverbs 3:5)

ABSTRACT

The African high school educators' work-life balance: a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry

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The purpose of this study was to explore the work-life balance (WLB) of Black African high school educators in an African context. African high school educators are confronted with multifarious and unique work-life challenges such as excessive workloads, resource shortages, indiscipline, a lack of parental involvement and abnormally high teacher-pupil ratios, which presented an opportunity to explore the research question: "How do Black African educators experience WLB in a high school context?" For an in-depth inquiry, a qualitative research approach was employed, using a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to analyse data. The outcomes of this inquiry confirmed contemporary research on the subjectivity of WLB, which is evident in the manner in which Black African high school educators allocate time, energy and attention. The findings demonstrated that Black African high school educators have mixed experiences of WLB as both work-life conflict and work-life enrichment, which hinders their ability to fully integrate these two domains. Based on the outcomes of the inquiry,

organisations can formulate policies and adopt work-life strategies that promote well-being of educators so that they can operate optimally in both work and life domains.

Keywords: Work-life balance (WLB), work-life conflict (WLC), work-life enrichment (WLE), work-life integration, well-being, optimal functioning, Hermeneutic phenomenology, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Ibhalansi yomsebenzi nempilo yothisha bezikole zamabanga aphakeme base-Afrika: Uphenyo lwe-hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry

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Inhloso yalolucwaningo bekuwukuhlola ibhalansi yempilo yomsebenzi pheqelezi ngokufingqiwe, yothisha basezikoleni zamabanga aphezulu abamnyama base-Afrika esimeni sase-Afrika. Othisha basezikoleni zamabanga aphakeme base-Afrika babhekene nezinsalelo eziningi neziyingqayizivele yokuphila komsebenzi njengomthwalo omningi, ukushoda kwezinsiza, ukungabi nasimilo, ukuntuleka ukuzibandakanya kwabazali kanye nezilinganiso eziphakeme ngendlela engavamile zothisha nabafundi, okunikezwe ithuba lokuhlola umbuzo wocwaningo: “Othisha abamnyama base-Afrika bayithola injani ibhalansi yempilo yomsebenzi esikoleni samabanga aphakeme?” Ukuze kwenziwe uphenyo olunzulu, kusetshenziswe indlela yocwaningo elisezingeni eliphezulu, kusetshenziswa indlela yocwaningo lwe-hermeneutic phenomenological. Umniningwane noma i-datha iyoqwe kusetshenziswa izingxoxiswano ezingahlelekile. I-interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) yasetshenziswa ukuze kuhlaziye idatha. Imiphumela yaloluphenyo iqinisekise ucwaningo lwesimanje mayelana nokuthobela, okubonakala indlela othisha basezikoleni zamabanga aphezulu base-Afrika abamnyama ababa ngayo isikhathi Amandla nokunaka. Okutholakele kubonise ukuthi othisha basezikoleni zamabanga aphezulu abamnyama base-Afrika banolwazi oluxubile lwe-WLB njenga lokhu okubili ukungqubuzana kwempilo yomsebenzi nokunothisa impilo yomsebenzi okuvimbela amakhono abo okuhlenganisa ngokugcwele lezi zizinda ezimbilia. Ngokusekelwe

emiphumeleni yophenyo, izinhlango zingakha izinqubomgomo futhi zisebenzisa amasu empilo yomsebenzi akhuthaza inhlalakahle yothisha ukuze bakwazi ukusebenza ngokugcwele kuzo zombili izizinda zomsebenzi nempilo.

Amagama angukhiye: Ibhalansi yomsebenzi nempilo, ukungqubuzana kwempilo yomsebenzi, ukunothisa impilo yomsebenzi, ukuhlanganiswa kwempilo yomsebenzi, inhlalakahle, ukusebenza kahle, *I-Hermeneutic phenomenology*, *I-interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)*.

The African high school educators' work-life balance: a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry

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Morero wa nyakišišo ye ke go hlotletša work-life balance (WLB) ya Batutiši ba dikolo tše di phagamego ba Bathobaso ka tshwaragano ya se Afrika. Baruriši ba Bathobaso ba mekamekane le mehutahuta le moswananoši wa mabothata a work-life a go swana le morwalo wa mošomo wo mo ntši kudu, tlhokego ya methopo, maitshwaro a baithuti, tlhokego ya botšeakarolo ba batswadi le direšio tša go setlwaelege tša barutuši le barutwana, tše di hlagišitšego monyetla wa go hlotletša potšišo ya nyakišišo: “Barutiši ba Bathobaso ba itemogela bjang WLB tshwaraganong ya sekolo?” Go nyakišišo ye e tseneletšego, dinyakišišo tša mokgwa wa khwaliteitifi o šomišitšwe, go šomišwa methotlotši wa fenomenotši ya hemeniki. Go kgobokantšhitšwe data ka tšhomišo ya dipoledišano tša semi-structured. Intepretive Phenomological Analysis (IPA) e šomišitšwa go sekaseka data. Dipelo tša nyakišišo ye di netefaditše dinyakišišo mo go sapotšektifiti ya WLB, ye e bonalago ka mokgwa woo baruti ši ba Bathobaso abago nako, maatla le go fa šedi.

Tše di hweditšwego di laeditše gore barutiši ba Bathobaso ban a le maitemogelo a go fapafapana a WLB go swana le thulano ya work-life le kaonafatšo ya work-life, tše di thibelago bokgoni bja bona bja go hlakanya di domeini tše pedi tše. Go ya ka dipelo tša nyakišišo, mekgatlo e ka hlama melaotheo (policies) gomme di thwale

disetratetši tše di godišago gobeng botse ga barutiši gore bankgone go šoma ka botlalo mo go mošomoi le didomeine tša bophelo.

Mantšu a bohlokwa: Work-life balance (WLB), work-life conflict (WLC), work-life enrichment (WLE), work-life integration, well-being, optimal functioning, Hermeneutic phenomenology, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

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CHAPTER 1

SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”.

Mahatma Gandhi.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, I focused on the Black African educators' work-life balance (WLB), employing a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry. The purpose in this inquiry was to delve into participants' lived experiences to gain in-depth understanding of their WLB. The research highlights the Black African educators' WLB from an Afrocentric perspective in a South African high school. Afrocentrism focuses on political and socio-economic pan-African philosophies of people as centred, oriented, located and grounded in Africa (Mkabela, 2005). The motifs of location and centredness take precedence in this Afrocentric method, which makes it essential for an in-depth understanding of history, philosophy and myths of the people of Africa (Mkabela, 2005). The knowledge of Afrocentricity is better understood by asking questions in an African place and closely following African philosophies that bring in-depth comprehension of the people (Chimakonam, 2016). This research focused on Black educators born and raised in the primacy of African culture. This focus was based on the premise that being African may include but is not limited to experiencing full African life, understanding the culture, style, origin and ownership of citizenship of a country (Igboin, 2021). The focus of this study was narrowed to the Black African educator because the Black African perspective is key to understanding the Afrocentric experience in African studies in general (Booyesen, 2001; Venter et al., 2020) and also specifically in the education context (Shai, 2020). In support of this notion, the spartial distribution of the population within the particular educational research setting influenced the sample of this study since 90 percent of pupils and educators are Blacks which makes the culture of the environment predominantly Black African.

Promoting a healthy life has become a strategic goal used to address employees' needs in many organisations (Chandni & Manjunath, 2020). WLB is gaining traction

in the work sphere, yet the teaching occupation has received little attention in this regard (Da Silva & Fischer, 2020). Research highlights teaching as one of the most challenging and stressful jobs in the world (Etteh et al., 2020; Rajani, 2020; Yang, 2020). This is heightened by living arrangements in some African homesteads which subject career couples, single parents and unmarried professionals to take charge of domestic work in addition to full-time jobs (Etteh et al., 2020). Although the transition of women from the traditional caretaker roles to the assumption of professional responsibilities was the primary cause for the genesis of WLB (Etteh et al., 2020; Muas, 2020); juggling multiple work-life roles makes WLB a concern for all employees across gender and at different life and career stages (Chandni & Manjunath, 2020).

Research indicates the interface between work and non-work activities as mostly conflicting and highlights how work pressure can be easily transferred to life and vice versa (Brough et al., 2020). Work-life conflict (WLC) is a major source of employee stress and studies have shown that promoting work-family welfare in the workplace leads to lower stress levels, job satisfaction and reduced rate of turnover (Helmle et al., 2014; Kahn et al., 1964). This resonates with Brough et al. (2020), who argue that minimising WLC and promoting a mutually beneficial balance for the employees will generate gratification, growth and energy.

In addition to providing the scientific orientation to the study, this chapter plays an important role in conveying my passionate stand on the subject of WLB in the field of industrial and organisational psychology. To describe the conducted research, first, a background and motivation is provided; thereafter the researcher's interest is delineated, followed by the potential contribution of this study, problem statement, objectives of the study and the literature review. I also highlight the disciplinary boundaries and paradigm perspectives, research design, method and finish the chapter with a brief conclusion.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The rationale for this study was to inquire about the WLB of Black African educators in the high school setting, in an attempt to comprehend their life experiences and suggest measures to optimise their work environment. This section focuses on the

importance of WLB in the workplace, gender roles in the African context and consequent challenges for WLB, challenges faced by Black African educators, the exacerbating influence of COVID-19 and information technology on WLB of educators and the researcher's interest in the study.

1.2.1 Work-life balance in the workplace

Work-life balance has been found to be a key determinant of organisational citizenship, productivity and well-being in the workplace (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). Work-life programmes existed as far back as the 1930s and the importance of WLB intensified in the 1980s and 1990s with the promulgation of multiple work-life programmes in many organisations (Anisha & Melvin, 2020; Babin Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015). The 19th century mobilisation towards a 40-hour working week was cognisant of human rights and the need for work, family recreation and recuperation (Brough et al., 2020). This was a precursor to modern-day WLB (Brough et al., 2020). The term “work-life balance” was coined in 1986 but its popularity has outpaced the theoretical development due to the increase of women assuming different full-time jobs, which have exacerbated the importance of WLB (Aveline & Mohan Kumar, 2017; Brough et al., 2020). There is a significant amplification of voices calling for a balance in employees’ work-home roles (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014). Studies are pointing out that imbalances between work and personal lives of employees lead to frustration, sickness, on-the-job accidents, absenteeism and high rates of turnover (Aveline & Mohan Kumar, 2017; Rajani, 2020; Yang, 2020). This has attracted flexibility in working hours which seems to benefit both the employee and the employer through lower stress levels, increased job satisfaction and lower attrition rates (Babin Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015; Helmle et al., 2014; Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). Sustainable and competitive organisations can be created by committing to WLB initiatives and sustainable policies (Bauwens et al., .2020; Ganguly, 2015). Organisations should endeavour to introduce flexible work schedules, redesign senior roles to promote flexibility and telecommuting, focusing on the outcome instead of time input and regularly review workloads (Meenakshi et al., 2013). Human resource (HR) departments are seen as key players that should formulate policies and systems that encourage systematic promotion of WLB to foster emotional commitment and organisational bonds, which

in turn lead to better performance, productivity, profitability, competitiveness and customer loyalty (Ganguly, 2015).

Studies have highlighted how WLB can assist in a volatile and competitive labour market by fostering employee emotional and physical commitment to the organisation (Aveline & Mohan Kumar, 2017; Iqbal et al., 2017; Yang, 2020). Multiple benefits of WLB have been identified in schools and these include more engagement in community programmes, improved health of educators, better focus on lifelong learning, productivity, and reduced employee turnover (Babin Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015; Yang, 2020). A balance between personal life and work results in a well-rounded employee with the ability to operate optimally in all spheres (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). Obtaining a balance does not mean creating equality between working hours and personal time, but managing to allocate sufficient time to satisfy demands from both domains optimally (Meenakshi et al., 2013).

The technological advancements in the modern-day world of work may exert extreme pressure on deadlines and other work demands (Bauwens et al., 2020). Juxtaposed to this is the contrasting social fabric of the working class, which is characterised by moderate to high income and a better standard of living that have led individuals to aspire for better living conditions, improved work environment and increased personal and family life (Bauwens et al., 2020; Corbera et al., 2020; Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010). People endeavour to get meaning in life and can endure discomfort for prolonged periods of imbalance as they pursue financial independence (Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010). Organisations must aim to reduce discomfort in employees by creating an environment which is conducive to sustain harmony between work-life demands to avoid burnout in employees (Corbera et al., 2020; Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010). Creating a conducive WLB environment in organisations may reduce issues of employee anxiety, depression, diminished self-confidence, irritability, failure to relax, sleeplessness, burnout, low productivity, increased employee turnover, safety hazards, migraine, divorce, high blood pressure and even psychotic disorder (Shankar, 2017).

Work-life balance studies have been mainly directed to low-level employees but with little focus on organisations' directors, customers and any other stakeholder who must be in the picture when deciding the optimisation of work and life experiences

(Guest, 2002). As employees progress on the organisational hierarchy, more complex job tasks are presented to them (Meenakshi et al., 2013). This leads to higher workload and neglect of personal life activities (Iqbal et al., 2017). Solely focusing on lower-level employees neglects the holistic approach on how the WLB phenomenon affects overall performance of the organisation (Guest, 2002). A holistic approach to WLB leaves room to focus on various initiatives which accommodate everyone's needs across the organisation (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011). A follow-through with some conclusions arrived at in previous research helps us to understand WLB. Guest (2002) concludes that there were a lot of unresolved matters concerning what constitute a good WLB and whether or not it should be a matter to bring under consideration at all. However, Guest (2002) also recommends that whatever the conclusion is on the importance of WLB, there is a need to conceptualise the phenomenon in a family context. In separate research, Nishanthi and Thalaspitiya (2015) conclude that there is a need for a collaborative approach between employees and managers to establish what constitutes optimal WLB, therefore encourage organisations to be fully vested in prioritising wellness initiatives. Mendis and Weerakkody (2017) conclude their study by recommending that there must be training programmes on WLB in the workplace and time management, management of workloads, and personal and professional development and stress management must feature prominently. Understanding WLB in the African context poses a fair share of challenges. The following section will highlight how African gender roles and power relations affect WLB.

1.2.2 Gender roles in the African context and consequent challenges for WLB

There has been a multi-disciplinary approach to matters relating to work-life interface and the focus is broadening from a women-centred approach to a recent work-life discourse that is relevant across genders (Voydanoff, 2008; Yang, 2020). The discourse of gender equality and role neutrality is gaining traction in Africa due to the dissolution of male masculinity stereotypes (Moolman, 2017). Traditionally, men used to be assigned demanding and courageous tasks, but in the modern African family set-up, some women prefer to pursue careers whilst men take care of household chores (Fapohunda, 2014). Dual career couples in Africa have been on the rise and this has made it challenging for both males and females to balance work-life demands (Bosch et al., 2012). Males and females amongst the South

African working-class experience WLB and research has shown that supportive work-family structures make it easy for them to balance the two domains (Akinnusi et al., 2018). Traditionally, the African patriarchal system may have been detrimental to holistic societal well-being (Bassey & Bubu, 2019). Men used to occupy a higher status in the social hierarchy which created an unequal relationship and made it almost impossible for women to voice their opinions (Madiba & Ngwenya, 2017). Nowadays, African males and females are open to explore the world of work, which makes WLB and supportive relationships a priority (Akinnusi et al., 2018; Bosch et al., 2012). Traditional African gender roles and power mechanisms subjected women to fear, physical abuse, financial dependence and labelling (Madiba & Ngwenya, 2017). The lack of supportive relationships, gender stereotyping and oppressive cultural norms had adverse effects on African women's ability to manage WLB (Francis et al., 2019; Mushfiqur et al., 2018; Ngulube, 2018). In some cases, these gender stereotypes have driven inequalities in the workplace, where women's salaries and promotion opportunities are still lower than that of males (Obioma et al., 2021), thereby affecting females' capacity to fully participate at work and experience WLB (Rabie et al., 2020; Reverberi et al., 2021).

Other researchers have focused on working mothers and fathers, as dual earners tend to emerge with higher disposable income and child-rearing responsibilities resulting in work-family conflict, stress and burnout (Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010). Nevertheless, WLB should have a holistic approach across gender, focusing on the balanced needs of married working couples, single parents and young professionals without families (Guest, 2002). It is negligent to solely focus on the WLB of women or parents and ignore workers with long-standing health challenges, single workers and the childless workers (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Gragnano et al., 2020). The amalgamation of both work life and family life better suits the needs of generation X and Y who strive for flexibility, control, innovation and competition, not forgetting the Millennials who work to live and strive for independence (Guest, 2002). It is this heterogeneity of the workforce that challenges the feasibility of a one-size fits all solution to balancing work and life for all employees (Gragnano et al., 2020).

1.2.3 Challenges faced by Black African educators

The increasing job and personal demands in the 21st century is exerting a lot of pressure on educators, making it difficult to perform their duties optimally (Rajani, 2020; Storey et al., 2008; Yang, 2020). Although there are mounting work-life stressors on educators, very little attention is paid to factors that encourage their WLB (Anisha & Melvin, 2020). The teaching fraternity has not been fully exposed to WLB practices as yet (Miryala & Chiluka, 2012; Rajani, 2020). Most schools do not provide flexible working hours, telecommuting or job sharing (Miryala & Chiluka, 2012; Yang, 2020). Less than half of Black African educators can engage meaningfully in family time, shake off work related tiredness, or balance work and life optimally (Rajani, 2020). This is a concern because in the African context, family is central to survival and it inspires the reason and purpose to keep going through daily challenges (Aju & Beddewela, 2019). African educators sometimes have to manage 50 to 80 learners per class, which creates a stressful environment not conducive to effective teaching and learning (Etteh et al., 2020). Heavy workloads may affect one's ability to engage in ethical practices and maintain therapeutic relations with other people (Makola et al., 2015). Other researchers have also supported this by stating that operating in a compromised work environment may lead to less motivation and may be detrimental to educators' health (Anisha & Melvin, 2020; Yang, 2020).

Educators are continually confronted with problems such as long working hours, shortage of resources, learner indiscipline and time shortages which challenge their sanity in schools (Kumar & Nagapriya, 2012; Makhazeni & Barkhuizen, 2015; Rajani, 2020; Yang, 2020). On top of these, Rothmann and Redelinghuys (2020) cite that in South African schools, educators are bullied by students and constantly confronted by challenges of fellow educator absenteeism. In some instances, physical, sexual, verbal abuse and sheer criminality exist in South African secondary schools (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018). Apart from indiscipline and truancy, educators work in poor conditions, coupled with excessive workloads and low income (Geiger & Pivovarove, 2018; Matla & Xaba, 2019). Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) echo the same sentiments by highlighting how poverty is impeding the ability to provide quality education in African schools, citing poor funding, electricity shortages, water problems, sanitation

issues and classroom shortages. Some parents are disinterested in their children's education and abdicate parental responsibility to the educator (Matla & Xaba, 2019).

Learners reflect low reading levels which need to be augmented through serious remediation (Pretorius & Murray, 2019). In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where this study was focused, Bertram et al. (2021) uncovered that the educators are dealing with mixed ability classes which require varied pedagogical strategies to accommodate variations in aptitude of learners. Other studies noted the plight of underqualified educators which is compromising the quality of education (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019, Mouton et al., 2012). In the Free State province, South Africa, some educators are ill-equipped to handle subjects at high school level due to poor content knowledge, resource shortages, lack of support and poor training (Tachie, 2020).

Schools face enormous interruptions from strike actions supported by unions as educators try to voice their grievances (Wills, 2019). Although South African schools face these strenuous demands, educators are expected to be patient, apply best pedagogical approaches, and facilitate a holistic learning experience, which unfortunately increases the workload and working hours (Yang, 2020). Work stress, social withdrawal, ethical violations, burnout and dissatisfaction are some of the unfortunate outcomes for teachers experiencing WLC (Cannizzo et al., 2019; Makola et al., 2015; Rajani, 2020). Unfortunately, compromising WLB due to strenuous job demands has led to high teacher turnover in secondary schools (AJayi & Olatunji, 2019; Shibiti, 2020; Sudibjo & Suwarli, 2020).

The blurred boundaries between teaching and family time result in neglecting of family roles such as looking after the elderly, spending time with children and preparing meals for the family, which are expected in African culture (Bauwens et al., 2020; Etehe et al., 2020). The situation is compounded by competition in the workplace which forces both males and females to neglect their families due to the fear of losing positions or the job entirely (Rajani, 2020). This argument resonates with Woodson et al. (2020), who argue that African teachers are threatened by the black masculinity vision of leadership which is developing rapidly. There are sectors of males within the teaching fraternity perpetuating the black male masculinity vision which advances the agenda of hard work whilst depriving them the ability to focus on other life needs (Woodson et al., 2020).

In light of the challenges cited above, educational institutions in Africa need to desist from focusing mainly on results without giving due attention to how educators' lives impact on productivity (Yang, 2020). Jowah and Beretu (2019) highlight unhealthy transactional relationships in which employees are viewed as merely complementing employers to achieve set objectives. This perception objectifies workers, which in turn may lead to neglect of multifarious life facets that may affect work. Institutions must invest in practical work-life programmes that promote well-being in educators with the aim of reducing employee depression, poor performance, and loss of highly skilled personnel (Yang, 2020). Bourhis and Mekkaoui (2010) propose a four-pronged approach to WLB policies, that is, flexible work hours, personal leave, employee assistance programmes, and child/dependent support systems. This creates a need for supplementing existing research on the WLB of high school educators to maximise comprehension of the factors that help to optimise well-being in the school environment.

Unless school management comes up with solid interventions, unfavourable WLB of educators may easily trigger health issues that detrimental to optimal functioning in the long run (da Silva & Fischer, 2020). Salahudin et al. (2021) have identified lack of emphasis of WLB in the teaching field as one of the causes of teacher shortages, especially in male educators. Generally, the teaching industry has not received much attention on WLB, and strides still need to be made to address unfavourable working conditions in the sector (da Silva & Fischer, 2020). There is a need to further explore these findings, especially in terms of how the Black African educator experiences WLB.

1.2.4 Exacerbating influence of COVID-19 and information technology (IT) on the WLB of educators

COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan, China, in 2019, whilst South Africa recorded its first confirmed case on 5 March 2020 (Mahaye, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a wide-spread crisis due to outbreaks in schools and other sectors of the economy (Du Plessis, 2020). COVID-19 has caused heightened shortages of resource (finance, space, educators), and strained WLB and optimal functioning of educators in African schools (du Plessis, 2020; Spaul & van der Berg, 2020). Schools were closed to minimise the contact of people, which led to a severe shock

in teaching, as educators and learners had to migrate to technology-based blended pedagogy (Bauwens et al., 2020; Du Plessis, 2020; Mahaye, 2020). In Africa, 98% of contact teaching could not be practised due to hard lockdown (Mahaye, 2020). The teaching environment is now more inclined to the use of virtual meetings, telecommuting, and online teaching as a supplement to direct contact (Bauwens et al., 2020).

Advanced computer-based methodologies which require constant up-skilling and re-skilling are fast encroaching and this is challenging and stressful for teachers, preventing them from enjoying healthy WLB (Fraser, 2017). The switch to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and blended teaching has enormous consequences for African teachers' WLB because studies have observed unclear demarcations between working hours and family time due to online teaching, which seems to invade into personal time (Bauwens et al., 2020; Corbera et al., 2020; Frase, 2017). Teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic increases the educators' workloads and made WLB's attainment challenging due to the haphazard nature in which it was introduced, poor training and a lack of access to computers and the internet (Gordy et al., 2021). Educators must migrate to an education system that they are not accustomed to (Soudien et al., 2021). Although there is global evidence indicating that the utilisation of ICT can enhance some of the work-life domains, such as flexibility, contrary to this, findings claim that technology is creeping into the private life domain, with unforeseen consequences (Bauwens et al., 2020). However, ICT may be here to stay as part of pedagogical practices of teachers, hence the need to get accustomed to virtual teaching as we traverse the era of Industry 4.0 (Bauwens et al., 2020; Corbera et al., 2020).

Evidence shows that although stressful at the beginning, if employees embrace technology and receive proper training it can actually enhance their life-work flexibility by making work easy, especially when supported with technical support (Bauwens et al. (2020). However, although the Digital Learning Environment (DLE) has the potential to enrich flexibility, concerns emanate from the ability of the learner to contact the teacher after working hours and also the preparation for Digital Learning content which is time consuming (Bauwens et al., 2020; Corbera et al., 2020). Studies have also shown the IT infrastructure challenges the unreliable power and connectivity resources in Africa (Adarkwah, 2020). Educators are forced to

conduct blended teaching in spite of not having the hardware, software and internet which is constantly interrupted and delayed by power failures and connectivity failures (Adarkwah, 2020). Apart from the infiltration of Industry 4.0 in the African education system, in the South African context COVID-19 has caused unprecedented damages which may affect educators' WLB for the unforeseeable future due to budget cuts, the reduction of the number of School Governing Body (SGB) employed educators, teacher shortages and fear of job loss (Du Plessis, 2020). Such continuous challenges in the highly demanding teaching sector may affect educators' intellectual application and fluidity negatively due to poor work-home balance (Babin Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015; Gordy et al., 2021).

The next section highlights the motives behind my interests in researching the WLB of educators in the high school sector.

1.2.5 Researcher's interest in the study

I am a 41 year old Black African male, invested in my family and carrier progression. I have been working with African teachers for the past 18 years as a secondary school educator, head teacher at a high school and a human resources manager. I noted that there is always a demand for high pass rates and quality results from the school management, parents, children and other interested groups. Unfortunately, I am yet to see stakeholders demand a work-life assessment of the educators who are teaching the nation. Educators' work is a crucial part of developing economies such as Africa, therefore I believe that their wellness should be prioritised. I have noticed that educators have intervention strategies which extend beyond normal working hours in the form of remedial and enrichment classes. With the restrictions imposed upon us by COVID-19, I have worked with educators who are supplementing normal face-to-face contact sessions with virtual classes. I have seen educators working at home when marking tests, projects and homework tasks. In our organisation, the introduction of virtual classes demands the educator's attention after normal working hours. In some instances, educators have to think out of the box on how to accommodate learners without access to computers and the internet, forcing them to meet learners after work in a physically distanced, COVID-19 friendly environment.

My interest in this study also comes from personal challenges of balancing work and life as I am serving in the education sector. I can attest from experience that working

as a teacher or a head teacher is time intensive and demanding. School work often interferes with other personal responsibilities at home. I remember my previous role as a high school teacher and how difficult it was to finishing marking, planning and lesson preparation during the school time. Most of the times I used to complete some of the work at home, and on top of that, accompany learners for sporting activities during weekends. Teaching work robbed me the opportunity to engage in social life. In my current role as head of a high school institution, work usually makes it impossible for me to engage meaningfully with family. Sometimes I even fail to find time to do basic home chores, accompany my son for sports or going to family excursions. My personal failure to minimise work interference with life in the teaching field has motivated me to explore WLB phenomenon with the hope of contributing towards the existing body of knowledge.

In the past ten years, I have witnessed teachers who reach out to me seeking advice because they will be on the verge of losing their marriage mainly from failing to make time for their children. In some instances, the teacher will highlight to me that work demands are making it impossible to give time for anything else in their lives. Teachers prioritise putting food on the family table over spending time with them. In my dual roles as human resources manager and a high school head teacher, I have lost more than three educators in the last five years due to stress-related illnesses. During the lockdown, schools opened at level 4 and as a COVID-19 wellness champion in my organisation, I witnessed many teachers who got infected by the virus and some even reported passing it on to family members. In all these situations no one in our institution cared to enquire about how to improve the teachers' WLB. In some cases, teachers resort to alcohol as a way of relieving pressure because there is no support within the institution. The school curriculum usually comprises extramural activities which are monitored by the educators. In the schools that I have worked, the sporting disciplines fall on weekends, and in some instances, there is a lot of travelling involved. Based on my observations and experience of working in the high school setting, it is of mutual interest for stakeholders to explore the WLB of educators to promote an optimised work environment. I am interested in exploring the WLB of Black African educators to reach an in-depth conclusion on experiences of their work-life situations and recommend interventions which may ameliorate their work-life experiences. Based on my previous and current experiences, I assume that

most Black African educators struggle with WLB and accept that the outcomes of the qualitative inquiry might be subjective to multiple realities. It is therefore the summation of my experiences as an educator, headmaster and human resource manager in high school settings for a lengthy period of time that has generated my interest and need to contribute with scientific study to the WLB in this sector.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Educators have a huge responsibility of imparting knowledge to pupils, which is demanding and stressful (Yang, 2020). Although traditionally educators are subjected to direct contact classes which are generally large and stressful, currently they must augment lesson delivery with online teaching due to the limitations imposed upon humanity by the COVID-19 pandemic (Corbera et al., 2020). In Africa, educators are confronted with challenges, which include but are not limited to teaching resource shortages, violence in schools, a lack of electricity, water shortages, bullying, poor parental involvement in learner education and poor funding (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Geiger & Pivovarove, 2018; Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018; Xaba, 2019), which have dramatic consequences on their WLB (Ajayi & Olatunji, 2019; Corbera et al., 2020; Yang, 2020). The policies introduced in the institutions have done very little to solve the challenges mentioned because educators continue to report poor working conditions, time pressure and work overload which may lead to anxiety, stress and burnout (Anisha & Melvin, 2020; Cannizzo et al., 2019; Iqbal et al., 2017; Miryala & Chiluka, 2012; Redelinghuys & Rothman, 2020). Studies exploring WLB have been recognised substantially in the past and are likely to increase as organisations seek to optimise the work environment (Iqbal et al., 2017; Rajani, 2020), but little has been done to address WLB challenges confronting educators in the African context (Yang, 2020). Anisha and Melvin (2020) highlight that an unmanageable WLB leads to a difficult life, depression, poor performance and conflict with family. Job stress, personal health and job dissatisfaction are prominent causes of turnover amongst high school teachers and these issues contribute to compromised WLB (Ajayi & Olatunji, 2019; Yang, 2020). Yang (2020) further asserts that job stress makes it impossible for teachers to impart knowledge effectively. On the other hand, Rajani (2020) highlights that some educators worry

about their jobs even when they are not at work. Schools focus more on quality teaching and good pass rates at the expense of the well-being of educators and this has prompted the topic of work-life-balance to gain traction in the international and South African contexts (Rajani, 2020; Woodson et al., 2020; Yang, 2020).

Many scholars have invested their academic focus on researching WLB. Earlier research by Shankar and Bhatnagar (2010) reveals that HR departments of many organisations are frantically seeking to establish WLB to leverage individual effectiveness and maximise productivity. Aveline and Mohan Kumar (2017) cite retention of employees as centred on how work and personal lives are balanced. In South Africa, Makhazeni and Barkhuizen (2015) express concern over the rising number of talented personnel contemplating to exit the teaching field. Although a lot of research has been centred on the WLB, very few studies have been centred on the ability of teachers to balance work and life, hence the need for more research in this fraternity (Yang, 2020). In keeping with Akanji et al. (2020), WLB is still a novel concept in the African high school educators' context. This is further supported by Cannizzo et al. (2019), who argue that there is a need to scrutinize the education sector and find ways to alleviate the pressure on educators by exploring their work-life experiences. A lot can still be explored on how to balance work and life demands in a manner that promotes wellness and optimal functioning of the African high school educators. As I traversed in this previously uncharted territory, the overall objective of this study was to explore how Black African educators experience WLB in a high school context. The African high school educators play a substantial role of education the youth, therefore their well-being should always be supported with ongoing research on WLB. This study uncovered insights which may contribute to the knowledge of the WLB phenomenon in the education sector of South Africa. This study is anticipated to benefit African high school educators and professionals, like industrial and organisational psychologists with positive suggestions on the conceptualisation of WLB of educators, describe the role of WLB in the school and recommend intervention strategies that promote optimal functioning and productivity in educators' lives.

In order to address the problems identified above, a coherent research question which is in tandem with the objectives of this inquiry was formulated as: "How do Black African educators experience WLB in a high school context?"

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The literature and empirical objectives were formulated to address the research question comprehensively. The overall objective of this study was to explore how Black African educators experience WLB in a high school context.

1.4.1 Literature Objectives

In light of the problem statement, the review of the literature aims to:

- To conceptualise WLB from literature.
- To describe the role of WLB in the work context.
- To explain the role of WLB in well-being.
- To explore the role that African psychology plays in WLB.

1.4.2 Empirical Objectives

- To explore the WLB of African high school educators.
- To explore the role of WLB in the functioning of Black African educators in a high school education context.
- To determine the challenges brought by COVID-19 to the WLB of Black African high school educators.
- To explore ways of improving WLB of Black African High school teachers.

1.5 DISCIPLINARY BOUNDARIES AND PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

This study was conducted within the primary discipline of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. In this section I will discuss the primary discipline as well as the secondary disciplines of Organisational Psychology and Career Psychology.

1.5.1 Primary discipline: Industrial and Organisational Psychology

Strumpfer (2007) highlights Industrial and Organisational Psychology (IOP) as an applied and specialist arm under psychology. IOP applies several psychological principles, concepts and methods that can be used to study and determine human behaviour in the work environment (Sdorow & Rickabaugh, 2002). The study includes processes such as cognition, biological, developmental, perception,

motivation, attitudes and learning as individual and in groups (Sdorow & Rickabaugh, 2002). The primary discipline of IOP emphasises matters of wellness and optimal functioning within the workplace (Sdorow & Rickabaugh, 2002; Strumpfer, 2007; Van Vuuren, 2010). IOP seeks to comprehend the interaction between humans and their work environment and improve how organisations function from a psychological perspective (Bergh & Theron, 2009). Matters such as motivation in the workplace, leadership, organisational development, conflict resolution, communication, transformational leadership and organisational health are encompassed under the field of IOP (Van Vuuren, 2010). The study of WLB is one of the focal areas assessed under IOP (Strumpfer, 2007).

1.5.2 Secondary disciplines

1.5.2.1 Organisational Psychology

Organisational psychology is centred on human feelings towards commitment to the organisation, organisational communication style, and the role-related behaviour (Muchinsky, 2006). Organisational Psychology (OP) focuses on human interaction patterns as a way to ameliorate the broader functioning of the system (Van der Westhuizen, 2006). The work behaviour is distinct from everyday behaviour because it happens in a specific context or organisation. Organisational Psychology therefore is the scientific study centred on the application of psychological principles in the work context (Muchinsky, 2006). It is also focused on employee adjustment, satisfaction and productivity (Van der Westhuizen, 2006). Organisational Psychology can propose valuable insights on how organisations could implement flexitime, manage change and enhance the effectiveness of employees. It encompasses matters that relate to WLB, such as practitioners in the HR departments who need to develop a systematic and holistic knowledge about principles, theories and policies that are linked to wellness issues (Van der Westhuizen, 2006).

1.5.2.2. Career Psychology

This is a subdivision of IOP and is centred on the career development of individuals, the nature of employment and career-related issues in the organisation (Bergh & Theron, 2009). Career psychology concentrates on studies of career development and career behaviour as a fundamental part of human development (De Villiers, 2009). This subdivision focuses on how to resolve the conflict between work and

personal life issues (Muchinsky, 2006). This resonates with the purpose of this study, which seeks to explore the WLB of African high school educators. The underlying assumption is that work life and personal life contradict or conflict in a way that affects healthy living. Prioritising in-depth study into WLB helps to uncover outcomes on how to create a balance between career and personal life.

1.6 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

In this section I will first attend to Afrocentrism as the psychological paradigm. Then I proceed to the interpretivist-constructivist research paradigm, based on a relativist ontological position and subjectivist epistemological position, which are congruent to this study.

1.6.1 African Psychology perspective: Afrocentrism

The **Afrocentric** stance on WLB is appropriate in formulating assumptions about human behaviour linked to this study. Afrocentricity is a way of thinking and acting in which the values, interests, perspectives are predominantly shaped by the centrality of Africa (Adeleke, 2015). It is particularistic and universalistic as it seeks to address the unique liberation needs of the people of Africa and foster spiritual and moral development of the world (Schiele, 2000). It dispels negativity around African ancestry and seeks societal transformation towards humanistic, moral and spiritual ends, with a specific focus on ethnic groups and people of nations (Schiele, 2000). Colonisation of Africa has had an undeniable effect on its people and how they resonate with the yesteryears of oppression and discrimination. Black people were marginalised and, in some instances, excluded from socio-economic activities during the colonial era (Adeleke, 2015). Afrocentrism stands against oppression, social alienation and advocates substantive change in the world views that pervade the social institutions and the intricacies of intimate interpersonal relations (Adeleke, 2015; Schiele, 2000). Afrocentrism recognises the effect of spirituality, colonisation and collectivism in Africans (Kumah-Abiwu, 2016). This will help in understanding how people make sense of their past, present and future meaning in life. Afrocentrism embraces facets of Ubuntu, communal values (collectivism), ethnicity and customary traditions (Pieterson, 2005). African ways of living suggest that people live as part of an interdependent community instead of taking an individual

approach (Adeleke, 2015; Aju & Beddewela, 2019). An African is perceived as less resistant as an individual but greatly resilient with community support and as a community member. This resonates largely with the philosophy of Ubuntu aphorism: “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”¹ (Aju & Beddewela, 2019). Afrocentrism's emphasis is largely on humanity and relationships rather than on material wealth (Aju & Beddewela, 2019). The instinct of Ubuntu is essentially ascribed to reciprocity, dignity, humanity, compassion and building the community (Kumah-Abiwu, 2016; Nussbaum, 2009).

1.6.2 Research paradigm: Interpretivism-constructivism

Paradigms are perspectives of meta-theoretical values and beliefs guiding the theories and modes which advise the research (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Paradigms guide the logic of the researcher to a specific data collection, observation and analysis methodology. It is a belief system aligning the researcher to a specific world view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This study was rooted in an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm. The assumption is that people make sense of their world as they engage and construct meaning (Tanh & Tanh, 2015). As a researcher, there is a need to bring to the surface the deep-seated meaning by exploring, reflecting and integrating experiences. The interpretivist-constructivist paradigm is relevant in situations that require the researcher to uncover insights leading to better comprehension of the participants' subjective lived experiences (Mack, 2010). The interpretivist-constructivist paradigm underpins that the relationship between reality and knowledge is a culmination of social interactions (Ultanir, 2012). Ultanir (2012) further asserts that education is acquired from self-directed experiences that involve active engagement with reality. The interpretivist-constructivist paradigm is congruent to a relativist ontological position in the sense that people interpret and construct meaning differently from the way they assess the situation (Kinzel & Kush, 2017). It is important to note that humans have a different framework of assessment based on experience and this ultimately culminates in unique knowledge of their environment. This is on the basis that people construct, interpret and experience the world differently as they interact with one another in their natural environment

¹ *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* is an African phrase that depicts a universal connectedness which promotes raising of a person through other people in the community (Aju & Beddewela, 2019).

(Maxwell, 2013). In this study, I focused on the exploration of the subjective experience of WLB of high school educators, based on socially constructed meaning as they interact and make meaning from work and life experiences. As cited in Ponterotto (2005), the constructivist paradigm is related to hermeneutics and phenomenology, therefore it helped me to accurately portray constructs in a manner that encourages deep reflections from the participants. Through the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, reality was understood from a participant's socially constructed meaning. In keeping with Mack (2010), I observed the experiences of the participants through direct interaction with the subjects.

In this inquiry I assumed a **relativist ontological** position which is congruent to the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm on the basis that the researcher seeks to uncover socially constructed meaning in individual perceptions, beliefs and attitudes on WLB (Rashid et al., 2019). Ontology delves into the nature of reality and what there is to know about the world (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Baghramian and Coliva (2019) assert that the idea of relativism stems from the realisation of deep differences in people's beliefs. Relativism asserts the different frameworks of assessment of a phenomenon which culminate in varied convictions of what is right and wrong (Kinzel & Kush, 2017). In relativism there are multiple realities, therefore reality cannot be distinguished from subjective experiences (Levers, 2013). This has an impact on the generalisation of findings outside the context of the study. Facts are relative to the views and experiences of the observer or emanate from the framework of assessment depending on the context (Kinzel & Kush, 2017). Relativism implicitly pre-assumes that the judgement is not rule-governed, is non-evidential, and incorrigible (Kinzel & Kush, 2017).

To gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the African high school educators' WLB, I employed a **subjectivist epistemological** position, which is congruent to the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm. Epistemology is about how reality can be accessed and how we generate knowledge (Agarwal, 2015). It is centred on how we get access to reality and the building blocks of our knowledge. Subjectivism has scepticism on the universality of meaning and norms (White, 2007). The underlying premise is that in all forms of social reality there is element of subjectivity (Rakitov, 2018). People envision issues from a personal point of view and subjectivity is a product of the human mind which cannot be divorced from social

reality (Hanly & Hanly, 2001; Rakitov, 2018). In subjectivism, meaning is imposed on the world by the perceiver independently of the object (White, 2007). It underpins the notion that knowledge is perceived through the influence of the observer and the observed and it depends on the person's perception (Lever, 2013). Language, ethnicity, race, gender and social class determine how one perceives knowledge (Lever, 2013). This resonates well with the research paradigm. I based this study on an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm founded on the philosophy of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Wilhelm Dilthey's interpretive hermeneutics. The intention is to gain full comprehension of the human experiences of the world, thereby suggesting that the reality that people perceive is socially constructed (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This resonates highly with Braun and Clarke (2013) who suggest that meaning is formulated and contextualised by human beings within a specific environment. This position facilitates the exploration of the subjective meaning of WLB from the educator's point of view. The interpretivist-constructivist researcher formulates meaning inductively from a pattern observed throughout the inquiry (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), in line with Crotty (1998) who says that human interpretations are important way of fully comprehending meaning, I collated and analysed the subjective meaning of the social constructs of the participants with emphasis on how knowledge emerges from one's interaction and experience with the environment. I engaged with participants in their natural environment so that I could develop better insight on the cognitive processing of their unique experiences of WLB in the high school context.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a strategy employed to integrate different components of the inquiry coherently with the aim of comprehensively addressing the research problem (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). This section will highlight the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, qualitative research strategy, writing style and approach to theory that I followed throughout the research process. Although the research methods are part of the research design, it is discussed hereafter under its own main heading, indicating it as the operationalisation of the methodological aspects of the research design.

1.7.1 A hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology

This qualitative study was directed by a hermeneutic phenomenological (HP) methodology, which was deemed appropriate because it is based on the interpretive-constructivist paradigm on the basis that people construct, interpret and experience the world by interacting with one another in their natural environment (Maxwell, 2013). The HP methodology endorses in-depth interpretation of phenomenological experiences and the meticulous scientific exploration thereof. Participants' subjective experiences are a precursor for constructing meaning that feeds into research findings (Creswell, 2014; Victor & Barnard, 2016). HP as a methodology employs in-depth probing of textual elucidations of participants' subjective life experiences, intending to deeply reflect and interpret situations to fully comprehend the underlying truth (Ponterotto, 2005; Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Through HP I was presented with a unique opportunity of constructing meaning based on the participants' work-life experiences. I understood how people construct, interpret and experience the world by interacting with one another in their natural environment (Maxwell, 2013). I moved in "hermeneutic circles" between parts of the text and the entire text in a bid to establish the truth, discover and interpret the phenomenon (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). The qualitative study followed an iterative process which encompasses fluidity and flexibility that allow changeability and is non-sequential in approach (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2007).

1.7.2 Qualitative research strategy

A qualitative research strategy was followed to explore the WLB of educators at a high school from an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm and HP methodology. Qualitative research is suitable for an HP and constructivist inquiry because it seeks to portray a world in which reality is socially constructed by people as they interact amongst themselves and their environment in a dynamic and complex manner (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). The social constructivism theory is rooted in sociology and communication, on the basis that meaning is derived from jointly constructed comprehension of the world which culminates into shared assumptions about reality arising from societal interactions (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Qualitative research is instrumental in situations that encapsulate subjective, experiential lifeworld of human beings to describe experiences in depth (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). It provides in-depth socio-cultural and detailed explanations and elucidations on the research topic

(Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). It brings about deeper insights on interrelations and understanding people (Vaismoradj et al., 2016). Sloan and Bowe (2014) assert that qualitative methodology is preferred for its focus on meanings and text as data and thus particularly attuned to a HP methodology. The HP methodology was used to fully interpret and comprehend the lived experiences of WLB for a sample of educators due to its suitability for education-based research (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). An HP study employs qualitative methods to evoke deeper insights from participants, which assist the researcher to construct and describe meaning from the subjective experience of each participant (Creswell, 2014). I therefore gathered the data virtually via MS Teams through in-depth semi-structured interviews. I employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse and interpret the data.

1.7.3 Employing hermeneutic circle in approach to theory and reflexivity in generating meaning

I employed the HP approach to theory with the aim of fully understanding the subjective meaning of WLB from the participants in this study. The theory from existing literature was integrated into this study and used as a foundation from planning phase right through data analysis, going back and forth between data and theory in an iterative manner (Loudon, 2017). In line with Kafle (2011), a HP approach to theory recognises the hermeneutic cycle of interpretation through constant reading of text, analysis and reflexivity. I moved back and forth, continuously reading between the existing literature, theories of WLB and the participants' narratives in a hermeneutic circle, attempting to understand the data (herein referred to as the parts) in relation to the WLB literature (the whole). As suggested by Suddick et al. (2020), I maintained a positive hermeneutic attitude and fusion of the horizons by combining theoretical knowledge from literature, my preconception and the experiences of the participants to arrive at extended, in-depth comprehension of the meaning of WLB experiences of African high school educators, which are deeper than what is on the surface of the narratives.

As suggested by Patnaik (2013), through the hermeneutic circle I was able to make meaning of participants' narratives by applying reflexivity through reflecting back to my own preconceptions which come from 18 years of experience as a head teacher and human resource manager in a high school. This is acceptable in the HP

approach to theory, which acknowledges the researcher's input through reflexivity (Kafle, 2011). Whilst it might be perceived as bias, reflexivity is aligned to my relativist ontological and subjectivist epistemological assumptions, therefore it allowed me to employ an interpretivist-constructivist lens by reflecting on my own prior experiences of WLB as a participant instead of a mere observer in this study (Regan, 2012). Through reflexivity I was able to ensure rigour and produce a human science description of the participants' experiences by verifying meaning against theories, my own understanding and continuously engaging and challenging social-cultural influences that put the WLB to test. I avoided bias by allowing participants to express themselves without judging, changing or taking anything away from what was said by capturing verbatim narratives to promote credibility (Barrett et al., 2020; Creswell, 2014; Palaganas et al., 2017; Ritchie et al., 2013, Sloan & Bowe, 2014). I ensured quality through self-reflective writing to check if bias was not creeping into this study and remained conscious of my own preconceptions (Reiners, 2012).

The meaning I derived in this study was influenced by my personal experiences and understanding of the theoretical framework relevant to WLB. The theoretical framework relevant to this study is explained in detail in this chapter and in the literature review of Chapter 2. This theoretical framework will ensure transparency for all the decisions I made in this study.

1.8 RESEARCH METHOD

Research methods are the collection of techniques employed to gather and analyse data when conducting a study, including the research setting, entrée and establishment of research roles, sampling, data gathering, recording, analysis and ensuring adherence to ethics (Williman, 2011) as discussed in the next section.

1.8.1 Research setting

A HP study exploring the WLB of teachers was conducted at a public high school in urban KwaZulu-Natal. The high school is characterised by exceptional academic standards and is in high demand in the province. This is due to a culture of hard work and discipline between educators and learners. The school usually achieves between 90 to 100 percent pass rate consistently on a yearly basis. The school

hosts holiday intervention programmes meant to assist high performing and underachieving learners. Since the time of the study there are 50 educators at this institution; 52 percent of the educators employed by the school are black Africans, 28 percent Indians, 10 percent white and 10 percent coloured. The female educators in the school constitute 66 percent and males are 34 percent of the staff complement. The school experiences challenges of educator shortages and supplements its human resources by hiring personnel through SGB funds. At the time of the study, there were 1 042 learners of mixed ability in the school, of which more than 90 percent are black Africans. Of the total learners, 43 were staying in the school boarding facilities. The school is well known for its high co-curricular standards, yet is also vulnerable to challenges in the secondary education landscape in South Africa. In a broader context, public schools in South Africa are confronted with the challenges of ageing infrastructure and shortages of textbooks. The funding problems affect the maintenance of grounds and other facilities around the schools (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Spaul & van der Berg, 2020). Although some schools charge tuition fees, there are serious problems of defaulting parents, which make the provision of quality education challenging (Makola et al, 2015, Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Other challenges affecting the schools are poor discipline, drug abuse, absenteeism and poor parental involvement in learner education (Matla & Xaba, 2019). In addition to sharing these struggles, in the school relevant to this study, educators and Grade 12 learners engage in extra tuition classes after school and during weekends. Continuous assessment tasks for Grades 10 to 12 learners can also be administered after normal schooling hours. Extra-curricular activities take place after school hours up to 17:00 and during weekends up to 12:00.

1.8.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

The school management team and the Department of Basic Education granted permission for this research to be conducted at the institution. The Acting Deputy Principal was appointed by the school management as the primary contact and the gatekeeper for this study. I contacted the participants through the Acting Deputy Principal (gatekeeper). The gatekeeper obtained contact details of voluntary participants who were within the predetermined inclusion criteria and shared the information with me. The participants' information sheets and consent forms were e-mailed to the gatekeeper who then facilitated that they were signed by voluntary

participants, scanned and e-mailed back to me. I then proceeded to contact the participants via e-mail, explaining in detail the nature of the study, aims of the research, potential benefits, voluntary participation, right to withdraw at any time, issues of data security and obtaining informed consent. I facilitated the setting up of MS Teams virtual meetings since direct interviews are not possible during these unprecedented times of COVID-19. Recording of data was via MS Teams and I did my own transcription by listening to audio recordings and transcribing verbatim narratives from the participants. My role was to conduct interviews and encourage participants to share how they experience WLB in the institution, without fear of being distorted or victimised, and explore participants' potential and opportunity as afforded by the HP study (Alase, 2017; William, 2011). By making use of the video in MS Teams, I was able to observe the behaviour of participants through facial expressions, gestures and maintaining eye contact to minimise over-reliance on verbatim feedback throughout the interview session. This concurs with Lavery (2003), who argues that verbatim alone falls short on capturing the intended information.

1.8.3 Population and sampling

Purposive non-probability sampling was employed. This is a technique in which the researcher selects a sample based on their subjective judgement rather than random sampling. This is a flexible approach which relies upon the experience of the researcher, therefore not all members of the population at the institution had an equal chance to participate in this inquiry because sampling was done with a purpose of getting a specific predefined group capable of adding value to the study (Gentles et al., 2015). Purposive non-probability sampling is ideal in HP inquiry because only a small sample with desired traits or characteristics can be selected to participate in the study (Gentles et al., 2015). Sloan and Bowe (2014) highlight that a sample of 10 participants may suffice for qualitative studies. In this study, a sample of eight participants was sufficient to reach redundancy. Sampling to redundancy is a situation in which interviews are conducted until the recurrence of the same themes is observed. This is also referred to as theoretical saturation, which is the point at which newly collected data no longer generates additional insights (Gentles et al., 2015; Salkind, 2010). Participants were selected based on certainty of experience in

relation to the research phenomenon, as recommended in HP studies, hence the purposive sampling (Ramsook, 2018).

The institution has a population of 50 educators teaching Grades 8 to 12. It is from these 50 educators that a sample 12 was drawn, but subsequently reduced to 8 once saturation was reached (Gentles et al., 2011; Salkind, 2010). The participants were selected based on predetermined criteria that included three years or more teaching experience within the institution, and a maximum variation sampling technique or heterogeneous sampling, which allows capturing the views of Black African males and females aged between 25 and 60 on their subjective perspectives which are of interest to this study. In this instance, African meant a combination of the following characteristics: being biologically black, a citizen of an African nation, born and bred in the primacy of Africa (Igboin, 2021; Venter et al., 2020). Black Africans are key to understanding of Afrocentric experiences (Shai, 2020; Venter et al., 2020), and are of significant importance to the current research setting which has a 90 percent Black African pupil population with just over 50% of its educators being Black Africans. This demographic was assumed to be dealing with both work and family demands of importance to my study and thus concluded the inclusion criteria. Thirty-six (36) out of 50 educators in the school were within the sample criteria. Educators temporarily employed by the school, with zero to two years' teaching experience were excluded as a way of promoting participants with crystallized concepts of WLB in this study context, to gather in-depth insights.

1.8.4 Data collection technique

I employed non-statistical data production with the aim of discovering in-depth meaning, definitions, characteristics, concepts and descriptions from the subjective experiences of participants on WLB (Franklin, 2012). This was done virtually via MS Teams, through a semi-structured interview. In line with the UNISA research protocol during COVID-19 lockdown levels 3-5, MS Teams interviews and data recording were preferred as a way of promoting social distancing and protecting myself and the participants against the virus. To acquire in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, I used semi-structured interview protocols to gather data (Sloan & Bowe, 2014) (refer to the interview guide attached to the dissertation as Annexure D). Questions were formulated to elicit explorative inquiry and inclusive analysis from

subjective narratives of the participants with the aim of promoting an interpretivist-constructivist epistemological position that I assumed in this study (Thomas et al., 2020). The interview questions included follow-up questions and phrases like “why”, “how” and “tell me more about”, which is encouraged when gathering in-depth data on lived experiences of participants (Crowther & Thompson, 2020; Newcomer et al., 2015). The semi-structured interview schedules were forwarded to the participants electronically for flexibility purposes. Although phenomenologists usually follow the traditional approach, virtual interviews are advantageous in small scale research with participants ranging from 1 to 20 (De Felice & Janesick, 2015). This is in keeping with the sample of this research, which was eight participants for reasons of garnering an in-depth understanding of subjective meaning (Gentles et al., 2015). There is an increase in recognition of internet-linked, contemporary technology, such as virtual interviews, in research and academics (O’Connor & Madge, 2003). A merging of MS Teams technology and phenomenology assisted me to adopt an efficient and less cumbersome data recording process (De Felice & Janesick, 2015; O’Connor & Madge, 2003). In keeping with Eike et al. (2016), I followed the advice on the use of virtual interviews by using MS Teams video call to observe non-verbal communication cues by maintaining eye contact at all times, maintaining a friendly demeanour and an upright posture, coupled with live voice and a positive attitude, and effective time management.

The duration of each interview was approximately 40 to 60 minutes per participant. Before the launch of each interview with the participant, I explained the recording, the confidentiality clause, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, and how the recording and the data would be protected for a period of up to five years post the session. I allowed each participant to fully exhaust the narrative of each experience without any interruptions but kept track by taking down notes and checking if there was any need to further probe the responses to each question. To show my reflexive stance, I diarised notes and comments in my reflexive journal based on each participant’s narratives, coupled with memoing ideas on what I was understanding from the data. The use of a reflexive journal throughout this inquiry helped me to constantly detail my thoughts, what I was doing, my feelings about Black African educators WLB, to acknowledge my role in the research, suspend my

preoccupations, gain a better understanding of the participants' experiences, and improve the credibility of this study (Suddick et al., 2020).

1.8.5 Data Recording and Management

I recorded data via MS Teams with the consent of each participant. As recommended by Spence (2016), I supplemented data recording by taking down verbatim notes of the narratives from every participant and diarising questions that came to light. Taking verbatim notes was a contingent measure to back up data in case of an unforeseen technological failure. Throughout the MS Teams video interview, I paid attention to participants' behaviour as cues for what was not being mentioned, because verbatim on its own may fall short of capturing every intended detail (Lavery, 2003). Once interviews were completed and no new insights could be generated, I transcribed verbatim data from the recordings. I maximised the management and protection of data through the use of password-protected electronic files, secure computer passwords and providing a lockable storage safe for the computer and all other research material. Personal information of participants and data generated from the interviews were kept private and confidential. Only my supervisors and I had access to the data. The data will be securely kept for a period of five years after the study has been concluded.

1.8.6 Data Analysis

I utilised IPA for this study. IPA is an approach to qualitative analysis rooted in the exploration of how individuals comprehend and formulate sense out of their lived experiences (Charlick et al., 2016). The focus was on a thorough comprehension of WLB in individual participant cases before generalisation to broader claims (Ajjawi & Higgins, 2007). My aim was to describe data by clustering common themes and identifying deviant case(s) that may add value to this study. I used IPA because it is rooted in hermeneutics and phenomenology due to its recognition of the researcher's preconceptions and how they can impede on participants experiences (Shaw, 2010). I employed the idiographic focus which assisted in comprehension of how individuals perceive the phenomenon (Peat et al., 2019). I followed the IPA steps suggested by Smith and Osborn (2015), as follows:

Step1: I began the data analysis process by adopting the idiographic approach which encourages analysis of one transcript in detail before proceeding to the others. This

was achieved by establishing an *interpretative relationship* with every script, which can be described as fully engaging in the process of uncovering concealed meaning through in-depth analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2015). During this initial phase my focus was to achieve full understanding, therefore I repeatedly read the transcript three times, noting points of interest on the left margin (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015). I was able to generate new insights as I read the transcript repeatedly. Each time I read the transcript, I commented about language use, paraphrased the narratives and in some instances integrated themes (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Engaging with the transcript in this manner allowed me to note points of emphasis, similarities and differences in the meaning of the text.

Step 2: Emerging themes were recorded in the right margin and theoretical integrations were made based on the content of the transcript. Thereafter, I proceeded to compile a list of emerging themes in the order in which they were identified on the transcript. I then engaged in theoretical ordering of concepts, drawing connections and clustering them into ordinate and superordinate themes. An iterative process was followed by triple-checking the verbatim narratives of each transcript against every theme with the aim of verifying if meaning was not lost (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

Step 3: The themes generated from the first transcript were used to set precedence for subsequent analysis of other transcripts (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Once the analysis of the first transcript was completed, I moved to the next one until all the transcripts were completed. In the process I discerned recurrent patterns and identified emerging themes just like I did with the first transcript. The superordinate themes from the first transcript were used as the point of confluence for convergent concepts across the transcripts (Alase, 2017). A final figure of themes was compiled, summing up the amalgamation of four superordinate themes from the analysis of eight transcripts.

Step 4: I then concluded by writing up meaning deduced from the participants' experiences.

IPA is in keeping with the HP approach, which postulates that meaning should be determined through the eyes of the people actively involved in the experiences under study (Hayes, 2000). The approach is also congruent to hermeneutic

phenomenology which is concerned with meaning based on the lived experiences of the people in everyday life (Hayes, 2000). An iterative data analysis approach was employed up to saturation level to ensure rigour (Johnson et al., 2020). Qualitative analysis is fundamentally an iterative process encapsulating a systematic repetitive and recursive data analysis process to yield results successively until a desired outcome is achieved (Johnson et al., 2020; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). I achieved this by moving back and forth within a hermeneutic circle, identifying divergent and similar cases based on participants' narratives. The hermeneutic circle involved anticipatory movement between my fore-understanding and allowing my prejudices to come into play as I fused or merged my understanding of the experience to that of each participant (Suddick et al., 2020). Fusion of horizons allowed in-depth and extended understanding of meaning from the transcripts as I discovered the new perspective, deeper than the narratives given by the participants (Spence, 2016). Reflexive movement between texts allowed me to be a part of the research as I continually checked the meaning of transcripts against my own understanding of WLB, selecting words carefully to crystalize meaning and expanding my horizons of understanding (Crowther & Thompson, 2020, Spence, 2016).

As recommended by Suddick et al. (2020), I employed retrospective reflexivity throughout the data analysis process by continuously examining and questioning my own judgements and beliefs of educators' WLB based on my previous experiences so that I could understand concealed meaning which might be resistant to being made visible, by focusing between what is being said and how it links to the experience of the phenomenon of WLB. I was also aware of my own apprehension to African spirituality which seems to be in contrast with my Christian beliefs. For the sake of scientific rigour and completeness, it was worth pronouncing my hesitation for delving deep into matters of African spirituality, which were manifested from the findings of this study. This is because of my Christian beliefs which are in contrast with African spirituality. However, I consistently reflected on my bias for African spirituality throughout this study and attempted to analyse the results based on the feedback from the participants.

Reflexivity helped to develop an informed theoretical disposition, undertake an analytical flexibility and interpret meaning throughout the data analysis process (Barrett et al., 2020; Creswell, 2014; Palaganas et al., 2017; Ritchie et al., 2013).

1.8.7. Quality criteria

Ensuring quality and criteria was an important measure for ensuring credibility of this study. The significance of this research was maintained by employing certain strategies to enhance ethics, rigour and credibility (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). In this section, I discuss three broad strategies. Firstly, I review the strategies typical to qualitative inquiry. Second, I review the ethical considerations of the study and lastly, I describe the reflexive writing and reporting style that I adopted.

1.8.7.1 Applying quality criteria of value in qualitative studies

I maintained rigour by ensuring congruence between the applied research methods, the HP research methodology and my interpretivist-constructivist paradigm (Johnson et al., 2020). In this chapter specifically, I aligned the congruence between these methodological aspects of the study in a consistent manner. Phenomenological data gathering and analysis were directed through constant member checking by emailing the transcripts to the participants to verify and check the findings with the aim of capturing a true reflection of their narratives and promoting trustworthiness of data (Creswell, 2014). All the participants agreed that the transcripts were a true reflection of their narratives and there after data was analysed. To fully tap into the strength of this HP research method, I upheld an ontological discovery of what is beyond the transcripts/ narratives by constant reflexive movement, checking for resonance between my pre-assumptions and participants' experiences, thereby confirming the trustworthiness of the data (Daniel, 2019; Ramsook, 2018). I established trustworthiness by acknowledging my potential personal bias towards this study in section 1.2.5. Reflecting on my WLB experiences in the teaching sector throughout in my diary, memoing and with my supervisors, assisted me to make meaning of participants' experiences during data collection with the understanding that these reflective activities were important in recognising and working with my influence in this HP study.

Credibility is the degree of accuracy and faithfulness of data (Johnson et al., 2020; Marais, 2013). I prioritised credibility of data by using verbatim narratives from

participants and carefully selecting words to crystalize meaning and expand my horizons of understanding (Spence, 2016). Credibility was further strengthened by gathering data until no new insights were generated (data saturation). Saturation was reached after interview number eight, when I sensed that there was adequate quality and quantity meaning from generated insights and I could not conceptualise any new themes to the extent that the data became repetitive (Daniel, 2019; Johnson et al., 2020; Kafle, 2011). As suggested by Kafle (2011), I probed the participants to ensure that texts possessed adequate richness to address the WLB experiences of high school educators, which made it possible to fully comprehend the inherent meaning from the narratives of the participants. I became fully oriented in participants' experiences by capturing field notes in a reflective journal, noting both verbal and non-verbal cues which strengthened my hermeneutic alertness to uncover in depth meaning from each narrative (Marais, 2013). A strong conceptual framework supported the research question and these determined the research methods (as presented in this chapter 1) which enhanced dependability, trustworthiness and pre-assumptions associated with HP methodology (Johnson et al., 2020). Iterative analysis was employed by systematically analysing each transcript and consequent transcripts and identifying verbatim narratives that adequately addressed the research questions.

Authenticity is the ability to consistently maintain fairness throughout the study (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). I made this possible by capturing narratives relevant to the research phenomenon, protecting personal details of participants, obtaining informed consent to record their narratives during interviews and maintaining their privacy and confidentiality through the use of pseudo names (Loudon, 2017).

Transferability is the extent to which research findings may be applied to other settings and or populations (Baumgart et al., 2021). Transferability will allow lessons to be drawn from this study to be transferred to other settings of similar context (Daniel, 2019). In this study transferability was ensured by careful selection of participants who have knowledge of WLB as educators within the school, giving in depth description of the research setting and of the demographics of the sample (see table 3.1. chapter 3) that participated in this research (Baumgart et al., 2021; Daniel, 2019; Marais, 2013).

1.8.7.2 Ensuring ethical research

I obtained ethical clearance from UNISA ethics committee (ERC Reference #: **2021_CEMS/IOP_000**) (see Annexure A), and permission to conduct this study from the School Governing Board (SGB) and the principal of the high school in KwaZulu-Natal (see Annexure C). I also obtained permission and clearance from the Department of Basic Education clearance committee (Ref.: **2/4/8/7052**) (see Annexure B). I sensitised all the participants to their right to withdraw at any stage should they feel uncomfortable to continue. I also advised the participants about the need to record interviews for further analysis of data. I specified that confidentiality was a priority consideration to maximise protection of the participants. The data protection procedures were explained to every participant (CEMS Research Committee, 2010; Van Eeden, 2005; Victor & Barnard, 2016). Protection of participants and the identity of the school take priority, therefore I used pseudonyms to conceal their real identities. I stored the data in password-protected electronic files that cannot be accessed without my authorisation.

1.8.7.3 Writing style and reporting

A HP inquiry is best suited with first-person writing style (Creswell, 2014), therefore it is congruent with this inquiry. My ontological and epistemological assumptions allowed me to adopt first person reporting. As recommended by Kafle (2011), I paid attention to the substance of participants' experiences of WLB and reported on the WLB phenomenon from their point of view. To do so, Kafle (2011) recommends using idiographic expressions from the data as it focuses on individual rather than generalisation of group experiences. I employed an idiographic approach which made it possible to obtain in-depth information based on subjective experiences of each participant. I reported the outcomes of this study in line with Master's level stipulations for a research of limited scope.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study will assume the chapter layout of Masters' research as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific orientation of the study

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Research article

Chapter 4: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

1.10 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this chapter was to explore the scientific orientation of this study. I motivated the need for this study in the field of IOP. I also discussed the research paradigms, research design and methods which are congruent and in synergy with my primary research question. The following chapter will highlight an extensive literature review, focusing on the historical background, theoretical background and a general framework relevant to this research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

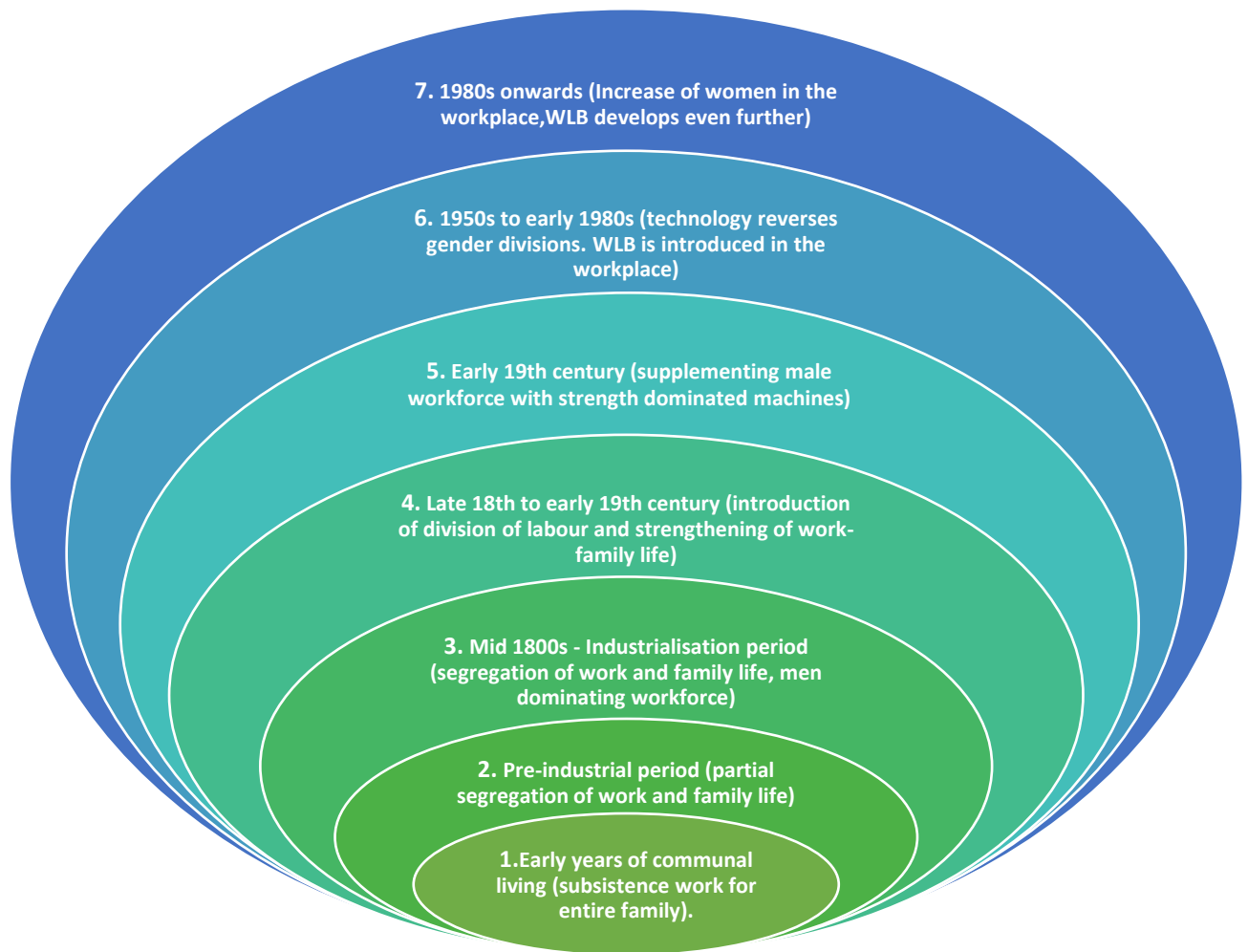
The purpose of this chapter is to review literature on the concept WLB and delineate its role in employee well-being in the work context. The chapter opens with the historical background of WLB, followed by a discussion on the African perspective to gender roles and its relevance to WLB. A conceptualisation of WLB is provided, which includes defining the WLB construct and explicating different approaches to WLB. Thereafter the meta-theoretical framework to WLB is expanded by presenting theories, related constructs and dimensions of WLB, perspectives of WLB, constructs related to WLB, and related life expectations as antecedents of WLB. The chapter also highlights the importance of WLB, psychological career life stages and anticipated work-life roles, organisational strategies to enhance WLB and African psychology. A synopsis of the contents of this chapter concludes this section.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE EVOLVING FOCUS ON WLB

In the early 18th century, the workforce was dominated by men, whilst women were relegated to domestic chores. The breakthrough of women into formal employment gained traction in the late 18th century and resulted in the promulgation of work-life considerations which were targeted on creating parity between personal life and work demands (Naithani, 2010). The workers increasingly became vocal in the 19th century by advocating against long working hours in factories, which prompted a reaction on how to introduce shorter working hours and still enhance productivity (Khoury, 2021). However, the genesis of WLB is better understood by tracking the history of the working class from early 18th century (Naithani, 2010).

Figure 2.1

Phases of Changing Composition of Work-life Spheres



Note. This figure summarises changing composition of work-life spheres. Adapted from “Overview of work-life balance discourse and its relevance in current economic scenario”, by P. Naithani, 2010, *Asian Social Science*, 6(6). 148-155. <https://doi.org/ssrn.com/abstract=2685805>

During the early phase of communal living, the entire family would invest time and energy in production and manufacturing for subsistence purposes without managerial supervision (Arenofsky, 2017). This trend changed around 1820s with the introduction of industries which created the working class and partially segregated family from work (Arenofsky, 2017; Naithani, 2010).

In the mid-1800s, the industrial revolution led to mechanisation, setting up of factories and mass production, with men dominating the workforce, whilst women were mainly concerned with household chores and looking after the children (Voydanoff, 2006). Around 1830s most backyard industries lost their independence and started looking for employment and submitting to employers, such that by the beginning of the 19th century craftsmen working from home were totally submerged by large industries (Leppegard et al., 2017). On average, full-time employees worked for more than 3 000 hours per year, earning meagre wages (Arenofsky, 2017). Around the 1880s, mass production in industries flooded markets with goods, leading to further plunges in wages and bosses oppressing employees in authoritarian style (Arenofsky, 2017). Between the late 18th and early 19th century, the separation of work and family life became more pronounced, although men still dominated the breadwinner role whilst women were the family's primary caregivers (Naithani, 2010). This was perpetuated by strength-dependent technology which was operated by men at work (Snooks, 1996). In the early 1900s, the authoritarian leadership failed to inspire economic prosperity due to negative reaction from dissatisfied employees, leading to the abandonment of this traditional dogma (Arenofsky, 2017). Psychological theories emerged with the aim of motivating men to make work meaningful (Arenofsky, 2017). In the early 20th century, computerisation and advanced technology significantly reduced dependence on masculinity, resulting in increased participation of women in the workplace, thereby reversing the pronounced gender division and stereotyping (Leppegard et al., 2017; Snooks, 1996).

Work-Life balance (WLB) became a focal point after the Second World War due to the increased number of women who were seeking beneficial employment apart from the traditional household chores (Kelliher et al., 2019; Leppegard et al., 2017). Although there was an influx of women into the world of formal work, most maintained their traditional primary homemaker roles, which resulted in the need for balancing the dual work and traditional family responsibilities (Kelliher et al., 2019). In 1938, the US government passed The Fair Labour Legislation Act with a 44-hour working week to promote WLB (Khoury, 2021). From 1970s onwards, the focus on WLB expanded to dual career couples, with specific attention on women balancing childcare and work. The need to create the balance between work and personal life

continued to grow, and in 1980s and 1990s resulted in organisations initiating family-friendly policies, telecommuting, and flexible work schedules, with a narrow focus on working women, although it later grew to also accommodate males (Khoury, 2021). In South Africa, legislation such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act 75 of 1997) highlights the favourable working conditions that promote WLB by stipulating that employees should be afforded 21 consecutive or 15 working days annual leave of full pay. The Act further prohibits engagement of employees for more than 45 hours per week, with overtime of not more than 3 hours per day or 10 hours per week.

Traditionally, WLB assumed a view in which work, and life were widely separate (Arenofsky, 2017; Khoury, 2021). Life has been viewed as loaded with activities such as childcare, home chores, looking after the elderly and other family responsibilities, whereas work has been seen as full-time, permanent employment (Kelliher et al., 2019). Such a view creates some blind spots and limitations on what work and life have to offer (Kelliher et al., 2019). In the new millennium, the balance between work and family life has significantly changed for both males and females due to highly dynamic job and family demands (Khoury, 2021; Richardson & Kelliher, 2015). Nowadays, WLB is envisioned in an inclusive manner that amalgamates employees without children, single employees with children, need for elderly care, lifelong learning, caring for pets, gym time, religious commitments and community engagement (Kelliher et al., 2019; Khoury, 2021; Richardson & Kelliher, 2015).

Work-life balance covers many disciplines, with research extending into exploring WLB of professionals like educators, IT technicians, lawyers and directors (Kelliher et al., 2019; Putri & Amran, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has seen the acceleration of working from home and a notable increase in time spent with family (Putri & Amran, 2021). This recent trend has created flexibility in the way in which employees tailor their schedules, but it also comes with its challenges due to disruptions which happen when working around young children and other family members (Kelliher et al., 2019; Putri & Amran, 2021).

Linked to the history of WLB is the perspective of gender roles in the African context. The following section explores how gender roles have been affecting WLB for men and women in Africa.

2.3 AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE TO GENDER ROLES AND ITS RELEVANCE TO WLB

The contextual disparities ascribed to WLB in developing countries are essential for in-depth comprehension of diverse employee needs (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). Linked to these disparities is the absence of gender neutrality in some African cultures which creates a disproportionate allocation of chores between men and women (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). A lack of gender egalitarianism in some African cultures robs people of equal rights and opportunities in Africa (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014). The traditional and stereotypical perception on the allocation of chores strains the WLB aspirations of the working class (Koenig & Eagly, 2014). African typical patriarchal norms and proclivity for men, frustrate women's aspiration to attain WLB due to limitations, such as non-supportive relationships, cultural expectations and a lack of a voice in the workplace, which result in a work-life interface that imposes a gender-based strain (Adisa et al., 2019; Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). Patriarchal hegemony in some African cultures forces women to negotiate for equality in the societies, with cultural teachings which condition females to subdue themselves and minimise resistance (Ngũmbi, 2017). This is heightened by some cultural settings which do not give women a voice and the perception on gender roles still prevails in some cultures (Ngũmbi, 2017). However, this assertion is fast changing as research is suggesting that gender differences do not play a major role in determining WLB or WLC experienced by men and women in Africa (Veiga, 2009). Although the contention that males and females may experience WLB differently is valid, effects of gender differences are negligible due to the decline in the traditional male breadwinner family in South Africa (Seeley, 2015). Evidence shows that both males and females have been experiencing common work-related stressors as spousal support became the dominant way of alleviating work-life pressure, hence the need for a gender-neutral WLB approach (Maqubela, 2013; Muasya, 2021; Seeley, 2015; Veiga, 2009). The independence of South Africa led to improved participation of black working-class families in the economy (Maqubela, 2013). The improved economic status of most families from low to middle class resulted in semi-migration from townships to middle-income residential areas which were formally occupied by whites (Maqubela, 2013). The unfortunate outcome of this

movement was reduced social support from neighbours and extended family members, which culminated in a compromised ability of working couples to maintain WLB (Maqubela, 2013; Wessells, 2021). The slow pace of technological advancement and the absence of modern house-cleaning equipment is another challenge which led to wastage of time and energy on manual chores that could have been faster and simpler through the deployment of machines (Maqubela, 2013). Some families have resorted to employ domestic assistants to cover the gap left vacant by the withdrawal of social support when they moved to middle-class areas (Maqubela, 2013; Muasya, 2021).

There is need to defuse the effects of racism, social class and sexism in Africa (Akala, 2020). Some studies have uncovered how women have to juggle multiple roles, whilst men become workaholics mainly focusing on career advancement, which frustrates an attempt to live optimally (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018). In some African societies, men have been found to be more focused on work than their families, whereas females prioritise family time over work (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018). The patriarchal norms in some parts of Africa may be the reason why females experience compromised WLB (Adisa et al., 2019). Although most women are now taking formal jobs, patriarchal societies still ascribe domestic chores as women's responsibility (Adisa et al., 2019). This mindset affects women's WLB to a wider extent as they have to juggle between formal work and life roles assigned by patriarchal ideologies. However, although these patriarchal views exist in some African societies, both African women and men struggle to attain WLB, but for different reasons (Seeley, 2015). For males in dual career relationships, work-family conflict has been found to be a cause of lower quality of life (Veiga, 2009).

Other studies have recognised the need for WLB with regard to increasing single people and couples without children in the African workforce who are struggling to get adequate social and educational time (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018; Warner & Hausdorf, 2009). Akala (2020) argues that in Africa, equal access and equal opportunity need to be more than just a showroom exercise, but rather a tool to advance the agenda of affirmative action that will bring balance between genders. HR departments in Africa need to go an extra mile to adapt WLB policies that cushion work-family stressors (Ganiyu et al., 2020). This need is expedited by the

steep increase in black people pursuing higher education, which makes a strong case for policy frameworks sensitive to generational needs (Akala, 2020).

In rural South Africa it was noted that some workers need training on how to balance work-life issues due to some challenges in navigating between the two blurred boundaries and a lack of support from immediate family (Laurenzi et al., 2020). Just like other parts of the world, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has advanced the proliferation of technology which has the potential to increase quality of work and efficiency, but this has disrupted traditional work routines in an irreparable manner in Africa (Goldman, 2021). The traditional work/non-work boundaries are shifting noticeably, and the parameters of morally acceptable work practices are being questioned (Goldman, 2021). Although the overarching view is of male dominance, Bosak et al. (2018) feel that the gender stereotypes in Africa are changing as more men and women adjust to the present-day demands, a shift which may lead to equality and better experiences of WLB. The teachings of collectivism in Africa have a huge impact on both males' and females' dedication to service and upholding the employment contract for the purposes of giving back and uplifting the communities (Brubaker, 2013).

2.4 CONCEPTUALISING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

2.4.1 Work-life balance defined

“**Work**” is defined as the intellectual and physical effort applied to accomplish a result (Bello & Tanko, 2020). The work domains present an individual with the opportunity to reach self-actualisation and to formulate meaningful relationships with other people (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010). This study explores financially beneficial work which Voydanoff (2002) argues should have a structure, expectations, social organisation, quality and support orientation.

“**Life**” is a culmination of natural activities performed by a human being and can be categorised as high order in terms of the hierarchy of needs (Stoyanov, 2017).

“**Balance**” is the act of distributing time between work and life (Bello & Tanko, 2020). Weiner et al. (1993) define balance as a process of distributing proportional weight between the two sides in order to keep stability. The feasibility of balancing work and

life activities is context-related and significantly differs from one individual to the other (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). A proper balance is a crucial roadmap which helps employees to navigate from the breadwinner paradigm that is saturated with long working hours, psychological and physical challenges, to a family member who meets the life obligations satisfactorily (Kromydas, 2020; Soni & Bakhru, 2019).

“Work-life balance” is an integral distribution of attention, time and resources between work and life demands (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). Hja`lmosdo`ttir and Bjarnado`ttir (2020) define WLB as the ability to manage work and family obligations regardless of gender and further assert that optimal management of work and life enhances mental and physical well-being. The two integral concepts of WLB are happiness and achievement, of which Wolor et al. (2020) argue that it is rare but essential for someone to have both. What affects happiness and achievement is the work-personal life interface which is rooted in how people’s lives are influenced by stringent and demanding workloads, whereas the personal life-work interface is focused on how one’s lifestyle does interfere with the work role (Abioro et al., 2018; Agalya & Manickavasagam, 2019; Schnettler et al., 2021; Sirgy & Lee, 2020; Soni & Bakhru, 2019). WLB stems from the attempt to satisfy a healthy and productive life (Chaudhuri et al., 2020).

WLB has been defined in multiple and overlapping ways (Bello & Tanko, 2020). Work-life balance is defined as the individual's capacity to be fully invested across all life roles (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Kitchmeyer (2000) defines WLB as the balanced allocation of time, energy and commitment across life and work roles. Greenhaus et al. (2003) define it as the extent to which an employee can satisfactorily engage in both work and family roles. Greenhaus et al. (2003) further allude that WLB includes the allocation of equal time and involvement in different spheres of work and non-work roles. Khoury (2021) defines WLB as a state of well-being induced by attaining a balance between work, leisure, friends and family time. Lewis and Beauregard (2018) envision WLB as role-related expectations negotiated between life and work domain. Gagnano et al. (2020) define WLB as a unique way of prioritising the work and life activities such as health, childcare, leisure and friends. Gagnano et al. (2020) further assert that a plethora of definitions and conceptualisation of WLB is a show of different views from person to person.

The assertion that WLB may not present objective reality but rather an aspiration to personal mastery is based on the dynamic and subjective nature of individual needs; however, attempts to maintain the balance should not be impeded by work (Khoury, 2021; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). WLB culminates as the manner in which employees endeavour to perpetually create a healthy work environment which creates room and time to deal with personal responsibilities (Wolor et al., 2020). Attaining WLB may be a process of setting clear priorities between work and personal life (Putri & Amran, 2021). Once clear priorities have been set and a balance is within the presumed target, it is possible that employees start performing satisfactorily at work and may achieve optimal well-being in life (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017). Failure to balance work and life demands may result in some employees experiencing work-induced bodily pain, which hampers their ability to actively participate in leisure, family and social life (Lingard & Tuner, 2021). Failure to promote WLB has detrimental effects which could impair emotional, physical and psychological capacity (Lingard & Turner, 2021, Wolor et al., 2020).

Based on the arguments above it can be deduced that WLB is the main determinant of employee well-being and it is in everyone's interest to attempt living a balanced life as part of compassionate self-care (Picton, 2021). Sensitivity must be applied when conceptualising WLB due to its subjective nature. Fleetwood (2007) highlights the danger of a conceptual perspective which visualises work as bad and life as good. Some views posit work as a restriction to a balanced life, yet it is a dimension of life (Kelliher et al., 2019). I have conceptualised WLB as ***a subjective and relative state of affairs in which people have diverse ways of allocating resources between life and work in a bid to live fulfilling and healthy lives.***

2.4.2 Different approaches to conceptualise work-life balance

Shankar (2017) argues that employers do appreciate highly satisfied employees and consider them as a dominant source of productivity. Employers regard WLB as optimal if it leads to the fulfilment of their objectives and business goals (Robbins & Judge, 2012; Shankar, 2017). Work-life balance from the employer's perspective is much more appreciated if it leads to increased productivity, organisational commitment, development of management skills, satisfactory customer relations, and instilling high confidence in employees (Shankar, 2017). On the other hand,

employees perceive WLB as satisfactory if it leads to maintaining a stress-free life, investing time in a hobby, use of time for family, societal commitments and remaining in contact with family even during work hours. Apart from how employers and employees differ in their interest in WLB, multifarious approaches to WLB emphasise different aspects to attain WLB.

The **equal approach** to WLB focuses on equal resource distribution. A balance is created between work and life domains when there is equitable allocation of resources such as time and money (Barber et al., 2016; Fleetwood, 2007). This is also alluded to by Babin Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015) who argue that WLB is a state of equilibrium between the job demands and personal life. However, this **equal approach** is criticised for failing to account for the individual's role preferences on their subjective sense of balance (Brough et al., 2020). This brings about the salience approach which views WLB as the overall contentment resulting from the successful fulfilment of work and family roles (Brough et al., 2020). This **salience approach** was initially supported by Kalliath and Brough (2008), who view WLB as the extent to which an individual invests time and resources consistently in roles based on their priority ranking and need. In other words, WLB does not mean giving equal time to work life and personal life, but rather striking a fulfilling compromise which encourages optimal functioning in all spheres of life. Reiter (2007) postulates the **situationist approach** in which the individual's capacity to enjoy WLB depends on personal circumstances. WLB is determined by how one perceives their situation rather than predetermined definitions. Although there are different approaches and perceptions, Haar and Broughman (2020) believe that WLB still requires further development for us to fully comprehend it.

The next section highlights the meta-theoretical framework that will help us to fully comprehend what motivates people to pursue WLB at different age groups. The dimension of WLB will be discussed, followed by theories such as the conflict, enrichment, boundary, border and spill-over. I will also explore the different constructs related to WLB.

2.5 A META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF WLB

Multifarious theories form the building blocks that give well-rounded comprehension of WLB. Motivational theories substantiate the need for WLB in human lives. Other classical theories supported by the boundary management and border theory formulate a solid foundation of WLB (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). This section is divided into theories, constructs and dimensions of WLB. The relationship between different theories is explored to provide a sound meta-theoretical framework for understanding and working with WLB.

2.5.1 Theories of work-life balance interference

There are different models which reveal the fluidity in the relationship between work and life. Guest (2002) highlights these models as follows: 1) **Segmentation model** highlights that personal life and work are non-dependent, distinct and have no influence on each other. 2) **Spill-over model** highlights that work and personal life affect each other negatively and positively. 3) **Compensation model** views work and personal life as highly dependent and compensatory. *Instrumental model* highlights that what one does in one sphere of life determines success or failure in the other. 4) **Conflict model** views posit that life demands pose difficulties that create antagonism with work and this may result in overload on the individual. On the other hand, the work demands also exert immense pressure on the same individual, thereby compromising attention paid to life matters. A synopsis of the different models above reflects the fluidity and subjectivity in which WLB can be viewed from different perspectives (Guest, 2002). These models have led to the development of different WLB theories, such as the conflict, enrichment and balance theories that denote how work and life interact with each other (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017).

Conflict theory: the conflict perspective was the forerunner to explore WL conflict in the early 19th century after mass criticism of lengthy working hours in industries, prompting a reaction to investigate ways to make work enriching and fulfilling for employees (Khoury, 2021). The theory highlights that there are conflicting time demands between work and life, therefore the two are contradictory but necessary roles (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). The underlying premise is that fulfilling one role is detrimental to the optimal satisfaction of the other role because of time-based conflict, behavioural conflict and strain-based conflict which affects general well-

being and life satisfaction (Fiksenbaum, 2014). The rewards gained from work lead to a biased time allocation that results in neglect of personal life, thereby interfering with the balance between the two domains (Bartos & Wehr, 2002; Le et al., 2020). The coercive demands of work contradict and compromise the satisfaction that life has to offer (Kulik et al., 2014; Soni & Bakhru, 2019), thereby creating a perception whereby work-life interface is viewed as conflicting (Le et al., 2020). Humphries et al. (2020) highlight that the competing time-demands is a common challenge, confronting workers from all occupations, thereby resulting in workplaces being referred to as greedy institutions which demand unlimited claims of time at the expense of family, friends, leisure, studying and religion. Such a conflict between work and life perpetuates a stereotypical perception which negates self-care (Humphries et al., 2020). In the conflict perspective, work-life (WL) constructs were related to negative WL spill-over, which creates strains for the employee due to excessive commitment of time to one role over the other, leading to mutual incompatibility (Nizam & Kam, 2018).

Enrichment theory: this is a collaborative theory which posits that full attainment in one domain will radiate positively towards the other and there will be enrichment in both work and life experiences (Kulik et al., 2014). This is supported by Chan et al. (2016) who highlights that the collaborative enrichment of domains leads to enriched and quality life/work which benefits the organisation through low rates of attrition, well-being and productivity. The argument is that the work domain can improve the quality of life that an individual lives (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). The work and life domains are even better if there is a balance between the two because satisfaction in the work domain can generate meaning in life (Kulik et al., 2014). The enrichment theory substantially echoes the influence of WLB on health and well-being, life satisfaction, job performance and reduced employee turnover (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). In the enrichment perspective, WL constructs are related to a positive spill-over effect whereby the two domains are mutually beneficial and enhance each other (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017).

Boundary theory: this is based on the meaning that people ascribe to work and home, and how easy one traverses from one role to the next (Piszczyk & Berg, 2014). Boundary management involves the application of psychological resources that help an individual to optimally manage work-life demarcations and still achieve

best outcomes from both (Wepfer et al., 2018). Consequences of poor boundary management will result in WLC, hence the need for the adoption of what is best for an individual between integration and segmentation (Shanine et al., 2019). The relationship between an employee's different roles is determined by how the individual manages the boundaries demarcating work from life (Adisa et al., 2019, Kulik et al., 2014). Factors such as gender will also determine the preferred way of managing boundaries (Shanine et al., 2019). Some studies have found that individuals with a higher work-life integration (WLI) tend to experience poorer WLB than those who set clear boundaries between work and life (Wepfer et al., 2018).

Border theory highlights that people traverse between family and work domains on a daily basis (Kulik et al., 2014; Soni & Bakhru, 2019). These borders do not only focus on work and family, but include other domains like religious commitments, gym and social events (Adisa et al., 2019). The border strength and permeability determine how an individual moves between work and life domains (Adisa et al., 2019; Kulik et al., 2014; Soni & Bakhru, 2019). The demarcations between work and life domains set the tone for what is behaviourally acceptable in the individual's mind, therefore this mental fence regulates how far one can move between roles (Adisa et al., 2019). The border is an emotional, physical, cognitive and temporal restriction which can be difficult to alter once internalised; it is therefore important to note that flexibility between boundaries allows an accommodation of the other domain, whereas permeability is the extent to which enactment of roles can take place (Adisa et al., 2019; Wepfer et al., 2018). Permeability involves penetration of behaviours from one role into the other (Piszczek & Berg, 2014). Integration and segmentation of roles come from how permeable the border is. Individuals with high border permeability and flexibility easily traverse between roles (Shanine et al., 2019). Some studies have found that employees with high life integration tend to experience poor WLB, whereas those who set clear boundaries between work and life have better balance and well-being (Piszczek & Berg, 2014; Wepfer et al., 2018). The segmentation or integration of boundaries and management of work-life borders determines how balanced an individual can be (Kulik et al., 2014; Soni & Bakhru, 2019).

Spill-over theory gives insight into how the intrusion of work into life or vice versa, can influence the well-being and functionality of an individual (Schnettler et al.,

2021). The intrusion can happen from the macro-system (family) towards the micro-system (work) or vice versa and the effects are either positive or negative (Schnettler et al., 2021). The **Work Interference with Personal Life** (WIPL) occurs when work causes neglecting of personal activities, leading to unhappiness, whereas **Personal Life Interference with Work** (PLIW) manifests from personal activities that drain energy, making the individual tired and almost difficult to work (Khoury, 2021). One's personal life may be loaded with activities which constantly bring tiredness, resulting in poor focus and productivity at work (Delina & Prabhakara Raya, 2016). Restrictive and demanding job demands usually encroach on personal life negatively, whereas flexibility to gainfully participate in both work and life will result in positive spill-over, which leads to a healthy WLB (Schnettler et al., 2021). Individuals who employ problem-focused coping strategies have a greater chance of mitigating negative spill-over than those who are emotionally invested in solving challenges (Sirgy & Lee, 2020). The positive spill-over between work and life may result in resources from one domain being utilised for developing the other (Kulik et al., 2014; Soni & Bakhru, 2019).

It is essential to understand the constructs that permeate WLB. The next section explores work life enrichment (WLE) and work-family conflict (WFC) as some of the overarching constructs related to understanding WLB.

2.5.2 Constructs related to Work-life balance (WLB)

Work-life balance is founded under the premise of living a fulfilling experience in different domains of life by committing and distributing time and energy across the whole spectrum of what an individual does (Bagley et al., 2018; Shabir et al., 2021). Literature highlights **work-family conflict** (WFC) and **work-family enrichment** (WFE), **work interference with personal life** (WIPL), **personal life interference with work** (PLIW) and **work-life enrichment** (WLE) as constructs of WLB (Delina & Prabhakara Raya, 2016; Khoury, 2021; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017).

Work-family conflict (WFC) is founded on the premise of role theory, which highlights how individuals juggle many roles within their social setting (Loudon, 2017). The understanding is that every individual holds a fixed time and energy, of which both work and life compete for, thereby leading to conflicting role demands (Jain & Nair, 2013). For an employee, the origins of WFC can either be family or

work domains namely: conflicting demands, lack of managerial support, lack of spousal support and lack of societal support (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2010). Studies by Schreuder et al. (2011); Tummers and Bronkhorst (2014) have also identified negative work domains such as work overload, role conflict, job stress, reduced work-life support and role ambiguity and cited these as predictors of WLC. Tummers and Bronkhorst (2014) further assert that emotionally draining circumstances such as working overtime, weekend work and work overload can be exhausting and detrimental to WLB, which leads to work-family conflict and reduced productivity. Work-family conflict (WFC) can also be determined by personal variables such as age, number of dependants, marital status, gender and inter-role conflict (Kahchh & Nagpur, 2014).

The term WFCB is interchangeable to **WLC** which can be defined as incompatible work and life roles emanating from contrasting role demands (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Personal matters interfere with work and vice versa. (Martins et al., 2002). WLC emanates from multiple roles assumed by an individual and these roles usually have contrasting expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). It can be argued that the incompatibility between work and life roles creates contrasting demands and conflict in an individual. This conflict destabilises the balance necessary for optimal functioning (Kahn et al., 1964). This is in keeping with Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) who argue that work and family are mutually incompatible and thus create conflicting demands. There are three dimensions of conflict between work and life. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identify these as: 1) **time-based conflict** - one domain of life demands more time than the other, 2) **strain-based conflict** - occurs when one domain creates fatigue, tension and depression which affect the other, and 3) **behaviour-based conflict** - which are the conflicting expectations of behaviour between roles. On the other hand, positive psychology postulates that work and life should be viewed positively (**work-life enrichment**) as multiple role demands from work and life may create a well-rounded individual (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). One role can increase energy, attitudes and skills development towards the other (Graves et al., 2007). This gives an overall view that experiences in the work domain can improve life and vice versa.

Work-family enrichment (WFE) promotes the integration of work and family domains as mutually beneficial rather than viewing the two as separate entities

(Greenhaus, 2003; Jaga et al., 2013). The emphasis of WFE relies on the principle of role accumulation and enhancement hypothesis (Loudon). The gains obtained from work are transferred to life and lesson learnt from personal life are transferred to work (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2010). Such a health exchange brings role compatibility and usually comes from supportive family, institutional support and societal setting (Shabir et al., 2021). Work and family are social settings that teach values, skills, social expectations and philosophies that enhance each other (Wadsworth & Hibel, 2013). Personal characteristics, work setting and the society can determine work-family enrichment. One's personality preference and factors from the environment determine the degree of spill-over between roles (Barber et al., 2016). Both the person-environment fit and systems perspective theories highlight the societal or environmental influence on how the individual conceptualises WLB and make choices that determine how life is constructed in a way that has a positive spill-over which leads to work-family enrichment and vice versa (Kossek et al., 2011). The segmentation and integration of system boundaries are instrumental in creating fluidity of how sub-systems influence each other; and a parity or integration on the enactment of roles can lead to permeability and enrichment between the two domains that result in optimum WLB (Kossek et al., 2011; Loudon, 2017; Wadsworth & Hibel, 2013). Overall, the overarching argument is that the bilateral influence of family and work has a positive effect for the individual (Jaga et al., 2013).

To give a well-rounded understanding of WLB, the following section will explore the dimensions such as time balance, involvement balance, satisfaction balance, work to life personal gains and work to personal life strains.

2.5.3 Dimensions of Work-life balance

WLB has a number of different dimensions which include time balance, involvement balance, satisfaction balance, work to personal life strains, personal life to work strains, work to personal life gains, and personal life to work gains (Khoury; 2021; Loudon, 2017; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017; Shabir et al., 2021).

Time balance refers to the allocation of time fairly between family and work (Greenhaus et al., 2020). Time balance revolves around the time allocated by the organisation to perform the job satisfactorily inside and outside the office. It factors in how employees manage family and work time as they traverse between the two

domains (Choudhury, 2015). Employees with long working hours struggle to balance family needs and work and find it difficult to also commit time to sport, leisure and friends (Chaudhury, 2015; Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). Job flexibility is the root solution for work-time balance (Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). Instinctively, individuals tend to restore balance when perceiving disparity in life and this is done through a contextually incorporation of psychological time in WLB (Adkins & Premeaux, 2019). Organisations must be proactive in facilitating this to avoid absenteeism and turnover (Adkins & Premeaux, 2019; Hussain & Endut, 2018; Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019).

Involvement balance is focused on employees' full psychological engagement in work and other activities that happen outside the work environment. It allows equivalent psychological commitment to both family and job contributions, which can be seen as balancing of time in mixed roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003). The avoidance of propagation of time in one dimension over the other is key for Barber et al. (2016), who highlight that the role that an individual plays in the society can have a negative or positive spill-over to work and vice versa. An individual must optimally participate in decision-making for both formal and informal events with minimal conflict between roles, and once this is achieved, it determines choices made and how life is constructed (Chaudhury, 2015; Kossek et al., 2011). Involvement of employees in key decision-making processes makes them valued, needed and considered (Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). Employee involvement encourages equal participation in both family and work activities, which results in commitment to the organisation (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). Flexibility in the schedules of both work and life will make it possible for an individual to experience a better balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Satisfaction balance is concerned with the employee's level of gratification with work and other life activities (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Provision of flexi-schedules, sports facilities, childcare facilities, job sharing, and bonuses contribute immensely to employee satisfaction and WLB, thereby enhancing commitment towards the organisation (Chaudhury, 2015; Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). This concurs with Greenhaus et al. (2003), who define satisfaction balance as the equal contentment or fulfilment with work commitment and family engagements. However, it has been noted that the individual who spends more time with family than at work, tends to experience a resounding satisfaction with life (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Work to personal life gains emphasizes that gains and strains that an employee experiences can determine the experience of work and personal life. An organisation with supportive peers and management can go a long way in influencing positive outcomes from an individual (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017). Nizam and Kam (2018) highlight the importance of gains or rewards and emphasize that organisations which practice fairness in rewarding employees minimize the attrition rate and maximise general levels of satisfaction and productivity. Organisations should prioritise a balance between work and life style such that leave policy, non-monetary rewards schemes, flexible schedules, freedom at work, mutual respect, and career advancement should be a norm to motivate the workforce (Nizam & Kam, 2018). Gains can be through employee involvement in decision-making, which increases voice of the subordinates and encourages leadership to pay attention and reward hard work accordingly (Mated et al., 2021).

Work to personal life strains emphasizes that mutual incompatibility between family and work domains result in inter-role conflict. Excessive commitment of time to one role will strain the other and eventually leads to work-family conflict (Nizam & Kam, 2018). The time involvement, work load, working conditions, and managerial support can determine the extent to which work interferes with personal life (Kahchh & Nagpur, 2014; Mathew & Panchanatham, 2011; Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017). In the modern-day world of work, the pressure exerted on an individual by work overload can be unprecedented such that seeking a life balance becomes a far-fetched dream (Khoury, 2021). Mathew and Panchanatham (2011) encourage redirecting of energy to recreation, leisure and social activities as a way of alleviating the strain of work to personal life. Work to personal life strains can also be determined by one's personality. This is supported by Blunch et al. (2020), who highlight that personality traits like extroversion, emotional stability and conscientiousness play a significant role in reducing life strains.

The following section highlights the objectives and anticipated outcomes of WLB from the employer's and employees' point of view.

2.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF WLB FOR THE ORGANISATION AND THE EMPLOYEE

The objectives of WLB for the employer seeks to stimulate economic growth through low attrition rate, reduced cost of hiring, promotion of employee engagement, increased productivity and profitability (Chandri & Manjunath, 2020; Konrad & Mangel, 2000). Organisations promote WLB initiatives with the primary focus on advancing the strategic position which responds to current and future labour market in a manner that creates a competitive advantage for the organisation (Kelliher et al., 2019). WLB is part of the organisation support founded in the social exchange theory with the aim of reinventing the employer-employee relationship and instil higher status in workers (Chandri & Manjunath, 2020). Such a contract is vital for the sustainability of the organisation, because striking a balance between professional and personal life has become a strategic move for organisations to survive in a highly competitive labour market (Chandri & Manjunath, 2020).

Organisations must approach employee needs with the understanding that the concept of personal and professional balance is completely different between millennials and generation Z, and research has shown that there is a need to innovate strategic WLB initiatives which cater for diverse workforce needs (Chandri & Manjunath, 2020). This has prompted the development of new and flexible ways of managing work through smart working, activity-based working, flexible working and agile working, with the aim of promoting WLB in the workplace (Gagnano et al., 2020). Although some employers may exhibit resistance towards accommodating employees' life activities such as hobbies, cultural activities and education, studies have shown that this may be costly in the long run and will even prompt resistance from some existing employees and stop top talent from joining the organisation (Kelliher et al., 2019).

For the employees, negative effects generated from failure to balance work and life lead to family-work-conflict or work-family-conflict, depending on the source of the imbalance (Naithani, 2010). Employees feel that there is a need for employers to be considerate of workers' family status, work status and other life commitments (Kelliher et al, 2019). Work-life balance seeks to empower employees to lead balanced, sustainable lives and promote family commitment (Gagnano et al., 2018;

Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). This assertion is reinforced by Naithani (2010) who highlights how the objectives of WLB should enhance work-home experiences, manage dual work-life responsibilities better, increase concentration, self-esteem, improved health and focusing at work. In other words, WLB seeks to promote optimal functioning of employees at work and in the life domain (Kulik et al., 2014). This is because WLB has been found to stimulate the psychological well-being of employees (Fotiadis et al., 2019; Haider et al., 2018).

Psychological well-being is a necessity because it has the potential of mediating the relationship between the employee's work and life satisfaction (Haider et al., 2018; Zheng et al., 2015). Redelinghuys and Rothman (2020) emphasise the need for wellness in South African schools and categorise the dimension of teachers' well-being as follows: 1) **social well-being** - this has to do the acceptance, coherence, actualisation, integration and contribution. It encompasses the extent to which one feels like part of the organisation and the societal structures; 2) **emotional well-being** - which is the positive affect and a show of job satisfaction through positive emotions; and 3) **psychological well-being** - which is the degree to which one can confidently express themselves through work, and it includes autonomy, relatedness, competence and meaningful work performance.

Ultimately, once work-life satisfaction is attained, it may lead to physical well-being (Gragnano et al., 2018). Studies have uncovered that employees who prioritise WLB experience healthier lives than those who do not (Fotiadis et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2015). However, age, level of education and working hours have been noted as key determinants of how one prioritises WLB and endeavours to lead a balanced and health life (Zheng et al., 2015). Employees who work towards psychological autonomy and control over their lives tend to attain WLB and better well-being (Fotiadis et al., 2019). Fotiadis et al. (2019) further allude that WLB allows employees to accomplish unique goals and freedom from taking coercive decisions, which promote less stress levels and well-being. Kelliher et al. (2019) and Zheng et al. (2015) echo the same sentiments and highlight how WLB reduces frequent medical appointments and demands for sick leave in organisations. Therefore, strategic design of WLB initiatives is essential and this should be coupled with respect and acceptance of the role WLB in employees' health (Fotiadis et al., 2019).

Planning, organising and setting limits can be adopted from work and employed in personal life settings to create a balanced work and life experience (Ma et al., 2021). People tend to compromise personal lives for work such that regardless of WLB policies, staff continues to report time pressure, work overload and anxiety, hence the need to create some form of balance (Cannizzo et al., 2019). However, the subjectivity of WLB renders it difficult for HR departments to determine a universal state that would satisfy everyone. Employees deal with different challenges which require different approaches in order to attain a balance (Shekhar, 2016). Child care, sabbaticals, job sharing, flexible scheduling, and telecommuting are amongst other non-financial benefits which could be employed by HR departments to improve WLB and job engagement (Shekhar, 2016).

The next section will focus on different career stages and how people at different stages establish themselves in their career lives. This is important for understanding why people at different life stages experience WLB differently (Adrian & Handayani, 2020).

2.7 PSYCHOLOGICAL CAREER STAGE AND RELATED LIFE EXPECTATIONS AS ANTECEDENTS TO WLB

Work-life balance is determined by multifarious antecedents at different age categories, therefore a one-size-fits-all approach is likely to fall short of employee expectations (Darcy et al., 2012). Individuals at different career stages struggle to attain WLB and strategies ascribed to each age category may be unique (Humphries et al., 2020). Coetzee et al., (2016) highlight three career life cycle stages relevant to this study as follows:

Table 2.1

Career Life Stage and Anticipated Work-life Roles

Early career stage (Early adulthood transition: 17-25/30 years)

- Establishing **family roles**
 - Becoming self-reliant
 - Developing competencies in the chosen field
 - Advancing studies (further education)
-

Early career life stage (First Adulthood/Midlife transition: 26/30-45 years)

- Managing quarter life-crisis
- Establishing WLB
- focusing on career maturity and thriving for self-efficacy in the work setting
- endeavouring to get motivation in unprecedented times

Mid-Career life stage (Middle Adulthood/Age of mastery/ late adulthood transition: 46-65 years)

- adjusting to changes in **family life**
- dealing with psychological polarities
- addressing mid-life crisis concerns

Note. A summary of career life stages and anticipated life roles. Adapted from *Career Counselling and Guidance in the Workplace: A Manual for Career Development Practitioners* (3rd ed.). Juta, by M. Coetzee, H. Roythorne-Jacobs, & C. Mensele, 2016. Copyright 2016 by Juta.

Work-life balance is not absolute, but rather dependent on the priority ascribed by the worker to different life and work demands. Younger employees who fall into category of single, single with children, childless couples, married and married with children, all have diverse, unique needs which vary in level of complexity (Gagnano et al., 2020). Millennials, Generation X, and Generation Y have a strong desire to attain a balance between work and life and prefer to actively participate in their children's lives (Loudon, 2017), whereas individuals in their late career life stage endeavour for short term goals, emotional stability and wellbeing (Gagnano et al., 2020). Each age group assesses the WLB initiatives taken by the employer differently and employees in the late career life stage are likely to balance their personal life and work better than younger ones but may not agree on the existence of flexible and equal WLB opportunities that are inclusive and tailored to address their career stage needs (Richert-Kaz`mierska & Stankiewicz, 2016). Research can still play a substantial role to overcome shortfalls for some employees' expectations with regard to demographics needs and the changes of WLB with age (Darcy et al., 2012).

The next section is a synopsis of some of the strategies employed in different organisations with the aim of promoting well-being through WLB.

2.8 ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING WELL-BEING THROUGH WORK-LIFE BALANCE

WLB presents employees with the opportunity to live happy, healthy and productive lives by mediating the relationship between job demands and well-being (Bataineh, 2019; Emre & Spiegeleare, 2021). When work and life demands are balanced, employees experience optimism, positive attitudes and psychological well-being (Sajid et al., 2018). Through WLB, employees experience harmony, which leads to psychological and physical wellness (Bataineh, 2019). South African organisations tend to introduce WLB initiatives which are in keeping with the norms of the society (Abe et al., 2016). Abe et al. (2016) further assert that the wellness programmes that promote WLB in the workplace are offered under the premise of four overarching theories, namely:

- **Institutional theory** which highlights how workplaces offer WLB initiatives that conform to societal norms;
- **Situational theory** which posits that organisations merely react to employee WLB needs as they arise;
- **Organisational adaptation theory** which promotes constant adaptation to the ever-changing wellness needs of the employees in order to cope with the dynamic WLB of different individuals; and
- **High commitment theory** which promotes empowerment of employees at all levels to take charge of their WLB needs.

Organisations have to formulate sound policies which assist in the retention of talented employees who help to create a competitive advantage in the complex and uncertain business world (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020). Different organisations have different approaches to wellness and WLB (Kelliher et al., 2019), but there must be a systematic approach to attract, develop, engage and retain talent (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020). Such initiatives will mitigate the high cost associated with the loss and replacement of top talent. Although implementing WLB-friendly policies or measures can be challenging, it should be noted that employees with well-managed personal lives are happy, productive and healthy, and tend to stay with the organisation for a long time (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020). Initiatives to balance work and life are an essential tool that can reduce the cost of

hiring, turnover, improve job satisfaction, productivity, and position the organisation as an employer of choice (Hossen et al., 2018).

The WLB initiatives that may be introduced by the organisations are three pronged, 1) flexible working programme designed to foster flexibility in the work approach in the form of compressed work week, telecommuting, supervisory support and flexitime, 2) family-friendly programmes such as childcare, paternal leave, maternal leave, time-off-in-lieu and elderly care, 3) health and wellness programmes which include access to the clinic, gymnasium and counselling (Abe et al., 2016; Gagnano et al., 2020; Maphanga, 2014). The diverse and complex nature of human beings demands a multifaceted approach to meet the unique WLB needs of every individual (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020). Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2020) further assert the merit of non-monetary WLB initiatives which have the potential to create an impression of care which yields benefits of attracting employee commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour and retention. Through WLB initiatives such as managerial and co-worker support, organisations can determine person-environment-fit with reference to work, group-fit and family; and it is important to realise that any sort of misfit may affect employee wellness and optimal functioning (Sajid et al., 2018).

The exploration of WLB presents an opportunity to envision a comprehensive interaction between personal life roles and work activities. Research has been attempting to comprehend WLB for numerous years (Kelliher et al., 2019). There are three overarching dimensions of WLB, namely: **organisational, societal and personal** balance (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017). An organisation that pays attention to these dimensions will create well-rounded employee support programmes, balanced workload and improved work satisfaction (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017; Shankar, 2017).

To achieve WLB, Putri and Amran (2021) recommend a 40-hour working week and eight hours of sleep before commencing a new day, and further explains how a 48-hour working week will lead to imbalance and neglect of crucial life commitments. Fagan et al. (2012) recommend a 36 to 48 hour working week with flexibility on start and finish time. This concurs with Khoury (2021), who highlights that a number of people rob themselves of sufficient rest and do not even realise that they are in a

state of imbalance until they burn out. Employees must realise that there is a connection between work and personal time and the roles directly affect each other (Khoury, 2021). Work and personal life are complementary in nature and the relationship necessitates the needs of both the employer and the employee to pull resource together so that WLB can be achieved (Picton, 2021). Differentiating work from life can be a false dichotomy because the two domains are interlinked rather than distinct (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). This poses a difficulty in attaining the actual balance but rather a matter of prioritising how to organise life and work schedules depending on one's circumstances (Gagnano et al., 2020; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). However, the issue of individual choices has been criticised for camouflaging employers and shifting the responsibility of WLB mainly to the employees (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). Whilst such a stance may empower individual employees to determine their own tailor-made balance, organisations must endeavour to induce regulatory frameworks and policies that promote well-being (Johari et al., 2018). Organisational policies should be accompanied by changes in work structure, schedules, culture and practices in order to promote autonomy (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). Workplace promotion of employee-friendly policies on WLB will go a long way to foster the connection between work and personal time (Chaudhuri et al., 2020). Globalisation and modernisation have both played a substantial role in promoting WLB policies in different organisations and this has undoubtedly increased employee retention in the highly competitive labour market (Khoury, 2021).

The following section focuses on African psychology, African beliefs and how they determine upholding of the psychological contract and promotion of WLB policies from the leadership in the workplace.

2.9 AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGY PROMOTING WLB

African psychological perspectives are grounded in Pan-African views that resonate with culture (Long, 2017). African culture is envisioned as the setting of the mind, ideas, customs and behaviours which separate one group from the other in the different context of countries and ethnic groups (multiplicity) (Grobler et al., 2019). Collectivism and the 'we conscious' paradigm are ascribed to Afrocentric philosophy,

grounded in the facets of Ubuntu (loyalty, sharing of ideas, community collectivism, care, harmony and hospitality), especially in South Africa (Grobler et al., 2019; Ratele et al., 2020). In Africa, Ubuntu is a set of traditional values that include compassion, caring, a communal bond, sharing, cooperation and obedience (Brubaker, 2013; Muller et al., 2017). Former president Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have both ascribed Ubuntu to treating others as human beings, in a brotherly fashion (Molose et al., 2018). Such considerations will foster the promotion of WLB in the workplace.

In African psychology, disconnect and independence of cosmic elements may be deemed undesirable and a threat, whilst holism is treasured and perceived at the centre of connectedness (Mkabela, 2005). Afrocentricity focuses on culture, centredness and primacy of the person (Long, 2017). The Afrocentric psychology puts emphasis on African people as subjects (Mkabela, 2005). Mkhize (2020) highlights how African psychology emphasizes the co-constitution of being, which lies in the maxim, “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”, meaning that there is no me without you (inclusive epistemology) and sociality of being (reciprocity). Although colonial effects and proliferation of Euro-American perspectives into African culture have diluted the original values of Africans (Cockley & Garba, 2018; Long, 2017; Mkabela, 2005, Nwoye, 2015), the people are set apart by valuing ancestry and spiritness (existence beyond material being), a belief that human beings are composed of different aspects (body, spirit, shadow) which can converse with each other (Mkhize, 2020). Communal wellbeing is promoted through the indigenous healing which originated in Africa (Edward, 2011). The spiritual healers connect with the ancestors to diagnose and prevent different illness by promoting holistic wellbeing known as *Ukuphilisa*, which is a reflection of community care and an extension of the gesture of *Ubuntu* (Edward, 2011). The knowledge of African healing and spirituality is passed in the family and community through oral tradition from a young age to adulthood (Knoetze, 2019).

Ubuntu plays a role in employees' capability to uphold psychological contract. African psychology influences employee expectations, commitment and upholding of the agreements entered into with the employer (Molose et al., 2018). The psychological contract was propounded by Dennis Rousseau who posits that both employers and employees have expectations which are not formally documented in

the signed contracts (Abudaqa et al., 2020). The employer expects the employee to be highly knowledgeable, skilled and fully committed to the organisation, whereas employees anticipate that if they perform satisfactorily well and surpass set expectations, the employer will reward them with other benefits not formally stated in the employment agreements (Abdelmoteleb, 2019; Abudaqa et al., 2020). An employee's culture will determine how one commits to meet the expectations of the employer (Molose et al., 2018). Such expectations are in keeping with the norm because any two parties in a formal professional agreement have greater outcome presuppositions for each other, solely based on the principle of communication and relationship (Abudaqa et al., 2020). Employers who follow up on the psychological contracts often promote well-being and positivity, which manifest into production and well-rounded WLB (Ahmad et al., 2018). This resonates with Muller et al. (2017), who state that in Africa, servant leaders are motivated by the spirit of Ubuntu to put their employees' interest first before their own, and this enhances positivity, productivity and wellness in the organisation. Molose et al. (2018) highlight how the power mechanisms in the organisations are influenced by Ubuntu and argue that this brings oneness and compassion which manifest into mutual commitment between management and employees.

The breach of psychological contract affects life through negative emotions, anger, attitude and unhealthy behaviours, which are detrimental to employees' well-being and WLB (Ahmad, et al., 2018). To uphold the psychological contract, employees usually sacrifice a lot of personal time and work very hard to please the employers, but unfortunately such commitment exerts pressure which manifest into a lack of time balance in terms of family commitments, personal advances and other life engagements (Abudaqa et al., 2020). This time balance is a devotion of time equally between family and work demands (Greenhaus et al., 2003). If the employers fail to reciprocate with the expected benefits, the workers become frustrated, which will start to affect job satisfaction and employee commitment (Abdelmoteleb, 2019). Abdelmoteleb (2019) further asserts that breaching of psychological contracts has the adverse effect of moderating the ability of employees to attain a balance between work and life satisfaction. For this reason, Abudaqa et al. (2020) propose policies which foster employee self-development by equivocally addressing life needs as a

way of mitigating inter-role conflict and giving propensity to WLB by upholding psychological contract in organisations.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter aimed at conceptualising WLB from literature. The subjective and complex nature of WLB was highlighted and initiatives for promoting optimal functioning and balancing of work-life were discussed. The literature objectives were addressed through critical integration of literature from different sources.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH ARTICLE

**THE BLACK AFRICAN EDUCATORS' WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A HERMENEUTIC
PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY**

"No one on his deathbed ever said, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office'. -

Paul Tsongas

CHAPTER 3: JOURNAL ARTICLE

(This chapter is compiled in line with SA Journal of Industrial Psychology (SAJIP) guidelines for a journal article and will be submitted to SAJIP for publication on acceptance of this dissertation)

Title of dissertation: The Black African educators' work-life balance: A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

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Orientation: African high school educators operate in a complex work environment that has the potential to induce negative work-life experiences. Work-life balance studies are essential for establishing a vantage position in promoting optimal functioning and productivity in the workplace.

Research Purpose: The objective of this study was to undertake an in-depth exploration of how Black African educators experience work-life balance in high schools with the aim of understanding their functioning and recommend ways to optimise their well-being.

Motivation of the study: Multifarious studies have been conducted on work-life balance, but in African high schools, this is still a novel concept. The African high

school educators continue to be subjected to demanding and stressful work environments with disciplinary issues, resource shortages and high work pressure. To optimise their experiences, work-life balance is necessary in the schools.

Research approach, design and method: To conduct this work-life balance inquiry, a qualitative study was employed from a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data through purposive sampling from eight African high school educators. Data analysis was done through Interpretive Phenomenological Inquiry (IPA).

Main findings: The findings of this study show that Black African educators experience Work-life balance (WLB) as both work-life conflict (WLC) and work-life enrichment (WLE) which sometimes leaves them confused. The mixed feelings of WLC and WLE culminate in poor work-life integration (WLI). The managerial and family support assists in alleviating work-life pressure in Black African educators. There is also evidence of positive transfer of resources between work and life although more can still be done to improve WLI. *Ubuntu* (communal virtues of love, care and humanity) and spirituality (belief in God and ancestors) have been identified as coping mechanisms that support Black African educators in their quest for WLB. Work-life enrichment may have resulted in psychological hardiness, which is evident in how the educators take control of their lives and turn daily stressors into positive outcomes.

Practical Implications: The outcomes of this research are relevant for formulating policies and strategies that will aid in optimising the work-life experiences of African high school educators.

Value add: This research adds value to the existing body of knowledge in the WLB studies. It has the potential to improve the policies within the public high schools in the African context. The primary focus of this study was to enhance the work-life experiences of Black African educators which may improve the quality of teaching and results obtained from public high schools.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession has been identified as one of the most challenging professions, yet minimum research has been explored to understand how work pressure is transferred to life amongst educators (Brough et al., 2020; Etteh et al., 2020; Rajani, 2020; Yang, 2020). This study focuses on Black African high school educators with specific reference to Black South African teachers born and raised in the pan-African environment, within the physical boundaries of the African continent and holding a citizenship of an African country (Igboin, 2021). The work-life challenges experienced by Black African educators are unique and need specific interventions (Etteh et al., 2020). The teaching profession in Africa has been identified as one of the careers susceptible to work distress (Rothmann & Redelinghuys, 2020). Teachers endure strenuous working conditions such that research has started to focus on how their wellbeing can be enhanced within schools (Adewusi, 2021; Rothmann & Redelinghuys, 2020). African educators in South African public schools are confronted with extra ordinary challenges which hinder the quality of education and life in general (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). These challenges include overcrowded classrooms that exceed the Department of Basic Education's maximum teacher-pupil ratio of 40:1, multi-grade teaching, shortage of learner-teacher support material, educator shortages, poor funding, electricity blackouts, water shortages, sanitation issues and indiscipline in some learners (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Moloantoa & Geyer, 2021). The educator shortages have resulted in overcrowding in the classrooms and excessive workloads for those teachers currently in service (Moloantoa & Geyer, 2021). Resource shortages in schools has led to some educators resorting to using of their own funds to provide learner-teacher support materials (Adewusi, 2021; Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Moloantoa & Geyer, 2021).

The above plethora of work-life challenges confronting modern day educator is worsened by lack of parental involvement in children's education, resulting in indiscipline which makes it almost impossible for teaching and learning to take place in African schools (Hayana et al., 2020). Educators have to constantly deal with teasing, verbal abuse, physical attacks and in some instances, it has prompted them to carry weapons to schools for personal protection (Adewusi, 2021; Hayana et al., 2020; Moloantoa & Geyer, 2021). On the one hand the most violent behaviour

amongst learners is reported in the classroom during teaching and learning time (Hayana et al., 2020). On the other hand, there is an ever-increasing burden of administrative duties which have to be performed by the educator before and after lesson delivery time. Work-life balance of educators has become highly compromised due to failure to cope with such mental, physical and emotional work challenges (Moloantoa & Geyer, 2021). All these challenges make WLB for the African educator a thought-provoking subject that needs to be supported with contemporary studies (Moloantoa & Geyer, 2021; Rothmann & Redelinghuys, 2020). Specifically, exploring working conditions and life experiences of Black African educators is essential for creating interventions that will optimise WLB in schools (Akar, 2018; Anisha & Melvin, 2020; Bauwens et al., 2020).

Work-life challenges have existed for a long time but in the African context, they are heightened by gender norms which continue to position females as responsible for household chores and family responsibilities (Bauwens et al., 2020; Etteh et al., 2020; Rajani, 2020). However, Africa has turned the corner in addressing gender inequalities yet in the teaching profession, teachers are still struggling to balance work and life roles successfully, leading to consistent feelings of exhaustion (Rajani, 2020). Failure to balance work and life has led to high teacher turnover in high schools (Ajayi & Olatunji, 2019). A number of studies echo the same sentiment by highlighting work-stress, withdrawal behaviour, ethical violations and resignations as some of the unfortunate outcomes for educators experiencing WLC (Cannizzo et al., 2019; Makola et al., 2015; Rajani, 2020).

The Black African educators' WLB challenges have been worsened by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kanagasabapathy & Arunkumar, 2020). Educators are grappling for solutions that will avert the COVID-19 challenges and facilitation of an environment conducive for WLB (Alonge & Osigiobare, 2020). Studies are calling for Sub-Saharan schools to adopt modern pedagogics, telecommuting, job sharing, and compressed work weeks as a way of responding to COVID-19 and enhancing WLB (Alonge & Osigiobare, 2020). However, contrary findings have shown that digital teaching and learning can lead to blurry boundaries and work-life encroachment, which negatively affect high school educators' ability to juggle work and life needs (Bauwens et al., 2020).

There is a need to empirically explore the gap in African knowledge on how educators born in the primacy of the African continent and culture experience WLB within their work context. The challenges of WLB in Black African educators in the education field give impetus to explore “how do African educators experience WLB in a high school context?” Exploring this research question will generate scientific data on the interventions that may be put in place to promote Black African educators’ WLB.

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Studies have shown that WLB is subjective in nature and continuously changes depending on the individual circumstances (Abioro et al., 2018; Agalya & Manickavasagam, 2019; Loudon, 2017). The teaching industry has been marked with pressing workloads which constantly demands time and attention, yet very limited research has been done with regard to Black African educators’ WLB (Bauwens et al., 2020; Da Silva & Fischer, 2020). Exploring the WLB of African high school educators will add insights on how to optimise their workspace hence the primary objective of this study was: To explore the WLB of African high school educators by pursuing the research question: “How do Black African educators experience WLB in a high school context?”

The gap in knowledge drives the need for empirical research in the Black African educators’ WLB. This population is essential for bringing experiences, myths and philosophies from African people’s perspective (Chinakonam, 2016; Mkabela, 2005) to the fore.

The outcomes of this study are anticipated to add value to the understanding how Black African educators experience WLB in a high school context, and how their experience can be enhanced for increased well-being and optimal functioning. This study will add insight to the school management on how to optimise work and life experiences of educators in a manner that promotes a balance and well-being within the high school context. It is anticipated that through this study, the Human Resource departments may also formulate work-life policies best suited for an African high school context.

The following section is a detailed discussion of literature on the African educators' WLB. Thereafter the research approach, methods, and presentation and discussion of results will follow. Finally, the practical implications, limitations and recommendations will conclude this chapter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-life balance generally refers to the distribution of time and attention between work and life demands, and it is found on the premise of promoting a fulfilling, healthy and productive life for all employees (Chaudhuri et al., 2020; Soni & Bakhru, 2019). The multiplicity of WLB definitions drive contradictions on how the concept is perceived, as some authors brandish work as bad whilst others view it as necessary and an essential part of life (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Loudon, 2017). Differentiating work from life has been criticised as a false dichotomy that attempts to portray one as bad and the other as good, yet the two domains are complimentary and necessary for survival (Gagnano et al., 2020; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). There is a consensus that employees take a strain from stringent workloads which impede the ability to balance work-life demands (Abioro et al., 2018; Agalya & Manickavasagam, 2019; Schnettler et al., 2021; Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Soni & Bakhru, 2019). Although there is this consensus, WLB has been defined in numerous ways over the years (Bello & Tanko, 2020).

Work-life balance is a state of satisfaction induced from creating parity in time allocation between work, personal, family, religious and recreational activities (Khoury, 2021). Hja`lmosdo`ttir and Bjarnado`ttir (2020) define WLB as one's ability to manage the strain induced from work-life roles. It can be envisaged as aptness to meet role-related expectations in a distinct fashion (Gagnano et al., 2020; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). Meeting role-related work-life expectations eliminates stress and leads to personal mastery (Khoury, 2021). Researchers argue that every individual appraises WLB differently depending on how they navigate between work-life roles (Loudon, 2017; Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). The factors that make people happy or satisfied both at work and home are unique and diverse (Wolor et al., 2020). The unique individual psychological preferences bring about the subjectivity of WLB (Herman & Larouche, 2021). The subjective work-life interface has become a

multidiscipline phenomenon drawing interest from fields such as IOP and occupational health (Loudon, 2017). To fully explore the subjective experience of WLB, research should explore demographics such as marital status, age, gender and individual life commitments separately in order to understand how each person ascribes importance between different chores such as looking after the sick, caregiving and gym (Coetzee et al., 2016; Kossek et al., 2010, Loudon, 2017). It is vital to gravitate to a work environment in which every individual endeavour to perform optimally in both work and life domains to mitigate emotional, psychological or physical impairment that may arise from distress (Khoury, 2021; Lingard & Turner, 2021; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017). Drawing on subjective experiences is therefore valuable in generating an understanding about WLB in any specific context. The contention that the heterogeneity of the workforce challenges the feasibility of introducing meaningful work-life initiatives in the workplace is fairly sound; however, multifarious recommendations and initiatives must still be implemented to accommodate the diverse workforce with subjective needs (Gagnano et al., 2020). In the current volatile and complex business environment, organisations need to enhance their competitiveness through employee-friendly WLB policies and initiatives to yield mutually beneficial returns, such as a healthy workforce, reduced attrition rate, and the production of quality outputs (Chaudhuri, 2020; Johari et al., 2018; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018, Shabir et al., 2021).

Theories of Work-Life Balance

The Role Theory

The simultaneous occurrence of multiple and conflicting demands on employees' time and attention may result in one domain taking precedence over the other (Alonge & Osigiobare, 2020). The behaviour of an employee in response to the role is imposed by the organisation in line with the key performance (Iddagoda et al., 2021). One role may elicit emotions that impede optimal functioning in the other role (Ayadurai, 2018). The importance ascribed to a role determines the strength of emotions generated by an individual when there is interference between roles (Ayadurai, 2018). An employee with optimal WLB tends to exhibit a better understanding of life and work role expectations (Iddagoda et al., 2021). The assistance rendered by the organisation and the boundaries imposed on external

institutions such as family and society by the employer determines whether work/life role expectations are met or not (Iddagoda et al., 2021).

Conflict Theory

The conflicting and incompatible work-life demands may interfere with one's ability to satisfy the needs of both roles as they compete for limited resources such as time and energy from an individual. Overload from one domain coerces an individual to make a difficult choice of satisfying one domain at the expense of the other (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). Although work and life are interconnected, it is inevitable that at some point they become incompatible due to antagonistic demands (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). Consequent to role and conflict theory perspectives on WLB, various related constructs have become relevant to the study of the work-life interface.

Work-life conflict (WLC) is derived from the role and conflict theories, focusing on how employees manage multiple roles that compete for scarce time and energy, which may lead to failure to satisfy expectations in one or both domains (Jain & Nair, 2013; Loudon, 2017). Negative work domains such as poor managerial support, work overload, job stress, reduced work-life support and role ambiguity are predictors of WFC, whereas a lack of spousal and societal support may be the source of life-work conflict (LWC) (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2010; Tummers & Bronkhorst, 2014). **Work-family enrichment** (WFE) and **family-work enrichment** (FWE) are derived from one's ability to integrate work-family roles and transfer the resources in a mutually beneficial manner to enhance overall well-being and functionality (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Jaga et al., 2013). The benefits acquired from work are used to better personal life experiences and the enjoyment derived from life is transferred to motivate performance at work (Delina & Prabhakara Raya, 2016; Khoury, 2021; Mathew & Panchanatham, 2010; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017).

The Spill-over Theory

Skills, behaviours, attitudes and emotions are developed through work and transferred to life and vice versa (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). Spill-over occurs when personal life affects work or vice versa (Alonge & Osigiobare, 2020). The transfer of skills, attitudes and emotions can either be positive or negative (Lakshmypriya & Rama-Krishna, 2016; Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). Negative

spill-over is associated with transcendence of dissatisfaction from one role to the other and transfer of negative feelings/emotions, fatigue and stress induced from parental responsibilities, childcare, and long working hours, whereas positive spill-over is generated when pleasant emotions and accomplishments from one domain radiate positively and enhance the other (AlHazemi, & Ali, 2016; Ayadurai, 2018). Work and personal life are envisioned as one, dependent entity (Alonge & Osijobare, 2020; Ayadurai, 2018; Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014).

Consequent WLB constructs of spill-over theory include the **work interference with personal life** (WIPL), which happens when work demands encroach and make it impossible to perform comfortably in personal activities (Khoury, 2021). This may be a result of work overload which demands time and energy to a point exceeding an individual's capacity to deliver adequately in family activities (Munjal et al., 2015). The **personal life interference with work** (PLIW) occurs when family expectations/responsibilities demand too much time and energy, thereby making it impossible to function in the work role (Munjal et al., 2015).

Dimensions of Work-life Balance

Dimensions of WLB relevant to this study are time balance, involvement balance, satisfaction balance, work-to-personal life strains, personal life-to-work strains, work-to-personal life gains, personal life-to-work gains (Khoury; 2021; Loudon, 2017; Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017; Shabir et al., 2021). *Time balance* alludes to the ability to apportion time in a manner that fulfils both work and family commitments (Greenhaus & Callalan, 2020). Organisations must be mindful of the time allocated for employees to perform their duties whilst individuals are also encouraged to manage the time spent between work and family in a fashion that encourages fulfilment of obligations from both roles (Chaudhury, 2015; Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). *Involvement balance* is concerned with the extent of employees' psychological and physical engagement in work and family activities. Full participation in work-life roles is achieved through flexible and equivalent psychological commitment to work and personal life (Greenhaus et al., 2003). *Satisfaction balance* is about an individual's contentment with the level of engagement in work-life domains (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Organisational policies that promote initiatives such as family responsibility leave, sabbaticals, flexi-work

schedules and wellness programmes have been found to bring some level of gratification in employees (Chaudhury, 2015; Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). *Work-to-personal life gains* are concerned with the benefits derived from work and how fair the reward process is perceived by the employee (Nizam & Kam, 2018). Some studies have recognised that the gains derived from work may lead to biased allocation of time in a manner that jeopardises family commitments, thereby resulting in work-family conflict (Blunch et al., 2020; Maged et al., 2021; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017).

African perspectives on psychology and employee well-being

African psychology is based on indigenous, situated knowledge and the African culture which values viewpoints of native people in a pluralistic perspective that accepts realities in multicultural context and history of the African people (Makhubela, 2016, Malherbe & Ratele, 2021; Mkhize, 2020; Ratele, 2017). The Black African educator is inextricably tied to and a product of this African culture. The two overarching facets in the African culture are spirituality and collectivism (Bujuwoye & Moletsane-Kekae, 2018).

In the African spiritual world view, there are visible and invisible forces that determine the fortunes and misfortunes that befall the human race (Nwoye, 2017). The underlying assumptions for most African people are that the planet earth is seen as a dwelling place for the living but other than that, there is a spiritual world, not visible to the naked eye, in which the ancestors, witches and magicians are at play (Nwoye, 2017). The invisible evil forces in the spirit realm have hostile intentions to inflict harm, misfortunes, illness or even cause death, whereas the ancestors are there to safeguard and protect the people (Asekhauno & Asia, 2021; Nwoye, 2017). Sickness is associated with witchcraft and well-being is largely ascribed to positive spirituality, through which people can access the spiritual world through dreams and spirit mediums and consult on issues of their well-being (Asekhauno & Asia, 2021; Ephirim-Donkor, 2021; Nwoye, 2017). Most Africans believe that life and career success or failure is spiritually determined; therefore, one has to look after their spiritual well-being to succeed in both work and life domains (Bujuwoye & Moletsane-Kekae, 2018).

Africans believe in collectivism which is a life orientation that fosters communal peace and harmony, a sense of belonging, communal ownership and care (Grobler et al., 2019). The emphasis is on the confluence of being, an inclusive epistemology and social reciprocity, commonly known as *Ubuntu* (Cockley & Garba, 2018; Long, 2017; Mkabela, 2005, Nwoye, 2017). Ubuntu has been found to play a substantial role in promoting well-being in the workplace through looking after each other's interests and well-being (Muller et al., 2017).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Approach

The **hermeneutic phenomenological (HP) approach** was employed with the aim of exploring participants' subjective work-life experiences to uncover the WLB of African high school educators (Chauhan et al., 2020; Riahi et al., 2020). In keeping with Suddick et al. (2020), the HP approach helps with understanding of how participants experience the research phenomenon (in this case, participants' WLB) and to find ways of improving it from an organisational perspective. The HP approach has its strength in its ontological exploration of meaning which makes it ideal to inquire the unknown directly from the subjective experiences of the participants (Kafle, 2011). Hermeneutic phenomenology resonates with the **subjectivist epistemology** underlying the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm and was vital in generating meaning in this inquiry. Subjectivism puts emphasis on knowledge as it emerges from one's interaction and experience with the environment. This resonates with interpretivism which highlights that meaning is formulated and contextualised by human beings within a specific environment (Braun & Clarke, 2013, Chauhan et al., 2020; Suddick, et al., 2020). The subjective WLB experiences of participants were gathered and analysed to construct and understanding of the Black African educator's WLB.

Research Strategy

The subjective nature of WLB makes qualitative research a well-suited method of inquiry to understand unique individual experiences of participants (Loudon, 2017; Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). Virtual semi-structured interviews were conducted with

eight educators identified from a South African public high school in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) using purposive sampling. All participants' data were collected and then analysed. Saturation was reached after having analysed the eight participant's transcription, when themes constructed from the narratives of participants became repetitive and no new insights could be generated from the interviews. The data was interpreted through Interpretive Phenomenological Inquiry (IPA).

Research Method

This section focuses on the research setting, the entrée and establishment of the role of the researcher, sampling procedure, methods of data collection, data recording, strategies employed to guarantee data quality, analysis of data and the reporting style.

Research Setting

This research was conducted when teachers were at school, which is the natural work-life context relevant to this study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The school is situated in urban KwaZulu-Natal and it enrolls learners from Grades 8 up to 12. The institution has a total of 50 educators, of which 52 percent are black, 28 percent Indian, 10 percent white and 10 percent coloured. The female educators constitute 66 percent and males make up 34 percent of the staff complement. The school has a total enrolment of 1 042 pupils. A total of 43 of the 1 042 learners stay in boarding facilities within the school. The school admits predominantly black children, who constitute more than 90 percent of the learner population. The setting of this study is confronted by challenges similar or closely related to those faced by other African high schools which are characterised by high teacher-pupil ratio of 50-80 learners per class and scarcity of resources (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Etehe et al., 2020; Makola et al., 2015, Spaul & Van der Berg, 2020).

Entrée and Establishing Researcher Role

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant UNISA ethics committee (ERC Reference#: 2021_CEMS/IOP_000) as well as from the provincial ethics committee of the Department of Basic Education in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) (Ref: 2/4/8/7052). Permission to conduct research at the school was requested in writing and was granted by the principal. The school appointed the Acting Deputy Principal as

gatekeeper who assisted with sourcing e-mail addresses of potential participants falling within the inclusion criteria. The gatekeeper obtained consent from volunteer participants to share their contact details with me. Thereafter I emailed to each participant the information sheet detailing the nature and purpose of the study, researcher's role, the objectives of the study and the intention to use a COVID-19 friendly approach using Microsoft Teams. Every participant signed the information sheet two weeks prior to the commencement of data collection and emailed it back to me. For confidentiality purposes I have kept the signed information sheets and consent forms in a password protected file and the hard copies in a lockable safe only accessible to me. The data generated from the interviews is securely stored for five years in a password-encrypted file, password-protected computer and the reflexive diary is locked in my access code-protected personal safe. The data is strictly confidential, therefore only my supervisors and I have access to the information.

Research Sampling

I employed purposive non-probability sampling to select information-rich participants with regard to the research phenomenon (Gentles et al., 2015). The selection of participants was therefore based on subjective judgement rather than random sampling (Ramsook, 2018; Sharma, 2017). This approach relied on selecting participants according to specific predefined criteria to ensure that they were capable of adding value to the research objective (Etikan & Bala, 2017; Sharma, 2017). This is in keeping with Gentles et al. (2015), who cite that purposive non-probability sampling is ideal in HP inquiry because only a small sample of people with desired traits or characteristics is selected to participate in the study. The criteria for sampling were culture, employment status, age and work experience. Black African educators employed on a full-time basis, in the 25 to 65 age group and with at least three years' teaching experience were sampled for data gathering purposes. This sample represents African educators on the basis that Black African is formally categorised in the South African census (Vahed, 2021) and being African encapsulates citizenship of a nation within the boundaries of the African continent and also sharing feelings, culture, experiences and even location of birth (Igboin, 2021). Although the Afrocentric approach may not be limited by race (Shai, 2020), focusing on Black Africans in this study is essential for understanding the African

culture in the education sector (Shockley & Frederick, 2010; Venter et al., 2020). Moreover, the school predominantly features a Black African culture due to 90 percent of the pupil population and 52% of the teacher population being Black Africans. Therefore, this sample was appropriate for obtaining African experiences of participants who understand the predominant school culture. The participants included males and females who are either single, single parents or married. A total of 36 out of 50 educators adhered to the sample criteria. Data saturation was achieved at the eighth participant when no new themes were emerging. The profiles of the participants are detailed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

Profile of the participants

Race	Gender	Age	Work experience	Employment status	Position	Marital status	No. of children
Black African	Male	40	10 years	Full time	Educator	Single	None
Black African	Female	26	3,5 years	Full time	Educator	Single	1
Black African	Female	25	3 years	Full time	Educator	Single	None
Black African	Female	48	23 years	Full time	Educator	Married	4
Black African	Female	32	6 years	Full time	Educator	Married	2
Black African	Female	50	22 years	Full time	Educator	Married	3
Black African	Male	41	11 years	Full time	Educator	Single	1
Black African	Male	36	10 years	Full time	Educator	Married	2

Note. This table shows the profile of the participants interviewed for data collection in this study.

Data Collection

Definitions, characteristics, concepts and descriptions of subjective experiences of participants on WLB were generated from non-statistical data production (Franklin, 2012). Befitting an HP inquiry, in-depth semi-structured virtual interviews were used (Crowther et al., 2015). In keeping with O'Connor and Madge (2003), who recognise an increase in internet-linked, contemporary technology such as virtual interviews, Microsoft Teams was used as a platform to conduct interviews and maintain social distancing with participants in the current era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first

step prioritised during data collection was to build rapport with the participants by assuring confidentiality, encouraging open dialogue and being a good listener (McGrath et al., 2019).

To evoke narratives of WLB encounters from the participants, an interview guide was designed, piloted on two voluntary educators and consequently adjusted to improve the quality of questions (Majid et al., 2017). Following McGrath et al. (2019), the interview guide ultimately comprised 15 questions aimed at encouraging open dialogue based on “what” and “how” of the educators’ WLB (see Annexure A). The interviews also included probing questions for clarification and elaboration on participants’ responses to generate enhanced meaning and understanding (Roulston & Choi, 2018).

Recording of Data

I recorded the narratives from the participants using MS Teams. Written permission to record the interviews via MS Teams was obtained from all participants two weeks prior to the commencement of data collection. At the beginning of each interview, participants were once again verbally reminded that the interview would be recorded. As suggested by Potgieter and Barnard (2010), I made field notes based on narratives from participants and questions that came to light during interviews. I did the transcription of digital recordings soon after the conclusion of the interviews in line with Potgieter and Barnard (2010) who stated that the transcriptions of data from recordings should take place as soon as possible after interviews to pave way for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed through Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a congruent HP analytic method. The overarching premise of IPA is to afford participants a voice and thereafter attempt to make sense of their narratives through interpretive analysis applied to a specific context (Charlick et al., 2016; Loudon, 2017). Verbatim quotations from the participants ground the findings, giving them a voice and harnessing direct subjective experiences of the educators’ WLB. I followed the IPA steps suggested by Smith and Osborn (2015). First, I adopted an idiographic approach analysing one transcript in detail before proceeding to the others. I engaged in an *interpretative relationship* and in-depth analysis with every script, to

uncover concealed meaning by reading the script repeatedly, noting points of emphasis, similarities, paraphrasing, integrating themes and commenting about language use (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Next, emerging themes were recorded and theoretical integrations were made based on the content of each transcript, connecting and clustering them into ordinate and superordinate themes (Smith & Osborn, 2015). I then used the themes generated from the first transcript to set precedence for subsequent analysis of other seven transcripts (Smith & Osborn, 2015). In the process I continued to discern recurrent patterns and additional emerging themes across transcripts. The superordinate themes from the first transcript were used as the point of confluence for convergent concepts across the transcripts (Alase, 2017). I finally compiled a figure of themes summing up four superordinate themes from the analysis of eight transcripts. Lastly, I concluded by writing up and integrated meaning deduced from the participants' experiences.

As recommended by Suddick et al. (2020), I employed retrospective reflexivity throughout the data analysis process by continuously examining and questioning my own judgements and beliefs of educators' WLB based on previous experiences. Reflexivity assisted me to understand concealed meaning, develop an informed theoretical disposition and adopt flexibility in data analysis (Barrett et al., 2020; Creswell, 2014; Palaganas et al., 2017; Ritchie et al., 2013). In applying such retrospective reflexivity, I also followed principles of the hermeneutic circle which is described as continuous alertness and circular movement between one's own fore-conceptions and participants' narratives to generate new meaning and fresh understanding (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Suddick et al., 2020). To understand the text hermeneutically, I analysed the parts of each transcript with reference to the whole, repeatedly moving between different narratives, fusing my opinions of WLB by comparing them to participants' narratives, focusing on divergent cases, similar narratives, drawing links across subordinate themes and developed high order superordinate themes (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004; Suddick et al., 2020).

Strategies to ensure Data Quality and Integrity

Trustworthiness was ensured by concentrating on credibility, dependability, authenticity, rigour and transferability (Terre Blanche et al., 2007). Credibility and dependability were enforced by applying recommendations made by Potgieter and

Barnard (2010) through an audit trail of data by digitally recording interviews and undertaking verbatim transcriptions of raw data. Member checking was done to improve credibility and authenticity of tentative outcomes by e-mailing every participant soon after data analysis to check the authenticity and truthfulness of the reflection of their narratives. Participants e-mailed me feedback which agreed that the transcripts were a true reflection of their narratives (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). Dependability was upheld by continuing with data collection until new insights could not be generated from the interviews, indicating a saturated understanding of the text in relation to the research phenomenon. Authenticity was further attained by grounding interpretations in multiple verbatim extracts from each participant's words. Rigour was sought through constant reflexivity as I examined my own judgements, beliefs and making sure that they do not bias this study. Transferability is the extent to which research findings may be applied to other settings and or populations (Baumgart et al., 2021). For transferability purposes, I gave an in-depth description of the research setting, demographics of the sample and careful selection of participants so that the findings can be inferred to contexts which share similar characteristics (Baumgart et al., 2021; Daniel, 2019; Marais, 2013).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research findings stem from integrating the generated data with role, conflict and spill-over, theories, as well as relevant WLB literature. Through IPA, four superordinate themes were constructed, each conceptualised upon three to four subordinate themes. Figure 3.1 depicts the subordinate themes that informed the formulation of superordinate themes:

Figure 3.1

Research Themes



Note. Superordinate and subordinate themes emerging from this study.

Theme 1: Work-personal life encroachment (WPLE)

Participants indicated how some of their duties have been spilling over to their family time after normal working hours, during weekends and even holidays. The narratives show that there is a dislike of how work is invading on the personal life space and time. Participant one (P1) highlighted the challenges of work that encroach on personal time and her experience of this:

I do not like working from home at all, but it is part of teaching. I have to mark, plan and sometimes I do this at home and create teaching aids to use the next day. Yes, I have some resources but they are not enough, therefore I must be creative. It interferes with my personal life because I have children and siblings. One cannot even enjoy life due to work commitments. I also have to help with household chores, which is impossible due to the quantity of work that I still have to complete when I get home. Sometimes the number of learners you deal with in a class makes it impossible to finish all the marking at school so circumstance force me to take it home.

This narrative concurs with the experience of P2 who mentions how work-family conflict clashes with cultural expectations and results in failure to optimally perform in line with role expectations:

Working from home does not have a specific time. Though I must say this, working from home interferes with my personal life. It interferes with family, house chores and in our culture, we must play a role by assisting with work when we are at home. As a woman I am expected to play certain roles at home and unfortunately, I sometimes fail due to work commitments that follow me after school.

To show the extent of work encroachment on personal life, P3 highlighted the plight of work spilling over to family time and the resultant effect of how she must extend her working hours and limit her rest or sleep time. Such an adjustment of time may be a cause of interest as it may be an indication of work spill-over which has a potential of causing burnout induced by extended working hours and limited sleep.

I have two children including a 3-year old. It is difficult to work with kids like that. I have to work more when the child is sleeping. Sometimes I work late at night. If I work whilst children are still awake it compromises the quality of work that I produce due to disruptions. I cannot ignore my kids when I get home because they also need to spend quality time with me. I feel that sometimes I end up failing to give them their time. That's why I end up working late when they are asleep.

In addition to the narratives from the participants above, the response from P6, reflects that WLB is more than just balancing work-family responsibilities but also includes personal commitments. P6 stated the following:

I need my personal time to unwind and reflect. Sometimes to be just quiet and chill in silence. I call it “me time”. I need time to hang out with friends, go to the gym, church and even leisure. Sometimes I find it challenging because teaching job, as you know, follows you home after work, weekends and even holidays. As they say, a teacher is on duty 24/7 but unfortunately, we also need life. Sometimes I end up failing to focus on anything.

The same sentiments of how work encroaches into personal lifestyle are also echoed by P8 who stated that: “I have always visited the gym three times per week since my time at the university. Surprisingly, I am now struggling to find time for gym even once a week because of work”.

Educators seem to experience spill-over from work to personal life which results in negative WLB. Educators are failing to commit fully to family responsibilities because of work which demands their personal time. It also appears that work-personal life encroachment (WPLE) may be affecting participants differently. Some express how working from home affects family time and household chores, whilst other participants show concern on how work is encroaching on their gym, leisure and personal recuperation time. Overall intake from this is that the functioning of African high school educators in the life domain is compromised by the work, leading to the experience of poor WLB. Functioning in one role may have detrimental effects on the other and may even affect well-being (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Schnettler et al., 2021) as aptly summarised in the words of P6: “Sometimes I end up failing to focus on anything”.

Theme 2: Communal and spiritual support resources enable coping with and alleviates work-life challenges

By exploring the WLB of Black African educators, I uncovered that participants constantly appraise the support received from people in their lives. In viewing the role that support plays in WLB, participants expressed how managers, spouses, other family members and colleagues help them to optimise work-life experiences. However, whilst they all substantially recognise the role that support plays in

mitigating strain, there is a mutual sentiment that suggests the need for more interventions to be put in place to help them balance work and life better. P3 highlighted her experience with the support from the school principal as follows:

The principal is supportive. She motivates us and encourages mental health all the time. We share what is not okay in our personal lives with each other. She encourages us to learn and I get time to write exams. I wish it could be more but as teachers we cannot leave learners for too long. I am happy that I get something.

Other participants felt that the Department of Basic Education does not do much to encourage WLB, but the support from the principal is highly appreciated and it motivates participants to remain committed to their work even when some are about to lose hope. These sentiments are echoed by P5:

The department does not do much, but we have support from the principal. She tries to help us when we are in need. Those who are studying get time to prepare for exams. We cannot complain. One cannot get everything.

Participant six (P6) similarly noted the principal's support as essential in coping with WLB challenges:

Support from the principal is good. She makes me feel re-energised when I am about to throw in the towel. She meets us regularly and I feel free to open up to her. She is a good listener and that makes me feel valued. I think she tries her level best.

In this context the findings show that support from the school principal may be helping to reduce the work-life-conflict (WLC) experienced by the educators. Educators feel motivated, re-energised and valued by a leader who shows interest in their WLB. Although the narratives show an aspiration for more support, it can be said that the school principal shows concern for educators' WLB within the school.

The participants also stated how they feel about other organisational support interventions. The school psychologist gives employees support that encourages mental well-being. According to the outcome of this study, the psychological service in the school is recognised as an essential and integral mechanism for dealing with WLB. Some educators get to a point of emotional breakdown and the psychologist

supports them to relieve WLC. P1 mentioned this in the following narrative: “Yes, we have a psychologist at school. When I am dealing with work-life issues I reach out, she is always available to assist. Sometimes teachers cry due to problems with learners, therefore the support from the psychologist is good”.

P7 expressed appreciation of the assistance received from the psychologist by highlighting how it has helped him to maintain sanity when dealing with work-life pressure:

Sometimes life throws challenges at you and dealing with problems and going to work at the same time can be a challenge, especially when both situations demand time from you. I utilise the services of our School Psychologist just to regain sanity in situations like that.

P8 also highlighted the importance of the support of the school psychologist:

It helps me to deal with aspects of my work that I cannot handle. Sometimes indiscipline and bullying from the learners is due to poor parental involvement. I have to handle this in the classroom, but it adds pressure on me. I depend on the psychologist to assist with most of these challenges.

It can be argued that the psychologist assists with relieving educators’ work-life pressure through counselling. Educators experience work challenges which may be beyond their scope and sometimes solicit the psychologist’s support to help deal with these challenges. Such a support may improve the WLB of teachers in cases that may affect psychological well-being in the school.

Assistance with some of the duties from the administrative staff is noted as welcome aid that helps to reduce work pressure. This might help teachers to focus on other work-life issues. One participant, P7, expressed how getting help from such organs of the school makes her feel like part of a system that looks after each other’s interests. He had the following to say:

I am happy with the help that we get from our admin staff. We all get assistance with capturing of marks. It makes me feel like I am in one big supportive family that understands how we need each other’s support to make work pleasant.

The other participants stated the following in appreciation for administrative staff support: “Admin staff helps with capturing marks. This is important because it leaves room to focus on other aspects of work because teaching has a lot of papers work and filing” (P2). The support from school administrative staff helps to relieve work pressure on educators and allows them to focus on other work-life issues. In this school the support from administrative staff makes the educators’ work-life experiences better as it reduces the work spill-over to personal commitments by creating time to complete more job tasks during normal working hours.

Participants’ narratives point to different aspects of support that they are valuing. Some educators attach more value to support from home as a means of dealing with WLB. The subjective importance of support can be noticed in different responses. The importance of spousal support was also highlighted by P3 who stated the following:

For me my pillar of support is my husband. When I am home I spend most of the time with my husband. He is my pillar of strength. I share everything with him and he supports and motivates me to keep going even with what affects my work. He assists me with some of the chores and looking after the children when he is not busy. He makes my work-family balance better. Without him I would struggle.

Family and spousal assistance with childcare and household chores goes a long way toward optimising how one experiences a balance between work and life. The gesture of showing care and appreciation for a partner’s work by giving a listening ear makes people feel loved, appreciated and supported in both life and work domains.

The contention that work is spilling over to personal life is very valid in this context. However, it is worth noting that the support from the organisation and home seem to cushion the extent of work encroachment on personal life and may potentially enhance the WLB experiences of Black African educators. Even though in some instances it can be noted that participants strive for more, there is general recognition of how different kinds of support are making a difference in optimising their experiences both at work and at home. The difficulty exists in satisfying every individual employee’s needs because each person prioritises work and life domains

differently depending on their individual needs and perception of WLB. This brings about the subjectivity of WLB.

Apart from the support as a coping mechanism, **spirituality and religion** have also been identified as sources of support and coping mechanisms for participants. Based on the generated data, it can be deduced that the participants' religion plays a part in their subjective WLB experiences. The narratives from the participants show how religion or spirituality can be a source of support to reach WLB aspirations or at least to persevere in the face of daunting work-life challenges. Participants highlighted how they depend on God to help them with strength to balance work and life, and protect their families as follows: "I pray every day for God's inspiration and protection around my work and family. You know without God we are nothing" (P1). In support of this P7 stated, "When I am struggling I pray for motivation to keep going. I believe that it is part of the calling, because teaching is a calling". P4 also added, "Because of my faith, there is usually very little not to look forward to. I am a Christian, I seek motivation from the pastor. I watch Pastor ... for inspiration". P8 has faith in ancestral intervention in work and life:

I am an African and I strongly believe in my culture. In difficult times I pray to our ancestors to protect and give me inspiration to keep going. Even the work that I do is only a success because of their intervention. When it becomes too much, the guidance will come from those beyond me. For me to keep going I always touch base with my ancestors to clear the way for me both at work and with my family.

These narratives exhibited belief in superior powers above human interventions. The participants experience WLC and portray doubt of coping without God's intervention. There is a belief in the spiritual side that has the supernatural powers to solve every work-life challenge. This reduces the dependence on human powers and focuses on spiritually-inspired work-life solutions. The educators' work-life experiences may be partly inspired by anticipated spiritual rewards that will be exchanged for fulfilling a calling to serve the community. From a WLB perspective there is an understanding that life is more than just looking after the children or other family members. People have a spiritual side which shapes their paradigm perspective. Spirituality and religion have been long identified as a very strong part of African community with a

belief that wellness at work and in life can be determined by supernatural powers (Asekhauno & Asia, 2021; Nwoye, 2017). The Black African educator experiences WLB as work-life (WL) conflict and WL interference/spill-over. Having support resources to cope with work pressures helps them to cope with dealing with their WL conflict and spill-over from work to life. In terms of an African perspective, the reliance on support and the relief it brings could be related to the spiritual (religion and ancestry) and communal (Ubuntu) value.

Theme 3: Work-life enrichment

The findings from the study reflect WLE fostered by spirituality and communal values (the need to give back and improve the community). Participants celebrate their effort in giving back to the community, developing people and finding meaning of work through that. Despite the work overload and work-life interference that P6 experiences, he seems to feel enriched by the fact that he contributes to his community through the work he does:

I love developing young boys and girls through education. I want to see black people who are educated to uplift our own communities. As you know, we come from a disadvantaged past, if I cannot do something for my own people who is going to do it for us. I want to give back to the community where I come from. It gives me satisfaction and a sense of purpose.

Colonisation of Africa had undeniable effects on its people and how they resonate with yesteryears of oppression and discrimination. Black people were marginalised and, in some instances, excluded from socio-economic activities during the colonial era. Nowadays, those who make it in life want to help others break the cycle of poverty through their work. From a WLB point of view, P2 specifically reflected on how developing the youth through work does not only motivate to commit time and energy to her job but also derive life satisfaction from performing a philanthropic act. Her life is enriched by benefits derived from work which inspires reason to do more, makes her feel happier, esteemed and accomplished in life even though the demands may be confusing at times:

I was inspired by my teacher who was passionate about developing the learners. Ever since I have always wanted to change people's life through imparting knowledge to young children especially at high school level. The

teacher made me whom I am today and I felt that I can also mould others to become better people. I find developing the learners much more fulfilling than money and it gives me motivation to work up the next day, go back to work, be happy and satisfied in life. Yes I agree that the money also helps me to live a better life and look after my family. As humans we need money to survive and my job helps me to do exactly that. Though sometimes the work-life demands can be overwhelming and confusing, but yes, I am ok.

This is a commonly held belief amongst the participants and the WLB relief brought by developing others as a meaningful endeavour is noted by P3 as well:

I like to empower young people. The only thing I could do was to actively get into teaching stream and become a teacher myself so that I can develop our own people. It makes me sleep peacefully and happy when I know that my work is making a difference in other people's life. Even though my work can be demanding and sometimes I do not know what to do, but the satisfaction that I get when I do good for the learners goes beyond me. I celebrate with my learners, family and colleagues. I even plan with my family on how I can make use of my time better so that I keep achieving at work and giving them attention as well. We are all happy when my learners pass and everyone in the family is happy to give input on how I can be successful both at work and home

The way in which the Black African educator copes with work overload is rooted in reflections about the meaning they derive from serving their community and in these reflections, they seem to, in fact, feel enriched by their work commitments. Their WLE therefore seems related to their strong Ubuntu, communal and spiritual values. The communal spirit and commitment to give back potentially reduce their WLC and promotes WLE because they find meaning and purpose through their work. This argument resonates with Sarwat et al. (2021) who argue that occurrences at work may positively influence the life role and finding meaning in life because of work will enrich an individual with positive attitudes towards self and family. This also comes from P8 who states:

When the learners in our schools do well it brings positive feelings. All the feelings of work pressure are transferred into joy. That what makes me love

my work. It gives me the opportunity to develop my community. Everyone in the community is happy including our families. So as a teacher I plan a lot, therefore I also use the same skills to plan around my life and find ways of doing better both at work and in life.

From a WLB perspective, this experience may be an indication of WLE. Positive emotions and planning skills from work are transferred to create satisfaction in life. In Africa, Ubuntu is a set of traditional values that include compassion, caring, communal bond, sharing, cooperation and obedience (Brubaker, 2013; Muller et al., 2017). The findings concur with Muller et al. (2017), as evident in this case and point; educators are inspired by their work which gives opportunity to show care and compassion towards the community. The Afrocentrism's emphasis is largely on spiritual purity, humanity and relationships rather than on material wealth (Aju & Beddewela, 2019). The instinct of African spirituality and Ubuntu is largely ascribed to reciprocity, dignity, humanity, compassion and building the community (Kumah-Abiwu, 2016; Nussbaum, 2009).

Theme 4: A shift in WLB because of the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 has changed our paradigm perspective of the world of work. The traditional perspective of work has been redefined and there is increased use of technology due to the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution (Bauwens et al., 2020). Apart from the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution during the pandemic, people are taking measures to keep themselves safe from the virus (Gordy et al., 2021). There is uncertainty and fear of contracting and transmitting the COVID-19 virus. P5 highlighted the following: "I am afraid to mix with learners in overcrowded classrooms. I am scared to contract COVID-19. If I get the virus at my age, I may not make it". The same sentiments are echoed in the narratives of P1: "I am afraid, but one still has to work in order to survive. I fear contracting the virus and possibly infecting my family as well."

Participating in the work role is exposing the educators to a high risk of contracting the virus and this has resulted in negative work experiences. Educators may be conflicted between going to work and staying safe in their homes because of the fear of COVID-19 virus. There is a need to earn income through work but concomitantly a

risk of contracting the virus and possibly passing it to family. P3 had the following to say:

I am anxious, but I just need to be positive. I fear that I might get COVID-19 virus at work and take it to my family. I guess it has made me more cautious with cleanliness. I really get anxious because of the babies. It is affecting my mental functioning because I am always wary about my family health.

It comes across as if educators experience anxiety and fear of contracting the COVID-19 virus and this may be affecting their psychological well-being negatively. There is an increase in psychological demands because of COVID-19 in this specific work context. This may have elicited a psychological or emotional work to life spill-over. Negative emotions from fear of contracting COVID-19 at work may be transferring to life thereby influencing the psychological wellbeing of participants, which may be detrimental to optimal functioning in both work and life.

The workload and responsibilities of educators have significantly shifted since the COVID-19 pandemic started. Educators are now expected to start work earlier than before as they are responsible for upholding COVID-19 protocols within the school. The following narrative gives a snippet of these changes: “The screening duties are taking a toll on us. It is hectic because we must arrive at work earlier than usual and follow specific procedures in order to sanitize every learner and also keep ourselves safe”. (P2). The same sentiments are echoed by P1: “I have to get to work earlier than normal to assist learners with maintaining social distancing, screening and sanitizing. This is a new challenge because I sometimes leave home without eating”. The work is demanding more time than before, resulting in some educators neglecting their physiological needs.

Whilst psychological and physical well-being is threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic, narratives from the other participants show that the social distancing measures and other COVID-19 protocols applied in the school have actually reduced teaching periods. Some of the participants stated the following:

Plateauing or alternating the attendance of different grades has significantly reduced the contact time with learners. Grades 8 to 11 alternate days for attendance but Grade 12 learners attend on daily basis. This is leaving a lot of

time for planning and marking tests. We no longer mark other work but tests only (P6).

We have been encouraged to reduce marking with the exception of tests. This usually leaves time and room to deal with other issues because usually marking follows me home (P5).

Usually books are marked regularly but nowadays we are not encouraged to mark learners' books due to COVID-19. This reduces work pressure a great deal. I maintain social distancing by interact with learners from at least 1 metre apart doing one on ones (P4).

Based on the responses above, it might be argued that the educators are now balancing their work and life better because there is less marking and rotational attendance which allows educators some breathing space. However, the work-life encroachment still exists because screening of learners has to happen early, which increases the working hours of the educators. The trade-offs between reduced workload and waking up early may perhaps mitigate the extent to which WLC is experienced.

Apart from fear of the pandemic and a shift in duty loads, COVID-19 has resulted in the introduction of new technology in most schools. Some educators seem to spend a lot of time trying to learn the “new normal” of doing things in the time of COVID-19. P5 had this to say:

I used different platforms of technology like Zoom and WhatsApp. It is demanding. I spend a lot of time on lesson preparation and trying to understand how to use the technology. I am no longer young but I have to learn to use technology and it is very difficult. You know us the old people were not exposed to these machines growing up, therefore it is not easy at all. Learning new technology takes most of time. I no longer have time for other things I used to do during my free time like going to church on Sundays or just catching up with my neighbours when I am at home.

The narrative above concurs with the sentiments expressed by P7 who states that:

I spend a lot of time trying to find new ways of teaching through platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp. It is hard to check if every learner is

understanding. Even my online lesson preparation is different from that of contact teaching. I need to be more creative because there was no training given to us, which demands more personal time.

This narrative may be an indication of how work is slowly increasing its encroachment on the lives of Black African educators as they dedicate extra time to learn the use of technology. Work-life conflict is induced from committing personal time to learn new ways of working and may cause a strain on educators' well-being and even impede them from participating in religion, family and community activities which are held in high esteem in the African context (Bauwens et al., 2020; Corbera et al., 2020).

DISCUSSION

This section deals with the interpretation of the outcomes from the IPA of participants' narratives highlighted above. The practical implications of this study, limitations, recommendations and conclusions will also be discussed.

The primary aim of this study was to explore how Black African educators experience WLB in high school context. A synopsis of findings entails the following themes:

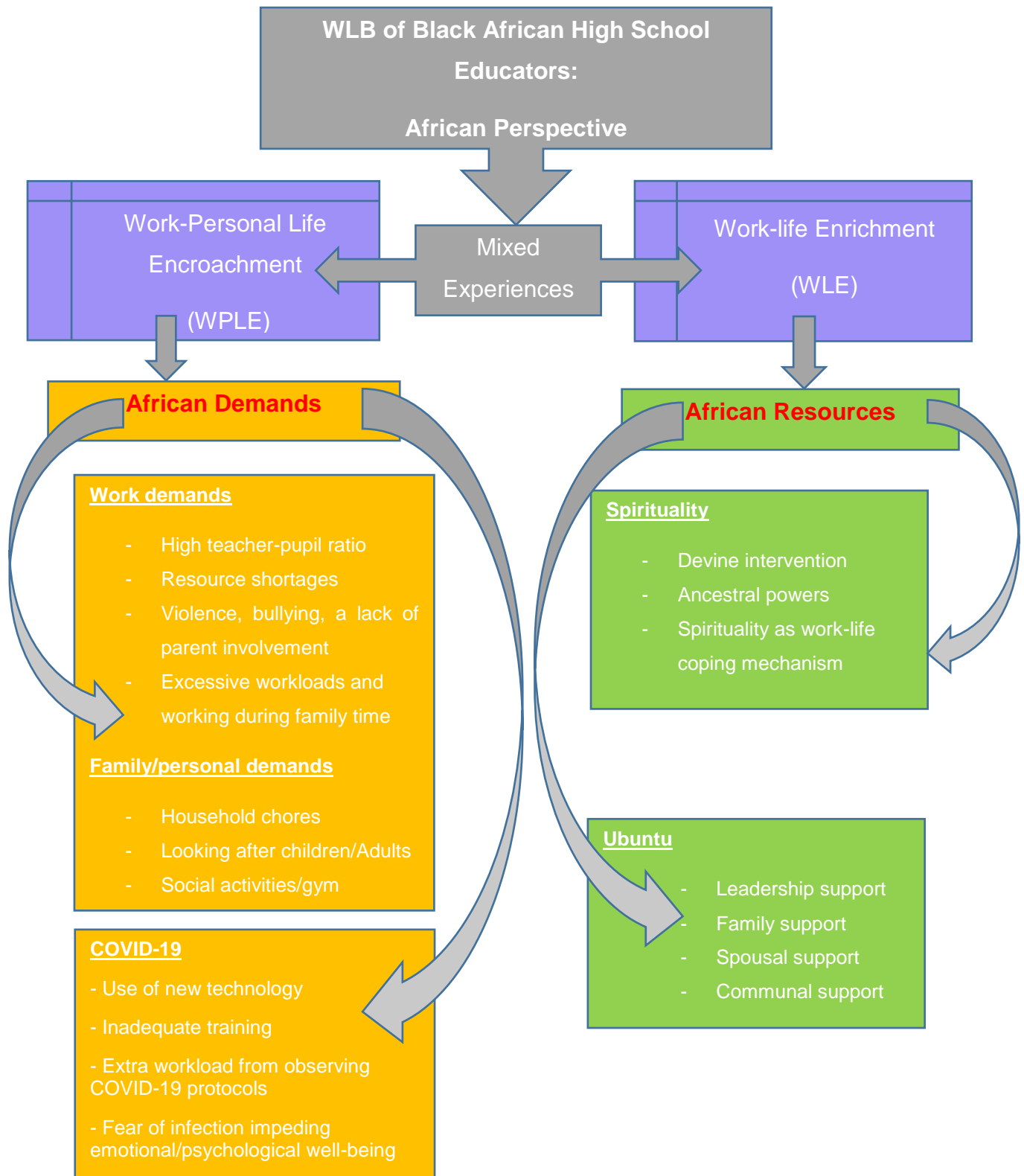
- Work-personal life encroachment/WLC.
- Communal and spiritual support resources enable coping with and alleviate WLB challenges.
- Work-life enrichment.
- A shift in WLB of educators because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In keeping with Wapfer et al. (2018), the findings of this study propose that there are blurry boundaries between work and life which require proper maintenance of WLI in order to enhance satisfaction and happiness of Black African high school educators. Some elements of work are complimentary and enriching to life whilst others may be demanding and conflicting roles which compete for the same resources, such as energy, time and attention from an individual. By combining the themes above, I concluded that the experiences of Black African high school educators depict a picture manifesting confusion from WLE and WLC, thereby impeding the ability to

integrate work and life optimally. Although Black African educators find meaning through their work, there may be poor transfer of resources such as time, energy and attention between the two domains. One has to balance the allocation of resources subjectively between life and work depending on personal preference, but the end goal should be to optimally integrate work as part of life and move from the traditional view that envision work as bad and life as good. Figure 3.2 shows how Black African high school educators have mixed feelings of WLC and WLE which may cause confusion in their WLB experiences. The confusion may mean that WLB to Black African high school educators could be a subjective and dynamic construct which is constantly being sought-after due to poor work-life integration. The excessive workloads which are exacerbated by COVID-19, tends to interfere with African high school educators' family and personal commitments resulting in work and life being envisioned as two separate entities instead of integral domains. However, even though there may be poor work-life integration in Black African high school educators, there are African resources which cushion their WLB experiences. Spirituality and Ubuntu are two African resources which inspire them to keep going at work and in life.

Figure 3.2

Summary of Work-life Balance in Black African high school Educators



Note. Author's construct showing the African demands and African resources that play a part in Black African high school educators' WLB.

The African work-life demands portray a picture whereby Black African high school educators find themselves trying to manoeuvre between work and family with divided time, energy and attention. Although the findings depict different perceptions of work-life experiences amongst the participants, there is mutual evidence showing that participants seem to be experiencing challenges balancing work with childcare, and household chores which form part of the culturally rooted family expectations in the African context. This concurs with Bozzon et al. (2017), who highlight how poor boundary management might make it challenging to attain WLB. In some instances participants find it challenging to perform household chores and work around children to the extent that they end up working very late at night. The multiple and conflicting work-life demands make it difficult for most participants to manage or maintain a satisfactory balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Rumangkit & Zuriana, 2019). The coercive demands of work may contradict the communal expectations of African societal norms (Kulik et al., 2014; Soni & Bakhru, 2019). This might end up eliciting a biased response whereby some participants find themselves compromised, inadequate and culturally inappropriate due to failure to equally participate in both work and life roles.

There seem to be a concern about work pressure which results in lack of personal time to relax, rest, reflect on life or participate in health lifestyle activities, such as going to the gym. In this instance it can be noted that work is compromising the ability to participate and enjoy a preferred lifestyle. There may be a **negative spillover** elicited from work intrusion on the preferred lifestyle of participants. The time and energy demands confronting participants may be detrimental to their well-being and optimal functionality in both spheres of work and life. The encroachment of restrictive work demands on personal life hinder functionality and productivity negatively (Schnettler et al., 2021). Etteh et al. (2020) express concern over the educators' workload which is neither conducive for effective teaching and learning nor the promotion of WLB.

The African resources which could be utilised by Black African high school educators are evident in the findings of this study. Participants are aware of the Employee Assistance Programmes offered by the school. The support by the school psychologist is appreciated and there is evidence that it has helped them to deal with work-life stressors satisfactorily. Rothmann and Redelinghuys (2020) highlight the problem of psychological challenges due to work pressure amongst educators and also note that there is bullying in African high schools. The availability of the psychologist in the school may have gone a long way in supporting participants to solve some of these work challenges. Other support interventions within the school are also appreciated. The participants value the school principal's support and it may have motivated them to remain productive and uphold their work ethics. The principal's leadership style may be in tandem with Molose et al. (2018) who expresses how **Ubuntu** in the African context influences the power mechanisms in the organisations, thereby bringing oneness and compassion which manifest into mutual commitment between management and employees. This also resonates with Muller et al. (2017), who highlight how servant leaders are motivated by the spirit of Ubuntu to put their employees' interest first before their own and this enhances positivity, productivity and wellness in the organisation. The participants are showing signs of being positively influenced by the humanness shown by their leader, and it seems to be inspiring them to work hard for the greater good of all stakeholders, whilst at the same time attempting to attain WLB for optimal functioning.

Other support initiatives that are helping participants to attain a well-rounded WLB are the support from the family and the spouse. Participants show that they are able to navigate WLB better when the family members understand their challenges and offer a helping hand with childcare and household chores. Participants seem to struggle to balance work and life due to cultural expectations in the African society. Participants may be exhibiting some degree of strain due to the failure to balance work which encroaches on their lives. Evidence suggests that there may be minimum support from both life and work on how to manage the border between the two dimensions. This may be attributed to conflicting role expectations at specific times, especially after school hours. On the other hand, the subjectivity of WLB comes to the fore when looking at the challenges that confront different participants. Some participants highlight challenges with navigating work with life style activities,

such as going to the gym or finding relaxation time after school or during weekends. Once again work tends to encroach on personal time, hindering participants' ability to focus on life matters. This may be an indication of the need to explore measures to create sustainable borders between work and life in order to promote optimal functioning in both dimensions.

Spirituality plays a major role in Black African educators' WLB. There is a strong subscription to the notion that the work and life of human beings need intervention of the supernatural powers and one cannot determine their fate. The participants indicated how their religion or spirituality is assisting with instilling hope and promoting functionality in both work and life domains. There is a sense of dependence on divine interventions as a shield of protection against work-life challenges. This paradigm may be an indication of participants' belief that supersedes human work-life interventions. There is a perception that no one can solve challenges they have without God's or ancestors' intervention. This belief appears to inspire participants to endeavour through the work-life challenges with the faith that their reward comes from above. Participants may have surrendered their work-life problems for spiritual intervention and remain confident that solutions will be inspired from the spirit realm.

The Black African educators seem to find meaning and purpose to persevere in both work and life from their seemingly strong spirituality. Based on the view of some participants, spirituality seems to influence every facet of life and survival. The transcendent power of spirituality is recognised as a source of guidance to the pathway of meaning-making and purposeful life beyond one's control or influence of other human beings. Spirit, being a power devoid of physical form or harm, is seen as a force that conquers every aspect of human challenges in the quest for survival. Spirituality seems to give some Black African educators sense of purpose, meaning and ability to live by values that are instrumental in decision-making, even in difficult movements. Such beliefs help some Black African educators to keep going with the faith that there is always a higher power to clear the way ahead of them.

Although all the participants in this study prefer to reduce the interference of work on personal lives, it is notable that there is a strong sense of dedication to serve the community, career identity and commitment to work. The participants are motivated

by the success of their learners which induces emotions of happiness and satisfaction with work. These pleasant emotions are then transferred to life, where achievement and happiness from work is shared with families. In return families will then support educators to achieve more at work without neglecting responsibilities at home. The work skills such as planning are transferred to life and used to strategise measures to balance work and family time. The proceeds from work are also used to better the standards of living of the family. The transfer of positive emotions and resources from one domain to the other manifests as WLE perspective to WLB.

The philosophy of the **Ubuntu** aphorism: “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” seems to play a substantial role in motivating the Black African educators’ WLE in this study. This is ascribed to the participants’ values of reciprocity, dignity, humanity, compassion and building the community rather than on material wealth (Aju & Beddewela, 2019; Kumah-Abiwu, 2016; Nussbaum, 2009). Ubuntu can be seen at play in managers, families and community members who extend a helping hand to assist educators with WLB issues. This study also found that a strong sense of Ubuntu in Black African educators creates deeper meaning induced from commitment to uplift the youth, regardless of the challenges experienced from work and life. The educators envision their careers as the only way to change and or unchain the community from the past colonial influences, stereotypes and discriminations that disadvantaged the black people. This finding echoes Kumah-Abiwu (2016), who highlights how the Africans resonate the effects of colonialism on their poor economic development and is also supported by Molose et al. (2018), who express how Ubuntu is shaped by the history of Africa which ultimately promotes communal bond, reciprocity, compassion for developing others and commitment.

In this study it is evident that educators experience both WLC and WLE, therefore the challenge is to manage the balance between the work overload and the life, which can cause confusion in the person experiencing it. The work spill-over to life is manifesting into WLC, which compromises the educators’ ability to enjoy life, but at the same time satisfaction derived by serving the community through work is manifest into WLE, which makes both work and life pleasant and meaningful. The confusion may be an indication that there is poor integration of work-life experiences which are multifarious in nature and ranging from duties within the school setting, working from home, family time, social events, leisure, religious commitments, gym

and many other activities that happen outside the confines of the home and work setting. The work and life should be envisioned as one rather than distinct domains (Pitre et al., 2017). Perhaps contradicting WLC and WLE experiences are the reason why fewer than half of educators find it difficult to say whether or not they are experiencing WLB (Rajani, 2020).

The dedication to serve the community may have contributed to **psychological hardiness** in the participants. This is manifested in the manner in which they maintain positivity in their jobs, resilient to persevere through the challenges and in control of their lives. The study shows a strong sense of purpose, beliefs, and attitudes to take control of life regardless of the challenges encountered at work and in life. All participants in this study show a strong desire to develop into stronger, resilient people who endeavour to attain WLB. This is aligned to Fotiadis et al. (2019), who argue that individuals who strive for positive psychological autonomy and control over their lives tend to experience a well-rounded WLB.

COVID-19 has changed the manner in which educators operate to a very large extent. The need to promote social distancing has resulted in educators interacting with some learners virtually. Participants seem to be concerned with digital migration and the use of technology at the school because of time spent trying to learn how to use technology in and outside the classroom, thereby compromising their family time. Some Black African educators are concerned about their slow pace of learning new technological skills and may be worried that this may not only force them to work extended hours but also affect their well-being.

The adjustment of working time due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been mentioned by almost all the participants. There seems to be a concern about the time one has to arrive at work in order to cater for sanitization of learners and maintaining social distancing at the school. Participants have to wake up very early in order to arrive at the school on time to keep COVID-19 protocols in check and some have expressed how they are continuously feeling tired because of increased duty allocation. Participants are afraid of contracting the virus and infecting their families, whilst some fear losing their lives due to COVID-19. The fear may be affecting their optimal functioning in a way that has the potential of disrupting productivity. This calls for urgent interventions as some may end up deciding to preserve their lives and opt to

resign. From a WLB perspective, employees cannot be fully engaged in the face of uncertainty and fear, and this may lead to other stress-related health issues which affect both work and personal well-being.

In conclusion, the WLC/imbalance happened as a result of work-life interference due to job tasks, familial/cultural role expectations and lifestyle activities that simultaneously demand time and attention from the participants after normal working hours. This evidently causes role conflict due to the one-sided and coercive nature of work as a major impediment to a fulfilling lifestyle (work-role salience) (Loudon, 2017). The educators' job seems to be steering the participants' attention more towards work at the expense of life. On the other hand, COVID-19 has exacerbated the WLC because keeping up with consistent technological advancement is an additional pressure that requires educators to learn new virtual ways of engaging with learners in the time that would have been invested in family/personal activities. However, the culture-specific resources embedded in the Afrocentric identity (spirituality and Ubuntu), may potentially act as WLB resources that potentially buffer the negative work-life spill-over. The same applies to family and managerial support which has proved to be of significant assistance on reducing work-life pressure. The support resource, such as family, enhances WLE because it speaks to the deeply embedded Afrocentric value of Ubuntu in the participants and gives a sense of meaning and purpose in Black African educators.

Practical Implications

While there is substantial contemporary literature on the subjective nature of WLB, limited attention has been given to the WLB of educators in the African context, let alone during these unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies have not fully explored the extent of subjectivity of WLB in educators. The unique challenges experienced by educators in the African context and the lack of gender egalitarianism in the family setting are cause of concern (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014) and require additional focussed research. Multiple and polarised roles may affect educators' ability to advance in both work and life roles.

Support interventions in high schools should be targeting or structured around strengthening the resilience resources of Black African educators namely Ubuntu and spirituality. This will strengthen the resolve of Black African educators in seeing

their communities develop through their work whilst at the same time paying attention to personal and family needs in a sustainable manner. The school management should be wary of the need for educator progression in both work and life. Bridgman et al. (2019) highlight how humans endeavour to reach higher echelons of needs once the lower level objectives have been satisfied. This applies to the need for living a fulfilling life and for social belonging once work objectives have been satisfied. Schools should tailor both group and individual-based work-life initiatives in order to cater for the diverse and unique needs of employees. Schools may need to arrange work-life workshops that train educators on self-compassion, prioritising health, learning to say 'no', and investing in relationships. Educators have different WLB needs hence the need for multifaceted WLB initiatives tailored to cater for diverse situations. High schools may need to initiate work-life support programmes, such as childcare facilities, gyms, cash in lieu, flexible leave policies, training managers to help educators deal with WLB issues and engage in community awareness WLB programmes. The school counsellors and psychologists have always been of instrumental psychological and emotional support to educators, and COVID-19 pandemic just confirmed the importance thereof in difficult times. Formulation of work-family integration initiatives such as employee-family coaching might encourage time and involvement balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Promotion of involvement balance helps employees to derive pleasure and fulfilment from both work and life (Abioro et al., 2018).

Whilst having fully engaged educators and producing good quality pass rates may be the main focus for the school management, it is essential to understand that employees also need to balance their work with family time and failure to achieve that may lead to WLC and compromised job performance (Greenhaus & Callalan, 2020). Managerial support remains a big motivator for employees to balance their work and lives. Whilst the school principal's role in promoting educators' WLB is dully noted, the support of immediate supervisors is also very important. Head of Departments work directly with educators, hence the need to develop their people management and work scheduling skills in a way that promotes WLB of subordinates. It may also be beneficial for the family and community to keep supporting educators with other responsibilities that demand time after work with a view to relieve psychological pressure and encourage healthy lives.

This study suggests that psychological hardiness is developed as a consequence of WLE experienced through meaningful work in Black African high school educators. Future studies are recommended to explore this area further.

Limitations and Recommendations

The outcomes of this study are not transferrable to another work setting but relevant to current context and in situations where research may replicate this inquiry in various organisations. The size of the sample of participants, gender, ethnicity, age, marital status and work experience within a restricted institution make it challenging to generalise or transfer the outcomes of this inquiry to other work settings. The homogeneous race that constituted the entire sample of this inquiry limits the findings from being generalised to the entire educators' labour force in South Africa. Bias may have been manifested from the fact that the interviewer worked in high schools for a lengthy period of time. Such potential bias was mitigated by availing the results of this study for peer review.

As recommendations for future research, similar studies involving participants from other racial backgrounds within the same context would be beneficial for holistic and in-depth comprehension of Black African high school educators' WLB needs. In addition, similar research in other work contexts will ameliorate our comprehension of subjective WLB amongst individuals and help in propagation of policies that are in keeping with the dynamic world of work. Finally, this study highlights Ubuntu and spirituality as central to Black African high school educators' WLB, therefore future research in this regard is encouraged. A PhD study exploring the role of Ubuntu and spirituality on work-life integration could lead to much more poignant Afrocentric interventions which help to improve experiences of Black African educators.

CONCLUSION

Work-life balance is important for the optimal functioning of employees. The biggest challenge is that WLB is a subjective experience which is experienced differently from one person to the other (Barber et al., 2016). Research needs to continuously inquire the best way of optimising employees' WLB needs (Iqbal et al., 2017; Rajani, 2020). As an attempt to achieve this, the primary objective of this study was to

explore the WLB experiences of Black African high school educators. To attain this, a HP inquiry was employed, using a semi-structured interview and Interpretive Phenomenological data analysis.

The outcomes of this study uncovered that the Black African high school educators sacrifice a lot of personal time for work at the expense of life. This results in WLC which affects their functionality in both life and work. However, although work is spilling over to personal life, educators also experience WLE by deriving meaning from giving back to the community and transferring resources between the two domains. The concomitant WLC and WLE tends to manifest in confused WLB experiences to Black African High school educators. However, the spirituality and Ubuntu of Black African educators tend to reduce experiences of WLC and enhance WLE. Although I neither personally agree with nor believe in ancestors, the African educators' beliefs in God and ancestors make them depend on spiritual intervention for WLB and give meaning and purpose to keep going against all odds. Ubuntu has been duly noted in African high schools, participants' families and communities. The support that Black African high school educators receive from their leaders, spouses, families and community go a long way to alleviate work-life pressure.

The findings reflect that the WLE and specifically the African rooted resources of Ubuntu and African spirituality, has led to psychological hardening of participants resulting in resilience, a strong sense of continuance and perseverance through the difficult situations. Ultimately, the findings highlight the need for an individually tailored approach which is sensitive to cater for unique employee work-life expectations.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarises the findings, conclusions, limitations and implications in relation to the research objective. The Black African high school educators' WLB was a focal point due to the unique work-life pressure experienced in South African schools. This inquiry was centred on Black African educators born and raised within the primacy of African culture, who are also citizens of an African country. A hermeneutic phenomenological (HP) methodology was employed based on the interpretive-constructivist paradigm which assisted in answering the research question: "How do Black African educators experience WLB in a high school context?" Hermeneutic Phenomenological methodology enabled me to successfully undertake a scientific and in-depth interpretation of phenomenological WLB experiences of Black African high school educators. Data analysis was done through Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which is congruent HP analytic method, and this made it possible to afford participants a voice by using verbatim quotations in order to harness direct subjective experiences of the educators' WLB. The outcomes of this inquiry showed that Black African high school educators experience WLB as WLC and WLE which sometimes leave them confused. The existence of WLC is evident in their experiences of African demands identified as work and life pressure but this seems to be reduced by African resources such as Ubuntu and spirituality. A relativist ontological position assumed was most suited for uncovering socially constructed WLB meaning of Black African high school educators whilst the subjectivist epistemological position was necessary for exploring the subjectivity of experiences of each participant.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

The primary aim of this study was to explore the Black African high school educators' work-life balance (WLB) experiences. The following conclusion is based on the literature review and empirical research findings uncovered by this inquiry.

4.1.1 Conclusions based on the literature review

The literature review was focused on defining and discussing the constructs related to WLB. It was also centred on analysing educators' WLB experiences based on previous research and explain the African psychology perspective. The literature objectives of this study were to:

- To conceptualise WLB from literature.
- To describe the role of WLB in the work context.
- To explain the role of WLB in well-being.
- To explore the role that African psychology plays in WLB.

Literature defined WLB as subjective in nature and concerned with distribution of attention, time and energy between work and life domains (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). Chaudhuri et al. (2020) found that WLB is motivated by the will to lead a healthy and productive life. Work-life balance has shifted from the traditional view which separated work from life in a manner that perceived one domain as bad and the other as good (Arenofsky, 2017; Kelliher et al., 2019). The modern view envisions work and life as integral domains in which one is part of the other (work part of life) (Khoury, 2021). Work-life balance has been found to be essential for physical and mental well-being through promotion of optimal management of work and life demands in both males and females (Bjarnadóttir, 2020). Studies found that managing work and life optimally should bring achievement and happiness by reducing conflict through integration of the two domains (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Khoury, 2021; Sirgy & Lee, 2020; Soni & Bakhru, 2029; Wolor et al., 2020). However, there is no one size fit all approach in creating balance and happiness of employees because WLB remains a subjective aspiration which is based on individual needs (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). The manner in which one balances work with family time, leisure, healthcare and time for friends is subjectively based on individual preferences but goes a long way in determining how they experience satisfaction and happiness (Khoury, 2021).

Research has identified that traditionally, Africa lacked gender egalitarianism, and this was an impediment to WLB (Koenig & Eagly, 2014; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018; Lyness & Judiesch, 2014). Some sections of Africa had patriarchal norms which hindered the prospect of equal rights in the family and work settings (Adisa et al.,

2019, Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). However, Africa is fast changing and it has started to embrace equality with the understanding that gender differences do not play a role in determining WLB because both men and women experience work-life stressors (Maqubela, 2013; Muasya, 2021; Seeley, 2015).

Studies have identified that individuals manage work-life roles differently depending on the time and energy at their disposal (Kahchh & Nagpur, 2014; Loudon, 2017). WLC arises when family time and work compete for scarce time and energy (Alonge & Osigiobre, 2020; Jain & Nair, 2013). It has also been noted that improved management and allocation of time and energy may lead to WLE which leads to integration of work and life in a mutually beneficial way (Jaga et al., 2013). This will result into gains accumulated from work being transferred to enhance life and vice versa, thereby bringing compatibility between the two domains (Matthew & Panchanatham, 2010). Research has found that WLE is high in people who have time, involvement and satisfaction balance (Khoury, 2021; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017; Shabir et al., 2021).

Work-life balance has been found to be beneficial for organisations as it reduces turnover, minimise cost of hiring, increases productivity and boosts profitability (Chandri & Manjunath, 2020). As a result, organisations have been adopting different strategies to promote WLB in a bid to keep employees healthy, happy and productive (Emre & Spiegeleare, 2021). In like manner, studies have shown that productivity and quality of results in the teaching field are largely dependent on educators' ability to balance work and life (Yang, 2020). The biggest challenge impeding educators' WLB has been workload which is encroaching on life space and time (Yang, 2020). This is even worse in female educators who have been identified as recipients of immense pressure from work and multiple cultural roles, such that less than half can experience WLB (Rajani, 2020). It was also found that in Africa people value family, therefore having conflicting work-family demands may cause impaired relationships with the society and such is the case with people experiencing poor WLB (Makola et al., 2015).

In the African context, studies found that it is important to take into consideration the African psychology which is grounded on the customs, ideas and minds of the people in order to fully comprehend their needs (Grobler et al., 2019). The

Afrocentric philosophy is grounded on traditional values that include Ubuntu, collectivism, caring, co-operation and spirituality, therefore any disconnect from this paradigm is deemed undesirable (Grobler et al., 2019; Muller et al., 2017; Ratele et al., 2020). These values and customs determine how they perceive life, work and the sense of balance between the two, with success and failure largely ascribed to issues of ancestry, witchcraft and other sources of supernatural powers (Bujuwoye & Moletsane-Kekae, 2018; Cockley & Garba, 2018; Long, 2017; Mkabela, 2005, Nwoye, 2015). There is a paradigm shift in Africa as people change from traditional and stereotypical gender roles in other communities to an inclusive, gender-neutral life due to an increase in working couples and single parents, which changes the way WLB is perceived (Maqubela, 2013; Muasya, 2021; Seeley, 2015; Veiga, 2009).

The need for the promotion of social, emotional and psychological well-being in African schools exists in literature and failure to promote WLB has been identified as a major cause of anxiety, sleeplessness, low productivity, divorce and high attrition rate (Redelinghuys & Rothman, 2020; Shankar, 2017). Some studies suggest work-life coaching as a measure to promote WLB (Mendis & Weerakkody, 2017). Managerial support has also been highlighted as a major determinant of WLB by expressing how African leaders are motivated by the spirit of Ubuntu, which motivates them to put the interests of subordinates before their own (Kelliher et al., 2019; Molose et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2017).

4.1.2 Conclusions drawn from the empirical study

The primary purpose of this empirical inquiry was to explore the Black African high school educators' WLB experiences. The empirical objectives of this study were to:

- To explore the WLB of Black African high school educators.
- To explore the role of WLB in the functioning of Black African educators in a high school education context.
- To determine the challenges brought by COVID-19 to the WLB of Black African high school educators.
- To explore ways of improving WLB of Black African High school teachers.

There is a synergy between the conclusions drawn from literature and the outcomes of this study. This inquiry confirmed that WLB is subjective in nature, depending on individual unique prioritisation of tasks in a way that leads to optimal functioning

(Barber et al., 2016; Loudon, 2017; Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). This study came to a conclusion that work and life compete for same resources from the individual, namely time, energy and attention. Work is spilling over to the life domain due to imposing demands. Educators experience WLC due to work which constantly requires educators' attention, even during the personal time, such as after normal school hours, weekends and even school holidays. Family time, leisure, religious commitments, social events, gym and other health matters seem to be coming second best after work engagements. This finding concurs with Rajani (2020), who cites that less than half of African educators can balance their work and life optimally. The misgiving that may result from excessively sacrificing for work is that basic human needs are neglected which may lead to compromise of well-being, dissatisfaction with work and life and poor productivity (Suhendro, 2018).

Black African educators find it challenging to navigate between work and family expectations such as childcare and household chores as per the cultural expectations of African people. The pressure exerted by failure to participate actively in life activities due to work, may have left some feeling as if they are short-changing their families. The outcomes of this study also show that the burden of the coercive nature of work does not only compromise Black African educators' opportunity to participate in household chores and family care, but even in life style activities such as gym and leisure. However, it has been noted that work-life demands are different from one person to the other. Whilst some participants find it difficult to balance work and cultural family expectations, others find it difficult to balance work with lifestyle activities. These differences bring about the subjectivity of work-life balance experiences in Black African high school educators.

This study highlights the importance of Employee Assistance initiatives that exist within the school. The role of the psychologist and the support staff in the school is substantial in alleviating work-life stressors. Educators seem to depend on the psychologist for help with issues such as deviant behaviour amongst learners (bullying, drugs and disciplinary issues) (Rothmann & Redelinghuys, 2020). The support staff (secretariat services) alleviates work pressure by assisting with capturing marks and printing of report cards. These interventions are reducing the quantity of work awaiting the educators' attention, which help to free time for other work-life issues. The managerial support in the school has been found to be a great

assistance as it motivates educators to thrive with balancing work-life demands. Black African educators appreciate the support of the school management who leads through respect, compassion, care and humanness (Ubuntu) (Molose et al., 2018). In keeping with Muller et al. (2017), this study noted that infusing Ubuntu in the managerial style culminates into legitimate and servant leadership, which helps to put the interests of subordinates first. The study also discovered that spousal and family support is an important factor for optimal WLB. Participants show that they are able to navigate work better when there is support from their family members. Family support has been found to relieve the pressure of cultural expectations, childcare, looking after the elderly and other household chores. The extension of assistance by the family, spouse and community members is a great act of Ubuntu, which is an African resource identified in this study as essential for reducing WLC.

Spirituality plays a substantial role in Black African educators' work-life beliefs as a coping mechanism. The findings of this study show that teaching is perceived as a calling and the work-life challenges confronting educators are believed to be only solvable if there are supernatural or divine interventions. Spirituality is a factor that instills hope, perseverance and completes most educators' WLB. The study found that most educators have a perception of dependence on God and the divine intervention that supersedes human's work-life interventions. Other participants believe in ancestral powers that have the potential to bring goodwill in life and at work. Spirituality has also been found to instil a sense of purpose, meaning and to be behind educators' perseverance to work hard for the betterment of African youth, regardless of work-life challenges. Spirituality, communal and service dedication may have influenced psychological hardiness, identified through Black African educators' strong sense of positivity, belief, and mental strength.

This study highlights how Black African high school educators remain dedicated to service, endowed with a strong career identity derived from WLE by finding meaning through work. This finding may be attributed to a strong sense of both Ubuntu and spirituality in the African culture. The participants remain focused on giving back to the community (reciprocity), respecting human dignity and compassion for fellow Africans. There was a mutual perception of putting learners' interests first before self-interests and material wealth (Aju & Beddewela, 2019; Kumah-Abiwu, 2016). The spirit of giving back and uplifting the communities which made them who they

are, inspires WLE. The educators envision their work as the only way of emancipating the community from the past colonial influences that oppressed the black people. This resonates with previous studies which highlight how Africans connect colonialism and how it has shaped Ubuntu and finding meaning by emancipating their communities (Kumah-Abiwa, 2016). Positive emotions induced from teaching work give purpose in life and motivate them to keep going. The positive emotions are then transferred to life and shared with families. The educators also transfer skills planning skills acquired from work and use them to plan in life, thereby promoting WLB. Life is also enriched by rewards obtained from work which are used to improve the standard of living of the families. Although the salaries are not high in the education sector, educators still use the income obtained from work to positively transform their families and communities.

The outcomes depict WLB as a dynamic construct, which is continuously being sort after by Black African Educators. Perhaps this dynamism is confusing to a person experiencing it in the sense that, on one end there is an experience of WLC and on the other there is WLE. In a way this shows that work and life are not distinct but rather integral components (Pitre et al., 2017). There may be signs of poor WLI in Black African educators due to failure to fully balance and gain satisfaction from work and life. It seems as if integrating the two opposite experiences of work and life does not come naturally for most Black African educators, yet WLI will assist them to have a more holistic experience of WLB (Afif, 2019; Foucreault et al., 2018).

This inquiry found that COVID-19 has changed the educators' model of operation within the high school. Virtual learning has been introduced to promote social distancing amongst learners. However, amongst the participants there are multifarious perceptions on the adaption of technology for teaching. Younger educators seem to enjoy the digital migration better than their older counterparts. Young participants feel that technology and online teaching introduced during these days of COVID-19 made teaching easier and interesting and freed some time to focus on other life needs. The study found that migration to online teaching led to reduced travelling costs, time spent on travelling to and from school and the risk of exposure to COVID-19, which promotes WLB. However, the older educators expressed concern with digital migration and the use of technology at the school. The study found that this may have led to them spending a lot of time trying to learn

to use technology in and outside the classroom, thereby taking a lot of family time and compromising the ability to balance work and life optimally. Older educators were found to be slow in learning new technological skills which forces them to continue working extended hours for a long period of time, thereby compromising their well-being.

This study found that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the time balance of the participants due to adjustments in clock-in times in order to accommodate COVID-19 protocols such as social distancing, sanitization and wearing of masks by the school children. Educators have to wake up very early in order to arrive at the school on time to keep COVID-19 protocols in check. Such experiences are forcing them to sacrifice their personal/family time leading to continuous feeling tiredness due to lack of sufficient rest. This study also discovered fear of contracting the virus amongst the participants to be affecting the level of engagement at work. From a WLB perspective, employees cannot be fully engaged in the face of uncertainty and fear, and this may lead to other stress-related health issues which affect both work and personal well-being.

In conclusion, the conflicting work-life roles make it difficult for Black African educators to enjoy a balanced life. The coercive nature of work has a clear dominance over the life of educators, which impedes the right to a fulfilling lifestyle (work-role salience) (Loudon, 2017). Although work-life challenges can be clearly noted, participants have also shown WLE by finding meaning through work and transferring resources between work and life (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Spousal support, managerial support, colleagues, and employee assistance initiatives within the school are also part of the motivational factors keeping the educators motivated. The faith and belief of the participants in divine intervention has also been playing a substantial role in giving them the propensity to continue with work. COVID-19 may have exacerbated uncertainty and fear of contracting the disease, which has heightened emotional and psychological issues which seem to limit WLB, but educators have faith in divine protection. The findings seem to suggest that **Ubuntu** and **spirituality** are the most influential factors to the WLB of the participants.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

4.2.1 Limitation of the literature review

I found that most literature referred to WLB of women, which does not give a gender-neutral view in this era when both males and females experience work-life pressure. There is limited literature on WLB of Black African educators which pose some challenges in formulating a comprehensive view of previous research-based scientific findings.

4.2.2 Limitation of the empirical component of the study

The findings of this inquiry may not be transferrable to other setting but relevant for the current work context and in situations where researcher may replicate a similar or related study in other organisations. The differences in age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and work experience within a restricted institution make it almost impossible to transfer the outcomes of this research to other work settings. The homogeneous race that constituted the sample of this inquiry limits the findings from being generalised to the entire population of African educators in South Africa. Data saturation was reached on the 8th participant. This might limit the extent to which this study may be inferred to other African races that were not represented in the participants. The fact that the interviewer worked in different high schools as a head teacher and a human resources officer for a lengthy period of time may have resulted in unintended bias to creep in. My personal beliefs were in contradiction to African spirituality; therefore, I had to keep reflecting on my preconceptions and their effect on this study. Traditionally HP study is conducted through direct interviews but in this research, I employed Microsoft Teams interviews due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19 and this may have had an impact on establishing rapport with participants. However, such potential bias was mitigated by presenting the outcomes of this inquiry for peer review.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INDUSTRY

This inquiry explored the Black African high school educators' WLB experiences and found that there are challenges encountered when navigating between the work and life roles. Of interest is the finding that WLB is not a "one size fits all" approach.

Organisations would benefit by introducing WLB initiatives that cater for the unique needs of individual employees. WLB is subjective in nature, thereby making it challenging to be addressed through a holistic or group approach. To promote WLI, WLB initiatives must seek to address both work and non-work domains (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Organisations must endeavour to establish flexible work schedules, such as staggered start and finish times, working from home, family responsibility and study leave for educators (Kelliher et al., 2019). However, care must be taken when introducing flexible WLB approaches in traditional cultures where gender roles are distinct because it may promote more divisions by expanding household burdens for other people (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2020). To avert this challenge, I encourage family coaching to sensitise household stakeholders of the need for a shift in norms with a view to promote gender neutrality (Starmer et al., 2019). Furthermore, as suggested by Pitre et al. (2017) coaching might be necessary to assist with development of skills through training and guidance on how to integrate work and life by constantly paying attention to personal and family commitments which contest with work for individual's scarce time and energy.

In order to promote well-being, weekends and holidays should be set aside for rest, gym, family time and other life expectations without work spill-over (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2020). The findings of this study show that the work of educators tends to spill over to their personal time, thereby making it challenging to utilise free time for other life commitments. Family support initiatives such as childcare, child/scholar transport, work-based gym, family counselling, and family clinics may be introduced in schools. Such endeavours will go a long way in alleviating pressure that leads to role conflict, especially for educators who assume the primary home caretaker role. However, in our emerging economy, the funding of such initiatives needs further exploration.

Organisations are recommended to introduce work-life policies to support educators working from home, especially in these times of COVID-19. Working from home may have negative consequences for employees with poor work-life boundary/border management (Bellmann & Hubler, 2021). Proper e-training, e-leadership and e-management should be introduced to offer real-time support for educators working from home (Wolor et al., 2020). Such support may include regular checks on employees on how they are managing to work from home, support with all required

technology and internet, e-training, counselling and encouraging regular breaks. These initiatives will not only help during these days of COVID-19, but also to support educators when they are working remotely during holidays, weekends and for blended learning which is resulting in increased online engagements with learners.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Future studies in the same context are recommended to involve participants from all racial backgrounds in order to have a holistic perception of the experiences of high school educators operating in the African context. In addition to this, further exploration of WLB experiences of the previously disadvantaged groups may add value to different fields of study (Loudon, 2017; Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). Similar studies in other work contexts will improve our comprehension of subjective WLB amongst individuals and help in the formulation of work policies that are in tandem with the fast-changing world of work. The effects of African gender roles in female educators' role salience may also be of importance to consider for further exploration. The challenges faced by female African educators need research-based interventions that will suggest solutions which are in harmony with the culture (Le et al., 2020). Finally, this study highlighted Ubuntu and spirituality as central to Black African high school educators' WLB. Future research in this regard may add to our understanding of the purpose of these factors in WLB.

4.5 REFLECTION OF THE STUDY

This research afforded me the opportunity to discover and fully comprehend the work-life challenges encountered by the educators and the initiatives taken by both the employer and the employee to balance the two. Apart from exploring the WLB of educators, the inquiry was a journey of continuous reflection on my views and perceptions of WLB. I believe this research will also help me and other people to balance work and life in a better way going forward. The inquiry enhanced my research competence in qualitative methodology. I was mesmerized but the subjective nature of WLB and the extent to which it affects well-being and

functionality of every gainfully employed individual. I am humbled by the complexity and expanse of WLB to the extent that I look forward for opportunities to further explore the WLI of employees and how it has evolved in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted the conclusions derived from literature as well as the empirical research. The limitations from the findings of this inquiry were discussed and recommendations made for the purpose of future research and adoption of WLB initiatives in industry. The chapter concludes with a personal reflection on the research conducted.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNISA CEMS/IOP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

03 March 2021

Dear Mr Wellington Mloyi

**Decision: Ethics approval from
05 March 2021 to 05 March 2024**

NHREC Registration #: (if applicable)
ERC Reference #: **2021_CEMS/IOP_000**
Name: Mr Wellington Mloyi
Student #: 47780851
Staff #: N/a

Researcher(s): Name: Mr Wellington Mloyi
Address: 9 Isabel Road Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa 3201
E-mail address, telephone: mloyiwellington@gmail.com, 078 218 9617

Supervisor (s): Name: Mrs Louise Tonelli
E-mail address, telephone: Levl@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 8229

**African high school educators' work-life balance: A Hermeneutic
Phenomenological Inquiry.**

Qualification: Masters (MCom)- Post graduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for **Three years**.

The low risk application was reviewed by the CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on the 3rd March 2021 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on 3rd March 2021.

The proposed research may only commence with the provision that:

- 1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 Position Statement on research ethics dated 26 June 2020 which is attached.***



University of South Africa
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Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **(05 March 2024)**
8. Submission of a complete research ethics progress report will constitute an application for the renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2021_CEMS/IOP_000 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of IOP ERC

E-mail: ynieka2@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-8231



Signature

Executive Dean : CEMS

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ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION FROM THE KWAZULU-NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 3921062 / 033-3921051

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za
Buyi.ntuli@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Ref.:2/4/8/7052

Mr Wellington Mloyi
9 Isabel Road
Scottsville
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "AFRICAN EDUCATORS' WORK LIFE BALANCE: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY" in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 23rd November 2020 to 10th March 2023.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 23rd November 2020

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

ANNEXURE C: PERMISSION FROM THE ALEXANDRA SCHOOL TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH



9 November 2020

Mr W. Mloyi
c/o UNISA

Dear Mr Mloyi

Permission to conduct research at Alexandra High School

Your request dated 25 June 2020 refers.

It is my pleasure to allow you permission to conduct research at our school. Your topic *The African Educator's work-life balance: A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry at a high school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*, does not only seem intriguing, but relevant.

Presently, there is a diverse group of educators on our staff within the age groups you require for your information. I am certain they will be very enthusiastic to be a part of any research within the Education field. Obviously, it will be appreciated if the outcomes of your study could be shared with our staff to enhance their professional development and contribute to their principle of lifelong learning. The work-life balance research aspect will also contribute to an evaluation of their lifestyle to ensure the school has a happy, committed and enthusiastic group of educators.

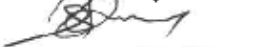
The covid-19 protocols are in place in school at the moment and I am certain this will be the new reality, even in February 2021. Most staff are technologically savvy and will be able to liaise or communicate with you via M.S. Teams.

Once you submit the permission forms for individual staff members to fill in, I shall send you the details of the staff that you request for your research. I know you will abide by the confidentiality you expressed in your letter of request.

I wish you the best in your research and look forward to further correspondence.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully



Mrs A. Pillay
Principal

ANNEXURE D: PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Topic: Black African high school educators' work-life balance: A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

Participant Interview Guide

Name : _____

Age : _____

Gender : _____

Position : _____

Teaching Experience: _____

Preamble

Thank you for availing yourself to discuss your work-life balance experiences. Your willingness to participate in the study is highly appreciated. The information generated from this interview will be solely used for my research and will be kept with utmost good faith. I would like to remind you once again that this study is a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry on the work-life balance of Black African high school educators.

As stated in the consent form signed by you, your identity will be protected by the use of pseudo names. The identity of the school will also be protected. The confidentiality of the school and the participants takes high preference in this study. The information you are going to share with me will be secured in a password protected file and will only be accessible to the research team.

Should you feel uncomfortable at any stage of the interview you are allowed to stop me or to withdraw your participation totally. My role as the researcher is to ask you specific disciplinary questions concerning your work-life balance experiences within the school.

Preliminary Questions

1. Kindly tell me about yourself and how you became an educator at your school

2. Tell me about your school and your role

3. May you walk me through your typical workday at school?

Research specific questions

1. What do you look forward to when you are going to work every day?

2. What do you NOT look forward to when you are going to work every day?

3. How would you describe your school culture?

4. How is your work schedule? Does it change at different times, for example, quarterly or annually?

5. What do you like best about working here?

6. What type of person would thrive at your school?

7. What is your approach to working from home periodically?

8. How are you coping with teaching during this COVID-19 pandemic period and what aspects of your work do you wish to change in response to the novel corona virus-19?

9. To what extent do you enjoy majority of your work?

10. How often are you late from home because you had to finish something urgent first before you go to work?

11. How often are you late from work because you had to finish something urgent before you go home?

12. What sets your school apart from others?

13. What aspects of your work would you like to change in order to have a balanced work and life?

14. What does your school do to help you maintain work-life balance?

15. What are you doing to keep your work and family life balanced?

ANNEXURE E: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that I have edited and proofread the dissertation entitled

The African Educators' Work-life Balance: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry

prepared by Mr Wellington Mloyi in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce in Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the University of South Africa, according to the prescribed specifications, where available, and the latest standards for language editing and technical (computer-based) layout.

Editing was restricted to language usage and spelling, consistency, formatting and the style of referencing. No structural writing of any content was undertaken.

As an editor I am not responsible for detecting any content that may constitute plagiarism.

All references have been provided in the prescribed format.

I am not accountable for any changes made to this dissertation by the author or any other party after the date of my edit.

(Electronically signed – actual signature withheld for security reasons)

MONICA BOTHA

11 January 2022

Sole Proprietor: Monica Botha

*Business Planning Corporate Systems Engineering Corporate Document Standards
Business and Academic Document Technical and Language Editing*

ANNEXURE F: TURNITIN REPORT



The Black African Educators work-life balance: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry.

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