

**CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION
ACADEMICS` WELL-BEING AND ADJUSTMENT
DURING ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEM AND
PROCESS CHANGES**

by

Phumla Penelope Banjwa

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SUPERVISOR: DR A VAN NIEKERK

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SUMMARY

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION ACADEMICS' WELL-BEING AND ADJUSTMENT DURING ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEM AND PROCESS CHANGES

by

P.P. Banjwa

Degree: Master of Commerce (Industrial and Organisational Psychology)

Supervisor: Dr A van Niekerk

This study explores the contextual factors influencing the well-being and adjustment of academics at higher education institutions (HEIs) during organisational system and process changes. The research was conducted at a residential university, and purposive sampling was used to select permanently employed academics from the level of junior lecturer to that of professor. The data collection complied with COVID-19 regulations, which only permitted online semi-structured interviews to be conducted and recorded on MS Teams. Academics shared their lived experiences on the research phenomenon, and research themes and sub-themes were created to draw conclusions from the research findings. The conclusions that were drawn from the study revealed that organisational system and process changes negatively impacted academics' well-being and adjustment. The academics described, among other things, how they experienced a lack of psychological support during organisational system and process changes. Therefore, the study presents recommendations to HEIs, human resource professionals, industrial and organisational psychologists, change management specialists and line managers on how to better inform HEIs policies and practices to best support academics and ensure their healthy well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process.

KEYWORDS

Well-being, employee well-being, health, adjustment, maladjustment, academics, organisational change, industrial and organisational psychology

ISISHWANKATHELO

IMIBA NEEMKO EZINEFUTHE KWINTLALONTLE NOKUZIHLENGHALENGISA
KWEENGALI ZEMFUNDO EZIKUMAZIKO EMFUNDO EPHAKAMILEYO XA
KUSENZEKA IINGUQU ZEENKQUBO

ngu

P.P. Banjwa

Isidanga: Master of Commerce (Industrial and Organisational Psychology)

Umkhokeli: Dr A van Niekerk

Esi sifundo siphonononga iimeko ezinefuthe kwintlalontle nokuzihlengahlengisa kweengali zemfundo kumazikho emfundo ephakamileyo (HEIs) ngexesha lokubakho kweenguqu kwinkqubo elandelwa kula maziko. Uphando luqhutywe kwiyunivesithi eneendawo zokuhlala zabafundi. Kwathathwa isampulu ekhethwe ngononophelo ekukhetheni iingali eziqeshwe isigxina kumazinga aqala kubahlohli abasaqalayo ukuya kutsho kwiinjingalwazi. Idatha yaqokelelwa phantsi kwemiqathango nemithetho yeCOVID-19, eyayivumela kuphela iindliwano ndlebe ezenziwa kumaza eintanethi zaza zashicilelwa kwinkqubo yeMS Teams. Iingali zabelana ngamava azo kwimiba yophando, kwaza kwaqulunqwa imixholo nemixholwana apho kwathathwa izigqibo emva kokufumanisa izinto ngezinto kuphando. Izigqibo ekwafikelelwa kuzo kwesi sifundo zadiza ukuba iinguqu zeenkqubo ziyichaphazela kakubi intlalontle yeengali nendlela abazihlengahlengisa ngayo. Phakathi kwezinto ezathethwa ziingali, kwabakho ukuchaza indlela ezingafumani ngayo inkxaso yengqondo nomphefumlo xa kungena iinguqu zeenkqubo. Ngoko ke esi sifundo sinika iingcebiso kumaziko emfundo ephakamileyo, kwiingali ezisebenza ngeemeko ezingqonge abaqweshwa kunye nemiba yengqesho jikelele, iingali zesimo sengqondo nomphefumlo kumaqumrhu neendawo ekusetyenzwa kuzo, iingali zolawulo lwenguqu kunye nabaphathi bamacandelo asemsebenzini. Ezi ngcebiso zimalunga neendlela ekunokuphuculwa ngazo imigaqo nkqubo nemisebenzi yala maziko ukwenzela ukuba iingali zifumane inkxaso ekhokelela kwintlalo entle nasekuzihlengahlengiseni bezilungiselela ngamaxesha enguqu yemigaqo nkqubo kumaziko amfundo ephakamileyo.

AMAGAMA APHAMBILI

Intlalontle, intlalontle yabaqeshwa, impilo, ukuzihlengehlengisa, ukungakwazi ukuzihlengehlengisa, iingcali zemfundo, inguqu kwiqumrhu, isimo sengqondo nomphefumlo emisebenzini nakumaqumrhu jikelele.

OPSOMMING

KONTEKSTUELE FAKTORE WAT DIE WELSTAND EN AANPASSING VAN AKADEMICI BY HOËRONDERWYSINSTELLINGS BEÏNVLOED TYDENS VERANDERINGE AAN ORGANISASIESTELSLS EN -PROSESSE

deur

P.P. Banjwa

Graad: Magister in die Handel (Bedryf- en Organisasiesielkunde)

Studieleier: Dr A van Niekerk

Hierdie studie ondersoek die kontekstuele faktore wat die welstand en aanpassing van akademië by hoëronderrysinstellings beïnvloed tydens veranderinge aan organisasiesistelsels en -prosesse. Die navorsing is by 'n residensiële universiteit gedoen, en doelbewuste steekproefneming is ingespan om akademië in vaste diens – van juniordosent- tot professorvlak – te kies. Die data-insameling het aan COVID-19-regulasies voldoen, dus was slegs aanlyn halfgestruktureerde onderhoude wat via MS Teams gevoer en opgeneem is, toelaatbaar. Akademië het hul geleefde ervarings van die navorsingsfenomeen gedeel, en navorsingstemas en subtemas is saamgestel om gevolgtrekkings op grond van die navorsingsbevindinge te maak. Die gevolgtrekkings wat na aanleiding van die studie gemaak is, het getoon dat veranderinge aan organisasiesistelsels en -prosesse 'n negatiewe impak op akademië se welstand en aanpassing gehad het. Die akademië het onder andere beskryf hoedat hulle 'n gebrek aan sielkundige ondersteuning ervaar het tydens organisasiesistelsel- en prosesveranderinge. Daarom maak hierdie studie aanbevelings vir hoëronderrysinstellings, mensehulpbronpraktisyne, bedryf- en organisasiesielkundiges, veranderingbestuurspesialiste en lynbestuurders oor hoe die beleide van hoëronderrysinstellings beter toegepas kan word om akademië so goed moontlik te ondersteun en hul welstand en gesonde aanpassing by organisasiesistelsels en -prosesse te verseker.

SLEUTELWOORDE

Welstand, werknemerwelstand, gezondheid, aanpassing, wanaanpassing, academici, organisatieverandering, bedrijf- en organisatiesielkunde

DECLARATION

I, **Phumla Penelope Banjwa**, student number **45319375**, for the degree Master of Commerce, declare that:

‘Contextual factors influencing higher education institution academics’ well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes’

is my own work and that all sources referred to in the text have been indicated and acknowledge by means of a complete reference list.

I declare that ethical clearance has been obtained from the College of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Research Committee at UNISA (see Annexure A) at the University of South Africa and that informed consent (see Annexure B) was given by all participants to conduct the research.

SIGNATURE:



DATE: 19 January 2023

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
HEI(s)	Higher education institution(s)
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HR	Human resources
IOP	Industrial and organisational psychology
OP	Organisational psychology
SWB	Subjective well-being
UNISA	University of South Africa

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a scientific overview of the research on contextual factors influencing higher education institutions (HEIs) academics' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. It also sets out the background and the motivation for the study and outlines the problem statement, including the research questions directing this research. The general and specific aims of the study are further discussed, and the paradigm perspectives adopted are discussed for both the literature review and empirical parts of this study. Finally, the chapter briefly outlines the research design and how the research will contribute to and benefit HEIs, human resource (HR) professionals, industrial and organisational (IO) psychologists, change management specialists, and line managers. The overarching goal is to better inform HEI policies and practices on how to best support academics and ensure their well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

When it comes to well-being and employee adjustment, organisations usually follow a blanket approach. This has been my experience for over 15 years in the HR profession. Often employees are treated equally, which indirectly translates to sameness (Egbekpala, 2022). According to Doherty (2004), sameness perpetuates gender blindness in that it assumes that employees have the same needs. Hannan (2022) states that gender equality implies recognising the interests and needs of diverse groups. Thus, this research seeks to open the context in which HEIs function to the reality that employees are not the same. Instead, they affiliate themselves with organisations having different needs, opinions and beliefs that are influenced by the context they have been exposed to.

In South Africa, organisations and HEIs function in a context that is characterised by social, political, and economic inequalities, as well as skills shortages (Abrahams, 2015; Van Hoek & Schultz, 2014; Walker et al., 2022). Due to these disparities, shortages and disproportionate employee needs, organisations are challenged to look

after employees' well-being and assist them with the required adjustments. However, organisations seem to find it difficult and often fail to improve adequate well-being and adjustment interventions to address this dilemma (Bond, 2014). Therefore, failure to cater for different realities and needs and not recognising employees as individuals will, unfortunately, translate into employees not successfully adjusting where needed. This can result in high labour turnover and absenteeism and even negatively affect their overall well-being, such as heightened instances of burnout and disengagement (Ahmed et al., 2018).

Past research proves that well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes have been widely researched (Kinman, 2019). Dodd et al. (2021) agreed that while HEIs are promoting well-being, more research is still needed on well-being measures during organisational system and process changes. Nene (2020) further states that, seemingly to date, the focus has been predominantly on studying international HEIs, and very limited research seems to focus on South African HEIs. Due to this limited understanding of the South African context, the researcher embarked on this phenomenological study to further explore the contextual factors influencing well-being and adjustment of academics during organisational system and process changes at a residential university.

Therefore, this study conceptualises well-being, adjustment and organisational system and process changes among academics. It aims to assist HEIs with unpacking the complexities of well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes and perhaps towards ensuring healthy and engaged employees. According to Nienaber and Martins (2015), an employee and the organisation are interrelated, and this relationship functions on different levels. On an individual level, the relations to each other mean the focus is on a psychological trait, state, and behavioural engagement. At a departmental or team level, the focus is on work components, leadership, and trust matters. At the organisational or top level, the focus is on strategic measures taken to achieve organisational goals. Coetzee et al. (2017) agreed that employee engagement is dependent on the relationship between the individual, the job, and the working environment. Subsequently, by better understanding the influence of organisational system and process changes on the well-being and

adjustment of academics, HEIs will be able to engage on all levels of employee engagement.

Therefore, the general aim of the study was to explore the contextual factors that influenced how organisational system and process changes impacted the well-being and adjustment of academics at HEIs. The study considered well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes and contextual factors influencing well-being and adjustment as meta-theoretical constructs.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

This qualitative study answered the question: What contextual factors influence academics' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes? To answer this question, the researcher assumed that employees experience well-being and adjustment differently. This was evident from the literature review that well-being and adjustment are linked to unique individual needs and realities, to say the least. According to Ponting (2020), well-being is broadly accepted as an evaluation of an individual's life experiences in that their thoughts and perceptions determine their overall well-being. Equally, adjustment is the process where the individual carries their values and standards irrespective of the change in their circumstances and maintains that balance (Amirbagloie-Daryani et al., 2022).

The quest to explore the research question was motivated by the fact that after South Africa became a democracy, the workplace became progressively diverse. Particularly after the Employee Equity Act (1998) and further affirmative action legislation were introduced, a significant number of men and women from previously disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds entered the workplace (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010). HEIs, at the time a predominantly white sector, have since exerted great effort to adapt to the call for all-inclusive diversity in the workforce, necessitating numerous organisational system and process changes.

Furthermore, people entering the workplace are subject to shifts in family roles that affect employee needs and realities differently (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010). With these gender shifts, the workplace is also recruiting new cohorts of employees of

Generation Y and Z. These new employees are referred to as millennials and post-millennials. They are believed to have different needs, views, and beliefs. Organisations are still attempting to completely understand what really motivates them (Heyns & Kerr, 2018). The study explored this topic to understand the phenomenon better and offer solutions to HEIs and affected employees against this background. Often, the organisational strategy seems to look good on paper, but it lacks attention to detail pertaining to the human experience and impact, resulting in the lived experience of employees being contrary to that which was initially envisaged (Drobyazko et al., 2019). Thus, to avoid an adverse employee experience, this study focused on answering the theoretical and empirical questions below.

The theoretical research questions this study sought to answer were as follows:

- (i) How is well-being conceptualised?
- (ii) How is adjustment conceptualised?
- (iii) How do organisational system and process changes influence employees?
- (iv) What is the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment?

The empirical research questions this study sought to answer were as follows:

- (i) How do academics in HEIs perceive well-being?
- (ii) How do academics in HEIs perceive adjustment?
- (iii) How do academics in HEIs experience the influence of organisational system and process changes on their well-being and adjustment?
- (iv) What recommendations, by means of a framework, can be made to HEIs to best support and ensure academics' healthy well-being and adjustment?

1.4 AIMS

This study explored the contextual factors and the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics' well-being and adjustment.

The specific literature review aims of this study were to:

- (i) conceptualise well-being;
- (ii) conceptualise adjustment;

- (iii) conceptualise organisational system and process changes on employees; and
- (iv) explore the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment.

The specific empirical aims of this study were to:

- (i) explore how organisational system and process changes influence academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment;
- (ii) formulate a framework to inform HEI policies and practices as to how best academics can be supported towards ensuring healthy well-being and adjustment; and
- (iii) provide recommendations for future research on how to improve the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment.

1.5 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

According to Plowright (2011), paradigms are a set of beliefs among groups of individuals. This study adopted the interpretivism paradigm for both the empirical and theoretical parts of this research.

The interpretivism paradigm was deemed appropriate in this study as it enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of and conceptualise well-being, adjustment and organisational system and process changes. The qualitative study is a naturalistic and interpretive approach as it relates to the truth experienced and interpreted by an individual (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to engage with literature and the participants by obtaining an interpretation of the phenomenon being studied by this research (Grix, 2004).

Paradigms are systems of connected practices employed by researchers to define the nature of their study through three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Durrheim & Painter, 2014).

Ontology is defined as the nature of reality to be studied and what can be known about it (Durrheim & Painter, 2014, p. 6). Epistemology is defined as the nature of the

relationship between the researcher and what can be studied (Durrheim & Painter, 2014, p. 6). The methodological dimension is defined as a practical way in which the researcher goes about studying the phenomenon and what is believed to be known about it (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2014, p. 6).

1.5.1 Empirical paradigm perspective

Through the interpretive approach, the researcher made the ontological assumption that participants held the knowledge of the nature of their reality. The researcher can therefore learn what needs to be known by exploring the subjective, lived experiences of the participants. That is how academics in HEIs, as participants, experienced the influence of organisational system and process changes on their well-being and adjustment. These lived experiences determined how participants responded to the research question.

In line with the interpretive paradigm, the researcher followed an epistemological approach and established relationships with the HEI academics as participants. The researcher further explored their lived experiences, particularly how organisational processes and system changes influenced their well-being and adjustment. Semi-structured interviews assisted the researcher in obtaining subjective responses that reflected the academics lived experience of this phenomenon. The researcher achieved this by establishing a relationship with the academics, observing, listening attentively, and showing them empathy (Durrheim & Painter, 2014). The researcher created a conducive environment for participants to trust the researcher and feel safe enough to engage openly, where there were minimal interruptions for participation and recording purposes (Dunwoodie et al., 2022).

The interpretive approach allowed the researcher to be interactional with the participants and the research question using semi-structured interviews. After the data collection, the researcher analysed and interpreted the data through content analysis and reported on the findings to describe how academics in HEIs experience the influence of organisational system and process changes on their well-being and adjustment (Durrheim & Painter, 2014).

To ensure a trustworthy and rigorous research project, the researcher applied the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in this interpretive study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These were attended to during the data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting on the study's findings. The researcher had to be meticulous in capturing rich data from participants for the results to hold resonance within the interpretive paradigm, as it requires precision, rigour, being systematic, and paying attention to detail throughout the entire process (Younus & Zaidan, 2022). Therefore, practically, the researcher focused on accurately recording the lived experiences of HEI academics and their well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. The theoretical paradigm perspectives are addressed next.

1.5.2 Theoretical paradigm perspective

The interpretive paradigm enabled the researcher to address the literature review aims by exploring previous research on the topic to establish what is known from different views. The researcher proceeded from the ontological assumption that there was knowledge in the literature about the nature of the reality of the topic of this study that was in line with the theoretical research questions (Durrheim & Painter, 2014).

Epistemologically, and aligned to the interpretive paradigm, the researcher explored literature on the topic of the study to gain insight into what can be known about this phenomenon (Durrheim & Painter, 2014). The researcher obtained knowledge when conceptualising the research constructs in the literature. The literature review also enabled the researcher to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of what is already known on this topic by reviewing the findings of similar research previously conducted.

Methodologically, within the interpretive paradigm, the researcher explored the subjective relationship between theory and the researcher (Durrheim & Painter, 2014). The study followed a systematic process of reviewing previous research from sources such as Google Scholar to ensure access to scientifically published journal articles and critically reviewed content from academic books that were related to focus areas of the study. The knowledge gained through previous research assisted the researcher

in structuring open questions that assisted in bridging the gap that the study had identified (Ramasamy & Abdulla, 2017).

1.5.3 Meta-theoretical perspective

This study is situated within the discipline of industrial and organisational psychology (IOP) and, more specifically, the sub-fields of organisational psychology (OP) and employee well-being.

1.5.3.1 Industrial psychology

IOP is defined as a study of human behaviour in the workplace, where human behaviour is related to work and the productivity of the organisation (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). IOP has two objectives: to conduct research to gain knowledge and improve the understanding of human work behaviour. Second, to apply the gained knowledge to improve work behaviour and employee well-being (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). According to Watts et al. (2022), IOP is concerned with improving the organisation and the lives of its employees. This is done by introducing and refining various interventions that help shape the environment and workforce.

1.5.3.2 Organisational psychology

OP is a subfield within IOP and relates to the study of human behaviour as displayed by individuals in the workplace. It also concerns the organisation's productivity and related systems to adjust to changing contexts and meet strategic organisational objectives (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). OP also works with how employees experience and engage with their work environment through how they think, feel, behave, act, and interact on an individual, group and organisation level (Chang et al., 2022). According to Schultz et al. (2020), OP aims to provide the organisation with sustainable practices and processes that improve productivity and profitability through efficient psychological models (Schultz et al., 2020).

1.5.3.3 Employee well-being

Aufegger et al. (2022) described the workplace as a space that fosters interactions and collaborations among employees to achieve a healthy and happy workforce, in which employee well-being is vital. Montana et al. (2020) emphasised that employees spend a significant amount of their time at the workplace, making it even more important that organisations aim towards creating a stress-free and physically safe workplace to enhance employee well-being. Huppert and So (2013) also share the same view that feeling good and functioning well is the best way to describe employee well-being in the workplace. These workplaces are viewed as some form of community setup that involve employee interactions and collaborations (Garg, 2017). A conducive environment is a workplace that understands its own culture and promotes a state of contentment among its workforce (Garg, 2017).

According to Tov (2018), employee well-being is central to how an employee perceives and experiences their workplace-related quality of life, which in turn determines their overall well-being. Individuals who rate high on well-being do still have to manage feelings of pain, boredom, grief, disappointment, and dissatisfaction (Cobaleda et al., 2019). It is therefore important for HEIs to focus on high employee well-being levels so as not to have an unproductive workforce that deliver poor quality work and who tend to make poor decisions leading to organisational strategy failure (Ponting, 2020).

In the context of HEIs, employee well-being can be achieved better through creating an environment that provides interventions and strategic thinking aligned to supporting the academics' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes (Chadburn et al., 2017). Also, to avoid the adverse results of psychological distress and burnout caused by poor employee well-being, which may ultimately translate into high employee turnover, low productivity levels and even employee disengagement (Wang et al., 2020). HEIs are responsible for assisting academics in striking a balance between performing their tasks and managing their well-being (Van der Vaart et al., 2021). To accelerate productivity, progressive institutions ensure that wellness programs focus on employee well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes (Rasool et al., 2021).

This study adopted psychological well-being, as defined by Tang et al. (2019), as a broad construct involving both positive indicators of psychological adjustment and the absence of indicators of psychological maladjustment. Positive indicators of psychological adjustment refer to positive emotionality, happiness, high self-esteem, or life satisfaction. In comparison, indicators of maladjustment refer to negative emotionality, psychopathological symptoms, and diagnoses (Tang et al., 2019). This definition aligns well with this research considering that academics translated their own lived experiences related to contextual factors that influence academics' well-being and adjustment during system and process changes at HEI. Reflecting on their own lived experiences, academics displayed indicators of adjustment and maladjustment that assisted the researcher in presenting the findings on the research questions explored.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design followed is explained thoroughly in chapter 3 and it outlined the three components of the research approach, research strategy and research method. The research method section discussed the research setting, entrée and establishing research role, sampling, data collection methods, and recording of data. Lastly, the data analysis methodology adopted for this study was outlined, as well as the reporting of findings, strategies to ensure quality data and ethical considerations.

1.7 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The study contributes new knowledge as it provides a basic framework emanating from exploring the contextual factors pertaining to organisational system and process changes and their influence on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment. HEIs, HR professionals, IO psychologists, change management specialists, and line managers can use the framework to better inform HEIs' policies and practices on how academics can best be supported towards ensuring healthy well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. The study makes further contributions by providing recommendations for future research on how to improve the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment.

1.8 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The dissertation consists of five chapters that are presented as follows.

Chapter 1: Scientific orientation to the research

Chapter 1 presented the scientific orientation of the research, which included an introduction, background, and motivation for the research. The problem statement, aims of the study, paradigm perspectives and contributions of the study were also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 conceptualised academics within HEIs' well-being during adjustment and organisational system and process changes. The chapter presented a literature review on how academics' well-being and adjustment were impacted during organisational system and process changes.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 presented three components: the research approach, research strategy and research method that informed this research. The research method further outlined the research setting, entrée and establishing research role, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data, data analysis methods adopted, reporting of the findings strategies to ensure quality data and ethical consideration.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter 4 presented the lived experiences, including the contextual factors influencing academics at HEIs' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. Aligned with the study's research questions, the researcher presented participants lived experiences narratively by means of themes, sub-themes, and verbatim quotations to support the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter 5: Discussions

Chapter 5 discussed the summary and conclusions drawn from the literature review's findings and the empirical part of the research. This chapter also discussed the limitations of this research. Then, recommendations were made to HEIs, HR professionals, IO psychologists, change management specialists and line managers. Finally, recommendations were also made for future research.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provided the background and motivation for the research. The problem statement, literature and empirical aims were also presented in this chapter. The discussion of the empirical and theoretical paradigm perspectives of the study then took place, followed by an outline of the research design adopted for this study, the contribution of the study and the chapter layout. Chapter 2 presented a comprehensive literature review in accordance with the specific literature review aims noted earlier.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Mishra and Alok (2022), conducting a literature review enables the researcher to obtain an overview of all the known facts within a specific field of study or topic. Shamseer et al. (2015) agreed that a literature review presents a review and analysis of information found in scientific resources to study a specific phenomenon further. Snyder (2019) further described a literature review as a systematic way of collecting and synthesising previous research to uncover areas in which more research is needed. Labaree (2021) defined literature review as both a summary and detailed explanation of the current state of knowledge on a specific topic. Labaree (2021) further indicated that a literature review's purpose is to provide evidence of the material that the researcher has explored. Thus, upon exploring the evidence from the previous literature, the researcher was able to present new information that can contribute to the field of study.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher had two key objectives to achieve. First, to obtain an overview of the available information and knowledge on the topic of study. Second, to identify knowledge gaps and to conceptualise new knowledge, findings or conclusions of the constructs that were being studied (Knopf, 2006). This literature review aimed to conceptualise well-being, adjustment, organisational system, and process changes and to explore the influence of organisational system and process changes on the well-being and adjustment of academics in HEIs. To meet the aims of the literature review, the researcher consulted various scientific and academic sources such as peer-reviewed publications, articles, journals, and books to study the variables noted above and presented the literature review in this chapter. This chapter also concluded with a discussion of the theoretical framework adopted.

2.2 WELL-BEING

According to Kirsten et al. (2009), well-being, health and wellness are referred to interchangeably as they focus on various dimensions of wellbeing. Health is described as a state of optimal functioning where the employee enjoys a good quality of life and

experiences a feeling of complete equilibrium (Kirsten et al., 2009). Wellness contributes to the building blocks of overall well-being and a state of optimal functioning, which are encapsulated within the five elements that are abbreviated by Seligman (2018) as PERMA:

- **Positive emotion;**
- **Engagement;**
- **Relationship;**
- **Meaning; and**
- **Accomplishment.**

The literature review of this study explored information from past research to have tested evidence of how well-being has been studied. This view assisted the researcher in getting a sense of the topic, for example, by considering various well-being definitions as conceptualised by previous researchers. Dwivedi (2022) defined well-being as intangible, difficult to define and even harder to measure. Dodge et al. (2012) defined well-being as the balancing factor of challenges the individual is faced with and the resources they have to deal with those challenges. Dodge et al. (2012) continued to say that balancing exists when an individual has the psychological, social, and physical resources needed to overcome a particular challenge. Bryson et al. (2017) defined well-being as a topic that is described through four fundamentals, which encapsulate a physical, mental, psychological, and social being. These four fundamentals focus on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence an individual.

Similarly, Carter (2016) defined well-being as a complex pursuit, which was increasingly utilised in many ways resulting in it taking the shape of a chameleon. Warr and Nielsen (2018) defined well-being as a compound of thoughts and feelings with two well-being indicators. The well-being indicator is adjustment which is referred to as positive emotionality, and maladjustment, which is referred to as negative emotionality. Well-being is multi-dimensional and is determined by assessing the negative and positive feelings of the individual (Diener et al., 2018). Wiklund et al. (2019, p. 579) defined well-being as an 'experience of satisfaction, positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and psychological functioning'. According to Al Makhamreh

and Stockley (2019), well-being predominantly allows individuals to lead a quality life with happiness and satisfaction with life and experience good mental and physical health. Most recently, well-being has been viewed as collectively and socially determined, and it emerges from a blend of personal and professional factors (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). According to Ahmed et al. (2020), well-being is attained through a good state of balance the individual has experienced through both challenging and rewarding life events and is a process of self-realisation. The presented literature suggests that well-being is diverse and fluid, which provides more reasons for HEIs to understand it so that appropriate interventions can be introduced to manage change effectively during organisational system and process changes. Kreitzer (2022) agrees that advancing well-being is a necessity that transcends all factors within the organisation and therefore urges the leadership to maximise its efforts in enhancing well-being among its workforce.

In this study, well-being was defined as a state of mind that can be observed in a person's physical, mental, psychological, and social being (Tang et al., 2019). Also, there are essentially two perspectives of how well-being functions within these four spheres, and that is hedonic and eudaimonic. According to Ryan and Deci (2019), hedonic and eudemonic are two intellectual traditions of well-being, where hedonic refers to individual experiences of happiness or pleasure through the satisfaction of preferences. In comparison, eudemonic refers to the individual life purpose and meaning where they strive to be the best of themselves. Khan and Abbas (2022) agreed that happy employees tend to think happier, which significantly influences well-being. In addition, Ryff and Singer (2008) also agreed that eudemonics emphasises the purpose and meaning of life, personal growth and the ability to thrive while realising the best in oneself. They went further to say that it is when an individual mirrors their authentic self when they recognise their strengths and weaknesses and develop a personal sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Diener (2009) introduced a third component to the hedonic view: overall satisfaction with life. De Vos et al. (2013) indicated that the first two components – positive feelings and the absence of negative ones – are often referred to as affective components, while the third component, satisfaction with life, involves conscious evaluative judgement about the quality of life. Huta and Waterman (2014) further indicated that

while both traditions share emotional and cognitive components, the eudemonic is mostly cognitive. According to Ryff (2019), eudemonic entails experiences of self-realisation, meaningfulness and feelings of being alive and refers to it as the individual's psychological functioning. On the other hand, hedonic is referred to as a combination of high positive and low negative effective well-being. Whelan et al. (2022) referred to eudemonic well-being as vitality and refer to hedonic well-being as feelings of happiness and sadness. This means that everyone is responsible for pursuing a eudemonic lifestyle to have enhanced hedonic outcomes such as more positive and less negative effects. Thus, the onus is on HEIs to enhance the optimal functioning of individuals with a balanced life experience where they feel and function across all areas of cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2019).

2.3 ADJUSTMENT

The term adjustment originates from the Latin word *adjustare* and is defined as the process by which an individual balances needs and obstacles in their environment (Yi et al., 2003). Alipoor et al. (2022) defined adjustment as a process where an individual uncovers and controls their feelings and emotions when dealing with a situation with the aim of reaching emotional stability. In the workplace, the term adjustment refers to the psychological adjustment of the employee, and it has three areas of optimal functioning. The first is intrapersonal functioning, where the individual is physically healthy and uses cognitive abilities and skills applicable to the work context. Open and sensitive to their own and other people's feelings, emotions and needs. The second, interpersonal functioning, is where the individual has gained an acceptance of self and others positively and unconditionally. Third are work characteristics that enable individuals to be optimally involved in their work (Bergh & Theron, 2003). Amirbagloie-Daryani et al. (2022) agreed that individuals achieve adjustment when they have established relationships between themselves and their environment. On the other hand, the term maladjustment refers to the inability to adjust. The individual displays this in the form of symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and burnout (Du Plessis & Martins, 2019). According to Amirbagloie-Daryani et al. (2022), maladjustment is defined as the individual's failure to react adequately to the demands of their environment. Maladjustment is a process of irregular patterns that are biological,

psychological, and social that results in a disturbed state of the psycho-equilibrium of the individual (Cucinella et al., 2022).

2.3.1 Characteristics

Adjustment is characterised by two types of adjustments: normal and abnormal adjustment. Normal adjustment refers to a working relationship with set standards and norms, while abnormal adjustment refers to a working relationship that happens without the set standards and norms (Bergh & Theron, 2003; Di Giunta, 2022). Moreover, adjustment is a multi-dimensional process that involves several factors, such as early life experiences, self-efficacy, spirituality, social support, and emotional intelligence. It is a unique process experienced by the individual, and no single factor determines healthy or unhealthy adjustment (Wang et al., 2015). Alipoor et al. (2022) reiterate that the surrounding environment is a vital factor that influences individuals' adjustment, and organisations need to minimise unnecessary triggers of negative behaviour.

2.3.2 Competencies

Cucinella et al. (2022) explained that coping competencies are emotional domains that assist individuals in regulating the way they interact with stressful situations. The health theory of coping is one of the emotional domains regulating how individuals interact with stressful situations. Stallman et al. (2021) stated that health theory of coping refers to the extent that an individual uses all their responses to reduce unpleasant emotions from a stressful situation. Individuals use healthy and unhealthy coping strategies during situations of distress. Healthy coping strategies are associated with mental health and well-being, versus unhealthy coping strategies that are associated with psychological distress and mental illness. Resilience is a further concept that assists in understanding the role of individual differences in psychological adjustment and helps to achieve a healthy theory of coping state (Yu & Chae, 2020). It refers to the level the individual displays when bouncing back from a traumatic experience they have encountered. These individuals view difficult situations they face as challenges rather than failures (Wang et al., 2004).

Similarly, Wang et al. (2012) indicated that individuals with high levels of resilience, self-esteem, positive problem-solving skills, and lower maladaptive perfectionism find it easy to adjust. Accordingly, Bolton et al. (2017) also agreed that resilience is the individual's ability to find a solution to challenges they are confronted with at any particular moment. Furthermore, while Cassidy et al. (2022) defined resilience as a set of protective factors that involve positive mental health in bouncing back from an adverse situation, Vaillant (2022) defined resilience as the capacity to recover after a stressful encounter that the individual had experienced.

2.3.3 Coping strategies

Equally, previous literature described coping as the extent to which an individual can adjust or not adjust to the situation they are facing at a particular time (Coetzee & Viviers, 2007). Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) defined coping as thoughts and behaviours the individual use to manage internal and external demands caused by stressful events. There are two types of coping styles: emotion-focused and problem-focused (Kim et al., 2022). In an emotion-focused style, the emotional response is limited, whereas, in the problem-focused style, the response in the situation causing distress is reduced. Skinner et al. (2016) agreed that being emotion-focused is poor management of psychological and behavioural outcomes, whereas problem-focused means that the individual focuses on reducing the psychological impact of stress. Skinner et al. (2016) linked the two coping styles to reactive and proactive coping strategies, respectively. In the reactive strategy, the individual tends to think about past mistakes, whereas in the proactive strategy, the individual tends to concentrate on doing preparatory work in advance to get positive results.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1987), an individual can come out from a distress situation using any particular coping style of their choice. Aldwin (2007) agreed that coping strategies cannot be universally adaptive or maladaptive. They should be judged after considering the context and the social and personal resources available to the individual and how they influence their actions. According to Compas et al. (2014), coping is commonly known as a form of emotion regulation, where the individual engages in response to prolong the distressful situation. Individuals encountering stress rely on an intrinsic act to regulate their emotions while relying on

an extrinsic act when their emotions are regulated by others (Sui et al., 2022). Moreover, accommodative coping can be an alternative for the individual, where they simply rely on flexible adjustment of their personal preferences to situational constraints (Skinner et al., 2016). Four adaptive coping strategies lead to coping success: cognitive coping, emotional coping, social support coping and leisure coping. These adaptive strategies assist the individual in processing the stressors they face and expressing emotions associated with them. At the same time, the individual can cope by receiving support from co-workers or can voluntarily engage in physical activities that can assist with dealing with the stressors (Du Plessis & Martins, 2019).

According to Holton et al. (2016), maladaptive coping strategies can perpetuate individuals to remain distressed. These are expressive suppression, thought suppression, avoidant coping, and rumination. The individual does not deal with the problem at all; instead, they avoid it while suppressing even the feelings associated with it. The risk of maladaptive coping strategies leads to disengaged employees (Holton et al., 2016). These employees display feelings of threat, uncertainty, anxiety, alienation, and frustration towards change. In this regard, Raccanello et al. (2022) pointed out that coping strategies can be active or inactive and are assessed in various measurement domains such as cognitive, emotional, social, and motivational. It is, therefore, imperative for HEIs to be aware of inactive coping strategies that could be displayed by academics during organisational system and process changes so that they can effectively manage them.

In the context of HEIs, adjustment and maladjustment require the institution to be knowledgeable of the symptoms to look for that show when academics experience adjustment and maladjustment during the organisational system and process changes. Employees who experience adjustment symptoms are engaged employees who drive the institution's success and persevere to achieve organisational goals (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). They are open to expressing their views, thoughts, and ideas regarding the change process, which in turn can assist HEIs in achieving their intended goals. Whereas employees who experience maladjustment symptoms are disengaged employees that become withdrawn, making it difficult to embrace change, which can translate to resistance to change (Holton et al., 2016). They do not deal with stressors and the emotions associated with them very well, making it difficult to be

flexible during organisational system and process changes (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016). Accordingly, Raccanello et al. (2022) emphasised the organisation's obligation to ensure that its workforce has a set of cognitive and behavioural resources to manage their workplace demands. Thus, it is vital for HEIs to maintain a balanced level of adjustment among academics during the organisational system and process changes to eliminate maladjustment.

2.4 ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEM AND PROCESS CHANGES

According to Leonhard (2021), organisations are faced with a rapidly changing world, and changes are escalating exponentially, leading to working environment pressures that hinder productivity. Iwu et al. (2022) agreed that for organisations to survive and cope with the ever-constant presence of change and to remain relevant, retain key talent and improve cost-effectiveness, ongoing innovation is needed, which includes system and process changes.

According to Boohene and Williams (2012), organisational change and its nature is perceived to be very broad by organisations and the scientific community. The scale of change can be necessitated by organisational structure, the transformation of system goals, objectives, functions, and the organisation's corporate culture. The change can be planned or unplanned for either short term, long term or both. To ensure a good return on investment, change must follow five stages: description, assessment, approval, implementation, and confirmation (Boohene & Williams, 2012).

When managing the change process, the organisation must first assess intra-organisational dynamics, including the actions and behaviours of individuals to the change (Hinnings & Greenwood, 2015). This means that implementation must be operationalised and ideally embraced by all stakeholders involved in the change within the organisation. Hinnings and Greenwood (2015) reiterated that change success depends on the willingness of employees and leadership to work towards the same goals by adopting supportive norms, routines, and behaviours. According to Munyai and Kathu (2021), changing processes and systems in the organisation require change among employees and management in that they will need to be upskilled and adopt the correct attitude towards the change to implement the change effectively. To

achieve successful change, change management assists with a structural approach for the transition and transformation of organisations, teams, and individuals from the current state of affairs to the desired state of affairs (Isueken, 2022). Mirzoyan and Tovmasyan (2022) agreed that change management is a multidisciplinary activity where applications, tools and processes are used to move people and the organisation from the current state to a future state.

2.4.1 External factors necessitating organisational change

HEIs do not operate in a vacuum as they are impacted by the various external factors necessitating organisational change, such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). HEIs are mindful that these dimensions force institutions to improve their systems and processes to remain relevant (Moralo & Graupner, 2022). For quite some time now, the world has been contemplating the move to digitalisation and COVID-19 fast-tracked this move (Volini et al., 2021). The prospects of digitalisation in HEIs are driven by virtual or online teaching and learning methodologies, requiring academics to learn new skills to work within and teach in a digitalised world (Leonhard, 2021). Adjusting to such a higher level of thinking and adopting a new mindset causes uncertainty and anxiety among employees, and organisations must employ improved and relevant strategies that safeguard employees' well-being and support the required transition better (Munyai & Kathu, 2021).

2.4.2 Barriers to change

While introducing change, organisations must be mindful of the potential barriers within the change process. These barriers are referred to as severe, unplanned, and unexpected hindrances to change implementation (Coetzee, 2006; Maali, 2022). They are categorised as project-, people-, organisation-, and environment-related barriers (Coetzee & Stanz, 2007; Klein et al., 2022). Project-related barriers are inherent in the change initiative, the change process, and the management of the project. The project-related barriers focus on the direction, clarity and planning, implementation and controlling of the project. People-related barriers refer to employees' and management's resistance to change. Various reasons lead to these people-related

barriers. They could be satisfied with the current *status quo* or suffer from change fatigue, have inadequate leadership or management, fear the unknown, have competitive commitments, experience personality conflicts or just merely resist to change initiative itself as they disagree with it (Coetzee & Stanz, 2007; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Errida and Lotfi (2021) agreed that barriers to change are an integral part of change, and employees can be considered barriers to change as they can make change impossible if not managed correctly. Without anticipating and planning interventions to curb these barriers, change interventions to entice employees can fail (Awamleh, 2022; Coetzee, 2006; Wynn, 2019). Therefore, it is vital for organisations, including HEIs, to form a holistic view of potential barriers to change and manage or remove them as far as possible for change to succeed.

2.4.3 Organisational change techniques

Organisational change occurs through the employee as 'pressures are interpreted, given meaning and responded to by actors within organisations' (Dacin et al., 2002, p. 48). It is the duty of the organisation to influence employees to unlearn bad behaviour from previous experience (Wynn, 2019). Change affects how employees think, behave, form their perceptions, their ability to handle changing environments, and their engagement during the change process (Ndlovu & Parumasur, 2005; Zhou et al., 2019). Engagement requires everyone involved in the change process to contribute to the overall organisational change, strategy, and transformation (Claus, 2021; Smythe, 2005). When change is introduced, it affects the operations of systems, processes and people; therefore, effective change management is vital (Coetzee & Stanz, 2007; Lozano & Garcia, 2020). Herold et al. (2008) further agreed that engagement in overall organisational change involves change commitment which will enable the successful implementation of change. Thus, HEIs need to strive for engaged employees during organisational system and process changes to gain high levels of energy and innovation, which lead to high levels of job performance and organisational success (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2008).

During the change process, leadership is expected to develop a vision and strategy to inspire, motivate and influence all stakeholders, during the change process (Thompson, 2022b). While effective leadership during change may have been linked

to the situational and transformational leadership theories in the past, where the focus was mainly on adaptability, willingness, and readiness of those being managed and the ability of the leader to lead, motivate and empower in diverse situations (Buchanan, 2013; Turnnidge & Cote, 2016). In recent years, leaders are expected to be more person-focused, compassionate, collaborative, agile and resilient to make the change a success (Lawton-Misra & Pretorius, 2021). Moreover, organisational leadership is expected to lead change and not just manage it. That becomes evident through meaningful interactions with all stakeholders affected by the change (Bawany, 2017; Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). Thus, it is a good strategy for the leadership and the organisation to focus on mechanisms that motivate and inspire employees to embrace change, for the change process is bound to fail without the employee's buy-in (Bolden, 2020; Fullan, 2011). The key to ensuring adaptability, survival, prosperity and sustainability leadership must ensure that all complexities of change are addressed empathetically (D'Auria et al., 2020; Hinning & Greenwood, 2015).

According to Nuel et al. (2021), employees who trust their leaders view them as role models who can articulate a compelling vision. Mustajab et al. (2020) agreed that leadership's role is to promote an open and trusting environment for change to be clearly understood by employees. Sound leadership strengthens employee confidence and trust in organisational leadership (Bick et al., 2020; Tepper, 2000, Yang, 2012; Yukl, 2012). Accordingly, Akkaya and Bagienska (2022) agreed that ensuring trust between leadership and employees is key to the efficient functioning of the organisation. Therefore, HEI leadership must understand that they are change agents in the change process and that their approach to change can make or break the process.

Having articulated the role of organisational leadership during a change process, employees have their roles too. These roles rely on adopting positive behaviour that ultimately ensures the successful implementation of change (Cameron & Green, 2019). Employees are expected to either work together or individually to bring about the expected change, and as they do that, they add their own learning and patronage towards the process (Cameron & Green, 2019). During the change process, employees expect the organisation to provide them with support on various factors, such as resources, leadership, skills training, and wellness support, among others

(Canibano, 2019; Jehanzeb, 2020). Thus, the organisation needs to realise that employees are a vital resource in the change process and must be supported in the transition for change to succeed (Amit, 2018; Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021).

2.4.4 Job demands

When conceptualising well-being, it is imperative to highlight the impact job demands and job resources have on well-being so that organisations, and HEIs more specifically, can manage organisational system and process changes effectively and ensure good alignment (Rietze & Zacher, 2022). Accordingly, Rietze and Zacher (2022) defined job demands as work characteristics that require a high degree of physical, mental, and emotional effort from the employee. Schaufeli (2018) defined job demands as aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort that is associated with certain physiological and psychological costs. Job demands are therefore often seen as 'bad things' such as excessive workload, future job insecurity and lack of support in securing research funding, among other things. These 'bad things' are associated with occupational stress that can devastate employees and the organisation (Bauwens et al., 2017). Therefore, decreasing job demands may motivate employees to be more productive within all aspects of their roles.

On the other hand, Schaufeli (2018) defined job resources as aspects of the job that assist with the functionality in achieving work goals and reduce work demands associated with physiological and psychological costs that enhance learning within the organisation. Bjaalid et al. (2022) defined job resources as psychological, physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that achieve work goals and stimulate employee growth and development. Job resources are therefore associated with 'good things', such as high morale and motivated and engaged employees. On the other hand, poor job resources lead to stress, anxiety and burnout; therefore, improving it may lead to efficiency that may translate to higher outputs. Moreover, reducing job demand, improving working relationships and managing change more effectively are key in any organisation (Kinman et al., 2019; Giusino et al., 2021).

Rising job demands and role stress are likely to impair the well-being of employees, and moreover, poorly managed job resources are likely to exacerbate the negative

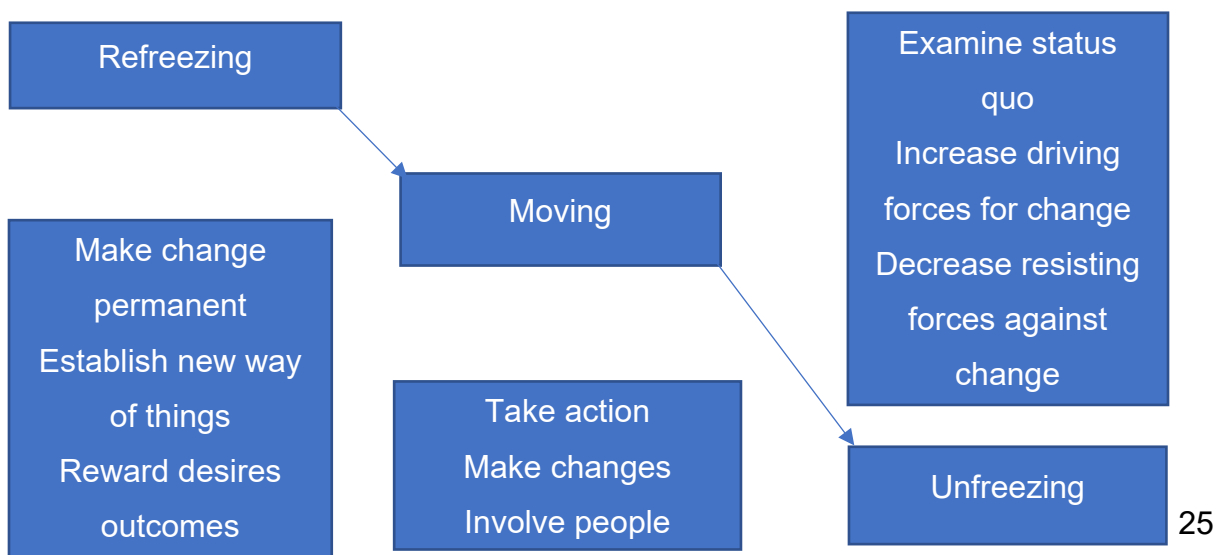
effects of increasing job demands (Lilja, 2022). For organisations and HEIs to excel in well-being, job demands, and lack of job resources have a definite impact on the well-being of employees. Kinman (2019) suggested that an organisation succeeds better in ensuring employee well-being when they are mindful on how resources are distributed. When distributed effectively during organisational change, job resources may decrease employee burnout and stress (Giusino et al., 2022). Moreover, poorly managed job demands and lack of job resources impede efforts to achieve well-being within the organisation during the change process and exacerbate ill-health among the workforce (Kreitzer, 2022).

2.4.5 Change models

According to Errida and Lotfi (2021), change models are vital for successful organisational change and help view change from different angles and perspectives. Change models seek to explain and identify factors that will influence change negatively or positively. The study focused on the three-stage model and force field analysis change model of Kurt Lewin. According to Kurt Lewin, change can be managed in a three-stage change model by focusing on changing group dynamics (Boohene & Williams, 2012; Dwiningwarni et al., 2022). The three-stage model (see Figure 1) is described below as freezing, moving, and unfreezing change.

Figure 1:

Kurt Lewin’s Three- stage change model (Lewin, 1951)

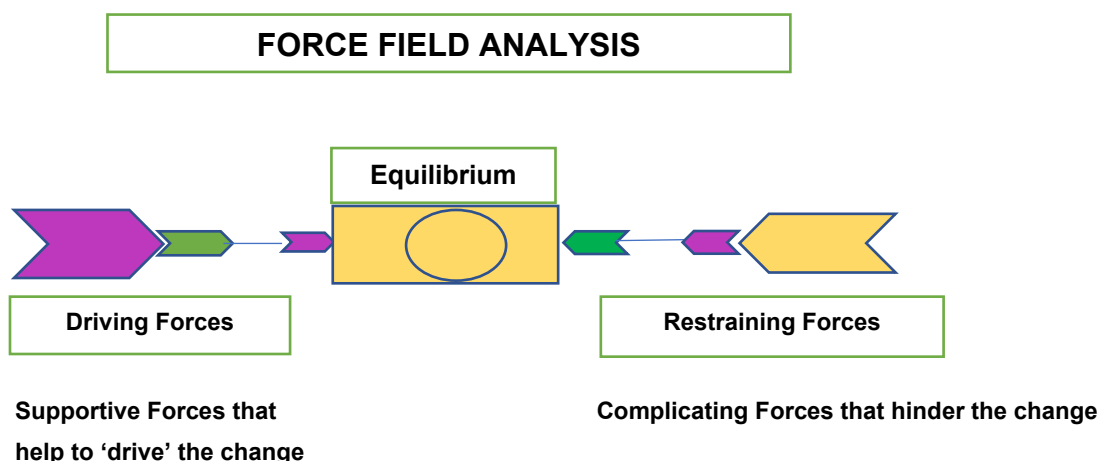


According to Errida and Lotfi (2021), the unfreezing stage consists of destabilising the *status quo*, the moving stage involves employees moving to a desired future state and the refreezing stage results in new behaviours, culture, and practices. These three stages are interconnected and prevent regression (Burnes, 2019). According to Boohene and Williams (2012), employees are prepared mentally and persuaded to accept the change at the unfreezing stage. This process is also commonly known as enablers as getting buy-in from recipients. At the moving stage, employees accept the change. This process is also commonly known as the implementation stage. At the refreezing stage, the employees are expected to embody the change. This process is also commonly known as maintaining the new *status quo* going forward (Boohene & Williams, 2012).

Kurt Lewin believed that the three-stage model goes hand in hand with the force field analysis model of change, and for successful change to occur, the state of equilibrium must be disturbed by simultaneously reducing restraining forces and increasing driving forces (Chukuigwe, 2022). The force field analysis model is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Force Field Analysis model for change (Lewin, 1951)



According to Chavan and Bhartaacharya (2022), the force field analysis model of change has two kinds of forces. First is the force that seeks to promote change, and second, the force that seeks to resist change. The force that promotes change is

referred to as driving forces such as improving incentives, productivity, and technology, to mention a few and the force that resists change is referred to as restricting forces, such as poor maintenance of equipment, technology illiteracy and hostility to mention a few (Jaipong et al., 2022).

2.5 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING HEIS ACADEMICS' WELL-BEING AND ADJUSTMENT DURING ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEM AND PROCESS CHANGES

The South African National Development Plan's vision for 2030 states three core responsibilities for HEIs. It first emphasises HEIs' responsibility to educate and train professionals who will partake in various sectors' economies. Second, HEIs are responsible for producing new knowledge and finding new applications for existing knowledge, which is done through innovation to equip society for constant changes. Third, HEIs provide opportunities to strengthen equity, social justice, and democracy. Based on this plan, the expectations levelled against academics are evident.

According to Van Niekerk and Van Gent (2021), they have observed increases in student intake due to the impact HEIs have on society. The student ratio issues translate to academics having to do more with fewer resources, in that students are human beings that require attention and support from their lecturers. The appointment of part-time lecturers also adds another layer of responsibilities to the permanent academics in that they are tasked with training these part-time lecturers and becoming their unofficial mentors, even if it is for a limited duration. These dimensions simply take time and effort that permanent academics do not necessarily have (Van Niekerk & Van Gent, 2021).

2.5.1 Transition to online teaching

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused further, serious disruption as new teaching strategies had to be developed and introduced rapidly. Academics had to instantly adapt to the new teaching norms and with no option but to abandon their entrenched teaching practices and move to online teaching (Littlejohn, 2020). This transition was termed emergency remote teaching to show that it happened outside

proactively planned environments (Hodges et al., 2020). Academics who were not experienced in teaching using online teaching platforms struggled to interpret students' learning experiences without verbal cues (Littlejohn, 2020). Similarly, academics had to strike a balance between maintaining educational standards and requirements while empathising with their students (Neuwirth et al., 2020).

In some or most instances, online teaching translated to extra time for preparing the content to be uploaded online. In some cases, classes had to be pre-recorded in designated venues. The workplace context further influences and shapes the teaching philosophy of academics and provides them with a sense of identity (Littlejohn, 2020). Moreover, having to work from home basically changed the capacity to teach as it first unsettles and disrupts the established work routines, and it requires some getting used to working two-dimensionally and no longer having the students face-to-face with the academic (Littlejohn, 2020). Additionally, working from home resulted in academics working longer hours to deliver on these new demands and no longer maintaining a healthy work-life balance where boundaries became blurred, increasingly placing more pressure on academics' mental health (Van Niekerk & Van Gent, 2021).

2.5.2 Increased demands and limited resources

According to Dhanpat et al. (2019), to merely perform operational duties, HEIs cannot afford to be static and instead need to strive for results that translate to positive productivity and profitability. To achieve this massive task, HEIs need to proactively pursue new strategies to enhance their services. HEIs are often known for a shortage of resources in the broader sense of the word, for example, HR, infrastructure, and financial resources. These shortages have a negative impact on academics in delivering their mandate. They lead to excessive workloads, extended working hours, lower salaries, lack of mobility and inadequate technological developments (Dhanpat et al., 2019). These negative factors make the function of academics stressful, with the likelihood of burnout (Han et al., 2020). Despite the reports of these negative factors, there are positive factors that still make HEIs attract academics and achieve substantial satisfaction in their existence (Avgoustaki & Frankort, 2019). Organisational leadership is one such factor, and its support plays a vital role in providing a sense of job satisfaction to academics (Fontaine et al., 2019).

2.5.3 Employee well-being support

Well-being support can benefit academics in HEIs by providing necessary support in times of uncertainty due to organisational changes. Well-being support is more effective since it is a targeted and intentional approach. For example, it is provided at individual, group, and organisational levels (Jonker et al., 2020). The overall support from addressing individual behaviour, providing training and upskilling employees and improving policies and organisational strategies address both short-term and long-term needs of the organisation (Giorgi et al., 2020). While conducting the study, it was discovered that the HEI being studied recently approved a Staff and Well-being Plan. This plan aims to support one of the HEI's key objectives, which is to become an employer of choice by enhancing the health and well-being of staff. It seeks to highlight staff health and well-being as an institutional priority that needs to be achieved. Thus, it was the opportune time in the researcher's view to conduct this study to influence the HEI's policies and practices by exploring contextual factors affecting well-being and adjustment of academics during organisational system and process changes.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the aims of the literature review and conceptualised well-being, adjustment, organisational system, and process changes on employees. The contextual factors that influence academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes were also considered. Quite vast information was reviewed to obtain a broad understanding of the available literature. Upon gathering the available information, the researcher was able to have an idea of the topic and was able to understand the gaps within the literature. The gaps were mainly that very limited research is available for the South African context within HEIs.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter described the research design and methodology used to conduct the study. It also discussed the research approach, strategy and methods used. The research method was discussed in more detail to ensure quality data collection and trustworthiness. This included the research setting, entrée and establishing research role, sampling, data collection, recording of data, data analysis, reporting and strategies to ensure quality data. The chapter concluded by discussing the ethical considerations applied while conducting this research.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Alvesson et al. (2022) defined research design as a map that identifies the means and methods to collect and analyse data. It is a systematic way of designing, compiling, and analysing information (Habib et al., 2014). The research design used in this study was a qualitative one in line with the interpretivist paradigm. It allowed participants to reflect on their lived experiences regarding the effects of organisational system and process changes on their well-being and adjustment. This research design discussed the research approach, strategy, and research methods.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study followed a qualitative, descriptive research approach. A descriptive study enables participants to share their lived experiences with the researcher and for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of academics in terms of the impact of organisational system and process changes on their well-being and adjustment (Mulisa, 2022). Furthermore, this research approach provided descriptive explanations of the beliefs and experiences of the participants as they experienced them subjectively (Weber, 2018). Bryman (2016) argued that this approach was interpretive because it views the world through different realities of participants. Both Bryman (2016) and Weber (2018) seemed to agree with Crotty (2020) that the ontological assumptions of interpretivism are realism and cannot be an objective truth.

Therefore, this approach was appropriate to answer the study's research questions through in-depth interviews. The researcher organised the collected data in themes in preparation for the findings.

3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research strategy adopted an interpretive approach to gather rich reports from participants. This enabled the researcher to understand the contextual factors influencing HEIs academics well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The aim was to put value to the experiences of HEI academics regarding well-being and adjustment. Through this strategy, participating academics as units of analysis were subjected to approximately one-hour semi-structured interviews to reflect on their lived experiences. Thereafter the researcher used an inductive process to make sense of the data collected.

3.5 RESEARCH METHOD

According to Creswell (2018), the research method refers to the techniques the researcher uses to acquire and analyse data to create knowledge. The methodology is defined as the strategy used in conducting an investigation (Creswell, 2018). The information was acquired by applying an interpretive research methodology that was interested in the meaning and behaviour participants ascribed to a particular phenomenon (Punch, 2013). Within the research methodology, the researcher considered and described the research setting, entrée and establishing the researcher's role, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data, data analysis, strategies to ensure quality data, reporting and ethical consideration, all of which are explained next.

3.5.1 Research setting

The research setting is within an HEI that is home to five faculties and a vibrant and cosmopolitan community of approximately 30 000 local and international students. It has a headcount of about 3 500 full-time employees, including 1000 academics. It is ranked among South Africa's leading tertiary institutions based on research outputs,

student pass rate and rated scientists. It is recognised internationally as an academic institution of excellence (Times Higher Education World University Ranking, 2022). To be part of an institution known for such high standards, academics are subjected to an ever-changing environment that is categorised by constant uncertainty and the need to adjust, especially amidst uncontrollable external circumstances such as COVID-19. The researcher interviewed participants to explore their lived experiences of how organisational system and process changes impacted their well-being and adjustment. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using an online platform, MS Teams, yet where COVID-19 regulations permitted, face-to-face interviews were conducted while observing all prescribed protocols.

3.5.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

At the time the study was conducted the researcher was employed as a Human Resources Practitioner. The HR office champions change management and is responsible for the overall well-being of employees. The researcher was mindful that by virtue of conducting the study, while working at the HR office, it could create certain expectations and/or impressions with potential participants. For this reason, the researcher provided a verbal disclaimer in each interview session to manage potential expectations or impressions. Furthermore, the researcher was in no authoritarian position towards any of the participants and actively reflected on her own bias and how that can be best managed effectively throughout the research process under the care of her supervisor. It is believed the researcher's position at the HEI in no way impacted negatively on the research. Participants were required to sign informed consent forms before participating in the study (see Annexure A). The researcher obtained gatekeeper permission from the institution where the study was to be conducted and ethical clearance from the UNISA Research Ethics Review Committee prior to conducting the research (see Annexure B).

3.5.3 Sampling

The research was conducted with a population of academics from the residential HEI. There are approximately 1000 academics employed in the participating institution. The study used purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling that selects

sampling units according to the purpose and topic of research and in accordance with specific inclusion criteria (Campbell et al., 2020; Singh & Masuku, 2013). The study's inclusion criteria were permanently employed academics at a HEI. Further, participants needed to have worked for at least a year or longer to ensure they have had exposure to organisational system and process changes at a HEI and experienced the influence thereof on their well-being and need to adjust. The demographics, age and job level assisted in gathering varied experiences. The study included academics between the ages of 18 and 65 of all races, gender, and job level, ranging from junior lecturers to full professors. The exclusion criteria were academics older than 65, which is the retirement age. Academics at the job level of distinguished professors were excluded because they were not freely available to participate. Lastly, temporarily employed academics were also excluded as they were mostly employed for a shorter duration with limited experience of organisational system and process changes.

Five academics were interviewed that are appointed in positions ranging from Junior Lecturer to Professor at the HEI. The researcher used the HEI's internal email platform/system to invite academics to participate in the study and therefore they participated voluntarily. Within qualitative research, a small sample is deemed appropriate as it can still generate rich and complex data in sufficient quantity for the researcher to draw contributory based findings from (Cash et al., 2022; Clarke & Braun, 2013). Moreover, the researcher was also vigilant in taking note of non-verbal clues displayed by participants during the data collection process. These non-verbal clues included instances where participants took long between answering questions, which could mean that they either found it difficult to answer or wanted to respond to what they thought the researcher wanted to hear (Sutton & Austin, 2015). In these instances, the researcher made use of further probing to ensure her observations were accurate and the responses of the participants were correctly interpreted. The researcher concluded the data collection process with five participants once a point of data saturation was reached. The concept of data saturation was initially introduced to qualitative research by Glasser and Strauss in 1967 (Francis et al., 2010). They defined the concept as the point where no additional data is found that develops aspects of a conceptual category. Thus, it was imperative for the researcher to interact

with raw data until no new themes and sub-themes arose to be able to conclude that a point of data saturation was reached and interviewing was stopped.

3.5.4 Data collection method

The study collected data through semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions to gather an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences (see Annexure C). Interviews were approximately one hour long allowing participants to share their experiences and for the researcher to capture those experiences comprehensively (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022; Skinner et al., 2000). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, research interviews were conducted virtually since academics mainly worked from home. MS Teams was used to conduct the interviews. The researcher was interested in this platform because it was prevalent in most organisations due to its overall functionality, such as the recording and video facilities. Its security features were also beneficial to the study. The researcher collected naturalistic data that reflected the participant's meaning of the research questions (Smith, 2015; Tellier & Yerian, 2022).

3.5.5 Recording of data

The researcher requested consent from participants to record the interviews (see Annexure A). Interviews conducted using MS Teams were recorded by using the platform's recording function. Where face-to-face interviews were permitted subject to COVID-19 protocols, the researcher used an audio recording device. The researcher anonymised the interviews using pseudonyms and transcribed the recorded data into electronic copies. Electronic copies were password protected, and all hard copies and devices used for this research were locked up in a safe place to which only the researcher and the supervisor had access. The researcher ensured that the recorded data remained authentic by transcribing it verbatim to maintain data quality (Andrew & Nehme, 2022; Sutton & Austin, 2015). All research-related information will be kept for a minimum of five years, including informal field notes. Thereafter electronic information will be permanently deleted, whereas hard copies will be shredded.

3.5.6 Data analysis

Content analysis is a technique firmly established in qualitative research for analysing research data collected through interviews between researchers and participants. It involves different modes of interpreting textual analysis of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is a systematic method for analysing and making inferences from text and other forms of qualitative information, such as interviews (Roberts et al., 2019). This study used content analysis, as it is not only aligned with the interpretivist paradigm but also since it was most useful to assist the researcher in coding the data collected through the semi-structured interviews. The study aimed to bring meaning, structure, and order to the collected data to ensure accurate findings were concluded and that it was a true representation of the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Smith (2015) suggested that it was the role of the researcher to understand the meaning the participant ascribed to their lived experiences. The content analysis method comprised of the following steps.

3.5.6.1 *Organising and preparation of data*

The researcher minimised distractions during the interview session to ensure that data was captured accurately. The researcher set aside sufficient time after interviews to transcribe the data using the recorded material (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moreover, preparing data assisted the researcher in mapping out the process ahead (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

3.5.6.2 *Reading through all data*

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the researcher reads through the data to make general sense of the participant's responses. Having a general sense of the data assists the researcher in reflecting on the meaning of the participant's responses which leads to generating ideas on how to present the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher listened to the tone of responses and got a general impression of how academics experienced well-being and adjustment during system and process changes.

3.5.6.3 Coding all the text

Coding is a difficult task where the researcher repeatedly interacts with the raw data to produce reliable coding (Benaquisto, 2008). The process of coding refers to the identification of similarities in the data. During the coding process, the researcher starts to understand the data through the eyes of the participants (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The researcher developed categories that answered key questions of the study. The researcher used an inductive approach to define categories to ensure the consistency of codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Coding the text assisted the researcher with the anonymity of participants. The underlying data assisted the researcher in producing categories and subcategories and eliminated trivial categories (Benaquisto, 2008).

3.5.6.4 Drawing inferences based on themes and coding

The themes and codes assist the researcher in exploring properties and dimensions, identifying relationships, and uncovering data patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These themes and codes assisted the researcher in clarifying participants' thought processes when they were engaging with the interview questions. Thus, the researcher took time to generate these categories to simplify the process of drawing conclusions to the study.

3.5.6.5 Representing themes and descriptions

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), conveying data findings in qualitative research is done through a narrative approach. The narrative approach assists the researcher in presenting themes and descriptions chronologically (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Themes assisted the researcher in providing coherent and meaningful findings (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The researcher decided on themes by classifying content according to the objectives of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher supported themes with direct quotations from participants to prove that the study captured their experiences. The researcher independently interacted with the raw data, identified primary and secondary themes, and produced headings accordingly (Benaquisto, 2008).

3.5.6.6 Interpretation of themes and descriptions

The researcher ensured that the results were representative of the participant's experiences. The reporting of the findings was structured in a manner that made it easy to read, with headings derived from the themes and coding capturing the participant's responses to the interview questions. While the researcher's data interpretations were summarised, distilled, and told respectfully, detailed information and annexures were securely locked up for confidentiality purposes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.5.7 Strategies employed to ensure quality data

In qualitative research, reliability of the interpretation and representation of the participants' experiences can be achieved by establishing confidence in the truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They refer to this confidence as trustworthiness and suggest that it has four criteria that need to be considered: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The study ensured that interviews were transcribed according to themes and codes for authenticity. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative research requires the researcher to be morally and professionally obligated to ensure ethics because they deal with sensitive information. The four criteria of trustworthiness relative to validity and reliability are discussed next.

3.5.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is establishing a high degree of coherence between the raw data and the researcher's interpretations and conclusions (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). The researcher can enhance credibility by accurately and richly describing data and conducting member checks (Given & Saumure, 2008). Additionally, credibility can be achieved by producing believable and convincing findings (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). To ensure credibility, the researcher first conducted semi-structured interviews that afforded participants the opportunity to give detailed accounts of their experiences with the research questions. Second, the researcher ensured credibility by providing evidence in the form of participant quotations to prove the accuracy of data

interpretations and conclusions. Lastly, the researcher ensured that participants verified that the captured data reflected their true experiences.

3.5.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which research findings provide an understanding of the participant's experiences (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). They believe that transferability can be achieved by providing detailed descriptions of participants' experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined transferability as the extent to which the findings have applicability in other contexts. To ensure transferability, the researcher first described in detail the process and methods to be followed in the study (Creswell, 2009). Lastly, the researcher presented findings with adequate evidence of how participants described their experiences during organisational system and process changes.

3.5.7.3 Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined dependability as the extent to which findings are consistent and can be repeated. They believed that dependability can be reached when the reader believes the findings reflect an accurate account of participants' experiences. To ensure dependability, the researcher ensured that the data analysis process was in line with the methodology used, namely content analysis. This approach did not take away that each participant's experience differs, but the aim was to eliminate anomalies as much as possible. Lastly, the researcher ensured that data was accurately reflected in the findings, interpretations and conclusions (Creswell, 2009).

3.5.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is defined as the extent to which researcher bias is eliminated, and the findings are shaped by the participants' experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure confirmability, the researcher did not impose her views on the participants and avoided jumping to conclusions, given the researcher's familiarity with change management. This was achieved by listening attentively to the participants to capture the essence of

their experiences accurately. Additionally, the transcribed data was reflective of both positive and negative information shared by participants to validate the credibility of the process (Creswell, 2009).

3.5.8 Reporting

Reporting was done by adopting a qualitative, narrative writing style where an inductive process was employed to make sense of the acquired data from participants' interviews (Sutton & Austin, 2015). To reflect the narrative correctly, the researcher relied on verbatim quotations from the participant's interviews. Relying on the verbatim quotations, the researcher aimed to narrate somewhat the exact message the participant intended to the receiver. Additionally, the researcher ensured that established themes and sub-themes were collated in such a way that they were reported in a narrative form (Sutton & Austin, 2015). These themes and sub-themes made it easy for the researcher during data interpretation. Data reporting was described in rich detail and yet self-explanatory to reflect the experiences of academics during organisational system and process changes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

3.5.9 Ethical consideration

Ethics in research play a vital role in safeguarding participants and evaluating the researcher's conduct to ensure a scientific study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The study applied the following ethical considerations.

3.5.9.1 *Ethical clearance*

The researcher began by applying for gatekeeper permission from the HEI, where the research was to be conducted through the HEI's Research Ethics Committee. Once gatekeeper permission was obtained, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of South Africa (UNISA) through the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology's (IOP) Research Ethics Review Committee (see Annexure B). The researcher only commenced with the research upon being granted ethical clearance from both institutions.

3.5.9.2 *Informed consent*

The researcher obtained consent from the participants by using the participant information sheet and the consent form that was provided by UNISA (see Annexure A). These two forms were designed to address pertinent ethical aspects, namely, to inform the participant about the purpose of the research, the role they were to play in the research and the inclusion criteria they had to meet to be able to participate in the research. Finally, the benefits and risks associated with their participation in the study were outlined. The consent form particularly demonstrated that the participant participated voluntarily in the study and could withdraw at any point should they no longer feel comfortable participating.

3.5.9.3 *Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity*

Ethical considerations required the researcher to ensure and maintain participants' confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. Only the researcher and the supervisor had access to the interview transcripts and data, considering their respective roles as student and registered IOP with the Health Professions Council of South Africa and in compliance with the Ethics Code of Practice (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2006). The researcher will keep the research material for a maximum of 5 years; thereafter, all electronic copies will be permanently deleted, and hard copies will be shredded.

To ensure the participants' anonymity, the researcher did not record any participant identifiers in the transcriptions and used pseudonyms to protect the participants' anonymity. The researcher eliminated bias by removing preconceived thoughts and understanding that the study's essence was to capture the participants' experiences. To ensure this, the researcher used self-reflection extensively and reached out to her supervisor to ensure possible bias was identified and effectively contained while collecting, analysing and writing up the data.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research design, approach, strategy and methodology used to conduct the study. The chapter further presented the appropriate research setting, accurate data collection and quality thereof, sampling, data collection method, recording of data, data analysis, strategies employed to ensure quality data, reporting and ethical considerations. Finally, this chapter concluded with an explanation of the ethical considerations applied to this research.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented the research findings that emerged from the data analysis process. The data analysis process generated findings relating to the contextual factors affecting academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. This chapter also illustrated the demographic data of the participants who partook in this research. It further presented a thorough discussion of the main themes, sub-themes and related categories that emerged from the research findings and support this discussion with verbatim quotes to support the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 below provides a detailed outline of the demographics of the research participants. All the participants in this study were selected purposively and participated voluntarily. They were all from the same institution yet situated within different faculties. They worked in the institution for more than one year and held positions from Junior Lecturer to Professor. All participants shared their own lived experiences during organisational system and process changes within HEI.

Table 4.1

Participants' demographic data

Academics	Gender	Race	Year of joining the institution	Position held at the institution
Participant 1	Male	African	2012	Associate Professor
Participant 2	Male	White	2007	Professor
Participant 3	Male	White	2014	Professor
Participant 4	Male	African	2019	Lecturer
Participant 5	Female	Coloured	2009	Associate Professor

4.3 MAIN THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The data analysis revealed four main themes, their sub-themes and related categories. Table 4.2 presents this. The main themes are factors that influenced change, factors that impacted academics' well-being, academics' adjustment experiences, and recommendations. A comprehensive analysis of the findings follows, supported by verbatim quotes and the participants' voices.

Table 4.2

Themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from data analysis

Theme	Sub-theme	Category
Factors that influenced change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership's role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and consultation
Factors that impacted academics' well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System and process efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System or process shortfalls • Support • Training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological components of well-being 	
Academics adjustment experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal coping mechanisms • Professional coping mechanisms 	
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Leadership style • Wellness support 	

4.3.1 Theme 1: Factors that influenced changes

Within this main theme of factors that influenced change, two sub-themes emerged: (1) technology and (2) leadership's role. Within the sub-theme, leadership's role, two related categories emerged, namely (1) communication and (2) consultation.

4.3.1.1 Technology

Generally, participants recognised that technological changes were imminent in the institution and that the institution seemed to rely on it. Yet even though it significantly impacted numerous processes and the employees, it was noted how employees still seemed to have embraced it. Even though they perceived it as challenging, they understood the necessity to embrace it and persevered until they mastered it.

I think I recognise that as the institution develops and changes, that we will need to change some things. I think that's a given, you know. We can't remain the same forever. There are new principles that come in both in terms of legislation in the higher education space how we are to operate. But even just the university itself, you know. If I think about how technology has impacted upon things like, for example, procurement processes or staff management processes. (Participant 3).

Obviously, there's been a lot more reliance on online systems in the last few years. I'm not good with technology. So, it's something that I need to take time with to understand it, to feel comfortable with it, and to get help where I need to be, okay, how does this work, what if this happens? Once I understand it, I'm happy to phase it in a lot quicker. (Participant 4).

What I'm saying is for a person like me who is not technical-minded, I had to struggle. I had to struggle. (Participant 1).

A few participants shared how adopting the new technology resulted in it taking much longer to finish a task. There also seemed to be a dissonance between how the technology seemed to fit into a specific context and then the new role participants had to adopt in addition to being an academic, but that of technician, trying to resolve

technical issues which came with the new technology. This seemed to be an aspect causing great frustration among academics as all did not seem to be as technologically savvy as was perhaps required.

But also, for me, it took a lot more time to mark, especially grading on the system took a lot more time to ... spend more time in marking and grading. (Participant 1).

You want to learn how to use technology, and it's not so easy. It does not come naturally because the nature of work that we do, doesn't require much technology as it would be people within sciences. In our faculty, traditionally, you don't normally use technology. (Participant 1).

I should be a technician; now, I must learn to be a technician. Do this and this, this-this-this. And when things go wrong, then you are in trouble, you know. (Participant 1).

There were sometimes things that we didn't really understand, which buttons to press and to do something with it, and sometimes the system didn't open up for you to actually do the submission. (Participant 5).

4.3.1.2 Leadership's role

Numerous participants alluded to the role leadership played during the change process. It seemed mostly that leadership was perceived to have exerted a great effort to assist in introducing the required system changes and equipping employees through presenting training with the necessary knowledge of how to use the new online system.

There was a concerted effort from the leadership initiating these processes. (Participant 2).

Then I think the institution was correct in ... I think it was managed well considering the circumstances at the start, when they had all these sessions about, okay, how

you use the online system, how do you use Teams, and all that sort of stuff. And they did that in a 2-week period before we started teaching again. (Participant 4).

Participant 3, in particular, highlighted the responsibility of continuously implementing the necessary changes, even if getting all stakeholders' buy-in and involvement in the change seemed challenging.

I think the other thing that I would also just love us to continue to do is not just change for the sake of change but to be responsible. (Participant 3).

That was difficult because I had to convince my colleagues to do this thing, even though I didn't necessarily think it was the wisest thing to do. (Participant 3).

Communication and consultation

According to participants, the institution seemed to favour using e-mails to communicate change. Participants seemed to agree that the communications were well-planned, open and transparent. At the same time, the rationale behind the intended change was communicated in such a way that participants could understand why the change was necessary and what benefits it holds for both employees and the institution, instilling a sense of trust.

Generally, I think we've been introduced to systems via e-mail, where we were informed about certain changes. My experience was that it was always well-planned. They're really very open with regard to the changes and the new system, so I really think that is positive. (Participant 5).

The rationale, the reasoning for that, of course, one understands that students will have access all the time, their work, so that they will not be limited. So, I understand why the system had to be in place and has to be in place for practical reasons and academic reasons; it's fine. (Participant 1).

For me, the things that are positive are number 1, clear communication, you know, the recognition that change is necessary; we can't stay the same forever; change is necessary. (Participant 3).

It's communication, open communication. Yeah, just being open about the processes. The transparency of doing what you do and the reasoning behind it. I think it's important for people to understand what it is, why it is important, and what the advantages would be. (Participant 5).

I would like to say, let's continue doing that, and let's just communicate, communicate, communicate all the time what is the change, why is it necessary, what are the implications of the change. So that helps. (Participant 3).

In addition to e-mails, participants also shared the value they gained from the involvement of an external contractor/facilitator who assisted them in operationalising the intended change. Also, having several meetings and workshops helped clarify the intended change process while allowing employees to voice their concerns and have their grievances positively responded to.

So, we had a big conference/workshop over 3, 4 days where this person came over and helped; all faculties were involved in that process of the curriculum. (Participant 2).

Yeah, we had a number of meetings where it was explained. (Participant 1).

So, we started many processes in the faculty in terms of a transformation committee and different workshops on transformation, on spatial injustices, etc. etc. So, it's still a continuous process. (Participant 2).

[Consultation session] It helped to be able to speak to someone who had authority to air the grievance, to be able to say, this is why we feel concerned and not heard. (Participant 3).

Finally, Participant 3 noted how the adopted consultation process assisted him in overcoming all his own concerns and uncomfortableness to such an extent that now he bought into it so seriously he does not wish to let go of it.

What do we change? Is there a good reason to change it? Can we help people to buy into that reason? Because I think there are very few people that are comfortable with change. Most of us, once we know how a system works, we want to stick with it, you know. (Participant 3).

4.3.2 Theme 2: Factors that impacted academics' well-being

The second main theme that emerged from the data analysis were factors that impact academics' well-being. The two sub-themes derived from this main theme were (1) resources impacting well-being and (2) psychological components of well-being.

4.3.2.1 System and process efficiency

Participants explained how system and process efficiency impacted their well-being and described in detail the factors they experienced during organisational system and process changes. Three related categories emanated within this sub-theme: system or process shortfalls, support and training.

System or process shortfalls

Participants noted numerous challenges they experienced relating to the stability and readiness of the system as well as other process-related shortfalls. These all seemed to have affected their well-being negatively in numerous ways due to pressures to complete or deal with tasks, stress, frustration and anxiety, to name a few.

Participants reported how the system would sometimes be down for hours at end either because of loadshedding, which no one could do something about, as the necessary infrastructure was not in place, such as generators. Or in more serious cases, in instances where the system malfunctioned, and academics have to wait for technicians to sort out the problems. Participants noted how such system errors or

downtimes significantly impacted their ability to do their work, affecting multiple modules and hundreds of students at a time.

Yeah, it goes down then for hours. That became not so nice, not so good, because you'd now have to depend on technicians – it will take some hours. So yeah. Well, sometimes there's loadshedding, but sometimes not about loadshedding, but something -perhaps they are doing maintenance, or something happens within the institution, then you hear the system is down. Yeah, well, once in a while loadshedding, but sometimes it was just technical glitches within the institution, whatever could have happened somewhere else. (Participant 1).

I think that's the biggest thing [system shortfall], because like yoh if it's your mistake or if it's a glitch of the system, that obviously affects one module I have 230 students, and in the other, I have 450 to 500. (Participant 4).

Currently, one of the very frustrating things, obviously, is around loadshedding. Our building is one of the buildings that doesn't have a generator. Whenever the power goes off, it's difficult to teach, and we still have students online. So, lots of meetings are taking place online, so having to say to myself, look, we'll plan. The institution executive has budgeted for a generator in the next cycle, and this will change; it's not forever, do your best now; it won't be this way forever. So that kind of flexibility was important. (Participant 3).

As a result of the system malfunctioning, Participant 4 mentioned how academics experienced an increase in their workload as a result of being flooded with student e-mails they had to attend to.

So, then you get like so many e-mails [during system glitches] being like, what's going on or what's happening here? And all that sort of stuff. (Participant 4).

Most impactful is Participant 1's shared frustration of how the process shortfalls were especially problematic and impacted negatively on his well-being when it came to the language policy. The problem seemed to be situated in academics being expected to mark scripts in a language in which they were not proficient. As a solution, the

university appointed markers proficient in other languages, but this seemed to cause huge frustration for Participant 1 as he had no control over how quickly the other marker would work. As a result, he experienced anxiety as he could not give his students feedback in time.

The language policy, especially in class, has been a major issue ... I think what I need to talk about is the language policy; I think to me this is quite significant; it affected me when I had to now mark scripts. Marking scripts now because here you are, you have English scripts, students who have written in English, others have written in Afrikaans. Now because you don't know Afrikaans, then you have to ... of course, university provided a person who would mark in Afrikaans. That was fine. That was very good. But then the problem arose when sometimes you are marking English, you marked faster, you finished your marking, somehow the one who is marking in Afrikaans is late, hasn't finished marking. Now you want to give feedback to the students – you cannot give feedback to students with Afrikaans scripts ... when you haven't got any feedback from the other colleague who is marking Afrikaans. (Participant 1).

Delays. Now you have to wait for a person who is still marking in Afrikaans. (Participant 1).

In addition to being unable to give feedback on time, Participant 1 also shared how the process of having different personnel marking students' scripts resulted in numerous enquiries about the discrepancies in comments provided to them, which he had to respond on, again adding to his workload and having to work under pressure.

And so, you find that students sometimes would pick up, those who have written in Afrikaans, they would find that their comments will not be ... (sighs) similar to my comments in English. Those who would be marked in Afrikaans, they would check with their own peers; they will find that the comments are not quite the same. Exactly. Different people [marking student exam scripts]. But in the end, it's you who is the teacher, myself, who has to answer, to respond to these queries, sometimes they come up. (Sighs.) So, you have these issues that you have to deal with all the time. (Participant 1).

Overall, Participant 1 experienced a major sense of uncomfortableness with having to teach in different languages due to the awkwardness it seemed to create in class as they had to cater differently for some students.

Yes, yes, yes, they're translating at the same time. Now what actually happened was that ... (sighs) yeah, it's sometimes quite awkward because the personnel from the Language Centre would come with walkie-talkies. (Participant 1).

In addition to the language issue noted by Participant 1, Participant 3 shared other process shortfalls. These included the adoption of online teaching modalities, which seemed to cause blurred lines between private and work life.

The fact that suddenly the boundaries between private life and work life were very blurred. (Participant 3).

Also, another process shortfall that aggrieved Participant 3 was how the process change caused a delay in him receiving his promotion.

What ended up happening was that my promotion was delayed by 6 months because of the changeover. (Participant 3).

Lastly, Participant 5 shared a further example and noted how the ethics application process had challenges when it was changed from manual to online.

The submissions don't go through, getting used to the new system and that the system doesn't always work as perfectly as one would want it to work. (Participant 5).

Support

Most participants alluded to the technical support provided by the institution to assist academics when they encountered problems and expressed this with gratitude. This support provided by leadership seemed to have been available 24/7, as noted by

participants, they needed this support and support from colleagues, such as student assistants.

And a big thing that they helped with and, yoh, I don't know how we can really quantify what our faculty IT did for us as a faculty, but like the support was available 24/7 to help us with these changes, and if there were urgent things, the support was there to help us, or if there's whatever, the support was there... Yeah. (Participant 4).

So, the institution, I think it was the right thing to do. But also, the other positive thing is that the institution does not just say, look, you can just do it on your own, they provide a support system. Support system. I mean, for me, my tutor was helpful, but even the technical ... I think they are called TAs, technical assistants. (Participant 1).

My student assistant would come in just to check whether the things were correct. (Participant 1).

This additional support not only enabled participants to embrace the change and start the process of creating a new context, for example, by creating a new curriculum. It also afforded them the valuable resource of additional time to focus on their core responsibilities while, with the support of fellow colleagues, gaining a better understanding of what the new process would entail and embracing the new system.

How do you go about in developing a new curriculum, where to start? It's not a top-down process, it's a bottom-up process. (Participant 2).

So, I remember, you know, just simple little things. The first time we had a departmental meeting via Teams, and having to phone each colleague and say, okay, tell me what's on your screen. Have you downloaded the app? Are you connected to the internet? Click the purple icon, do you see a link there? Okay, you can't hear me, is your volume up? So that sort of level of very, very basic sort of support, just so that we could perform regular functions. (Participant 3).

Interestingly, pointing to how colleagues cared for each other and supported each other, Participant 4 shared how the worries of his fellow colleagues multiplied on him and how he felt pressured because of that.

So, there is a pressure with it. But like for me ... and it's just a pressure of, like, you're working with other colleagues, or like I usually don't work by myself. If there's another colleague and you're trying to like to manage yourself, but be like, okay, it's fine; but their worries can sort of like be multiplied onto you, and then it makes things a bit more difficult. So, then there's a lot of pressure with that. (Participant 4).

Training

The lack of training caused participants to have difficulties using the system optimally. There were instances where participants struggled with technical issues and had to redo their assessments due to not being secured until the assessment time, which seemed to have been a great source of stress and anxiety as it added to their current workload. Some participants reiterated how lack of training caused them not to understand changes and how they needed to figure out the systems on their own. They also shared how they were expected to account for errors even though they were not trained to minimise such errors. Subsequently, there seemed to be a continuous pattern reported by the participants of being stretched, feeling uncertain and not knowing what to do and fearing they were in trouble as they did not know what to do and how to do it.

There were issues which were highly technical, like for instance, having a new page, setting up a new page ... And so, what it meant now was we had to withdraw the whole semester test now; to start afresh now, I had to come up with new questions. That had to be deleted. I had to delete that and to have a new set of questions and to get now this assistant and the tutor to help me upload that in such a way that it was not accessible to the students. (Participant 1).

You're continuously realising there are things happening you don't understand, you don't have the knowledge of what's going on here ... I've got to try to figure out what is happening here. (Participant 2).

Wrong marks! So, you are in trouble. But you were not taught what you must do, what you must actually do. (Participant 1).

4.3.2.2 Psychological components of well-being

The negative psychological impact that participants experienced mainly described their emotional state, where feelings such as frustration, anxiety and stress were more prevalent. The participants articulated to what extent their well-being was negatively impacted, especially how it caused battling with their internal world and attempting to find sense. In addition, lecturing time was extended due to the introduction of the new systems and processes, again resulting in weighing heavily on their psychological well-being as it was experienced as psychologically taxing. Furthermore, the support provided at times, or lack thereof, caused frustration among participants and the concern about the impact the changes have on students caused even greater stress for other participants. Moreover, system or process malfunctions resulted in participants feeling pressurised and made most of them constantly think something might go wrong, while some indicated they were not thinking about it as frequently so as not to endanger their health.

It affected my well-being in the sense that you are battling with your inner world and battling with your own systems that shaped you and where you're coming from. So, there's an inner battle inside of you, trying to make sense of this in a certain way. (Participant 2).

Well, it was, in a way, quite frustrating. Quite frustrating because you know that a lecture will take about 50-minute lecture. Then you know that it goes on to 1 hour and 10 minutes. So, an extra 10 or 15 minutes. So, you find yourself running into somebody's other time period, lecture period, because of this ... But of course, the other side is that for me, it took a lot more time to do the work and emotionally sometimes taxing. Sometimes emotionally taxing, especially when the system sometimes goes down. (Participant 1).

One of the last ones [Technical Assistant] who was working with me, I didn't find her... I found her very frustrating the way she was working with me. And at one time, I was very angry with her ... But it gets frustrating when you've got so many other things that you have to do, then you also now have to try to cope with learning how to use the system. (Participant 1).

Participants further alluded to how even though they thought this process was managed well, it made them feel frustrated, anxious, depressed and even hopeless. Again, concern for others, that is, colleagues and students, and worrying about the impact of the system change on them and their well-being was prevalent. Finally, as noted by Participant 3, boundaries between private life and work life become blurred, which seemed to cause additional stress.

So, I had to tell myself, be patient, be restrained, don't be anxious, you know. But at the right time, it all worked out, you know. And I think that was the right way to do it because number 1, it managed my own anxiety, number 2, it managed the relationship, which for me is very important. I'm a very relational person, and I wouldn't want to have upset or offended this new senior colleague ... I was also empathising with my colleagues who were saying this system doesn't work (laughs); it's frustrating. (Participant 3).

It was stressful, I can say that. I really encountered stress and stress in different ways. I think three levels of stress. The one was a real concern for our students, particularly the students in our faculty who are not all privileged in very internet device-ready environments, that it was going to be a struggle for them to do online learning. So, I was concerned about them. How will we teach effectively? And then the second thing I was concerned about is I have a few colleagues in my department for whom I'm responsible, who didn't know how to use computers, you know. And then, of course, there was the third level of sort of stress for me, which was just the fact that suddenly the boundaries between private life and work life were very blurred. (Participant 3).

Look, there were times I was feeling very depressed. Yeah, they affect me a lot, emotionally, because you ... (sighs) you are working with this system, you don't know what will happen tomorrow, what is happening you have done this, something goes wrong. What if something goes wrong? What's going to happen? ... Yeah, I mean it; because there were sometimes, you'd feel very depressed, and you feel hopeless about this and that. Then you even say that this is not really my job that I should be getting involved in all these technical issues. (Participant 1).

So yeah, [error in the system] I think it just puts pressure on you. (Participant 4).

I can't continuously think and reflect on what happens at work then I will injure my health. (Participant 2).

4.3.3 Theme 3: Academics' adjustment experiences

The third main theme was the adjustment experiences of academics. The sub-themes derived from this main theme were personal (1) coping mechanisms and (2) professional coping mechanisms.

4.3.3.1 Personal coping mechanisms

The personal coping mechanisms used by participants can be summarised as acceptance, embracing, agility, adjustment and positive action. Participants showed insight into accepting the change and not working against the system but embracing it and the resultant change. Also, to be agile and adjust as necessary by doing whatever it takes to tackle the change and make it work.

Generally, I've learnt that one needs to go with the flow needs to accept the change because if you resist it, it's just going to be much more difficult. So, you rather learn as much as you can of the new system and go with that as well. (Participant 5).

And there I had to guard myself to say, don't be negative, don't sabotage the system it's the only system we've got, let's see how we can make it work ... Don't be

anxious about it, don't be ... you know, I've got a whole career at this institution, work well with the people, be patient, things will work out. (Participant 3).

I'll try to adjust ... not everything at once. I adjust to it when I do choose to take those opportunities; I try to incorporate it, especially if I can see the use of it. Or let me put it like this: First of all, trying to put myself in positions where I'm learning about these different organisational systems and process changes. (Participant 4).

Yeah, exactly. I mean, I told myself that look, I'm going to do the best that I can do to learn how this thing works. (Participant 1).

It was also evident how personalities played an important role. Being mentally flexible and having the ability to openly and honestly communicate one's feelings and experiences with the people around you who were in it with you or your support network certainly assisted in getting the burden of worry they carried of their chests, but also to be in a position of receiving advice and perhaps new perspectives with it.

But also the sort of mental flexibility to say, I understand why this is happening. (Participant 3).

I think I'm just by nature an extrovert, so if I start to feel something, I express it, and I tell people, listen, this is what's happening, help me ... So, whenever I felt uneasiness, I discussed it with them [colleagues] and I'd tell them, listen, this is what's busy happening to me. So I was in the position that I could vent my uncertainty and could speak to colleagues (Participant 2).

The other thing was also not being afraid to tell people if I was struggling or not coping. So, speaking certainly to my close family, my wife, but also just colleagues to say, look, I'm struggling to figure out what to do here, can you give me some advice? (Participant 3).

Yeah, and just getting perspective from like either my faith or my family, or those sort of things that helps me a lot with these things, because like, I also know why, I try to sort of get that understanding that, like, if things happen or things change, it's

not to put us under pressure, it's usually because of other like outside situations, and we must just be like patient with those sort of things, and sort of take it from there. I think things like that do assist me with dealing with change or dealing with issues like that. (Participant 4).

Participants also alluded to the importance of self-knowledge in combination with well-balanced spiritual, physical and emotional well-being. These elements seemed to give a sense of security (higher power present), purpose and that you are not alone. They relied on their spirituality and families and by doing physical exercises to cope better with the changes. Many participants also alluded to how physical exercise and eating healthy assisted them in retaining balance and, in doing so, looked after their overall well-being as it also helped them physically and mentally.

I think it's understanding yourself and knowing yourself also, and going with confidence. I think one's spiritual well-being and your physical and emotional well-being sort of, I think they dovetail with each other. And knowing that there's a Higher Power than yourself and that you can try and do anything and you're not alone. (Participant 5).

I am a person of faith, so you know, daily I would have quiet time, I would pray about things. Yeah, I think certainly that faith element is important. It gives me meaning, that sense of purpose that I'm not on my own. (Participant 3).

So, I'm a big tennis player. I play a lot of tennis. Almost every day I go to the tennis court. I've had a nice game and then it's out of my system. (Participant 2).

Yeah, I mean, I do try to exercise, I do try to eat as good as possible. (Participant 4).

I realise not everyone can do this, but for me, physical exercise, being physically fit helped me with mental well-being. So, the fact that I could walk and run and just burn off that stress. I often in the afternoon go for a run and then figure out, ah, this is what I can do, fresh idea, you know. (Participant 3).

4.3.3.2 Professional coping mechanisms

Participants mentioned numerous professional coping mechanisms. This ranged from understanding the need and purpose of the change to align it with one's own purpose for work and modules to embrace the change and broadening the skills and competence one needed to adjust better during organisational system and process changes to do ones job properly.

So, I can be like, okay, this is what it is, this is why we should pick from X to Y, why people say it's useful [the online system]. Then I make an assessment of, okay, will this be useful for my purposes and for the modules that I lecture, yes, or no? Then, after that, adjusting to it, I try to adjust in a, I won't say slow pace; I'll do it very much in a very considered manner because I don't want to change something that I'm not too familiar with. So, I'll be like, okay, let me try it in this way. (Participant 4).

So, the best way is to accept that there's change, accept that there's progression, learn as much about it as you can in order for you to complete what you have to do and do your job properly. (Participant 5).

So, I, for one, had to put more time to try to get used to IT and how to use it effectively... Yeah, trying to learn this system. That did help. But sometimes, it was not so easy. Of course, we had technical assistance within the institution. (Participant 1).

It was commendable to learn that some participants embraced the need to change and found ways to make it work well. Participant 3 below provided evidence pointing to great insight into how the two conflicting worlds, that is, internal feelings and conflict, needed to be worked with to build a bridge to help with the needed transition. In a different form, Participant 1 also alluded to the 'building of a bridge' with the language issue by developing a rubric that then become the bridge between closing the gap and ensuring quality and consistency.

But to try and say, okay, how do you act like a bridge between these two sets of feelings? How do you calm things down, de-escalate conflict? So that kind of thing was quite important at that stage. (Participant 3).

So, it meant next time, before my colleague would mark in Afrikaans, we'd have to sit down now before he or she starts marking. Then I would have something like a rubric that lets us use this rubric together. You and I will have to use this rubric, the matrix so that what I do, you also do the same thing. (Participant 1).

4.3.4 Theme 4: Recommendations

The fourth main theme that derived from the research findings was recommendations that speak to the three sub-themes that emerged, namely: (1) resources, (2) leadership style and (3) wellness support. These three sub-themes are discussed next.

4.3.4.1 Resources

The institution is expected to put resources in place to ensure a smooth transition during organisational system and process changes. Participants recommended that the institution ensures the availability of resources to assist with the transition needed to implement the necessary change effectively. So, support capacity, especially on the IT side, seemed insufficient and needed to be addressed by ensuring the ratio of IT support employees to faculty employees was more balanced. Also, onboarding new employees and ensuring they understand the systems well was an important element that seemed to lack during the orientation process. Designing a more robust induction programme that covers all the necessary elements is, therefore, necessary.

And then, as much capacity should be built in the system as possible, either in IT or like just support systems within, like the faculty. It does seem like there's a lack of resource issue, just from my observations. It's only a handful of people in IT or a handful of people like helping us in the faculty with these things. Yeah, that obviously can be inefficient, especially in a crisis time like COVID-19. (Participant 4).

But when you come into the institution for the first time, you'll be employed as a lecturer. I found my experience in the faculty, especially orientation was not good was not as good. Was not as good. Orientation. It was very bad. (Participant 1).

Before we throw someone in to teach or before we throw someone into a new sort of organisational system, let's make sure they understand how things are. (Participant 4).

Participant 4, in particular, recommended provision should be made to train all employees on how the online system works and provide them with all the necessary tools to solve issues they might experience going forward.

But we should definitely spend more time being like, okay, this is how online system is, this is how it works, this is what you do, this is what you cannot do. (Participant 4).

Try to come and huddle up more often; maybe certain things could have been resolved. But I guess it's also a lack of resources thing. (Participant 4).

4.3.4.2 Leadership style

During organisational system and process changes, leadership is expected to adopt a leadership style that realistically enables a conducive environment to facilitate the necessary change. This includes creating opportunities for engagement and providing continuous feedback regarding the change process from inception to implementation. Participants recommended that HEI leadership should be certain that the planned system change is necessary and important before introducing it and that it should be well-planned through stages and not enforced on employees all at once. A phased approach is believed to aid employees in coping with the required change more gradually instead of all at once. This could result in resistance or negatively influence employee well-being.

That we do things because they matter, and they're necessary, and they're important. (Participant 3).

I think that change shouldn't all come as one ... a lot of changes at the same time, but that it's introduced gradually, and as you move gradually into this new system, that you're taken with in, a ... I like to call it 'bit-by-bit.' So, it is gradually introducing it and as you move gradually into it. (Participant 5).

Some participants recommended that leaders ensure they create a safe space in which all stakeholders involved, that is, students, employees and leadership, can engage in consultation and dialoguing to address concerns and find solutions as to how best the system can be implemented without negatively influencing employee well-being.

Create safe spaces, listen to the lecturers' experiences because I think it's not one-way. (Participant 2).

I think there must be a continuous dialogue from top structures to the faculties, to the different departments, but back again so that we listen to each other. We get some of these instructions from the top, we try to address it in our different faculties and departments, but then there's got to be feedback into the system again. (Participant 2).

I think the most important thing we can do is to create spaces so that these students can speak out not to oppose them from the start or immediately. (Participant 2).

Give them [Students] any opportunity to say, look, I can't write in that way, I need another option. And for me that felt almost like the institution was being harsh and uncaring. (Participant 3).

4.3.4.3 Wellness

It was quite surprising to listen to Participant 1's response about the employee wellness department, their work, and the help they offer. He indicated that he was unaware there was a wellness department he could contact in case he needed

emotional support. He was clear in saying there was no support related to employees' health during organisational system and process changes.

Which wellness department are you talking about now? What do they do? What is it all about? ... Well, not ... not so much support in terms of health. (Participant 1).

The other participants were aware of the employee wellness department; however, Participant 5 alluded to the fact that there might be cases where employees ignore the communicate circulated by the wellness department and subsequently do not utilise the support they offer.

I'm not sure what the university itself or the institution can do besides providing opportunities for wellness, which I think our institution does have quite a few opportunities where they have workshops for people's well-being, and it is sent through to everybody. I'm just not sure how many people really look at it and actually apply to take part in it. (Participant 5).

Subsequently, recommendations are made to the HEI's wellness department to strengthen its presence through awareness campaigns. Also, Participants 4 and 3 recommended that the wellness department reconsider its methodology and adopt a more holistic approach. Not only should this include looking after the elements present in the wellness wheel, but it should also involve management in the process of looking out for their employees by being equipped with the necessary skill to identify when someone needs help. Also, for management to provide coaching services to their employees to bring in an element of objectivity and guide them on how best to deal with the situation.

The wellness wheel and it had, if I remember correctly, physical, social, spiritual, occupational, emotional, and mental wellness. So, if you can try to maintain as many of those as possible, as far as possible, Yeah, I do think it's something that should definitely be if it's not done, it definitely should be done as far as possible. (Participant 4).

And it might be that that's one thing that the institution considers, certainly for middle and more senior managers, is to provide that measure of coaching, accountability just to help us to, when we face these mind blockages, or stress or over-work, or stuck with a problem, that there's someone objective who can listen and just coach us through it. (Participant 3).

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of academics' lived experiences during organisational system and process changes at the identified HEI. Four main themes, with their related sub-themes and categories, emerged from the data during the data analysis process. The main themes were factors that influenced change, factors that impacted academics' well-being, academic adjustment experiences, and recommendations. The next chapter discussed the findings that emerged from the study. This included the conclusions drawn, limitations, and recommendations to be made.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented an integrated discussion of the conclusions drawn from the literature review and empirical findings of this research. The chapter further considered whether or not the aims of this research had been achieved. The chapter also presented the limitations of the study while presenting recommendations to HEIs, HR professionals, industrial and organisational psychologists (IO), change management specialists and line managers to address the shortcomings that were identified in the study to better inform HEIs' policies and practices on how to best support academics and ensure their well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. Moreover, the chapter made recommendations for future research purposes.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review aims outlined in chapter 1 were to:

- (i) conceptualise well-being;
- (ii) conceptualise adjustment;
- (iii) conceptualise organisational system and process changes on employees; and
- (iv) explore the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment.

5.2.1 Conceptualisation of well-being

This section concluded that conceptualising well-being involves defining health as a state of physical, mental, and social well-being that refers to happiness and satisfaction that bring an individual to a state of fullness and purpose (Montanio, 2022). The literature review equally revealed that well-being is broad and incorporates physical, psychological, and social elements (Chen et al.2022). The physical element focuses on the individual's physical health; the psychological element focuses on the individual's emotional and mental health, whereas the social element focuses on the

satisfaction and happiness of the individual. Well-being gives the individual positive emotions such as joy, calmness, tranquillity, hopefulness, resilience and a sense of purpose (Thompson, 2022a). Thus, the essence of well-being assists the individual with the opportunity to develop their potential, not just physical or psychological prosperity (Jashnitha & Mohan, 2022). Employee well-being in the work context is imperative to ensure that the workforce can withstand organisational changes (Tuzovic & Kabadayi 2020).

5.2.2 Conceptualisation of adjustment

Adjustment is conceptualised as psychological or emotional distress that manifests through feelings of anxiety and depression (Dhanpat et al., 2022). Ever-changing environments and the presence of change and implementation of change initiatives often result in negative emotions among employees, such as fear of the unknown, worry, sadness, stress, depression, anxiety, and despondence (Aknin et al., 2022; Ndlovu et al., 2022). These negative emotions may negatively impact employees' ability to adjust (Ndlovu et al., 2022). Change creates instability and uncertainty, and it is in that context that organisations must monitor their employees' adjustment capabilities (Van Niekerk & Van Gent, 2019).

First, adjustment characteristics are conceptualised as normal and abnormal and can be classified as healthy or unhealthy behaviour during organisational system and process changes. The organisation is expected to counter maladjustment by reducing the negative triggers that can negatively affect employees during a change process (Raccanello et al., 2022). The adjustment competencies, on the other hand, are conceptualised as emotional resources that individuals can draw from to deal with the situations they struggle to adjust to (Raccanello et al., 2022). Kim et al. (2022) agreed that employees with no coping skills cannot adjust; instead, they succumb to pressure and feel emotionally exhausted. Individuals with good coping skills employ internal energy to carry on with the difficult situations they are faced with rather than feeling despondent (Waters et al., 2022). Therefore, during organisational system and process changes, employees are expected to have coping skills that help them to adjust by being flexible, resilient, and able to adapt to change (Ndlovu et al., 2022). Therefore, for leadership to understand and be able to work with the principles of the

force field analysis model of change could be quite beneficial. This model will enable them to understand what driving forces enable change and what forces resist change and manage these forces in a manner that will positively influence employee behaviour while also working with instances of maladjustment (Chavan & Bhattacharya, 2022; Jaipong et al., 2022).

5.2.3 Conceptualisation of organisational system and process changes on employees

Change is conceptualised as fluid and intangible hence employees experience challenges navigating through it (Etareri, 2022). It is a constant phenomenon that disrupts the current *status quo* (Naukkarinen, 2022). The available literature clarifies why change is introduced in many cases and is also inevitable (Mhlanga et al., 2022). The focus of introducing change still seems to involve conventional ways of planning and ultimately implementing it. In a work context, the changes disrupt the workflow and can cause the responsibilities to change drastically, or the tools to perform the work may change, resulting in employees doubling efforts to deliver their tasks (Okeke-Uzodike & Gamede, 2021). This is why Krimi (2022) emphasised the need for effective management of change and efficient employee support during the change process. Proper change management requires timeous, clear, and open communication and consultation processes from the organisation, while employee support can be offered in the form of additional resources and wellness support to alleviate any mistrust in the process (Childs et al., 2022).

There are external factors that necessitate change. To survive these external factors, the organisation requires vigorous and powerful leaders that can create a conducive atmosphere for employees to have minimal negative impact during organisational system and process changes (Krimi, 2022). Powerful leaders offer effective and timeous communication, they provide adequate support to the employees among other things. Having powerful leaders who champion change can assist with eliminating barriers to change by providing clear direction to the organisation and creating interventions that will best support the workforce during organisational system and process changes (Krimi, 2022). Thus, the organisation must have change interventions that support employees for them to remain engaged with the change

process (Schein 2010). Developing change techniques successfully assists in increased job resources which results in low job demand, and employees experience change positively. At the same time, the organisation will realise its organisational goals (Carolan, 2020).

5.2.4 Exploring the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment

The literature review demonstrated how significant the role of academics is. As a result, HEIs are constantly pursuing redefining and redesigning their systems and processes to ensure that academics can perform optimally in their roles (Hussein et al., 2022). The changes introduced to transition academics between various systems and processes can negatively influence academics' well-being and adjustment if adequate resources are not allocated to drive change seamlessly (Badasjane et al., 2022). Additionally, these changes may cause negative behavioural influences on academics when not properly planned, clearly communicated, well implemented and not providing employee wellness support (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2022). Thus, HEIs must eliminate factors that can negatively influence academics' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.

5.3 CONCLUSION DRAWN FROM THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presented a conclusion drawn from the research findings based on the main themes and sub-themes derived from the study. The study research aims were to:

- (i) explore the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment;
- (ii) formulate a framework to inform HEI policies and practices as to how best academics can be supported towards ensuring healthy well-being and adjustment; and
- (iii) provide recommendations for future research on improving the influence of organisational system and process changes on academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment.

The findings of this research yielded four themes: factors that influence change; factors that impact academic well-being; academic adjustment experiences; and finally, recommendations proposed by the participants.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Factors that influence changes

The sub-themes under factors that influence changes were (1) technology and (2) leadership's role during organisational system and process changes.

5.3.1.1 Technology

The findings of the study revealed that employees understood the rationale and the reliance on technology and were willing to adopt it, even though it caused some struggle on their part. Participants freely shared how technology changes challenge them and caused struggles and difficulties on two levels. First, their technological competence resulted in them being slowed down with their work and progress, and second, the required technological change was not always compatible with all aspects of the systems they operated according to, resulting in great frustration. Nevertheless, they were open and willing to put more effort into embracing the new technology and learning the systems.

Introducing the new system took some participants out of their comfort zone as they needed to move away from doing things the traditional way. It was encouraging to hear that they still managed to implement the changes despite all the struggles that employees had sighted. Participants came across as responsible employees and had the organisation's best interest at heart in that they welcomed the introduced systems irrespective of the discomfort it caused them.

5.3.1.2 Leadership's role

Leadership's role was recognised as vital during organisational system and process changes. Participants acknowledged how leaders made concerted efforts to support them while initiating the systems and process changes. Their efforts gave the participants the sense that their leaders were actively looking at innovative ways for

employees to perform their duties. The participants shared how they appreciated that leaders introduced change only when it was necessary to do so. They also appreciated the efficient way the leaders implemented the change by being open to frequent communications and consultations using forums such as meetings and workshops. This gave employees a voice to raise concerns, give inputs and positively resolve grievances they might have had. As one participant noted, this gave him a great sense of comfort amid this 'uncomfortable' process and time. Interestingly, a participant that was in a leadership role shared that sometimes leaders were expected to embrace change even if they disagreed with it. That statement reminded leaders that the organisation's interest takes priority over personal interests or preferences. In essence, leadership's role during organisational system and process changes is critical in articulating the reasons for the change, facilitating change, and ultimately implementing it. Finally, consultations meant that the engagements happened with people with authority that could provide direction and resolutions during organisational system and process changes.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Factors that impacted academics' well-being

In this theme, participants shared factors that negatively impacted their well-being. The sub-themes were (1) resources impacting well-being and (2) the psychological components of well-being during organisational system and process changes.

5.3.2.1 *System and process efficiency*

The findings of the study revealed system and process efficiency impacting negatively on well-being included system or process shortfalls, support, and training provided during organisational system and process changes.

System or process shortfalls

The system or process shortfalls negatively impacted participants' well-being as most participants reported the system was not yet stable enough and thus implemented prematurely. Furthermore, unpreparedness for loadshedding (no generators) and system malfunctioning resulted in an increase in workload. This included an increase

in student enquiries via e-mail and an increase in making mistakes resulting in the work having to be redone while trying to overcome the failing systems. Also, with the new language policy, quality assurance concerns were raised as academics felt they could not control the quality and timely delivery of the marked assignments, thus not giving students feedback on time. These system and process challenges negatively affected employees' well-being as an increase in work pressure was experienced, and promotional opportunities were negatively affected, resulting in higher levels of frustration, feelings of lack of control, and increased stress and anxiety levels.

Support

The findings show a general satisfaction among participants with the task-oriented support they received from HEI leadership and additional student assistants. This gave them additional resources to develop new curricula and extra time as they had more time to learn and master the new system and processes. Psychologically, they alluded to the extra burden they carried because of having colleagues suffer and, in a way, this increased pressure they felt to help others. It can be clearly derived from the participants' voices that support related to health and wellness was lacking or insufficient.

Training

Research findings revealed that participants, in some cases, received inadequate training during organisational system and process changes. Not being able to effectively utilise the system resulted in frustration, especially as they viewed some aspects of the system as highly technical. In other instances, participants had to redo or reload student assessments due to being incorrectly done initially, again increasing the workload. Participants indicated being in a constant state of feeling stretched and uncertain and that they would get into trouble. Furthermore, lack of training could result in reputational risk as participants shared quality assurance concerns such as allocating and releasing wrong marks due to not knowing how to upload these correctly as they were still attempting to figure out the process.

5.3.2.2 *Psychological components of well-being*

Participants described the influence of process and system change on the psychological part of their well-being as quite emotional as it seemed to become a battle within their inner worlds they were fighting while trying to make sense of it all. Participants used words such as feeling frustrated, angry, stressed, anxious, hopeless and depressed over and over again. Interestingly, although participants voiced extreme, negative feelings, none indicated or spoke to experiencing any physiological symptoms that affected their well-being. This could perhaps be ascribed to the coping mechanisms they chose to deploy, which was described in more detail under theme 3. Finally, participants not only spoke to their own psychological well-being during the interviews but it was often noted how a concern for others emerged as they cared greatly about the impact this change had on not only themselves but also their students and colleagues. In its entirety, and as well described by a participant, this entire process of change is 'psychologically taxing'.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Academic adjustment experiences

In this theme, participants shared their adjustment experiences during organisational system and process changes. The sub-themes were (1) personal and (2) professional coping mechanisms.

5.3.3.1 *Personal coping mechanisms*

The findings of this research emphasised the important role personal coping mechanisms play in assisting participants to adjust and cope with the organisational system and process changes. Participants shared how they learnt one should embrace the change and make it work. This requires coping mechanisms such as being agile and willing to adjust while focusing on positive actions. For example, some participants shared how they talked themselves out of resisting the change, not sabotaging the system and not being angry and anxious about it. Some participants noted how their personality and comfortableness to share their experiences and fears openly with colleagues helped them gain new insight and perspectives on some matters, enhancing their mental flexibility. A sense of belonging and a tolerant work

environment allowed them to learn from their mistakes. Other participants used a phased-in approach where they changed gradually and not all at once.

Participants finally spoke of the value of self-knowledge in helping them cope by striking a balance by attending to spiritual, emotional and physical needs. Participants realised that they needed their high powers to replenish spiritually during such challenging periods. Participants also shared how their physical well-being assisted them in coping. This ranged from playing their favourite sport or just getting in some physical exercise while also paying attention to adopting healthy eating habits.

5.3.3.2 Professional coping mechanisms

Participants shared that they developed professional ways to cope with change. For them to embrace and engage with the needed change, it was necessary to assess what the change entailed, how it was beneficial to the organisation, and how they could align it with their own needs and responsibilities to become more effective. Participants alluded to how this gave them the opportunity to learn new things, which broadened their own skill set. A participant, also in a leadership role, shared that he coped professionally by de-escalating conflict and acting as a bridge between the internal conflict employees were experiencing and the change that needed to happen. This allowed him to keep harmony in the department. Participants also noted how they relied on internal resources, such as the IT support department and assistants, to cope with system challenges. In addition, participants also shared how they had to rely on their own professional knowledge and skills. For example, as one participant shared, it forced him to be creative, resulting in him finding a solution, such as creating a rubric to assist him in ensuring quality assessment.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Recommendations

In this theme, participants shared recommendations that HEIs should address during organisational system and process changes. The sub-themes were (1) resources, (2) leadership style and (3) wellness support.

5.3.4.1 Resources

Participants recommended that HEIs should ensure that there are enough personnel to offer support during organisational system and process changes and that this support is readily available. The HIE must also develop a more robust induction programme that fully equips employees with all the system and process knowledge they need to be effective. Participants also recommended the implementation of more training interventions aimed at upskilling all employees to be sufficiently knowledgeable and equipped to effectively work with the current and new system and understand all processes thoroughly.

5.3.4.2 Leadership style

Participants emphasised the importance of leadership creating an environment and adopting an inclusive leadership style that fosters engagement and continuous feedback from the planning to implementing the proposed organisational system and process changes. Participants also noted how it is leadership's responsibility to ensure that change is necessary and important, after which the change should be implemented gradually, at a reasonable pace, so as not to overwhelm employees, negatively impacting their well-being.

Importantly, participants also recommended that leadership should create safe spaces for all stakeholders – students, employees and leadership – to engage in dialogue. This includes voicing challenges, finding effective solutions to problems, evaluating progress and receiving feedback on progress made. This implies leaders must move away from a leadership style in which they adopt a top-down approach and rather follow a consultative style in which continuous dialoguing occurs during the organisational system and process changes.

5.3.4.3 Wellness support

From the findings, it is clear that greater awareness should be created of the existence of the wellness department and all the services they offer to benefit all employees. Participants noted many employees did not use the wellness department and

observed they also do not respond to communications from this department. Participants recommended that HEIs strengthen awareness of the wellness department by launching more campaigns communicating the services and benefits they offer, especially during organisational system and process changes. Participants also recommended that HEIs equip leaders with the necessary skills to provide coaching services tailored to the demands faced by the organisational system and process changes. Furthermore, there was a recommendation that HEIs must ensure a holistic approach to well-being by providing what is referred to as a wellness wheel that focuses on physical, spiritual, social, occupational, emotional, and mental components of well-being.

5.4 INTEGRATING THE FINDINGS WITH THE LITERATURE

The research findings revealed that employees were receptive to organisational system and process changes, even though it was a challenging and uncomfortable process. Employees also understood that change was necessary for organisations to be more innovative, productive and competitive. Literature confirmed that organisations operate in a world undergoing drastic changes, and organisations need to keep up for them to be competitive (Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022). Further to normal change, organisations had to battle unforeseen or unprecedented changes like the COVID-19 pandemic, where technology became the main enabler through which HEIs could execute their business and employees perform their duties.

A framework depicting the results of this research is presented in Figure 3. This framework is intended to be used by HEIs to guide them in developing HEI policies and practices on how best academics can be supported towards ensuring healthy well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.

The framework (see Figure 3) illustrates three factors that were identified in the study as negatively impacting academics in HEIs' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes, namely factors that affected change, factors that impacted academics wellbeing and academics adjustment experiences. These factors can assist HEIs in forecasting, preparing and planning better for future changes. HEIs will also monitor negative factors and implement effective strategies

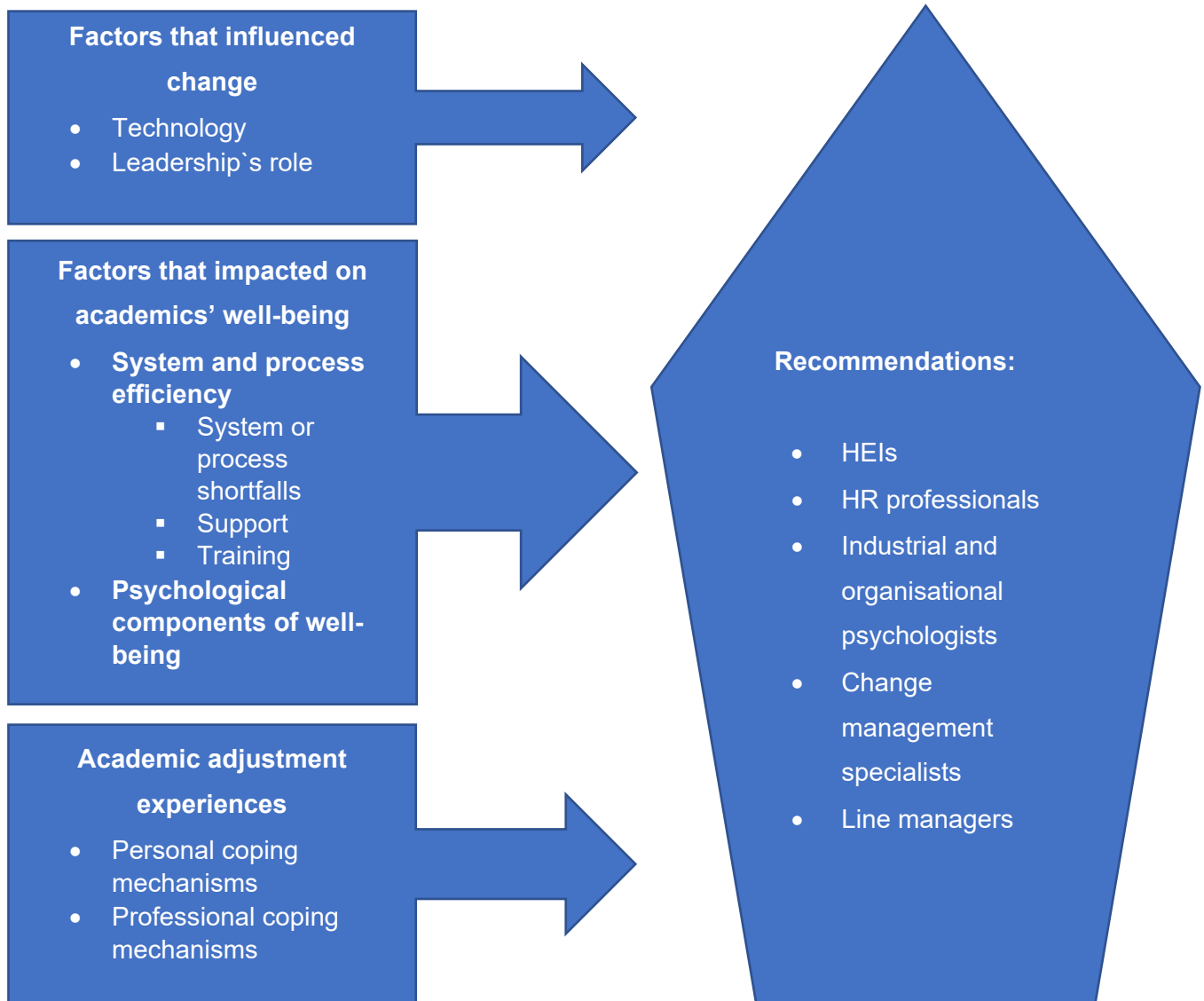
that will positively impact well-being and academic adjustment during organisational system and process changes. The study identified factors influencing change such as technology, which was not performing up to standard for various reasons. The impact of communication and consultation from leadership during organisational system and process changes was also highlighted. On the main, the HEI identified in this study did its best to communicate and consult; however, these factors must still be emphasised so that they can be improved going forward.

The factors that impacted academics' well-being were identified as • System and process efficiency and psychological components of well-being. The •System and process efficiency resulted from system or process shortfalls, support and training during organisational system and process changes. Psychological components of well-being were identified as the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual elements that were negatively impacted during organisational system and process changes. Academic adjustment experiences were identified through personal and professional coping mechanisms that academics shared in the study. Participants shared what mechanisms they employed to cope with the adverse experiences that they encountered during organisational system and process changes.

Furthermore, the framework incorporates recommendations that can be beneficial in informing HEI policies and practices on how best academics can be supported towards ensuring healthy well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.

Figure 3

Framework to inform HEI policies and practices on how best to support academics and ensure their healthy well-being and adjustment



However, to further describe the findings of the empirical part of this research, the framework is further integrated with the literature review conducted in this research. Participants shared negative psychological effects they experienced, which negatively influenced their well-being and adjustment during the system and process changes. These were mostly emotional feelings such as high levels of anxiety, frustration, anger, pressure, impatience, and stress. The negative feelings were triggered by the expectation to constantly figure out the new systems and the extra time it took to conduct lectures due to introduced processes and the additional support they needed to offer to students and fellow colleagues. The negative emotional feelings heightened a sense of despondency in some participants. Literature by Cameron and Green (2019) accentuate how organisations should focus on behavioural perspective by counselling employees and addressing emotions. The study of Dewhurst and FitzPatrick (2022) explained that organisations that survive change put people first and prioritise employee connectivity rather than merely driving an organisational vision.

Participants shared their adjustment coping strategies in two folds, the personal and professional coping mechanisms. These were the mechanisms they relied on to deal with the negative feelings they encountered during organisation systems and process changes. Participants shared coping strategies on a personal level, namely accepting the change and be self-motivated to work positively with it. Participants had to have internal conversations to calm themselves down and familiarise themselves with the change process. They created their own support structures through a debriefing with colleagues. Other participants relied on their spiritual well-being to get a different perspective on change. Through this different understanding, they were able to navigate the changes better, which ultimately made their jobs better too. To some participants, spiritual well-being was the reassurance that they were not alone during the journey of change. Regarding physical well-being, participants shared that they coped better when they played their favourite sport, did physical exercises, and practised healthy eating. The study of Ogden (2022) defined coping as the way that the individual moves mentally from a stressful situation to normal functioning. The mental move is made by changing how the individual thinks about their problem. That mental shift from a negative to a positive thought makes the individual manage change better (Ogden, 2022).

Coping strategies participants shared on the professional level were understanding the purpose and benefits that change was bringing. Participants explained that after they took the opportunity to learn the systems and the processes, they were able to cope better. Some participants shared that the technical support offered to them assisted them to cope. Other participants created practical ways to help them function better with the new systems and processes. In this regard, Jacob et al. (2022) defined coping as a process the individual takes in managing taxing stressors to tolerate or accept the problem they face. This process includes emotional regulation strategies, which are problem-solving and making intentional efforts to cope with the stress; however, individuals can have expressive suppression and have fewer problem-solving strategies (Knapp & Sweeney, 2022). Thus, it is imperative for HEIs to improve coping strategies that keep the positive adjustment of their employees.

As a result of the sudden changes, participants shared how they had to embrace system changes within HEI. It was evident from the findings that while participants understood the rationale for the changes, factors impacted their well-being. There were external factors that affected the change process negatively. Participants described these external factors as system shortfalls and system glitches caused by insufficient IT support capacity rendering it unable to cope with malfunctions. Participants cited load shedding as a challenge, proving sufficient risk mitigation was not in place with infrastructure, such as generators or even a backup system. Literature also confirmed that in general, proper infrastructure needs to be in place to implement change effectively (Lederman, 2020). Maphalala et al. (2021) agreed that proper infrastructure is vital in supporting employees in delivering their responsibilities. Thus, Motala and Menon (2020) suggested that organisations should invest in infrastructure to implement changes successfully.

Some instances act as barriers to change the participants experienced during organisation system and process changes, such as inadequate training where they often had to figure the system out on their own. They explained how they took longer to finalise tasks due to them still learning how the system works. In addition to adding to their current workload, they also sometimes had to redo work as it was not done correctly the first time, further adding to the workload. Muleya et al. (2022) explain that failure to provide training could be costly to the organisation in terms of time spent

performing a task. It further indicated that training is critical to change management in ensuring that employees are competent in the suggested changes. Elsafty and Oraby (2022) agreed that training employees during a change process was advantageous to the organisation as it enhances employees' skills and knowledge. Achatz et al. (2022) reiterate that employees that receive adequate training are more likely to embrace the change and transition quicker.

Additionally, participants experienced system or process shortfalls and a lack of psychological support as barriers. These barriers caused participants to deal with the negative psychological components of well-being that they experienced during the organisational system and process changes, such as feelings of hopelessness, stress, anxiety, and depression, to name but a few. These feelings can be avoided if the organisation minimises barriers to change (Mühlemann et al., 2021). Carnevale and Hatak (2020) agreed that removing barriers to change can cause fewer interruptions and less emotional distress while employees try to navigate the new systems and processes.

The findings further revealed that the sudden shift from face-to-face teaching to online teaching during the pandemic influenced change. The study of Potter et al. (2022) reiterates how organisations needed to evolve and create a strong presence regarding online teaching as an immediate short-term plan to complete the academic year and for accessibility and economic survival, among other things. The sudden shift meant that change needed to happen with limited resources, given the short timeframe to make the shift to the new systems during the pandemic (Littlejohn et al. 2021). Literature defines resources as anything that can assist the employee in attaining the skill or knowledge (Armaou et al., 2020). Devereaux et al. (2022) shared that for change to succeed, organisations are expected to acquire resources and to coordinate them well.

Moreover, the research findings showed how leadership attempted to provide employee well-being support during organisational system and process changes, specifically leadership's role in planning for these changes. Participants shared the concerted effort that leaders showed to ensure success, which was evident in the efficient way change implementation was done. Participants also shared that

communication and consultation were done timeously and clearly most of the time. The reasons for the change were further explained very well. Various communication platforms were used to communicate the change, for example, meetings, workshops, and conferences. Participants further shared that consultation assisted in raising grievances that they experienced during the change process. Literature by Kotter (1995) highlighted that during organisational system and process changes, leadership needs to set direction, align the workforce and motivate them towards the envisaged change. Literature proposed that leadership could apply Kotter's eight-step model, which suggests that communication is key to communicating the vision throughout the change process (Cameron & Green, 2019). Communicating the vision translates to consultation, where the organisation can paint a picture of the suggested changes to employees and explain the plan to get everyone to function optimally within this vision (Wentworth et al., 2020).

Tang's study (2019) further indicated that to achieve positive employee well-being, employees should not feel as if the change is forced upon them in any way and that they have no option but to submit to the change when leadership has decided on the change to take place. Equally, Mihalache and Mihalache (2022) indicated that the common change strategies should not focus on realising the vision of leadership and focus less on employee connectivity, where change is mostly effected by aligning people to systems and processes and not aligning systems and processes to people. The researcher, through this study, discovered that wellness interventions are required and must address individualise support that employees desire as the experiences of individuals are unique and require leadership to at least make efforts to have interventions that are not one size fits all during organisational system and process changes

5.4.1 Limitations of the study

This section described the literature review and empirical study limitations that were encountered when conducting the research.

5.4.2 Limitations of literature review

The study explored literature to obtain an overview of the available information and knowledge on the topic of study and to identify knowledge gaps. The study discovered that the available literature on contextual factors influencing academics' well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes is mainly presented through the experiences of international academics. Thus, this study will record the experience in the South African context to expand the limited body of available work.

5.4.3 Limitations of empirical study

The study only reflects the experiences of academics in a residential university. It does not reflect the experiences of the other academics at other residential and online HEIs. The sample size was sufficient for this qualitative research as data saturation was reached. However, the data collection can be enriched if, in another study, the specific inclusion criterion can be expanded to consider not only the experiences of permanently employed academics but also that of contract employees, support staff and management of the HEI.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presented recommendations to HEIs, HR professionals, industrial and organisational psychologists, change management specialists and line managers for future studies.

5.5.1 Recommendations for future studies

The researcher recommends that more studies be conducted within South African HEIs. Future research studies should focus on the role of leadership and employee connectivity during organisational system and process changes. Further research is also needed to develop a framework that clearly outlines the role of all stakeholders during the different phases of a change management initiative planning and implementation, with a specific emphasis on how they can be more employee well-being focused and holistic in all the elements they include in their project. Furthermore,

future research should be conducted on the influence of organisational readiness on planning and implementing a change initiative and how best the risks associated with it can be managed integrous and ethically. When conducting these studies, people who initiate change must be allowed to voice their views on how the changes impact them. Moreover, the support staff members must also be afforded the opportunity to bring across their experiences as they are expected to offer support to academics. The various views will result in recommendations that will better inform HEI policies and practices on how best employees can be supported towards ensuring healthy well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.

5.5.2 Recommendations to HEIs and stakeholders

HEIs as the initiators of change are expected to manage change in a manner that is considerate to the well-being and adjustment of their employees. To show consideration on a strategic level, HEIs must first determine the level of readiness of employees and systems before planning and implementing change. There must be clear indicators that employees as change enablers are receptive to change. Top leadership must foster a culture allowing for an agile workforce and systems. It is recognised that change happens in unprecedented ways and that leadership must have emergency plans that can respond effectively to mitigate any risks.

IOPs play a vital role in making HR professionals, change management specialists, employee wellness managers and line managers understand the impact change has on employee behaviour. During a change process, employees can demonstrate positive or negative behaviours, as was the case in the findings of this study. Line managers, HR professionals and change management specialists are expected to observe and monitor employees and provide further assistance to employees that change has impacted them negatively by referring them to employee wellness where necessary. Employees who display positive behaviour should be encouraged to embrace the change further. IOPs can assist in bridging the gap between employees with positive and negative behaviours by providing guidance on organisational strategy and, specifically, change initiative strategy to ensure it is planned and implemented in such a way that all risks are mitigated in terms of employee behaviour. Furthermore, the behaviour should instead be managed so that it becomes an enabler

ensuring successful change management implementation. Moreover, participants recommended that the employee wellness department launch awareness campaigns, get employees to trust them and use what they offer. They should further develop a holistic employee wellness programme and policies and practices that can better support academics during organisational system and process changes.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the discussions on the conclusions of the literature review aims and the findings of the empirical aims of the study. This chapter further integrated the empirical research findings with literature on the influence that organisational system and process changes have on the well-being and adjustment of academics. This chapter then presented the limitations of the study, followed by the recommendations that HEIs, HR professionals, industrial and organisational psychologists, change management specialists and line managers can implement when faced with change initiatives in future. The recommendations emanated from the integration of the literature review with the four main themes that emerged from the empirical part of this research.

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ANNEXURE A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number: **2022/CEMS/IOP/000**

Research permission reference number (if applicable):

01 February 2022

Title: Contextual factors influencing higher education institution academics` well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Phumla Penelope Banjwa, and I am doing research with Dr Annelize van Niekerk, a senior lecturer in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, towards a Master of Commerce Degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Contextual factors influencing higher education institutions academics` well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to find out contextual factors pertaining to organisational system and process changes as experienced by HEI academics on their wellbeing and adjustment. Findings and recommendations of the study will be published in a form of a dissertation. The participant and the institution can access the dissertation through university library. The study will help higher education institutions make changes that improve well-being and adjustment of academics during organisational system and process changes.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You form part of academics in the residential university that the study is targeting. The study seeks to afford academics an opportunity to share their lived experiences on contextual factors influencing HEI academics well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. I have been referred to you by a colleague from your institution. The study will conduct research with 10 participants that hold an academic position within the institution at different faculties and position levels. The aim is to capture detailed diverse experiences that will assist HEI to improve the well-being and adjustment of academics during organisational system and process changes. Should you agree to participate, you will be required to sign a consent form to formalise your participation. Participants will remain anonymous as pseudonyms will be used, such as Participant A, Participant B etc. to ensure confidentiality.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The participant will be subject to open-ended questions for an hour semi-structured interview. The participant is expected to share their lived experiences on well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes. The study involves a recorded audio with an audio recorder. An interview protocol will be used to guide the interview, and it contains the following questions:

1. Please tell me how you have experienced organisational system and process changes to date in the organisation.
2. How do you adjust to these organisational system and process changes, and why do you choose this way of adjusting?
3. In your experience, how have these organisational system and process changes influenced your ability to adjustment, and why?
4. How would you say have these organisational system and process changes impacted on your well-being?
5. During these organisational system and process changes, what would you say did the institution do correctly and or incorrectly that resulted in it impacting positively and or negatively on your well-being and ability to adjust?

6. What recommendations would you make to the institution towards improving the employee experience of organisational system and process changes so that it positively influences their well-being and how they adjust during these periods?

The researcher will ask clarifying questions should the need arise.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to explore contextual factors pertaining to organisational system and process changes as experienced by HEI academics on their well-being and adjustment. Findings and recommendations of the study will be published in a form of a dissertation. The participant and the institution can access the dissertation through university library. The study will help higher education institutions make changes that improve well-being and adjustment of academics during organisational system and process changes

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

No foreseeable risk of harm is anticipated, and no potential level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. The researcher will ensure a conducive environment for online or face to face interviews. Participants will remain anonymous as pseudonyms will be used, such as Participant A, Participant B etc., to ensure confidentiality. In the event that the researcher observed signs of anxiety from the participant, contact numbers for wellness department will be shared. In case of any

adverse event, the researcher will consult with the supervisor and the research ethics review committee to devise the best strategy on how to manage the situation at hand.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a pseudonym such as Participant A, Participant B. etc., and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. I will have access to the data in the form of paper-based records and the audio recordings. Dr Van Niekerk, as my supervisor, will have access in the form of paper-based records. My supervisor is a registered psychologist by profession with the HPCSA and will comply with the Psychology Code of Ethics and ensure that data is safely secured. I will ensure no participant name is mentioned in the masters dissertation when it is published.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at the researcher`s home for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After 5 years data will be destroyed, e.g., hard copies will be shredded, electronic copies and audio recordings will be permanently deleted from the hard drive using appropriate software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participants will be offered no payment or reward, and the participation will be voluntary.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Committee of CEMS, UNISA. A gate pass permission from Stellenbosch University was obtained. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

The final research findings will be published in the form of masters dissertation. If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Phumla Penelope Banjwa on 0827525948 or email banjwa@sun.ac.za. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor Dr Annelize van Niekerk on email vnieka2@unisa.ac.za or 0124298231.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Phumla Penelope Banjwa

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....(please print)

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNISA CEMS/IOP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

01 February 2022

Dear Phumla Penelope Banjwa,

**Decision: Ethics approval from
01 February 2022 to 01
February 2025**

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference # : **2022/CEMS/IOP/000**
Name : Phumla Penelope Banjwa
Student # : 45319375
Staff # : N/a

Researcher(s): Name: Phumla Penelope Banjwa
Address:
E-mail address, telephone: 45319375@mylife.unisa.ac.za, 0827525948

Supervisor (s): Name: Dr Annelize Van Niekerk
Address: Unisa, Muckleneuk Campus, Preller Street, Pretoria, 0003
E-mail address, telephone: vnieka2@unisa.ac.za, 0124298231

Contextual factors influencing Higher Education Institution Academics wellbeing and adjustment during organisational system and process changes.

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 **26th January 2022** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on **31st January 2022**.*

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.**



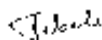
University of South Africa
Fritter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 792 UNISA 0001 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

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 **(01 February 2025)**
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 **2022_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

Acting Chair of IOP ERC

E-mail : tebelc@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-8809



Signature

Acting Executive Dean : CEMS

E-mail: Mpoofurt@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-4808



ANNEXURE C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

The semi-structured interview schedule consists of an initial stage in which the participant is prepared for the interview as well as the interview itself:

1. PREPARING THE INTERVIEWER TO CONDUCT THE INTERVIEWS

- Ensure to have a counsellor and the supervisor on standby should any adverse event occur.
- Be mindful of the typical signs of distress that can inform the presence of stress or uncomfortableness with the participants.

2. INITIAL STAGE OF PREPARING THE PARTICIPANT

In this stage, the academics are prepared for the interview by setting them at ease, as well as informing them of the following:

- 2.1. Their rights as participants in the research.
- 2.2. The purpose of the interview.
- 2.3. The reason for their selection.
- 2.4. The anticipated duration of the interview.
- 2.5. That consent must be of their own free will.
- 2.6. Should the participant feel uncomfortable at any point in the interview, they should please notify the researcher so that the cause of the uncomfortableness can be addressed.
 - 2.6.1. The researcher will have a counsellor on standby should the participant need support services.
 - 2.6.2. The interview location, if in person, will be the choice of the participant.
 - 2.6.3. The researcher will be very sensitive and will ensure the participant's video is on while conducting the interviews so that the researcher can observe their behaviour and detect any possible signs of discomfort or distress. The researcher will also frequently check in with the participants if they are still fine and ready to continue with the interviews.

- 2.6.4. The researcher will have their supervisor on standby should any instance occur for an additional source to refer to ascertain the best course of action to protect the participant the researcher and to ensure data is collected ethically.
- 2.6.5. If the interview is done in person, the researcher will always have refreshments such as water and tissues available.
- 2.6.6. The researcher will make it clear that the participant may take a break when needed and if the participant prefers that the interview be sectioned in shorter sessions.
- 2.6.7. The researcher will strive to develop a positive regard throughout the interview.

3. INTERVIEW ITSELF

In this section, the open-ended questions I intend to ask the academics.

- 3.1. How have you experienced well-being in the institution?
- 3.2. How do you describe your adjustment and why?
- 3.3. How have you experienced organisational system and process changes?
- 3.4. What is the institution doing correctly and incorrectly during organisational system and process changes that impacts well-being and adjustment positively and negatively?
- 3.5. How does organisational system and process changes influence well-being and adjustment, and why?
- 3.6. What recommendations would you make to improve well-being and adjustment during organisational system and process changes and why?

Frequent pauses will be allowed in-between interviews to ask the participant if she is still fine to continue with the interview.

The following guidelines are recommended by UNISA to ensure the safety of the researcher and participant(s):

- Do not proceed with the intended contact data collection visit or meeting if the researcher and/or participant is feeling unwell.

- Telephonic pre-screening before the visit is advised, as well as keeping a register of participants that were involved in face-to-face data collection activities.
- The researcher and members of the research team must also be screened before any human participant contact. Keep evidence of the screening data signed by a witness.
- Useful COVID-19 guidance is provided on the Department of Health WhatsApp group +27 60 012 3456.
 - When the visit can go ahead, please be mindful of the following procedures: 4.5.1 Wearing an appropriate cloth mask. Do not touch your face, and advise the participants to do the same.
 - The researcher has to ensure that the research team and participants have masks and sanitiser.
 - In specific contexts, it will be essential to handout sanitiser and sealed cloth masks to the participants.
 - If possible, do a pre-screening by measuring the participants' temperature (including those of the researcher) and ask questions that were not included in the telephonic pre-screening.
 - Keep a physical distance of 2 meters;
 - Sanitize hands with 70% alcohol-based sanitizer or wash with soap and water for at least 40 seconds before commencing any activities.
 - Sanitize all surfaces before commencing activities and again before leaving.
 - Avoid the exchange of paper between participants and researchers, unless the use of paper is ethically or scientifically justified.
 - Use disposable gloves with the handling of hard copies of documents, put it in a paper envelope, and store it away. Researcher and participants to remove the gloves or sanitize your hands since the novel coronavirus can reside on paper for up to 3 days.
 - Store documents for a minimum of 3 days before taking them out.
 - The risk of contagion during the use and exchange of pens, digital devices, smartphones, and tablets must be considered and mitigated. Please refer to the links below how to clean these devices.

- No food may be shared. Pre-packed, sanitized items such as chips or water could be handed out if necessary.

4. FINAL STAGE

In the final stage, the interview is concluded by asking the participants if they would like to add anything.

The participant will also be asked if they feel they need to speak to a professional counsellor as a result of perhaps reliving certain experiences that might have been discussed during the interviews. Participants will be referred to Dr Annelize van Niekerk (HPCSA Reg Nr PS 0118966) 012 429 8231 or 082 332 7377 and will also be reminded of the **Cipla SADAG Mental Health Line** (0800 4567 789 or WhatsApp 076 88 22 775), should they feel they need counselling or further support.

ANNEXURE D: TURN-IT-IN REPORT

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION ACADEMICS` WELL-BEING AND ADJUSTMENT DURING ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEM AND PROCESS CHANGES

ORIGINALITY REPORT

11 %	10 %	2 %	4 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	6 %
2	Submitted to University of South Africa Student Paper	<1 %
3	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1 %
4	www.sajip.co.za Internet Source	<1 %
5	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
6	works.bepress.com Internet Source	<1 %
7	pt.scribd.com Internet Source	<1 %
8	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %

core.ac.uk