The Ambiguity of Working from Home in a Pandemic

A co-created understanding of psychological well-being.

Molly M. Coutts

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Abstract

The emergence and rapid spread of Covid-19 has resulted in many non-essential businesses having to move employees into a working from home (WFH) framework. This study explores the psychological well-being (PWB) of New Zealand participants to understand how individuals were affected by the sudden transition to WFH. In particular, this study sheds light on factors such as work-life balance, organisational support and social capital and the impact these have on PWB.

Several overseas studies have explored the PWB of employees while WFH and reported that generally PWB decreased for reasons including physical impacts of WFH, fear of unemployment and threats to work-life balance. The New Zealand government took a hardline approach to Covid-19 and locked down the country when there were 155 cases. New Zealand's approach kept cases comparatively low and as such, the initial lockdown lasted seven weeks, shorter than many overseas lockdowns. This study looks at the PWB of New Zealanders while WFH during the pandemic and brings a qualitative lens to this emerging field of research. To date, little research has been conducted in a New Zealand context.

Six participants were recruited via snowball sampling. Participants were interviewed individually using semi-structured interviews and were asked questions about their well-being during Covid-19. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The picture that emerged appeared to differ in some significant ways from overseas evidence. Generally, participants had stable PWB while WFH in lockdown. Prior to Covid-19 employees expressed a desire to work from home, however organisational mistrust presented barriers to this occurring. Following the seven weeks of employees WFH, all of the participants' organisations changed their practices and policies to reflect new flexible working options, which participants embraced. Organisational support appeared to be a contributing factor to participants PWB but work-life balance decreased for the majority of participants due to the blurring of home and life boundaries and having to navigate new Covid-19 work protocols. All participants reported their trust in the New Zealand government indicating social capital was high among this group and potentially a contributing factor to the generally stable PWB.

Communication platforms such as Zoom and Teams significantly helped most participants feel connected to colleagues, friends and family, helping to maintain the social fabric, and in turn, social capital. Participants that experienced disconnection with family also experienced reduced well-being. These findings contribute to the research field of workplace well-being and may have implications for individuals and organisations as employees continue to navigate Covid-19 and hybrid work models.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents who have always encouraged me to go beyond what I believe I am capable of. Though your glasses may be rose-tinted, your resolute faith has been instrumental in me becoming the person I am today.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis study is a qualitative investigation of New Zealand employees' experiences of working from home (WFH) during the coronavirus pandemic 2019 (Covid-19). This pandemic has spread to all corners of the globe, impacting individuals, communities and nations in a myriad of ways. Many have lost jobs, livelihoods and loved ones and healthcare systems have been overwhelmed (Tangcharoensathien et al., 2021). Covid-19 was first detected in New Zealand on February 28th, 2020 and shortly after this, New Zealand entered its first lockdown (Wilson, 2020). All non-essential businesses either closed or moved to remote working signaling the first impacts to organisations in New Zealand. As a result of the pandemic and its widespread effects, there has been a notable decrease in the mental health of people worldwide (Xiao et al., 2020; Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Majumdar et al., 2020; Evanoff et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2021). At the time of writing, globally there have been over 426,600,000 reported confirmed cases of Covid-19 and over 5,900,000 deaths (WHO, 2022). The effects of Covid-19 are extensive and detrimental and for this reason, this study will aim to look at the impacts of Covid-19 and WFH on individuals' psychological well-being (PWB) in New Zealand.

New Zealand's response to the pandemic was commended globally due to its 'go hard, go early' approach which saw low numbers of cases and deaths compared to much of the world (Kung et al., 2021). The first lockdown New Zealand endured was shorter than many overseas lockdowns and as such, findings from New Zealand participants may vary in comparison to overseas studies. Overseas evidence found some of the largest impacts on individual's PWB during the pandemic was fear of unemployment, physical effects from home offices, psychosocial effects, social capital, work-life balance and supervisor support (Xiao et al., 2020; Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Majumdar et al., 2020; Plester, 2021). Most of these studies were quantitative, with just one specific to New Zealand. This left a gap in the research for richer in-depth and nuanced accounts of New Zealand experiences when WFH during a pandemic. The current research aims to understand specific factors that affected participants well-being in order to gain a theoretical understanding of issues and coping strategies.

Prior studies have looked at the impact of WFH on individuals, in particular factors like supervisor support, spillover effect, work-life balance and burnout (Evanoff et al., 2020; Standen et al., 1999; Wheatley 2012; Hayes et al., 2020; Peeters et al., 2005). However, there are few studies that consider these aspects in terms of WFH during a pandemic and even fewer are qualitative. While qualitative research can provide a rich understanding of lived experiences, there is yet to be a published study in this area. Such lived experiences may include the impacts of organisations working remotely, limitations on leaving the house and social distancing may contribute to unique findings from New Zealand participants. The results of this study may influence future research and contribute to the literature of PWB and WFH in pandemic conditions.

Quantitative research regarding WFH during Covid-19 has provided valuable findings on the widespread effects to PWB, but there is a gap for specific accounts to be explored. In particular, there is a need for stories, emotive experiences and individual perceptions on well-being in New Zealand during Covid-19. Allowing individual participants to share their experiences and interpretations enhances theoretical implications for navigating WFH in a pandemic due to the novel context.

This study employs an exploratory qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews and a snowball sampling approach. The data collection method is in-depth interviews conducted via Zoom. These interviews aim to explore perceptions of six New Zealand participants WFH during Covid-19. The interview questions were designed to reflect previous well-being models incorporating aspects such as work–life balance and organisational support. Well-being factors such as physical impacts of working from home or spillover effect have guided interview questions to ensure they are framed in the context of the pandemic (Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Standen et al., 1999). Interview questions are designed to ascertain the direct and indirect impacts to PWB and the reactions of participants. The data is analysed using thematic analysis in order to identify patterns and generate new insights.

One of the reasons for pursuing this topic is to understand my relationship with the participants' accounts of WFH. With that in mind, I have centered some of the interview questions around things I noticed while WFH during lockdown, such as relationship changes with colleagues

or boundaries with family. The objective is to co-construct these understandings in an interactive and purposeful way and to be accountable to participants as they discuss their perceptions. In doing this, I hope to create an ontological position from which I can infer what contributes to and fosters well-being during the pandemic. Thus, subjectivity and social constructionism incorporates my reactions and reflections alongside participants' accounts and is a strength of this research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010).

In summary, the overall aim of this study is to answer the following research question: *How has working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic impacted employee psychological well-being?* Understanding specific factors that impact PWB may contribute to current theoretical models and have implications for organisations.

In Chapter Two a review of the literature provides background to this research. The literature highlights measures of well-being and factors affecting well-being and considers WFH and emerging research on WFH during Covid-19. Chapter Three describes my methodological process and explains the exploratory qualitative approach. This chapter also includes information about the ethics of this study, participant demographics, recruitment method and describes my interview structure. Chapter Four presents more core findings based on the analysis of the interviews with participants and illustrates themes and categories. Chapter Five discusses perceptions of PWB for these participants and debates findings in relation to prior literature. Finally, the implications, limitations and future directions for this study are explored.

Literature review

Well-being is a growing area of research, yet an agreed-upon definition remains undetermined. Aristotle wrote in respect to well-being, “the only thing everybody agrees on is the name of this concept, but everybody understands its content differently. The generalised understanding of human well-being provided by psychology can be formulated as the existence of humans in accordance with their nature" (as cited in Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2016, p. 3). The struggle to understand the essence of well-being is ongoing with new theories still being postulated. In this section, the well-being literature will be reviewed alongside its relationship to resilience, workplace factors, social capital and crises.

Subjective Well-being

One of the longest-standing theories of well-being is subjective well-being (SWB). The tripartite model developed by Diener (1984) posits three distinct but related components of well-being: (1) positive affect pertaining to the presence of positive emotions such as satisfaction, happiness and joy; (2) negative affect pertaining to the absence of unpleasant emotions such as sadness, melancholy and loneliness; and (3) cognitive evaluations of one’s life satisfaction. The World Health Organization (WHO) (1997) understands these cognitive evaluations as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns” (p. 1). WHO describes life satisfaction as a “broad-ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person’s physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment” (p. 1). This demonstrates the complexity and multiple layers of well-being.

Assessing Subjective Well-being

One of the main characteristics of SWB is the ‘subjective’ component which makes it somewhat challenging to measure. Subjectivity in SWB pertains to individual judgement, rather than to an external, global measure (Christopher, 1999). Whilst there are standardised and validated surveys, the subjective nature relies on self-report measures. Individuals assess their own well-being by evaluating their positive, negative affect and life satisfaction. In order to do this,

people must decide what they consider normal standards and create a baseline assessment. The individual can then identify fluctuations from this baseline in their well-being based on the three components of Diener's model (Christopher, 1999). This introduces considerable variation in what is considered normal SWB as this will differ from person to person. However, 'normal' is another tricky concept to measure, therefore finding individual averages rather than normal averages is arguably the most effective measurement (Christopher, 1999).

While Diener's SWB measures of positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction have been discussed, the challenge lies in assessing the contributing factors of SWB. Biswas-Diener, Diener and Tamir (2004) postulate three main elements that contribute to positive and negative affect and life satisfaction. These are personality traits, adaptation to life circumstances and social relationships. It should be acknowledged there are several personality approaches such as psychoanalytic, life-span, humanistic, cognitive and trait (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Biswas et al. (2004) employ only trait theory as one of their assessment components of SWB. In particular, with respect to well-being they consider extroversion and neuroticism. Extroversion/introversion and neuroticism/emotional stability are dimensions from the Big Five personality factors, which also include openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness. Extroversion is associated with higher levels of well-being largely because those more socially outgoing tend to experience stronger positive emotions, which also extend to when they are alone (Biswas-Diener et al., 2004). Conversely, those with low emotional stability and higher neuroticism are more prone to anxiety, guilt and depression and are considered to have lower levels of overall well-being. Biswas-Diener et al. (2004) also note that extroverted individuals tend to have higher emotional stability which further amplifies well-being (Biswas-Diener et al., 2004).

The second factor affecting SWB is adaptation to change as a result of life circumstances (Biswas-Diener et al., 2004). The ability to adapt to a range of circumstances is often referred to as cognitive flexibility (Kalia et al., 2020). Kalia et al. (2020) discuss more broadly a construct called psychological flexibility of which they believe cognitive flexibility is a component. Similarly, psychological flexibility is the adaptation of behaviour to adjust to changes in one's environment with the goal being higher well-being (Kalia et al., 2020). Research in the UK found individuals with lower psychological flexibility experienced more Covid-19 related depression or

anxiety whereas those with higher levels of psychological flexibility tended to exhibit higher well-being, further increasing their ability to adapt. Cognitive flexibility has also been beneficial to adapt to unemployment anxiety, a threat or reality for some as a result of Covid-19 (Alioat & Keshky, 2020). Further, Alioat & Keshky (2020) assert cognitive flexibility, in relation to unemployment, can help maintain PWB. This is crucial, as unemployment has previously been shown to have serious negative effects to an individual's well-being (Biswas-Diener et al., 2004; Hoang & Knabe, 2021).

The third factor that affects SWB is social relationships (Biswas-Diener et al., 2004). Through seeking, forming and maintaining social relationships individuals are found to have higher well-being (Biswas-Diener et al., 2004; Lansford et al., 2005; Lucas & Dyrenforth, 2006). This ties in with the first factor suggesting extroverted people have higher emotional stability and as such, can have higher well-being (Biswas-Diener et al., 2004).

It is important to note the subjective nature of SWB may mean extroverts and introverts have different thresholds for their social relationships as a way to manage their well-being. Thus, personality traits, adaptation to life circumstances and social relationships all impact upon SWB and help an individual to actively assess their SWB as it relates to Diener's (1984) theory. Whilst Biswas-Diener et al.'s (2004) three proposed contributing components are not a model of SWB, they help to self-identify specific elements contributing to positive and negative affect and life satisfaction.

In addition to SWB (which is often referred to as hedonia) researchers also discuss the importance of psychological well-being (PWB) (often referred to as eudaimonia). Hedonia is when an individual is content, comfortable and happy (Dodge et al., 2012). Eudaimonia is the act of pursuing goals that have meaning to both society and the individual (Dodge et al., 2012). Keyes (2002) referred to SWB (hedonia) as assessing the pleasant life and PWB (eudaimonia) as assessing human potential and the meaningful life. While these two types of well-being have different definitions, Dodge et al. (2012) argue it is crucial to note these two forms of well-being are not entirely separate from each other.

Psychological Well-being

An influential model of PWB describes nine environmental features said to play a crucial role in predicting PWB (Warr, 1987). Warr (1987) developed this PWB model and took inspiration from Aristotle who asserted the highest of human good is eudaimonia. Aristotle claimed the highest of all human good is not pleasure or satisfaction but instead it is about engaging in ways aligned with your virtues and striving to achieve your best (as cited in Ryff & Singer, 2008). From here, Warr produced nine environmental features directly impacting PWB (Table 1). An individual who rates themselves highly on these features is said to have higher PWB. Personality traits are not listed in this model indicating a prominent difference between SWB and PWB. There is a greater acknowledgement of controllable environmental factors in PWB as opposed to internal factors, emphasized in SWB.

Warr's model appears to cover most realms of a person's life and even considers factors that are somewhat less controllable, such as the availability of money. There are so many components proposed to affect well-being in this model and while there is support for all of them (Biswas-Diner et al., 2004; Christopher, 1999), the model is arguably too complex. In number eight of Warr's model (see Table 1), he asserts there should be "neither too much nor too little contact" in relation to interpersonal contact. There is little information on what could be the 'sweet spot' for interpersonal contact apart from eluding that there is one. The formidable and complex nature of this model potentially makes it too intricate to assess PWB today.

Warr & Ryff Psychological Well-being Model Comparison

Ryff developed a six-factor model of PWB (Table 1) that picked up on dimensions of Warr's work and was also inspired by Aristotle (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Warr (1987) and Ryff (1989) both include 'autonomy' as a feature emphasizing the need for an individual to feel they have the ability to control their actions. There are also links between Ryff's 'personal growth' and Warr's 'opportunity for skill use' and 'variety' demonstrating individuals do better when they feel they are progressing and can apply their skillset. Another similarity lies between Ryff's 'environmental mastery' and Warr's 'externally generated goals' and 'environmental clarity'. These factors illustrate the importance of understanding and managing life situations and challenges that may arise. 'Positive relationships' from Ryff and 'opportunity for interpersonal

contact' from Warr also have links and exemplify the need for social contact and the impact interacting with others has on positively influencing PWB. Ryff's 'self-acceptance' and Warr's 'valued social position' is the last link and demonstrates the introspective aspect of well-being and how having a secure sense of self influences PWB.

It is evident there are many agreed-upon elements of PWB and while Ryff excludes some features of Warr's model such as 'availability of money' and 'physical security', many of the controllable factors are considered good indicators of well-being. The money and security factors of Warr's model, whilst important, can be considered largely 'out of control' of the individual. By removing them, the six factors that remain can be argued to be within an individual's control, which increases the ability for individuals to influence their well-being. Ryff's model is simplified whilst still incorporating essential characteristics of PWB.

There are studies suggesting there are four rather than six factors in Ryff's model (Chen, Jing, Hayes & Lee, 2013). Environmental mastery and self-acceptance are highly correlated (r = .90 and .91), as are purpose in life and personal growth (r = .94 and .97) (Chen et al., 2013). There are several studies that argue the six-factors are equivocal and not statistically distinct and thus it is perhaps represented best by four factors (Abbott et al. 2006; Burns & Machin, 2009). In fact, Ryff and Keyes (1995) also report high correlations between purpose in life and personal growth as well as high correlations between environmental mastery and self-acceptance. Despite this, the six-factor model is still widely used and, in some instances, modified to a four-factor model. From Warr's model, it can also be seen that opportunity for interpersonal contact relates to the social relationship aspect of SWB demonstrating the connection between the two forms of well-being.

Despite the popularity of Warr and Ryff's models, it is important to remember they were developed in a Western context and as such, do have limits on their use (Oishi, 2002). Well-being as a general concept, is culturally specific and hence there cannot be one single societal measure of it (Oishi, 2002). In the current study situated in NZ, also a Western context, I draw on Warr and Ryffs research, but are mindful of its potential cross-cultural limitations.

Table 1.

Comparison between core components of Warr (1987) and Ryff (1989) models of PWB

Warr 1987 Model	Ryff 1989 Model
(1) Opportunity for control – autonomy over activities and events, participation in decision making.	(1) Purpose in life - the extent to which individuals feel their lives have meaning, purpose and direction.
(2) Opportunity for skill use – opportunity to use or extend skills.	(2) Autonomy - whether individuals view themselves to be living in accord with their own personal convictions.
(3) Externally generated goals – moderate levels of demand; consistency of demands and task identity.	(3) Personal growth - the extent to which individuals are making use of their personal talents and potential.
(4) Variety – in task content and location, skill use, roles and responsibilities.	(4) Environmental mastery - how well individuals are managing their life situations.
(5) Environmental clarity – ability to understand and predict the environment. Clarity around consequences of behaviour, what is considered desirable behaviour, and the future.	(5) Positive relationships - the depth of connection individuals have in ties with significant others.
(6) Availability of money – variations at the lower levels are hypothesized to impact well-being most	(6) Self-acceptance - the knowledge and acceptance individuals have of themselves, including awareness of personal limitations.
(7) Physical security – good working or home conditions, absence of danger.	
(8) Opportunity for interpersonal contact – neither too much nor too little contact; quality of interactions, relationships, social support and instrumental support; good communications.	

Table 1 (continued).

(9) Valued social position – (a) wider cultural evaluations of occupational prestige and social rank; (b) the social environment of the home or work; (c) personal evaluations of task significance, meaning of tasks, self-respect from tasks.	

Overlap between Subjective and Psychological Well-being

Whilst SWB and PWB are used as separate measures of well-being, there are some overlapping characteristics. Chen et al. (2013) assert their bifactor model analysis demonstrated SWB and PWB are strongly related. They reason this by discussing SWB and PWB's link of 'general factor of global well-being' (well-being on a general level). When controlling for the general factor of global well-being, components of SWB and PWB form distinct factors demonstrating the variances between the two well-being measures. These are discussed further below. Hence, there is support for the theory that they are related and few would argue they are entirely conceptually distinct from each other. Instead, many researchers acknowledge well-being is a multidimensional construct (Dodge et al., 2012; Joshanloo, 2019; Robertson & Cooper, 2011).

Longitudinal research with 2,700 adults in the United States has found PWB is more stable over time than SWB (Joshanloo, 2019). Specifically, SWB was found to significantly predict SWB 10 years later, while PWB significantly predicted PWB both 10 and 20 years later. This suggests SWB may be more affected by more transitory emotional experiences such as reactions to current stressors and explains why SWB is not as consistent across time (Joshanloo, 2019). SWB could then be considered a reactive approach. On the other hand, PWB may be based on developing more stable skills and abilities that provide individuals with resources to deal with stressors and thus have more stable well-being over time (Joshanloo, 2019). Joshanloo's study may have limits on their findings outside of a Western context.

For the purposes of the current research, PWB and in particular Ryff's model, will be the main key construct underpinning this research as this is argued to be more stable over time.

However, I acknowledge the interplay of external and internal factors influencing PWB are an important component when considering the major event of Covid-19, and PWB takes this into account. A key factor to note is while Ryff's model was argued to be more suitable than Warr's for this research because it removes factors out of the individual's control such as availability of money and physical security, this differs from more abstract external factors. The abstract external factors to be considered in this study refer to emotional reactions to environmental stressors such as Covid-19, rather than the ability of one to be able to make sufficient money or live and work in safe conditions.

Resilience

The concept of resilience appears in most well-being literature, as a good sense of well-being requires resiliency (Brickman et al., 1978; Biswas-Diener et al., 2004). Ungar (2008) defines resilience as:

> In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2008, p. 225).

Ungar is influential in the area of resilience and discusses how resilience does not just come from the individual, but is also collective and considers several contributing factors (Ungar et al., 2013; Ungar, 2008; Ungar & Theron 2020). Throughout Ungar's research, he has attempted to demonstrate that sustained resiliency relies on biological, psychological, social, cultural and ecological systems which can help individuals improve and sustain well-being when faced with adversity (Ungar & Theron 2020; Ungar et al., 2013). These resilience factors are often intertwined. For example, psychological characteristics such as self-efficacy may be influenced by one's environment and so, have the ability to influence an individual's coping mechanism (Nowicki, 2008). A specific example of the interaction between these factors is Ungar and Theron's (2020) research where they found that among migrant Chinese children, those that had personal assets, peer and family support and a quality school environment were more protected against poor well-being. In the context of this research, resilience will be considered both

individually and collectively because Covid-19 affects many people's lives at the individual level as well as families, institutions and communities.

Importance of Social Well-being for Psychological Well-being

Keyes' (2002) model of social well-being extends the eudaimonic basis of well-being from the intrapersonal focus of Ryff's model (1989) to an interpersonal focus. Beyond PWB, Keyes (1998; 2002) asserts positive functioning includes social challenges and proposed five dimensions of social well-being to complement Ryff's earlier six-factor model of PWB. Including social well-being opens up the well-being assessment to how one operates and functions in the community whereas PWB is more of a personal well-being assessment (Keyes 2002). These social dimensions of well-being consist of social coherence (understanding of society and what is happening around you), social actualisation (evaluation of the potential and direction society is headed), social integration (sense of connection to society), social acceptance (trusting others and the capacity to be kind) and social contribution (evaluation of social value).

Keyes created this model to emphasize that individuals need to see society as meaningful and understandable, holding potential for growth, creating a sense of belonging and also having the opportunity to contribute to society. Thus, by combining PWB and considering social well-being dimensions, it becomes a broader way to measure well-being. PWB places emphasis on external stressors and the resources individuals have developed to deal with these. These resources can also be considered from a social perspective. That is, while individual social motivations come largely from within, they are also dependent on the situation and environment one might find themselves in.

Well-being at Work

Workplace well-being is something most individuals would strive for. Adequate organisational support, colleague relationships and individual characteristics could all be important factors in achieving this (Diener & Seligman, 2004). Well-being in the workplace is considered important from an organisational perspective due to the association between increased workplace well-being and improved performance (Diener & Seligman, 2004). For the individual, this is not just work performance but also carries into other realms of life such as emotions,

relationships, and communities (Diener & Seligman, 2004). Given work and home lives are often intertwined, a higher sense of well-being would also support other areas of an individual's life, promoting happier employees (Beauregard, 2011).

Well-being and WFH is a concept that has received frequent attention in recent years as organisations begin to move away from traditional ways of operating (Sproull, Kiesler, & Kiesler, 1991). Most of the literature focuses on how WFH affects work-family balance, job satisfaction and productivity for organisations. There appears to be less research on how WFH is affecting an individual's well-being, separate from the relationship with productivity. This gap in the literature could be explained by the lack of a sufficient model of PWB applicable to both work and home. Therefore, combining the current PWB measure with Keyes (2002) social well-being model may create an effective tool for assessing how work and home life function separately, and also how they are able to successfully coexist.

Effects of Working from Home

Places of work tend to have underlying fabrics and processes people become accustomed to and help form our routine, something often lacking when WFH (Standen, Daniels & Lamond, 1999). Diener and Seligman (2004) acknowledge that work tasks are enjoyed by most and provide meaning, structure, social engagement and an opportunity to use skills. The removal of many of these factors when WFH is largely due to the difficulty of separating work and home life. This is often referred to as the spillover effect (Standen et al., 1999; Robertson & Cooper, 2011). Standen et al. (1999) assert that despite physical and abstract boundaries between work and home this cannot always be prevented. Work flows into family-life and family-life flows into work-life and it can be difficult to separate and balance these elements. Work-family conflict has been seen to increase when WFH, largely due to the proximity of work and home life contributing to more frequent daily interactions which in turn can deteriorate well-being (Standen et al., 1999). Previously, during the work commute, people had time to switch between roles and shift the focus to either family or work life. Removing this buffer has been shown to have a direct negative effect on well-being (Standen et al., 1999).

Employees have been found to have a preference for WFH due to flexibility, less work stressors, more family time and the opportunity for more lifestyle control (Ekpanyaskul and Padungtod, 2021). WFH removes many of the office fabrics and structures and replaces them with a new routine, perhaps one more intertwined with home routines (Standen et al., 1999). Despite the negative effects of spillover and the above reported issues with WFH, employees still prefer it (Standen et al., 1999, Robertson & Cooper, 2011). This does however raise questions around why and how people's well-being is deteriorating when WFH tends to be employees' preference (Standen et al., 1999).

With organisations moving towards more flexible ways of working, this creates concerns about how work and home-life can co-exist successfully. Tensions and spillover effect have the potential to introduce negative reactions to WFH such as burnout (Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021). Burnout has been shown to relate to social conflict, lower motivation, dissatisfaction with work and increased risk of health-related impairments, all of which impact PWB (Rehman et al., 2020; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout is well-known in the workplace but it should be noted it occurs when WFH as well (Hayes et al., 2020; Peeters et al., 2005). Thus, while employees still prefer flexibility and increased family time that comes with WFH, burnout should be considered as a potential negative outcome (Diener and Seligman, 2004). More research is needed to understand what employees require to have higher levels of PWB when WFH. Further, whether or not home and work-life can effectively coexist when they serve different needs is an area requiring exploration.

Practical Aspects of Assessing for both Subjective and Psychological Well-being

In order to assess eudaimonia at work, components of hedonia must come into play. The interconnectedness between the two forms of well-being on a theoretical level was discussed earlier (Chen et al., 2013; Dodge et al., 2012). Roberston and Cooper (2011) provide insight based on literature and case study reviews acknowledging the interconnectedness and its usefulness when conducting research in the realm of work. Both the affective and cognitive (SWB) assessments can be evaluated alongside the eudaimonic well-being aspect of a sense of purpose at work (PWB). Robertson and Cooper define this as "the affective and purposive psychological state that people experience while they are at work" (p. 54). In essence, the affective state is if people feel good or

not at work, and the purposive state is whether people feel their work is meaningful and has purpose. This helps create an understanding of one's work well-being and moves away from just job satisfaction. Well-being at work is influenced by the interplay between personality and situational factors like management, communication, resources, work-life balance, job security and autonomy (Robertson & Cooper, 2011). These factors are all taken into consideration when an employee assesses their PWB at work. Feeling good about the culture of the workplace, coupled with a sense of accomplishment for the work directly relate to positive PWB (Robertson & Cooper, 2011).

Benefits and Negative Effects of Psychological Well-being when Working from Home

When employees have higher PWB, this can lead to key organisational benefits such as better performance, customer satisfaction and organisational citizenship (Robertson & Cooper, 2011). Robertson and Cooper (2011) review evidence looking at both engagement and well-being in organisations. In their book, they review and publish case studies from the UK, Europe and USA. They consider well-being in the workplace within various organisations such as Johnson & Johnson, the University of Leeds and the London Fire Brigade. These case studies were conducted through surveys and intervention groups, some occurring over a 15-year period. They found that when an individual is overwhelmed at work and demands are too high, it can lead to the detriment of PWB. However, a lack of demands has the ability to do the same. Thus, an individual should be challenged and have the opportunity to use their resources in order to boost PWB. Having control and flexibility over demands, as in WFH, is thought to increase PWB at work (Robertson & Cooper, 2011).

Robertson and Cooper (2011) acknowledge difficulties in implementing flexible working practices, particularly when choosing work hours, which can make collegial communication difficult. One common theme surrounding the transition to WFH was looking forward to removing the work commute and being able to achieve more household and family tasks during that time (Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021). However, most employees actually report working more hours late at night or very early in the morning (Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021). Thus, while many describe the relief of no commute, their commute time is now spent at the desk. The complexities

of balancing demands while trying to stay at equilibrium demonstrates the challenges associated with implementing flexible working practices.

There are clear organisational benefits of having employees' work from home, however ensuring employees are coping at home is an area requiring more research. WFH often results in working longer hours and whilst organisational productivity may rise from longer hours, many people experience loneliness and knock-on effects from more time spent working (Ekpanyaskul and Padungtod, 2021). Despite often having families on the other side of the office door, the uncertainty that becomes of work-life balance has been shown to aggravate psychosocial problems such as cabin fever and work-family conflict (Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021). This is an example of the spillover effect (Standen et al., 1999). Waking up in a place of work/home creates new associations. Before when home may have meant family, comfort and peace, new factors such as work, stress and deadlines are introduced. Family not understanding these double demands may contribute to a sense of loneliness. Work-life equilibrium becomes unbalanced and borders between home and work life become blurred, making it hard to switch off (Felstead, & Henseke, 2017). Shutting the laptop at the end of the day, leaving the office building and going home where work does not physically occur is exchanged for a new home office. Due to this, the effort of home workers is higher than that of office workers (Felstead, & Henseke, 2017). With work constantly waiting on the other side of the door, many give in to the temptation to read 'just one email'. Further, without face-to-face interaction, it can be harder to gauge how a manager thinks employees are performing (Olsen & Primps, 1984).

Work-life Balance and Psychological Well-being

Work-life balance differs for everyone, and some people may need either more work depending on their family, hobbies or role (Wilkinson, 2013). Work-life balance and PWB do appear to have a relationship whereby poor work-life balance negatively affects PWB (Wilkinson, 2013). Lockwood (2003) describes work-life balance from both employee and employer perspectives. From the employee viewpoint, it is said to be "the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities" and from the employer viewpoint, it is said to be "the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work" (Lockwood, 2003, p. 3). Thus, there is variation in how work-life balance is

perceived based on whose viewpoint it is being considered from. For the purpose of this research, work-life balance from the perspective of the employee is the one of interest. A balanced state of job and life should be sought. If these become unbalanced then well-being begins to be negatively affected (Wilkinson, 2013).

Work-life balance has been found to be an issue for both men and women regardless of relationship, parental, or full/part-time work status (Wilkinson, 2013). That said, women who have less work-life balance seem to have lower PWB than men despite there not being significant differences between reports of work-life balance for genders (Wilkinson, 2013; Shams & Kadow, 2019). Shams and Kadow (2019) conducted their study in Pakistan among 640 working class labourers and also found that women who had poorer work-life balance tended to have lower PWB compared to men. Shams and Kadow suggest these gender effects could be due to the historical ways in which women have had more domestic responsibilities. This pressure coupled with the increased female workforce could have a negative effect on well-being. Attempts at finding work-life balance are quite different among genders (Wilkinson, 2013). Women benefit more from job flexibility or working part-time whereas men attempt to not blur the boundaries between home and work in an effort to keep the balance.

Wilkinson (2013) considers the power of work in terms of well-being. For example, for those who work so much it leaves little time for friends and family, their work-life balance is out. This also impacts friends and family who may begin to resent the amount of time this person spends at work which subsequently lowers PWB for all who have relationships with this person. Further, a significant relationship between work-family stress and well-being was found whereby the imposition of work into family time consequently makes it difficult to meet personal demands, also resulting in lower PWB among family members (Wilkinson, 2013).

From the literature, it seems work-life balance has an impact on PWB (Grant et al., 2013; Wilkinson, 2013; Lockwood, 2003). While PWB and work-life balance are distinct concepts, they are inevitably linked, particularly when WFH is involved. The spillover effect and blurred boundaries are also concepts related to work-life balance. When equilibrium is not achieved, PWB is likely compromised and decreases. Thus, reducing the spillover effect has the ability to keep

work-life balance in check and as a result, PWB may be more stable. Another factor found to increase stability of PWB is high social capital.

Social Capital

The OECD defines social capital as "networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings which facilitate cooperation within or among groups" (OECD, 2001, p. V, as cited in Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2002). It has been found that nations with better social capital and trust respond to crises and transition more happily and effectively (Helliwell et al., 2014; Lindström & Giordano, 2016).

Helliwell et al. (2014) conducted a series of studies looking at how social capital relates to a nation's ability to deal with a crisis. Helliwell et al. (2014) used secondary longitudinal data from OECD countries to look at social capital and well-being ratings before and after the financial crisis. Dividing countries into groups according to the extent to which they were financially affected by the crisis, they found countries like South Korea which initially had reported lower well-being than other OECD countries prior to the financial crisis, after the crisis their well-being was amongst the highest. They argued this was due to Korea having higher social capital than the other countries in their group. For example, in Korea during the financial crisis people began job-sharing instead of laying off workers so most the population was still able to make some money, even if they were having to give up some of their hours to ensure the survival of others (Helliwell et al., 2014), While Helliwell et al. (2014) study did not appear to control for demographic differences across the samples from different countries, which could have affected their results, their findings do support Keyes' (2002) concept of social well-being by identifying that social coherence and social integration are important for long term well-being.

The impact social capital has on well-being is significant and understanding how they are related may be crucial to guiding how a nation should respond to crises. A sense of trust and the quality of social fabric during and after a crisis plays a large role in response and recovery (Lindström & Giordano, 2016). Similar to Helliewell et al., (2014), Lindström and Giordano (2016) looked at PWB and social capital as a result of the 2008 financial crisis. Their research highlights how crises affect both PWB and social capital and demonstrates their

interconnectedness. Their longitudinal study used data from the British Household Panel Survey in the UK among 11, 743 participants. This data had pre- and post-financial crisis comparisons of the same individuals (representing a range of employment/unemployment, socioeconomic status, gender, race and education). Lindström and Giordano found there was decreased social capital (such as generalised trust and social participation) after the financial crisis and this was related to negative effects on PWB. Crucially, there appeared to be evidence that the government response to the crisis was partly responsible for the lowered levels of generalised trust. They note that governments respond differently to crises due to several factors including resources, guidance, circumstances and money. Further evidence showed unemployed individuals had an increased risk of worse PWB largely due to feelings of uncertainty (Lindström & Giordano, 2016).

Based on the evidence, it appears social capital, and in particular generalised trust, has an impact on PWB. Those who had reduced trust had reduced PWB whereas those who retained trust were relatively protected against reduced PWB. This research demonstrates some of the factors that have the ability to impact social capital and reiterates the complexity of an individual's PWB (Helliewell et al., 2014; Lindström & Giordano, 2016). These findings highlight that PWB and social capital are not fixed and will fluctuate, at times dramatically with major events and that transparency as a government may help contribute to the trust required to support PWB among the population.

The Covid-19 Crisis

In December 2019, China reported an outbreak of pneumonia characterized by fever, dry cough and fatigue in Wuhan. Just a few days later, the genome of Covid-19 was released (Ciotti et al, 2020; Wu et al., 2020). The disease travelled quickly and soon spread to Thailand, Japan, Germany and the United States (Wu et al., 2020). By early February 2020, Covid-19 had spread to at least 25 countries, killed 565 people and there were 28,276 confirmed cases (WHO, 2019). Since its detection, the virus has spread globally, resulting in millions of deaths and putting strain on healthcare systems and economies (Tangcharoensathien et al., 2021).

The first reported case in New Zealand was on February 28th, 2020. On 14 March, when New Zealand had six reported cases, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced border restrictions,

mandatory self-isolation for those entering the country and indicated there would be economic support measures put in place (Wilson, 2020). On March 24th, 2020 New Zealand moved into lockdown with 155 cases (New Zealand Government, 2020). Many businesses had to shut down entirely with some others able to facilitate WFH. In April, New Zealand implemented graduated, risk-informed national Covid-19 suppression measures aimed at disease elimination (New Zealand Government, 2020). The New Zealand government's response to managing the public health aspects of Covid-19 used available science and health professionals' advice to move New Zealand through a series of 'alert' phases (Wilson, 2020). Since the initial lockdown New Zealand has moved between alert phases, with Auckland most frequently reverting back into high alert levels. At the time of writing, Covid-19, is still rampant around much of the world and vaccinations programmes are well underway in many countries, including New Zealand.

Covid-19 and Well-being at 'Work'

Covid-19 and well-being at work has increasingly become an area of interest and there are emerging streams of research since Covid-19's onset in late 2019. Most of the research incorporates overseas contexts, but there are some similarities between New Zealand and overseas lockdowns, working patterns, and government mandates (Fahy et al., 2020). A questionnaire was deployed in the US and received just under 1000 responses through snowball sampling (Xiao et al., 2020). This study included participants who needed to spend most of their work time at an office desk and had transitioned to WFH due to the pandemic. The study included mostly women, of varying ethnicities. All participants had at least a two-year degree, most earned at least between $50-100k and there was a range of professional occupations. Four measures were used and these were lifestyle and home environment (e.g. physical activity and food intake); occupational environment (e.g. changes in workload and distractions while working); home office environment (e.g. physical workstation and visual environment); and physical and mental well-being (e.g. musculoskeletal and anxiety).

Results from Xiao et al.'s study indicate poorer physical and mental well-being and an increased number of physical and mental health issues after transitioning to WFH. Physical issues such as neck, shoulder and back pains were identified, and aligned with most of the Covid-19 work-related research. Negative effects on physical well-being were largely associated with

ergonomics (Xiao et al., 2020; Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Majumdar et al., 2020). Psychosocial problems during Covid-19 were illustrated by Ekpanyaskul and Padungtod (2021) who found the most common psychosocial health issues were cabin fever, restlessness, the ambiguity between work and daily life, and anxiety from work. With the real possibility of continuing or having to go back to WFH again in New Zealand, organisations and individuals can learn from these shortfalls and create environments conducive to well-being. Xiao et al.'s (2020) study provided valuable insights, but primarily considered white collar workers with the large majority being women. Thus, further research is needed among workers from a variety of demographic groups to ascertain how well-being has been affected during the pandemic.

Covid-19 spread rapidly around the world and many countries and citizens had little time to prepare for the imminent lockdowns. Xiao et al. (2020) acknowledge the quick onset of Covid-19 and the reality that many workplaces did not have time to consider WFH practices and the general logistics surrounding this. There was no real time to put in place specific measures and not only were employees isolated from their workmates physically, but also from family and the outside world. This research looked at both physical and mental well-being in United States workers (Xiao et al., 2020). Three main factors were considered: (1) assessing the change in physical and mental well-being after WFH, (2) identifying how the changes in lifestyle and home environment after WFH influence physical and mental well-being, and (3) evaluating how the occupational and home office environments affect physical and mental well-being when WFH. Xiao et al. (2020) noted that while many office workers may have worked from home in the past, WFH has been completely redefined because of factors including the total inaccessibility of the office. Additionally, the pandemic was spreading throughout the world and there was little known about it.

With the closure of many businesses, jobs became more insecure creating a major external stressor. A report in the USA found between September-November 2020 there was a 127 percent increase in business closure from the previous year (Edmunds, 2021). Evanoff et al. (2020) conducted a study of over 5500 university employees from the medical centre at Washington University during the pandemic. The online survey included questions surrounding supervisor support, family home stressors and also included questions about working throughout the

pandemic. The findings showed increased stress, anxiety, depression, work exhaustion, burnout, and worsened well-being among participants around four to five weeks after WFH policies were implemented. Further, they found family households earning less than $70,000 reported having two or more new physical and mental issues more often than workers with higher income (Evanoff et al., 2020). While this large scale study provides important insights into workers mental health during the pandemic, by drawing only on employees at Washington University as its sample, context effects related to the employer and the demographics of the sample cannot be ruled out.

A well-being during Covid-19 study in India found that social distancing and isolation required during lockdowns resulted in detrimental effects on mental well-being, with increased digital use including cell phones and laptops to keep up with the work from home (Majumdar et al., 2020). India is an incredibly densely populated country of 1.3 billion across diverse states with economic and social disparities, health inequalities, and distinct cultures with a multitude of challenges created by the pandemic. Majumdar et al. (2020) also found office workers who were WFH increased the time spent on their laptops and consequently, sleep duration became shorter. Majumdar et al.'s findings of depressive symptomatology were significant, with a percentage increase among office workers of around two to 15 percent. This increased computer use may suggest less social contact and Keyes' (2002) model of social well-being demonstrates negative effects due to isolation and the importance of social aspects for well-being. Majumdar et al. acknowledge India has large disparities in terms of economic and social status and while these are also disparities in New Zealand, they may not be as extreme as those in India. Thus, this research may not be entirely reflective or relevant to the current situation in New Zealand.

Keyes (2002) also suggests understanding and seeing society as meaningful during this time is of huge importance. In New Zealand and globally, more than ever people have had to rely on neighbours to help keep people safe. Sectors of society have been difficult to understand during this time with some groups breaking rules and causing recurrent lockdowns. Covid-19 has changed the format of normal ways to assess well-being and this is a challenge that will need to be overcome when navigating PWB research and Covid-19. Using PWB research and incorporating social well-being literature is essential for the current study. The quality of an individual's social relationships

is critical to their well-being. Individuals need supportive and positive relationships and a sense of belonging to sustain well-being (Keyes, 2002).

Gender Differences and Stressors when Working from Home

A study on WFH during Covid-19 demonstrated that women had higher levels of anxiety, work exhaustion, and decreased well-being (Xiao et al., 2020). WFH may be more challenging for women since females tend to have more responsibility for household chores and working mothers may feel additional strains due to a lack of support with homeschooling and taking care of children (Xiao et al., 2020; Wheatley, 2012; Meyer et al., 2021). Meyer et al. (2021) conducted a longitudinal study with 789 participants in Germany. The majority of participants were female and government officials, working university students and freelancers working in diverse professional sectors. Most were living with a partner in shared households and the majority of participants had children in their households. Meyer et al. (2021) found employee exhaustion applied almost exclusively to women. The negative effects worsened when there were young children in the house, low levels of job autonomy and lack of support from a partner. The finding that women are more vulnerable to poorer PWB when WFH is a factor organisations may want to consider. Further research on how to alleviate the additional pressures women tend to feel due to traditional and childcare roles is needed. This research was conducted with primarily females which may have contributed to the overrepresented employee exhaustion for women.

Supervisor Support

There is an argument for the positive impact felt by employees when they have support from their manager and supervisor (perceived supervisor support). This is particularly relevant when WFH occurs without immediate contact. Evanoff et al. (2020) found perceived supervisor support was associated with multiple positive factors including reduction in work-family conflict, improved well-being and job satisfaction. Over two-thirds of respondents reported “much worse” or “somewhat worse” mental well-being when employees began WFH. Over half also reported their workload had increased after transitioning to WFH. Much of this increase in workload was attributed to Covid-19 work-related changes including the learning of new systems and ways of operations. Evanoff et al.’s data suggests that improving supervisor support mitigates work-family issues and directly affects well-being in the workplace, which has been shown to indirectly benefit

organisations (e.g., better performance and customer satisfaction). Evanoff et al.'s participants reported being stressed about finances, employment, home-schooling, care for elderly relatives and actually contracting Covid-19 (Evanoff et al., 2020). Evidently, these external stressors threaten the equilibrium of some individuals.

Not only is supervisor support important, but so is collegial support. Xiao et al. (2020) assert frequent communication with coworkers ensures participation in not only decision making but also as a source of support and an opportunity to take breaks from work. Communication with colleagues helps to maintain better mental health status, therefore inversely, decreased communication leads to decreased well-being. This creates questions around whether it is the collaboration on projects with colleagues, or simply the micro-conversations taking place in an office that has an effect on well-being. Shams and Jackson (1994) assert having healthy social relationships with colleagues, friends and family predicts higher well-being whereas those who spend more time alone or experience loneliness are found to have lower well-being on average. Meyer et al. (2021) extend on this by reporting WFH and the social distancing that comes with Covid-19 can reduce support which has negative consequences for PWB. From these studies, it is clear that PWB as a result of WFH is threatened in a multitude of ways. Further research is needed on whether online interactions serve the same purpose of social connection.

Narratives while Working from Home during Covid-19

Most the studies on well-being and Covid-19 have been quantitative. These studies are able to demonstrate how the wider population has been affected, but do not necessarily capture the voices or nuances of participants. Plester (2021, p. 87) wrote a chapter on 'The Lighter Side of Lockdown' showcasing individuals' accounts of WFH. Plester asserts that allowing yourself to laugh and see the funny side of things, relieves some of the pressure of managing home, family and work in extraordinary conditions. Some challenges of WFH were also identified by participants alongside their ways of using humour to cope. Conducting her research as narrative allowed for participants to share their humorous accounts of situations involving WFH during lockdown. One of Plester's participants identified a challenge stating:

> My family bliss was easier with campus, the local library and the Solar Café as my workplaces. I have struggled to separate these places under lockdown. The cues at home trigger happy times playing with kids, meals and rest – why would I want that to change? I felt anxiety as I switched between militantly scheduling time for myself and then remembering Jacinda's [Ardern: New Zealand Prime Minister] words, being kind and flexible acknowledging the changes we've been able to make. Wine helps. (Plester, 2021, p. 87)

This indicates the spillover effect whereby work-life is now entering the household as WFH becomes the new norm. This extract demonstrates when work and home came together it created a conflict around how to keep work and home separate in order to not only act appropriately in each mode but to create a boundary between work and family. Looking at the spillover effect through a qualitative lens provides additional information on the impact of the blurred lines of work and home life. This participant in Plester's study associates' home with family, fun and down time. Introducing work into the home has created a sense of anxiety around how to navigate these roles, particularly when family members are in the house. This participant uses humour about the assistance of wine, which has the effect of 'making light' of his experience.

Wheatley (2012) discussed how WFH provides flexibility to potentially improve work-life balance, but also the possibility for work to permeate the home environment, impacting on employee identity, and the temporal and spatial structures of the household. One of Plesters's colleagues discussed getting to see a more personal side of their colleagues when WFH, with children appearing in Zoom meetings and the visibility of colleagues' homes. It raises questions about whether or not work relationships may have been strengthened after learning more about one another when WFH during the pandemic. Further, this is one of the few studies during Covid-19 that has been conducted as narrative. It provides deep insights into individual experiences and introduces details such as thoughts and feelings and the impact on PWB. Using this qualitative research and combining it with the reviewed quantitative research provides new insights into the complex effects of WFH during a pandemic and shows more research is needed in this area.

Unemployment during Covid-19

Internationally, the pandemic brought with it increased job insecurity that not only caused stress among individuals, but some workers were made redundant due to the halting of business

(Lindström & Giordano, 2016; Biswas-Diener et al., 2004; Hoang & Knabe, 2021). In New Zealand between April 2020 and September 2020, unemployment rates rose from 4.2 percent to 5.3 percent (Census and Economic Information Centre, 2020). This was during the initial full lockdown and subsequent partial lockdown lasting seven weeks in Auckland. Unemployment, coupled with uncertainty has been shown to have negative effects on PWB (Lindström & Giordano, 2016; Hoang & Knabe, 2021).

A study looking at unemployment since the onset of Covid-19 found job insecurity can increase psychological distress (Achdut & Refaeli, 2020). This study was conducted among 390 Israeli people between the ages of 20-35, just over half having completed post-secondary education. Achdut and Refaeli (2020) found employment in these individuals was associated with increased well-being, but it can also satisfy elements contributing to 'the good life'. In summary, research suggests employment can help with personal identity, purpose in life, satisfying a necessary social aspect and increasing self-esteem. Therefore, Achdut and Refaeli suggest unemployment can have a negative effect on well-being and explains why psychological distress might increase. Loneliness as a result of unemployment was also found to be a factor in the increased psychological distress (Achdut & Refaeli, 2020). It is then possible unemployment coupled with lockdown and social distancing rules may contribute to increased loneliness in New Zealand.

Justification/Purpose of the Current Research

This literature review has examined PWB and WFH with an emerging focus on the Covid-19 pandemic. It was found that well-being decreased for many across the world as a result of several factors including spillover, isolation and job insecurity. Minimal research has been done in New Zealand with few studies taking a qualitative approach. PWB has been selected as the key construct underpinning this research largely due to its ability to consider external stressors, such as Covid-19. Further, PWB acknowledges that high levels of well-being rely on developing skills and abilities from reactions to emotional experiences (Joshanloo, 2019). It could be argued it is a proactive approach to well-being compared to SWB that looks at how individuals react emotionally to stressors. Having resources to deal with an external stressor such as Covid-19 is important for how one emerges on the other side of an event. Using SWB creates concerns that

well-being relies too much on internal factors without considering the importance that external stressors have on an individual's well-being.

Ryff's (1989) six-factor model provides a solid basis for identifying components of PWB and emphasizes the interplay between the act of living one's life and thoughts and feelings about it. PWB considers more broadly that a person is functioning effectively as well as feeling good. High functioning is essential to well-being and functioning in a social sense further contributes to this. Keyes' (1998, 2002) five dimensions of social well-being complement Ryff's six-factor model of PWB and consider the importance of not just high internal functioning, but being able to translate this in a social way. Assessing for social well-being throughout multiple lockdowns is important when considering the isolation factor. Elements such as social coherence and actualisation have the potential to demonstrate how individuals coped with WFH in the context of Covid-19. After considering using Warr's (1987) nine-feature model of PWB it was identified as being too comprehensive and broad almost to its detriment. For this reason, Ryff's six-factor model is the model employed for the research.

When Covid-19 began to spread throughout the world, governments and the wider population were uncertain about where it was headed. Some were of the mindset it would blow over quickly while others took a more conservative approach. New Zealand was in a somewhat privileged position because it was able to see the pattern of Covid-19 overseas and appraise other nations' reactions. New Zealand continues to be in an advantageous situation in that it is an island nation so has a unique ability to close its borders and inhibit arrivals. When New Zealand went 'hard and early' with its lockdown, many people had to make the quick transition to WFH. Some did not have office setups at home, nor the ability to convert a private room into a home office. This left many working from kitchen tables, sofas and beds (Wilser, 2020).

Reading the literature on WFH it is evident there are gaps around considerations of well-being and how family life impacts on work-life. This is likely because one model of PWB does not fit succinctly with both job and home. Therefore, combining Ryff's (1989) PWB measure with Keyes' (1998, 2002) social well-being model will help to assess work and home life separately and together. WFH delivers complex challenges to navigate as it involves not only how a person

feels and functions at work, but also the effect the crossover of family, home and work life has on the individual.

PWB at work is more than just job satisfaction and productivity, it extends to other realms of an individual's life such as social aspects, family and emotions. Whilst there are studies emerging around the world about the effects of Covid-19 on people and their work-life, there is a need for voices to provide depth about how PWB was impacted during this time. As mentioned by Robertson and Cooper (2011), affective and purposive psychological states are good ways to understand an individual's work well-being without just assessing job satisfaction. Assessing both these states further demonstrates the interconnectedness of SWB and PWB. Although most of the focus of the research is on PWB, components of SWB such as affective states do come into play (Dodge et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2013).

Based on the research around Covid-19 and well-being while WFH, there appears to be a pattern of negative affect. There are several reasons for this negative affect including spillover effect, perceived supervisor support, ergonomics, isolation and increased hours of work. Beyond these reasons, there were also fears of becoming unemployed and the strain that causes. After reviewing the research I have shifted my perspective from wanting to only assess well-being during the transition to WFH to wanting to assess well-being and WFH across the pandemic as it continues to unfold. The research has naturally guided me in a different direction and shown the gaps and areas requiring more research, namely in-depth accounts of how well-being was impacted while WFH during Covid-19, spillover effect and the experiences of New Zealanders. There are far more factors involved than just how the transition to WFH during Covid-19 affected people. It is all of the aforementioned elements such as spillover and organisational support, but it is also the angst around the general Covid-19 situation such as fears of the unknown, contracting Covid-19 and family issues (Evanoff et al., 2020). Therefore, this study will look at the transition to WFH during Covid-19 but it will also consider other factors such as unease, isolation and resilience that have contributed to PWB during this pandemic.

Resilience as a factor crucial to well-being has been demonstrated in most scholarly articles articulating how to achieve a high sense of well-being (Ungar, 2008; Ungar & Theron, 2020;

Brickman et al., 1978; Biswas-Diener et al., 2004). Ungar (2008) explains resilience requires individuals to navigate psychological, social, cultural and physical resources in order to sustain their well-being. These factors may have become more of a challenge for individuals during the pandemic, for example the need to distance oneself from others may have made it difficult to maintain social aspects. The notion that these factors are intertwined and can impact on one another provides further challenges when trying to navigate the pandemic. Having to make the sudden transition to WFH created new stressors many individuals have not previously faced. Learning how to work at home but still keep work and home life separate, manage children, schooling and get used to new tools like Zoom all creates challenges. Contrarily, isolating alone and navigating the loneliness coupled with significantly less contact with colleagues is likely to impact PWB. The pandemic brings with it many unexpected challenges and resilience is one factor that could be crucial for well-being throughout this time (Ungar & Theron, 2020).

The purpose of this review was to explore PWB literature and its links to WFH and Covid-19. It is clear from the overseas research; well-being has been negatively affected during Covid-19. Along with this, it is also clear WFH creates strains between work and family life that have negative impacts on several realms such as emotions, relationships and social aspects (Diener & Seligman, 2004). This field of inquiry is important as Covid-19 is still rampant around the world and identifying factors contributing to worsened PWB creates an opportunity to improve WFH practices. Given the overseas evidence that well-being has been negatively affected during Covid-19, I wanted to investigate in-depth experiences of New Zealand workers to ascertain if there has been a similar experience here.

New Zealand's response to the pandemic has been praised around the world because of its go-hard and go-early approach. Despite the worldwide acknowledgement of New Zealand's transparent approach to flattening the pandemic curve, little or no research has been conducted on employee well-being when WFH. Based on evidence supporting governmental response and its relationship with trust, New Zealand's government planning and execution of its strategy has the ability to influence PWB (Lindström & Giordano, 2016). Therefore, the current study aims to look

at Covid-19 and WFH and add New Zealand perspectives to the emerging literature in this area. This study will contribute to the understanding of how WFH might affect employees PWB during a pandemic.

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this section, the methodological framework and its appropriateness for the current study is discussed. Qualitative research and its usefulness for exploratory research is first examined, followed by the selection of thematic coding. Rigour in qualitative research is then discussed and its application to the study clarified. Finally, the methods in the study are detailed, with reference to recruitment, ethical considerations, data collection and analysis.

The literature review revealed a lack of exploration into the voices of New Zealanders who have been WFH during Covid-19. Whilst there are emerging streams of research around well-being during this pandemic, these are often in quantitative research. Qualitative research uses its exploratory nature to procure deeper meanings of human interpretations, understandings, experiences and perspectives (Stewart, Gill, Chadwick & Treasure, 2008). WFH due to Covid-19 has become topical and requires further exploration to gain an understanding of PWB throughout the pandemic. While there is minimal research on this within New Zealand, overseas evidence has demonstrated well-being and work-family balance were negatively affected and these had knock-on effects emotionally, socially and physically (Evanoff et al., 2020,). Through seeking in- depth accounts of PWB in New Zealand employees, I may be able to ascertain if they have had a similar experience to their overseas counterparts. The hope is that results from this study will guide future research in this area.

Research Aim

The purpose of this study is to investigate the following research question:
How has working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic impacted employee psychological well-being?

This study also intends on answering the following sub-questions:

- What, if any changes to the employee's perceived work-life balance were noticed during Covid-19?
- What do organisations do to support individuals to successfully work from home?
- Does social capital affect psychological well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is employed in the current study and is used to explore and obtain deeper meanings of human understandings, beliefs, experiences and viewpoints (Stewart et al., 2008). The methods used in qualitative research offer insights into individuals' perspectives, attitudes and interpretations while keeping flexibility throughout the process. Methods such as interviews are able to provide insights into areas requiring further exploration (Stewart et al., 2008). The explorative nature of qualitative research provides a suitable lens in which to investigate the emerging research topic of WFH during Covid-19 and the impact on PWB.

Using qualitative research to investigate new areas is beneficial because of the 'real-life' nature of findings that arise (Gill et al., 2008). Strategies implemented by organisations to curb negative effects such as lowered PWB, work-family conflict and lack of communication will be investigated as well as positive effects such as work-life balance, flexible initiatives and the growth of organisational opportunities. Due to the limited research in this area, this study will be exploratory in nature. Exploratory research involves open-ended interview questions and analysis strategies (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The interview schedule can be seen in Appendix A. Barker et al. (2002) promote the use of exploratory research when there is little known about the topic.

Embedded in the qualitative paradigm is the idea that humans are social beings that use meaning to make sense of their worlds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this study, employees will be asked to describe their experiences while WFH and the ways their organisation supported or did not support them to do so. Participants will also be asked how they individually navigated WFH throughout Covid-19, a time that was different from previous work experiences. This research will focus on constructed meaning that comes from the semi-structured interviews with employees (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There is a large subjective element in qualitative research whereby individuals view their realities and knowledge differently from one another. Therefore, the type of data analysis such as thematic coding used to make sense of participant responses plays a vital role in the interpretation of data and helping to make sense of their realities and views (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This study will not generalise findings but the responses of participants will be interpreted and collated. This study seeks to explore employees' perceptions and experiences about their own PWB while WFH during Covid-19.

Rigour and Meaning in Qualitative Research

Traditionally rigour has been associated with quantitative research, but increasingly there is an expectation of a certain level of rigour in qualitative research (Alvesson et al., 2017). Alvesson et al. (2017) argue rigour is beginning to contest meaning as the number one goal of research. Alvesson et al. (p .47) assert that a specific kind of rigour upheld in the academic sphere requires a "vacuum cleaning of existing literature" demonstrating how new research will contribute to the field without necessarily questioning whether that research is headed in the right direction. Further, placing a tighter framework around coding procedures is now making it appear more 'objective', something not traditionally associated with qualitative research. The concern here is that qualitative research is becoming too tight, and these parameters are creating more of a focus on rigour than the research itself.

Alvesson et al. (2017, p. 87) believe in the importance of rigour, but not at the expense of meaning and thus they propose five questions every researcher should ask themselves. If there is established rigour and the researcher is able to answer these, then they are on track to produce good research, however if the researcher has compromised rigour for meaning, they may fail to answer these. Thus, my goal as a researcher is to be able to answer all of these questions while still maintaining an appropriate level of rigour.

1. "Have you got anything important to say to a qualified audience (outside your academic microtribe)?"
2. "Would you say that this has not been said before or that you are not using new words to make an old point or that you are not just reproducing what we more or less already know or believe?"
3. "Is this meaningful and socially relevant for others?"
4. "Can you formulate a clear message with a novel idea or an insightful contribution summarizing your work within a minute or two?"
5. "Is the value of what you have written and the time it took commensurate with your salary?"

These questions should not only be answered with “yes”, but with a meaningful answer (Alvesson et al., 2017). In order to avoid deception of oneself, others close to the research should also answer these questions. If both the researcher and peer can answer these questions truthfully and find they are able to provide meaningful answers then this should instill confidence that the research is meaningful (Alvesson et al., 2017). Thus, if research has no meaning, then its rigour carries no value. Rigour must still exist but should not replace meaning. They can co-exist as long as neither is compromised. Alvesson et al. argue originality throughout a research paper and practical ramifications should address the concerns around rigour. Further, without the tight confines of rigour and data management, it allows for individual accounts rich with experiences highlighting virtues. Therefore, as Alvesson et al. suggest, I should ensure my main objective is in finding and identifying meaning in this study.

Lincoln and Guba (1986) propose a non-conventional form of rigour more contingent on authenticity and trustworthiness than validity and replicability. Where multiple realities are socially constructed with only subjective ‘truths’, this cannot be positioned as objective or valid, instead it is seen as authentic. Therefore, four components of naturalistic rigour necessary to showcase trustworthiness in qualitative research as described by Lincoln and Guba are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is described in preference to internal validity (Shenton, 2004). The idea of credibility is to ensure the research is investigating what it originally intended to. In the current research, prior to data collection, in an attempt to familiarise myself with the research, a pilot study was carried out and an interview conducted with someone who was WFH during the pandemic (Shenton, 2004). Preceding the interviews, participants were sent an email with information about the research. At this point, they were able to say they no longer wanted to be involved in the study without the pressure of doing this face-to-face. A journal with reflections on interviews was kept and initial impressions following the interviews were discussed with supervisors. Member checking was also undertaken after the interviews allowing the participants to review their responses and pull out of the research if they wished. Member checking is a concept defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) involving sharing interpretations and conclusions with participants. The

aim is to corroborate and assess the trustworthiness of the findings which is crucial to strengthening credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transcription is also an important facet of establishing credibility and helps to familiarise oneself with the data from the early stages (Riessman, 1993). In this study, transcription was done by the software Otter.Ai (a transcription software programme). This software is not completely accurate so all recordings were listened to at least once to check for accuracy. During this time initial interpretations began from the verbal accounts. It was ensured the transcripts retained as much of the non-verbal cues (e.g., sighs, pauses or hand signals) as possible and the accounts were transferred from verbal to written as accurately and 'true' as possible (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Transferability

Transferability is described in preference to external validity/generalisability (Shenton, 2004). Generalisation commonly used in quantitative research has no real place in qualitative research. Transferability is more pertinent to the transfer of knowledge to a similar situation without generalising across a spectrum. The way transferability was achieved in this research was through the clear explanation of the method (Graineheim & Lundamn, 2003). Quotes and a discussion of the findings help to showcase the accounts and truths of participants that may allow readers to transfer these themselves to different situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

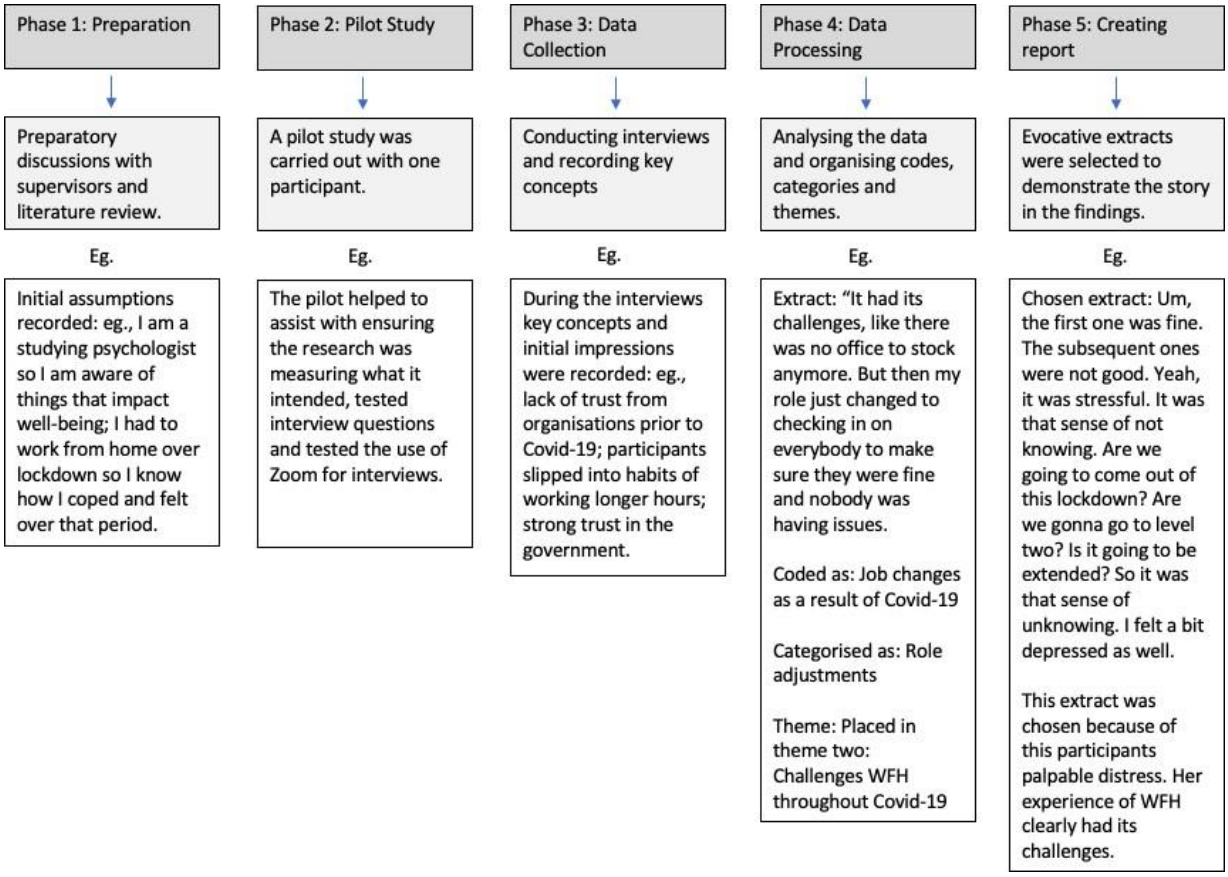
Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability is described in preference to reliability. Graineheim and Lundman (2003) explain how the nature of qualitative research means there can be long periods between interviews. While the interview questions will not change, during these periods it is possible new interpretations will be made which has the potential to influence the following interviews. Thus, a researcher should remain consistent across the studies and attempt to not leave too long in between interviews. To combat this, an audit trail was kept as transparency for the reader (Figure 1). Audit trails help to establish rigour by providing details of data analysis (analysis, reduction, synthesis) and the decisions that led to the findings (Robinson, 2003). This helps to keep the findings in context and highlights how interpretations were made (Robinson, 2003). Transcription was not done until all interviews had been carried out. This meant the interpretations I began to make from

re-listening to the interviews were not influencing the rest of the interviews I did. Finally, confirmability is described in preference to objectivity. Again, keeping an audit trail demonstrated the findings are the result of participants' accounts and meanings and not the preference of the researcher.

Figure 1.

Synthesized audit trail process.



Social Desirability

Another concept to note and one that researchers should attempt to mitigate is the issue of social desirability. Social desirability is the tendency for participants to align themselves with the researcher and what is considered to be socially acceptable, without it necessarily being their reality (Bergen & Labonte, 2020). Social desirability in qualitative research can be hard to control, but there are ways to minimise it. In line with Bergen and Labonte (2020), I used my intuition to

identify responses that were coming across as socially desirable. These included participant answers that were vague, body language cues or contradictions in what was being said (Bergen & Labonte, 2020). I became more attuned to social desirability throughout the interviews. It is possible participants were nervous, misinterpreted my questions or actually had conflicting opinions (Bergen & Labonte, 2020).

A step I took to mitigate social desirability was making sure the room where the interview was taking place was private, and the individual was alone. The participants were asked for verbal confirmation over Zoom that they were alone in the room. This ensured responses did not include excessive praise if the employee was within earshot of a colleague or manager. Bergen and Labonte (2020) found when others were within earshot, responses varied to what was said in private. It is also important to establish rapport with employees, so not jumping straight into the interview but having a casual conversation, including humour and also using self-disclosure. I spoke a bit about my lockdown and WFH experience with participants. Explaining the details of the study in-depth to participants including anonymity and confidentiality helped to remove any pressures of organisations getting hold of the results and reduced the possibility of socially desirable answers. Bergen and Labonte found when participants had a better understanding of the purpose of the research, they were less likely to think the interview was a performance evaluation. Finally, the pilot helped to identify which questions were too direct and needed rephrasing to ensure genuine answers. Examples of this are in Table 2.

Ontology and Epistemology

My ontological and epistemological position led me to qualitative research because of the acknowledgement that researchers bring subjectivity (their views, perspectives, frameworks for making sense of the world; their politics; their passions) into the research process and this is acknowledged as a strength in research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Qualitative research interested me when I first learned about it during undergraduate study.

"Ontology is a philosophical belief system about the nature of social reality - what can be known and how" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2010, pg. 4). There are different ontological positions of which some ask the question: is the social world patterned and predictable, and others, is the social world

constructed by human interactions? (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010) The ontological position of the researcher directly impacts all aspects of research, such as topic selection, research questions and the way in which the research is conducted (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

For the purpose of this research, constructivism/interpretivism is employed as the ontological perspective. That is, there is no single reality or truth but instead, reality is created by individuals in groups (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). An individual's understanding of the world is their reality and what they see to be true has an impact on how they live their lives. Burr (2015) asserts social constructionism is an individual's knowledge of the world and this includes society, events and what is thought to exist. It is their observations and understandings rather than objective, unbiased reality (Burr, 2015). The reason for selecting this approach is each participant has their observations, insights and understandings of their time WFH over Covid-19. There is no one 'true' account of this period of time, but rather different versions (Burr, 2015). In relation to this study, how individuals perceive and interpret their PWB and experiences of WFH is their individual, socially constructed truth.

Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowledge (Hetherington, 2019). Epistemologists seek to understand knowledge's nature and availability and ask the question, can we really have knowledge (Hetherington, 2019)? On one hand, there is the theory that knowledge can be measured and on the other hand, there is the theory that reality requires interpretation. The latter sits within the constructivist realm (Hetherington, 2019). My epistemological view is therefore that reality needs to be interpreted in order to uncover the underlying meaning of events, activities and behaviours. This comes from both the individual making sense of their reality while WFH during Covid-19, but also from the researcher interpreting themes in multiple individual's accounts to find similarities in the constructions of views.

The underlying theory behind constructionism is that reality is socially constructed by the individual experiencing it (Breen & Darlaston-Jones, 2007). Further co-construction between the individual and interviewer then occurs. The interview process creates a platform to construct meaning and without it, this social construction might not exist. Further, reflexively, by putting myself as the researcher in this process, it brings about a shared understanding and meaning-making between the two of us. Everything within a person's perceived reality is contextual and

shaped by societal, cultural and personal norms which distinguish realities as unique to everyone (Breen & Darlaston-Jones, 2007).

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allow participants to create and verbalise the meaning of their PWB during the pandemic. The realities of employees may vary as a result of their prior experiences, their connection to others, and any societal and lifestyle differences resulting from their experience of WFH during Covid-19. If employees' reality is created out of their subjective worldview then it cannot be objectively analysed because nobody will see the world in exactly the same way. Thus, as an interviewer, I can only interpret these employee responses through my understanding of their reality which was co-constructed in the interview. As a researcher I cannot consider myself to be impartial or separate from the employees. I am connected and will have an influence on the findings of this study. Accepting that my subjectivity comes into play, it is important to continue to be aware of it rather than just acknowledge it in this methodological section, merely because I am doing qualitative research (Peshkin, 1988). In doing this I was more aware of how my subjectivity was shaping the research and could attend to my subjectivity in a meaningful way. By keeping the journal with reflections, it acted as a 'subjectivity audit' (Peshkin, 1988). This journal shows my thought processes and demonstrates to readers where self and subject became joined (Peskin, 1988). An example of this would be the following note I made during research:

> The participant felt a sense of isolation in lockdown with no mention of Zoom calls with friends. Personally, I found Zoom helped me stay connected during lockdown. Through not seeking out these moments with friends where you have the chance to forget about Covid-19 momentarily, it may have increased the feelings of isolation and separation from society for this participant.

From this note it is evident I was using my experience from the pandemic to interpret why this participant may have had increased feelings of isolation and loneliness. This was not through any dialogue from the participant, but instead through my subjectivity demonstrating not only the influence I have on this study, but also the co-creation of it.

Braun and Clarke (2013) discuss how reflexivity, known as critical reflection, is crucial in research. As the researcher, this involves examining my beliefs, judgements and practices and how these might impact the research. Reflexivity relates directly to ontology and epistemology and

questions around the self, intersubjectivity and individual knowledge (Berger, 2015). It is pertinent during qualitative research that the researcher is constantly evaluating their position and recognizing this may affect the research (Berger, 2015). Berger (2015) uses case studies to address three types of researcher positions and the advantages and disadvantages of each:

1. Participant and researcher shared experience. This insider status is achieved when there is a shared identity between the participant and researcher (Berger, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2013). The benefit of this insider position is it opens up the ability to understand implied content, sensitivities and have personal insights into the topic. One major challenge with insider status is the blurred boundaries and the potential this has for the researcher to project their feelings or beliefs which may influence the participants' responses (Berger, 2015). Participant and researcher shared experience is likely to be the case in the current research as I too have had to work from home during Covid-19.

2. The transition of the researcher from outsider to insider during the course of the study. The example given by Berger is when she moved to being a stepmother during her study, with that actually being her study focus. It brought her attention to biases and generalisations made in prior studies, and ones she had begun to adopt herself. The benefits of this are in reexamining interviews, researchers may use their now insider status to pick up on nuances that were not visible before. However, the disadvantages of this transition have not yet been examined. I propose one of the challenges could be the nature of subjectivity. That is, through being an insider I may be more influenced by personal feelings which could impact the way I interpret what is being said by participants.

3. Reflexivity when the researcher has no familiarity with the research topic. This one is not particualrly relevant in the current research but is worth noting. A benefit of this is the participant is the expert in this field, and this can be empowering and encourage them to share rich experiences with the researcher (Berger, 2015). The biggest challenge of this is the researcher has no real experience of the topic and may use inappropriate language, not pick up on insider behaviour or introduce the possibility of judgement due to the lack of understanding.

The position to be taken in the current study is participant and researcher shared experience (number one). I will have a shared identity with the participants, because I also experienced WFH throughout Covid-19. Thus, I am an insider and will have the ability to understand the content and use personal insights to help to make sense of what is being said. Reflexivity from the perspective of shared knowledge will be a large part of the shared meaning to take place in this study. This differs from reflexivity when the researcher has no familiarity with the topic as above. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) note, reflexivity is known as the acknowledgement by the researcher that their actions will directly impact the understanding and meaning-making of the topic at hand. In qualitative research, reflexivity is a measure used to ensure credibility, trustworthiness and non-exploitative research. By keeping my journal and 'subjectivity audit' I was able to assess my thoughts and reflections not only on what the participants expressed in the interviews but my reactions to these and any particular points I related to. Further, keeping this journal brings to light my influence on my interpretation of the data and my relationship to it (as demonstrated in the above extract) (Jootun et al., 2009).

My knowledge undoubtedly varied from participants and likewise for them between other participants. Acknowledging these differences led everyone to different experiences throughout Covid-19 and helped me to be continually reflexive in my research. Reflexivity requires constant self-reflection and the ability to enhance the quality and credibility of the research through the integration and application of understandings (Jootun et al., 2009). In this respect, it goes further than subjectivity, as it is not just acknowledging the researcher plays a role, but it is acknowledging the researcher's knowledge, understanding and meaning will also expand or change after the research. Jootun et al. (2009) assert it is the researchers' job to produce an account of how participants understand the topic, and this relates significantly to how much the researcher already knows about the topic. My insider knowledge allows me to read between the lines and understand inferences, and this connection informs understanding (Berger, 2015). Thus, reflexivity should be carefully noted and attended to throughout the study.

Pilot Study

Objectives

The purpose of the pilot phase was threefold, namely:

- To ensure the research is investigating what it originally intended to. Conducting a pilot interview helps to familiarise myself with the research and increases credibility (Shenton, 2004).
- The pilot helped to identify which questions were too direct and needed rephrasing to ensure genuine answers and reduce social desirability (Bergen & Labonte, 2020). See Table 2.
- To pilot test the use of Zoom for interviews.

Participants

One individual was interviewed and was selected based on convenience. Care was taken to ensure this individual worked from home throughout the first New Zealand Covid-19 lockdown.

Outcomes from Pilot Interview

Table 2.

Interview amendments (in line with Bergen & Labonte, 2020 and Bearman, 2019).

Technique	Original Approach	Improved Approach
Indirect questioning	Posing questions directly (assumptions). Example: *How did your relationship with colleagues change while WFH?*	Posing indirect questions that don't assume/put participants in a position where they must come up with an example. Example: *Did you notice any changes in your relationships with colleagues? If so, in what way?*

Table 2 (continued).

Probing for more information	Accepting generic or incomplete responses.	Asking follow-up questions or prompts. Example: *Can you explain to me more about this?*
Follow-up/prompt questions	Not requesting information important to the study.	Asking lead-on questions that play a role in how participant answers are shaped. Example: *Are you still working from home? If not, how long did you work from home?*
Simplifying/merging questions	Asking questions that were too lengthy and required repeating. Example: *How do you manage boundaries with family/others in the house? What techniques, rules or practices did you put in place? Were there any changes to work-family balance?*	Simplifying the question and merging aspects into another question. Example: Q1: *How do you manage boundaries with family/others in the house? What techniques, rules or practices did you put in place?* Q2: *Did your family dynamic change throughout Covid-19 while WFH? How?*

Method

Recruitment of Participants

The type of recruitment used in this study was snowball sampling. This is a non-probability method of sampling involving people available to the researcher (Ghaljaie et al., 2017). Snowball sampling is a convenience sampling method that requires the existing study subjects to recruit future subjects among their acquaintances (Ghalhaie et al., 2017).

Polit-O'Hara and Beck (2006) describe snowball sampling as 'efficient and cost-effective' which is suitable to this master's thesis. I found two initial participants via convenience sampling who then referred me to someone, they knew with similar situations to take part in the research. This happened twice until I had six participants in total. "The snowball method not only takes little time but also provides the researcher with the opportunity to communicate better with the samples, as they are acquaintances of the first sample, and the first sample is linked to the researcher" (Polit-O'Hara & Beck, 2006. P. 319).

The limitations associated with snowball sampling include distortion of participants and the snowball failing to roll. Parker et al. (2019) discuss how the research may become distorted based on the participants' referral. For example, females may recommend females or participants might refer to those from the same ethnic backgrounds. However, with no intention of generalising the research, having overrepresented groups is not an issue in this research. The second issue is when the snowball fails to roll (Parker et al., 2019). This is when the participants either do not refer new participants, or there is a lack of willing participants. This may be due to uncertainty around confidentiality and anonymity and potential exposure to employers, colleagues or family (Parker et al., 2019). This is discussed in ethical considerations, but participants are assured the information collected will be secure and they are able to withdraw at any time with no explanation. Member checking was also undertaken.

Permission was obtained from potential participants by existing participants for the researcher to contact them via email with more information about the study. Emails contained details of the study, participant information and consent forms. Potential participants were given the option of either emailing or phoning for any questions or concerns. This all took place prior to the interview. Participants were asked to identify someone they knew who had worked from home during the pandemic.

Participants

Six participants from around New Zealand took part in this study. Participants worked in various sectors and all spent time working from home. Demographic information can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.
Demographic information.

	Location	Age	Gender	Ethnic group/s	Work role	Tenure in role	# people in household during lockdown
Louise	Northland	40-49	Female	New Zealand Māori/ European	Area Manager	15 years	Five
Grant	Taranaki	40-49	Male	Caucasian/ European	Customer Relationship Manager	16 months	Four
Moira	Christchu-rch	40-49	Female	White/South African	Office Manager	3.5 years	Four
Brooke	Auckland	40-49	Female	New Zealand European	Customer Service Manager	12 years	Two
Eric	Auckland	30-39	Male	Chinese	Military Officer	13 years	Two
Connor	Auckland	20-29	Male	New Zealand European	Senior Account Manager	7 years	Four

**names changed for anonymity*

Data Collection

Data collection took place over a period of three weeks between July 21, 2021 and August 9, 2021. Data were collected through Zoom interviews with each individual participant. Interview location was selected by each participant, in an environment where they would be most comfortable. Participants were asked to be alone in the room during the interview.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured style allowing adjustability, conversational exploration and probing in certain areas (Barriball & While, 1994; Gill et al., 2008). Further, they took on a conversational tone allowing participants to provide open answers representing how they felt (Newcomer et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews have a somewhat predetermined order but allow flexibility in not only how these are addressed, but also for different channels to be explored (Newcomer et al., 2015). A semi-structured interview guide was developed and used to direct the areas of enquiry (Appendix A).

There was no time limit on the interviews, but they were told to allow one hour. The interviews were concluded when the conversation naturally came to an end. After the interview, participants were able to add any points or elaborate further before the tape recorder was turned off.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical permission for this research was obtained from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC). Ref. 024713. Approved on 21 July 2020.

There are two major ethical issues with this type of research and pertain to most qualitative research. These are confidentiality and anonymity (Newcomer et al., 2015). It was crucial participants were assured the information collected would be secure. Anonymity covers largely the same basis of confidentiality but also means the participants should be given different names in the research. Pseudonyms were given to each participant and minor details were changed to preserve anonymity.

Participants received research information sheets (Appendix B) following verbal agreement to participate in the research. This informal verbal consent was gained prior to meeting with the participants and then consent forms were sent out to be signed by the participants (Appendix C). These consent forms are located in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer and will be destroyed after six years as per Auckland University's research project protocols. All interview recordings, transcripts and data from throughout the research process are also located in password-protected files on the researcher's computer.

The risk of physical harm to participants was low in this study. It was recognised the interviews may stir up emotions for those participants who had been negatively impacted by Covid-19. Participants were notified they could ask for the tape recorder to be paused at any time, for the editing or removal of material, or their withdrawal from the study with no explanation necessary. Following auditing of the interview transcripts, each participant was sent a copy of the transcripts from their interview and was given the opportunity to make changes or remove any sections they did not want to be included. They were given one week to do this, during which they had another opportunity to withdraw from the study. All participants sent their transcriptions back to the researcher and were willing to continue participation. The manuscripts will be available to participants following examination of this thesis.

Data Set

The length of the interviews with the participants spanned from 24 minutes to 45 minutes. The resultant data set used for analysis involved six interviews. The complete recording time for this data set was 3 hours and 16 minutes.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis in line with Braun and Clarke (2006) was undertaken. This method includes the identification, analysis and reporting of themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes represent aspects of the data associated with the research question and exemplify patterned responses or meaning from participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes are not categorised based on prevalence but instead on the researcher's subjective opinion of which are the most important. During coding, I played an active role in categorising accounts into themes as I believed they most naturally fit and not just as I wanted them to fit (Shenton, 2004).

Thematic analysis is practical in research such as this, where there are few previous studies of the same topic. An inductive thematic approach was taken whereby the coded categories came directly from the interviews and are therefore very strongly linked to the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). That is, there were no preexisting codes used or developed and an effort was made not to code items into preconceived ideas and instead, build them up as I go. Previous research on PWB may have influenced the way in which I categorised the codes and the question schedule.

An audit journal was kept throughout the data collection and analysis phases in which the researcher noted down key concepts visible throughout the process (Figure 1). Prior to data collection assumptions by the researcher were identified and recorded. This list was regularly referred to throughout data collection and analysis. These assumptions were recognised as potential threats to the rigour of the data and the researcher was careful not to let them guide the analysis in any way. Active immersion in the data is crucial to the search for meaning and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In alignment with Braun & Clarke's (2006) six steps of thematic analysis, the following was carried out in order. These steps are (1) familiarisation with data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; (6) producing the report.

1. Familiarization with Data

This came from the interviews themselves, reading the data several times, making notes of initial ideas and during transcription. The dialogue was transcribed by the transcription service Otter.ai. Once returned to the researcher they were compared alongside the audio recordings to convert to strict verbatim as well as check for precision. At this point, they were also made anonymous. Each participant was then emailed a copy of the transcript from their interview and was offered the chance to make changes if they wished. This was a limited member check because it was just the transcript they were viewing, as at that point I had not made any interpretations.

Directly following each interview, initial general ideas and impressions of the researcher were noted down in the audit trail (Figure 1). There were also more specific notes made in regard to individual extracts. Questions I was asking myself at that time were influenced by Braun and Clarke (2012). How does this participant make sense of their experiences? What assumptions do they make in interpreting their experience? What kind of world is revealed through their accounts?

This extract exemplifies interpretations made.

> *"I feel like working from home, and what has happened to us, although the pandemic itself is a negative thing, one of the best positives that has come out of it is that there is now a level of trust. People are open to the ideas of working from home, which everyone and many people have always wanted to do for years and years and years. They just want that little option every now and then whether it's a mental break away from the office or-or-or just headspace to forge forward on a project without people knocking on your office door, or just popping in to say hello eight times a day." (Grant).*

a) there was distrust from Grant's organisation with employees prior to Covid-19, b) prior to Covid-19 there was a desire to work from home, c) WFH created opportunities for increased productivity, d) employees need space sometimes when they are working. Looking deeper, I interpreted that a) Grant recognises a conceptual context that existed prior to the pandemic around trust and this potentially hindered well-being, b) Grant is disappointed the trust wasn't initially there and it only came about when it was forced upon his organisation, c) Grant recognises there are organisational benefits of employees working from home, such as increased output, d) Grant struggles to work in an office all of the time.

2. Generating Initial Codes

From the outset of reading the interviews, I began to make a system for noting interesting features of the data. The aforementioned audit trail for initial ideas and impressions from the interviews also hosted initial ideas for codes. Initially, there were more than 70 codes developed. This process was tricky and painstaking but guided the direction for categories, and eventually themes.

In the early stage of analysis 70 codes were assigned to 23 categories representing the data. Categories can be seen in Table 4 of the findings section. Some codes were direct reflections of the language participants used, while others were a representation of the researchers' conceptual frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2012). An example of this is the code 'trust in employees' that was identified from two participants' statements. For example, Louise discussed how her organisation began to trust employees after they had been WFH for a while. You can see this in her statement:

"Yeah, the trust is there. We've proven that we can still be effective by accessing all of our programmes and software everything we need to."

On the other hand, the code of 'adjusting to online interaction with colleagues' was not directly mentioned by the participants but is an interpretation I made. Examples of why I created this code were based around interpretations of participant's statements about adjusting to online interaction seen in this example by Louise:

"I'm having a conversation with you over a zoom call, or I'm going to make a phone call, where I would normally come and visit you and talk face to face."

As I began to code more extracts, I modified existing codes to include more language. For example, my code 'interaction with colleagues when in the office' was initially titled 'colleague proximity'. As I continued analysis, it became evident it was not just the proximity of colleagues that meant there was more interaction, but employees enjoyed this interaction so much they sought it out.

Further, it became apparent all participants had used online tools such as Zoom or Teams throughout the lockdowns. The question about these tools was specific to the organisation section of the interview, but it was observed that most participants also used these tools to connect with friends and family, and as an outlet for fun. These accounts appeared to be important to the participants as their discussions around these tools were often offered separately to the actual interview questions. Therefore, the data discussing tools for connection was an unexpected finding resulting in an additional category. Following the identification of the reasons these tools were used, the transcripts were searched again for any terms around fun, humour and connecting with friends and family, terms often used when described in conjunction with Zoom and Teams. These early revelations formed a significant part of the findings.

3. Searching for Themes

Again, from the outset and throughout the rereading of interviews, I searched for themes in the data based on the categories I had created. I revisited earlier impressions as I went and adapted these as I became more familiar with the interview responses. The themes initially were

dichotomous with ‘positive talk’ and ‘negative talk’ and an ‘other’ theme. These were recognised immediately as being overly simplistic and were fleshed out. It was clear the ‘other’ theme was far too broad. It became evident this theme primarily comprised categories surrounding the organisation as well as several personal factors. Thus, I was able to make two clear themes from the one miscellaneous ‘other’ theme. This created a cohesive story with enough meaningful data to support these two new themes. The initial ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ dichotomous themes became ‘advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19’ and ‘challenges WFH throughout Covid-19’. These new titles acknowledge the more complex aspects of the data.

In the end the four created themes were: (Theme one: advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19; Theme two: challenges WFH throughout Covid-19; Theme three: personal factors influencing PWB; and Theme four: organisational support). These themes are presented in Table 4 of the findings section.

Several codes were found to be essentially identifying the same features. For example, the codes ‘1pm government announcements’, ‘government trust’, and ‘public servant issues’ were collated into ‘trust in government’. These alternates all appeared to come down to the trust put in the government and thus, became one category that made up part of the theme ‘personal factors influencing PWB’. In some situations, several categories clustered together to form the themes themselves. For example, codes making up the categories ‘redundancy’, ‘company values and culture’, ‘tools for connection’, ‘ergonomic setup’, ‘changes in practice and policy’ were collated into the theme of ‘organisational support’. This theme was reasonably clear-cut compared to the others and formed quite naturally. This theme is directly helpful to answering the research question of: *What do organisations do to support individuals to successfully WFH?*

A number of the categories were included in more than one theme. These overlaps help to demonstrate the salience of certain concepts such as ‘well-being’, ‘tools for connection’ or ‘work-life balance’. The crossover categories illustrate the intrapersonal and interpersonal contractions contributing to tensions, paradoxes and interesting and coherent stories within the overall data.

Searching for themes was an active process, whereby I generated or constructed themes, rather than discovered them. Although this phase is called "searching for themes," Braun and Clarke (2012) assert "it is not like archaeologists digging around, searching for the themes that lie hidden within the data, preexisting the process of analysis. Rather, analysts are like sculptors, making choices about how to shape and craft their piece of stone (the raw data) into a work of art (the analysis)" (p. 63).

In line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestion, I created a thematic 'map' of the analysis (Figure 2, p. 57). This displays a clear picture of how the categories fitted within the themes and where the overlaps were. In all the categories there is at least one overlapping theme. This is where the tensions were first recognised and the thematic map emphasized the interconnected nature.

4. Reviewing Themes

At this stage, I began the review process whereby I evaluated all the coded extracts to ensure they fit the categories, the themes and also the entire data set. Firstly, I ensured my themes were capturing the full dataset and were appropriate for the coded extracts. When the four themes were satisfied, I did a final reread of all the transcripts and coded extracts to ensure the themes meaningfully captured the entire dataset. It was important to keep in mind the co-constructive nature of this research and thus ensure both participant and researcher were making meaning of the concepts (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000).

At this stage, it was evident that four categories were very closely linked with other categories and as such they were reduced further. The initial 23 categories then became 19 categories. An example of this was the category 'gratitude'. Once it was recognized that gratitude expressed by participants pertained to other categories such as 'resilience' or 'redundancy', the codes were reassigned into those categories. Also at this stage, it was identified that a further few categories were crossover categories. For example, 'communication' fell within the theme of 'advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19' and 'personal factors influencing PWB'. These were then placed in the multiple themes in which they fit and denoted by italics in Table 4. Once these

final changes had been made, I moved on to step five of Braun and Clarkes' (2006) phases for thematic analysis.

5. Defining and Naming Themes

After classifying the categories into themes and developing four themes. Alongside these themes, I came up with distinct definitions and names for each theme. These themes were ordered in a way that best displayed the hierarchy of the significance of the data. They were ordered as follows:

Theme one: Advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19
Theme two: Challenges WFH throughout Covid-19
Theme three: Personal factors influencing PWB
Theme four: Organisational support

Initially, personal factors influencing PWB was theme four, but all of the categories had powerful extracts and when the hierarchy table (Table 4) was created, it was clear the interpretations and meanings made from this theme were more significant which resulted in it being moved to theme three in order to present the themes in order of importance.

During this phase, I also began selecting extracts to present in my findings and analyse in order to tell the story of each theme. The extracts selected were chosen because they are evocative and clearly demonstrate the story that as a researcher I am trying to tell to represent my interpretations of the participants' experiences. Each theme had distinct components, but the crossover categories helped to exemplify the interconnectedness of participants' experiences as well as tensions, paradoxes and complexities in these interpretations.

6. Producing the Report

This was the final stage of analysis in this study. It involved the selection of vivid extracts and the relationship these had to the research questions. These extract examples from the transcripts were used to show key ideas making up the categories and themes. This was developed into a table which formed the structure of the thematic coding. With the use of these extracts, a

story was told about participant experiences of WFH in New Zealand throughout a pandemic. This analysis can be read in the next chapter, presenting findings.

Chapter 3: Findings

The purpose of this research was to answer the main research question: *How has working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic impacted employee psychological well-being?* To explore this question, six people living and working in New Zealand were interviewed in a semi-structured style. Demographic information for these participants is presented in Table 3 in the previous chapter. Of the six participants, three were living in Auckland. At the time of the interviews in July-September 2021, these three participants in Auckland had endured three additional lockdowns totaling 28 days, with the most recent having ended in late April 2021. All other participants only had one lockdown that began in March 2020 and ran for five weeks.

This chapter presents the findings that have been interpreted from the interviews with participants who had to transition to WFH due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Over a three-week period, all interviews were carried out on Zoom before being transcribed by Otter.ai and transcripts were reviewed by the researcher. The voice recordings were listened to several times during the transcription phase in order to keep the feelings, actions, ideas, and energy of the participants in the interviews. The aim was to capture the words and nuances that informed the interviews to express participants' ideas as comprehensively as possible. All interviewees were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in this research.

The process of thematic analysis in this research was comprehensive and painstaking and spanned several phases. Drawing on the interviews with individuals, after the initial coding process there were more than 70 codes and these were placed into 23 categories. After more intensive analysis and in-depth engagement with the data many of these were identified as being similar to one another, therefore several categories were revised and amalgamated, bringing the total number of categories down to 19. As categories were grouped in related clusters, themes were created and these themes were further reduced and aggregated as discussed earlier in the data analysis section. Four main themes were established. Table 4 provides an overview of the themes and categories identified in the analytical process. Several categories are represented in more than one theme. These crossover categories are denoted by italics. Figure 2 shows a thematic map also outlining the crossover themes.

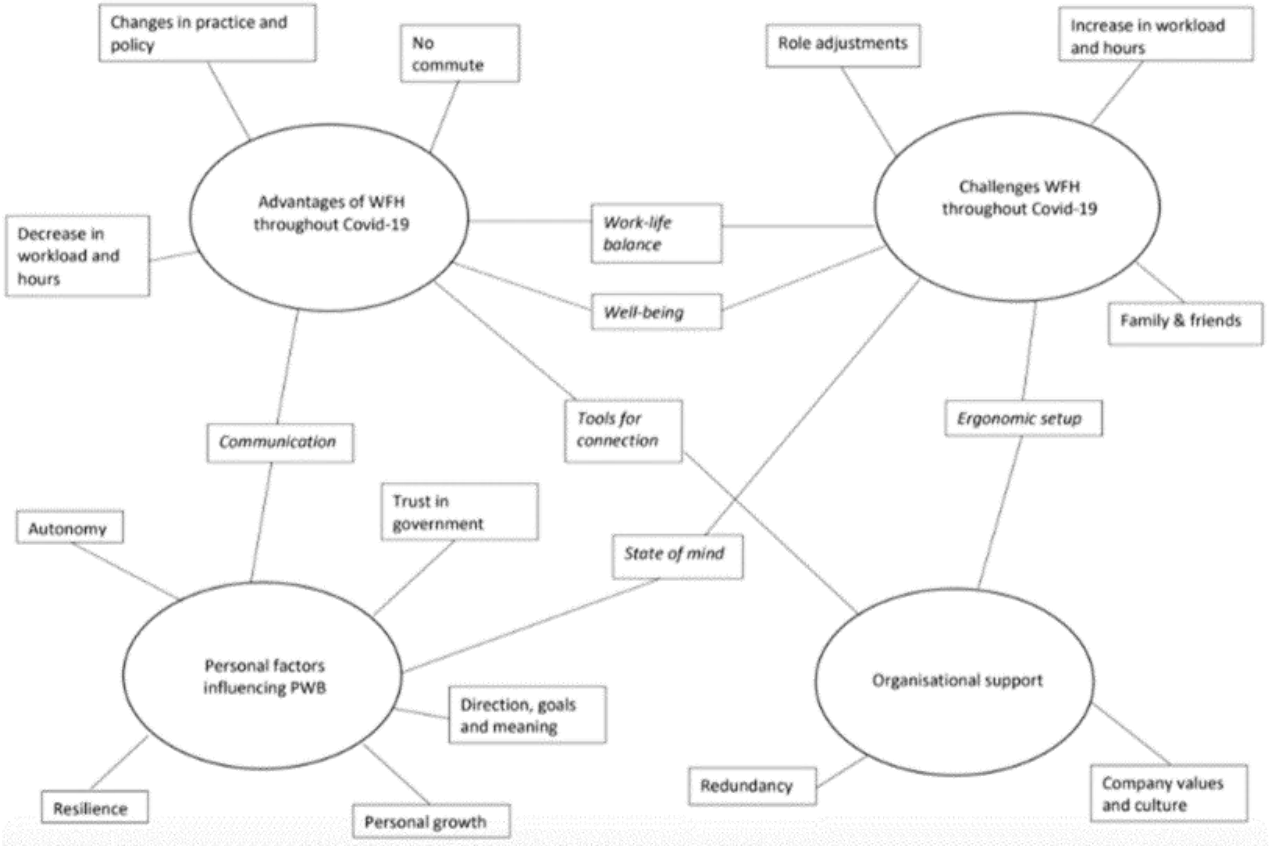
Table 4.

Themes and categories.

Themes	Categories
Advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19	Changes in practice and policy
	Tools for connection
	Decrease in workload and hours
	Well-being
	Work-life balance
	Communication
	No commute
Challenges WFH throughout Covid-19	Role adjustments
	Increase in workload and hours
	Work-life balance
	Well-being
	State of mind
	Ergonomic setup
	Family and friends
Personal factors influencing PWB	Trust in government
	Communication
	State of mind
	Direction, goals and meaning
	Resilience
	Autonomy
	Personal Growth
Organisational support	Company values and culture
	Redundancy
	Ergonomic setup
	Tools for connection
	Changes in practice and policy

Figure 2.

Thematic map.



Overview of Themes

All of the participants in this study described the various ways they enjoyed the Covid-19 lockdown, as well as the challenges they faced during this period. The advantages associated with WFH were evident in all the participants' accounts. The positive talk around Covid-19 lockdown, separate from the disease itself, gave way to theme one of ‘advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19’. Most notably, WFH over the lockdown led to all six participants' organisations changing their practices and policies to become more flexible. Various other factors such as virtual connection and a decrease in hours and workload led to some positive experiences over this lockdown period.

Contrastingly, all participants noted the difficulties of the sudden transition to WFH. Five out of the six participants had either not worked from home at all or not worked from home often,

which meant this was very new for them. Quotes such as ‘it had its challenges’ or ‘you weren’t sure what was happening’ were identified as underlying factors for theme two of ‘challenges WFH throughout Covid-19’. A notable finding to come out of theme three is that well-being and work-life balance can sometimes be distinct from one another. This finding is significant because prior research suggests that these concepts are intertwined and affect one another. The complexity of participants' accounts demonstrates the various challenges and ways of coping.

The name assigned to the third theme was ‘personal factors influencing PWB’. This theme highlighted individual characteristics that had a direct impact on well-being. Some of the descriptors in this theme were ‘I strongly trust the New Zealand government’ and ‘tested my resilience’. Further, two of six participants discussed the negative impact Covid-19 had on their state of mind and this theme will demonstrate the ways in which this affected the individuals. The language used in this theme was largely individualistic highlighting the personal and individual impacts on these participants. Analysis reveals the complexity and paradoxes experienced by all of these participants.

‘Organisational Support’ was the name assigned to theme four that included two crossover categories with theme one and theme two. The enabling or preventative factors facilitated by organisations appeared to have had a strong impact on employee PWB. All participants spoke positively about their company culture, an element that some of the participants indicated had helped them to cope during the lockdown period. Theme four includes both challenges and benefits showing the ambiguity and complexity of various factors experienced by the participants. Between the four themes, there are crossover categories as well as independent categories demonstrating the tensions in this topic.

Theme one: Advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19

This theme encompasses the advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19 and the dialogue around this. There were seven categories assigned to this theme. All of the participants described positive aspects to WFH and as a result, some reported preferring to work from home. The flexibility associated with WFH including removal of a commute, better work-life balance and the ability to spend more time with family are all reported advantages of WFH. It appears these factors as well as productivity levels led all participants' organisations to change their practices and policies to accommodate more flexible working arrangements.

Changes in Practice and Policy

Overwhelmingly, participants noted one of the biggest advantages to come out of Covid-19 was their organisations embracing flexibility in both how and where they can work. Four participants discussed their desire to work from home prior to the pandemic, but a lack of trust coming from their organisations meant this was not normally an option. The pandemic was effectively a forced trial because all of these workers had to suddenly transition to WFH. For these employees and their companies, this was unchartered territory and something they had to navigate together. All of the participants perceived the quality of their work was largely unchanged. Further, all of the participants expressed their thoughts around policy changes brought on by Covid-19. Grant, Eric and Louise discuss the shift in trust and what that has meant for them and their company's practices and policies.

> *"Absolutely. Yes, most definitely. It was not something that was encouraged before. Um, it was, from what I hear, would have come from a place of distrust as well. You know, are you actually doing your work when you're working from home kind of feeling because that's what people have told me about before. Also, it wasn't like a widely accepted practice, whereas now the company has actually formalised the practice, and they've got a guideline as to what you need to do in order to do it. It's up to everyone, every employee to discuss it with their line manager, and the line manager can sign off on you doing it or not doing it or coming to an agreement." (Grant)*

"I worked from home during that initial period through the whole national lockdown, but then I've continued to sort of adopt a one day away work at home because I could conduct, as can the majority of my team, conduct their roles from home. I think the trends are changing now. We don't have to drive into an office and be there at eight-thirty and then leave at five o'clock and know you've done a day's work. We, yeah, the trust is there. We've proven that we can still be effective by accessing all of our programmes and software, everything we need to conduct the clients, but conversation, etc. can all be done remotely." (Louise).

"Um I guess, if we weren't working from home, there'd be perceptions of like, oh, why is so and so not there at three or three-thirty. As opposed to working from home where if you don't have anything to do workwise, then you can do something else. So it was probably more a perception thing, and it definitely varies between individuals that have, I guess, high trust in their employment, and have high trust from their managers, and so forth, as well." (Eric).

Prior to Covid-19, these three participants did not work from home often or at all. Based on the extracts, the reasons for this include the lack of trust from their organisations regarding employees' productivity when WFH. Eric discusses the perspective of mistrust in terms of physically being able to see the employees working. It appears Eric thinks his organisation is more confident employees are working if they can be seen in the office during his 7.45am to 4.30pm workday. However, Eric further discusses that if he got his work done early at home, he did not feel the same obligation to stay in front of the computer to ensure others knew he was working his full hours. Thus, it is inferred Eric believes his organisation had more trust in its employees to do the work in the office rather than WFH. This aligns with the other three participants and Eric explains in his above quote how he believes this is a 'perception thing'.

One of the reasons participants wanted to have these WFH options was to work in an environment with fewer distractions. Three participants discussed being more productive when WFH and as such, these same participants said their preference would be to work in the office some days and work from home other days. Having these flexible practices allows them to still interact with colleagues and attend in-person meetings, while working on projects with fewer distractions.

"Um the tough thing about working in an office when, when we're not in the field, I'm in an office and it's open. So, there's probably up to five people in there. The tough thing is because I manage a decent amount of people, it can be quite distracting. Soo um working from home, I'm able to um do the things I need to do and assign sort of undistracted time to it, and sort of only be approached when things are serious enough that they may need to, like, email me or call me or something like that." (Eric).

"Yeah, and so we didn't have any glaringly obvious feedback, that projects were not happening, or things were stalling because of people working from home. I think we would have found that a lot of people got further down the line in some of the work that they were meant to do because they were working from home with less interruption from people within the office." (Grant).

"And then since COVID, and since we've come out of the lockdown, our company has realised oh people actually can work from home, and people were actually really productive when working from home. You don't have people tapping you on your shoulder chatting for half an hour or you know, you just did your work and got on with it so they were actually more productive. So, our company has changed to a three-two policy. So two in the office and two days from home, which has been great." (Moira).

"I feel like working from home, and what has happened to us, although the pandemic itself is a negative thing, one of the best positives that has come out of it is that there is now a level of trust. People are open to the idea of working from home, which everyone and many people have always wanted to do for years and years and years. They just want that little option every now and then whether it's a mental break away from the office or-or-or just headspace to forge forward on a project without people knocking on your office door, or just popping in to say hello eight times a day." (Grant).

It is evident these participants believe they are more productive when WFH. Grant's palpable relief about having an option to work from home demonstrates the desire some of the participants had to integrate more flexible working practices into their work lives. The forced WFH trial brought about by the pandemic demonstrated to these participants' organisations that employees can be productive and successfully work from home, which in turn has resulted in practice and policy changes in all six participants' organisations. These participants' organisations have gone from a place of mistrust in employees WFH to having to do this over the lockdown, to

now extending WFH to continue after the lockdown. These flexible working practices have become integrated into these participants' organisations, empowering them to do their work, because they have shown they can still be productive when WFH.

Tools for Connection and Communication

Microsoft Teams and Zoom were the tools used by these six participants to communicate with colleagues, family and friends. Moira, Grant, Louise and Brooke used Microsoft Teams, while Connor and Eric used Zoom. These tools created a sense of connection that helped at least one participant feel less alone. For some of the participants, these tools improved or forged relationships with colleagues that were not there before Covid-19. The presence of children, photographs, and seeing inside colleagues and bosses' houses demonstrated a personal side many participants felt they could identify with. This category is related to the other category of communication as advantages of WFH. Below extracts from Moira, Grant and Brooke demonstrate the ways these tools were used for connection.

> *"Now, one of the best things of the lockdown was that people actually switch their cameras on. So we could actually see people whereas before you'd do a meeting it was always with their headphones on. No one would switch their cameras on. Whereas now every meeting people have cameras on. It was amazing. So, it felt much better. Yeah, you actually got to see them more as human beings, especially your bosses. You're like ooo you actually have dogs? Oo you have kids? Yeah, you actually connected more." (Moira).*

> *"I think the positive side about COVID was people were more willing to share their private stuff with you over teams like hey, well, that's a nice picture in the background. Is it your family? Then they would say yes, absolutely and they would share a little bit more about it...You know, you get to see a little window into someone's personal life, because they're sitting in their lounge as an example. You might see photographs on the back wall, or their kids come past." (Grant).*

> *"Yeah, we would have drinks on Friday on teams, and with my colleagues that are in the same office as me, we often talked to each other each day, which was really good. It was good that you weren't alone sort of thing." (Brooke).*

> *"We did like a daily check-in where we would do like 'broken telephone' almost where I would start it and I'd phone someone, and then they would have to phone the next person. So, you got to know each other cause you ask random questions and personal questions.*

So, it was actually a really good bonding exercise. Yeah, it was fun, and you got to chat to different people. So, we've got offices in Wellington, Dunedin, and Auckland, so we picked different people within any office you had never chatted to before, you actually just chatted to them." (Moira).

"The other things we did, we would have um funny little zoom meetings with friends. We'd all put funny wigs on. Do dumb stuff. For the team, I created a couple of liiiike quizzes, and one was around Easter, so I looked on Google and found all these silly questions. Yeah, I mean, we just did that, we were connecting and as best you could and as regularly as you could which was helpful. Yeah, cause it was really, it was a strain not seeing your friends." (Louise).

These participants all talk about the different ways they connected with their colleagues through Zoom or Teams. Moira's comments around 'it felt much better' and 'you got to see them as human beings' are powerful extracts. The sense of reassurance seeing her colleague's faces, in some instances for the first time clearly meant a lot to Moira. Further, as Grant and Moira point out, learning more about colleagues and bosses and what goes on in their private life seemed to bridge that gap from a colleague, to someone you might have common interests with. These tools connected Louise with friends as well as colleagues. In her quote, it is clear she struggled with not being able to see friends and Teams was a way to keep that connection. Evidently, Teams was an outlet for humour and fun for Louise and her language illustrates the silliness around it, but also its ability to lift her spirits during the pandemic.

Moira discusses the initiatives her company used to encourage colleagues not only to keep in contact but to connect with colleagues in other New Zealand offices. Moira's tone at this point in the interview was upbeat and cheerful and it was evident she really enjoyed this side of lockdown. It appeared to mean a lot to her that her organisation enabled and encouraged them to connect with others. For Moira, relationships with her colleagues improved and Teams provided the opportunity for this to happen. In Brooke's case, these connections appeared to go deeper and actually helped to bridge the isolation gap brought about by lockdown to help her feel less alone. For these four participants, these tools were powerful ways to forge or consolidate relationships with colleagues.

Decrease in hours and workload

Three participants reported having a decreased workload and working less hours throughout the Covid-19 lockdown (Eric, Connor and Moira). Participants working jobs that were more hands-on were not able to keep up the same intensity usually required of them. A decrease in hours and workload combined with more flexibility subsequently improved some of these participants' well-being and work-life balance, as discussed in the next category. Here Eric, Connor and Moira discuss their reduction in hours worked.

> *"Yeah, ah it definitely differed. I'd say me probably working online, it went down from an average of you know six hours sort of thing in the office to probably about two or three. In that, because there was much less that we could do, there was just no point in trying to create extra work really." (Eric).*

> *"Ah I guess because they don't, they're-they're really good at letting people just get on with their jobs. So, I guess as long as the work is done, it's generally pretty good. So, I guess, I guess they would obviously prefer you're working the whole day as you should be. So yeah, in the situation, I mean I should've been doing 8.30am to 5pm every day but to say I was would be a lie (laughs)." (Connor).*

> *"Um yeah…at the start, I mean, I tried to be as good as possible. So I'd be like, eight thirtyish, nine til anywhere between four to five. So I tri-I tried my best. Then second, third lockdowns is pretty much get on, do what I had to do, and then just had my phone on me and checking emails and taking calls if I needed to, but I wasn't really sitting there trying to really get into it. As long as I had my phone on me and the emails I was generally pretty fine." (Connor).*

> *"Personally, mine dropped, but everyone else in the office? Not so much. Surprisingly, our company was a lot busier because everybody needed to all of a sudden get online and get businesses online. So our company, being Microsoft based, was doing all the Teams and setting everybody up, so our business actually improved." (Moira).*

Part of Eric's role requires hands-on work and with the Covid-19 restrictions, he was unable to do some of these tasks. As a result, Eric's workload decreased substantially. Eric was also in charge of a team in his role so had the added pressure of being a manager. In discussions with him, he acknowledged the stressful situation brought about by the pandemic and did not want to couple this with added job pressures and therefore encouraged his team members to avoid

overworking. Similarly, Connor also reported having a decreased workload. He sheepishly reported that though he should have been working his normal eight-hour day, if his work was done for the day then he would knock off. Of all of the participants in this study, Connor seemed to believe his company had the most trust in their employees to work from home.

Well-being

Three of the six participants reported stable well-being (Eric, Connor and Grant), and one participant reported an increase in well-being (Louise).

> *"Um I, I rather enjoyed working from home, to be honest. So it wasn't obviously, the COVID, and the situation with ah the country and everywhere else wasn't great, but I think I made an effort to I don't know. I, I think I appreciated that. So it wasn't so dreading, maybe. Yeah. I-I like that autonomy and doing whatever I wanted to do, obviously, not whatever I wanted to do. What I could do, yeah." (Eric).*

> *"I loved it. Yeah, we were one of those, it didn't bother us (laughs). We were fine. It did help having my husband and my kids there. I think it was me on my own it might be a different story. But yeah, we're quite homebodies anyway. I mean especially with immigrating from South Africa. We haven't really got the friends and that you know so we are quite homebound and family aren't infected. So yeah, for us it was easy." (Moira).*

You can see the different ways Eric and Moira enjoyed their lockdown experience. For Eric, it was having more autonomy and authority around how he likes to work. He seems uncertain about how to phrase his experience, but it could be inferred he saw it as an opportunity to make the most of this time and did not let himself get down about the Covid-19 situation. Using the mindset of seeing lockdown as a possibility to try something new rather than a dreaded time, proved beneficial for him. Throughout the interview with Moira, she spoke frequently about her family. Her statement about enjoying lockdown and the quality time she spent with her family was clearly important to her. Immigrating and settling in a new country is challenging and it seems Moira does not have too many close relationships in Christchurch. As such, Moira was able to just enjoy this time with her family. Later on, Moira also made reference to being ready to have another lockdown. Moira was not one of the participants to report stable or increased well-being for reasons made clear in theme two.

Louise discussed her improved well-being over lockdown. She attributed this to having time to do things she enjoyed that previously work may have dominated. Louise also acknowledges her struggles of missing friends and family and the contribution that makes to her well-being.

> *"I, I actually think my well-being was better over Covid-19. Yeah. Apart from the pressure of the meetings I was reading, I was going for regular walks, because there wasn't an excuse that I had to be attending something else. We were sharing things like if I went on a bike ride I would share photos of that sort of stuff. So I think it was fine. The only thing that I lacked was that people contact with the wider group of people, which I was desperate to get out and see friends and family, but I was fine. Well-being was okay and is okay." (Louise).*

Work-life balance

One participant reported improved work-life balance (Eric) and one participant reported stable work-life balance (Connor). The four remaining participants reported a decrease in their work-life balance (decreased work-life balance is discussed in theme two).

> *"Work-life balance working from home improved and it differed because we weren't expected to be in the office. Even when we didn't have a whole lot to do. So you know our normal workday ranges from sort of 7.45am to about 4.30pm. That's considered our standard day. Um, I guess, if-if we weren't working from home, you know, like, there'd be perceptions of like, oh, why is so and so not there at three or 3.30pm um as opposed to working from home where if you don't have anything to do workwise, um then you can do something else." (Eric).*

> *"Umm, hmm just trying to think. I suppose when um mm, I think when the first lockdown came around, it was probably, I don't know I feel like, I feel I haven't changed too much. I still have a pretty good relationship between the two. So I kind of leave my work at the office when I can, and when I was on lockdown, once it reached five o'clock or whenever I finished I wasn't really looking at too much. I wouldn't say it changed other than you not being really able to go out and see people and stuff. But I wouldn't say the balance has changed too much, because of it." (Connor).*

Eric discusses his work-life balance improving, largely because he did not feel he had to keep up appearances by being physically in the office until the end of the day. This ties in with his previous comments about not creating extra work over the lockdown. It could be inferred that in

the office, Eric's organisation expects employees to be there from 7.45am to 4.30pm, and as such Eric might create extra work if he is not busy to give off the impression to others in the office he is working his standard workday. However, in a WFH environment in the context of Covid-19, not creating this extra work allowed Eric to live a more balanced lifestyle. Connor discusses his stable work-life balance and the minimal effect WFH had on this, apart from the socialising that was not allowed in lockdown. Overall, of the three participants that reported a decrease in hours and workload, Eric and Connor were the two that reported stable or improved well-being and work-life balance.

No commute

Four participants (Moira, Brooke, Grant and Louise) spoke unprompted about the benefits of no longer having to commute to work.

> *"Actually, you know, you could save the commute time. You could be making calls earlier, you could be doing a whole lot of stuff virtually, that would be just as effective and more efficient than now." (Louise).*

> *"Especially in Wellington or Auckland where the cities are so much bigger and the commute is such a nightmare. Like the staff hated commuting, they would rather work an extra hour a day at home than get on the train, sit in the traffic so yeah, I-I find the people are happier working from home." (Moira).*

> *"I enjoy sometimes where normally you would be sitting in traffic, and then instead you know, you can get showered and be at your laptop working before you would've even got to the office." (Brooke).*

> *They just want that little option every now and then whether it's a mental break away from the office or-or-or just headspace to forge forward on a project….or without the grind of traffic getting to and from work. I'm pretty fortunate in that I don't have that. Yeah, I didn't have that full experience which say for example, Aucklanders are Wellingtonians would have had for example. (Grant).*

All of these participants point out that by WFH and removing the commute, you can get more work done. Despite their working days being extended, this is their preference. In the next

theme, these same four participants report an increase in workload and/or hours. It could be inferred that time spent usually commuting, is now spent at the computer at home.

Theme two: Challenges WFH throughout Covid-19:

This theme encompasses challenges faced by employees while WFH throughout Covid-19. There were seven categories assigned to this theme. All of the participants spoke about having to adjust their roles to suit their new working environment at home. In large part, this was due to equipment challenges and not being able to physically meet with clients and colleagues. Other challenges brought about by the pandemic include an increase in workload predominantly to deal with new Covid-19 protocols, and changes to state of mind, well-being, and work-life balance.

Role adjustments

Every participant spoke about the challenges of making the sudden transition to WFH. For some participants, these were minor challenges, and for others, larger challenges. In time most of the participants found ways to manage these challenges so they were better equipped to work from home in the future. Many participants had to pivot in their roles largely because of the inaccessibility of the office, with several aspects of participants' work having to become digital. Tasks of usual became redundant and some of the participants, such as Moira, had their roles redefined.

> *"Um obviously, it had its challenges, like there was no office to stock anymore. Anything like that on my side, but my role then just changed to checking in on everybody to make sure they were all fine and no one was having any issues, especially the people who were isolated on their own." (Moira).*

> *"Yeah, we were more focused on things we needed to do and staying um I guess staying ready if we had to do anything. So it wasn't really about, because like I said, our primary role is in the field, so the stuff that we can do outside of it is really just preparing for that. So really, it was just staying ready and theoretically ready, as much as we could. We couldn't go in to do much practicing or anything like that for pretty much the whole of the lockdown." (Eric).*

> *"So you had to learn how to do a lot of stuff online and for a lot of people that was a mega challenge, because not only just doing it online, it's then where do you put it? How do you*

safely send out the right documentation to the client so that all the privacy and everything isn't put at risk of any kind? So that was probably the one thing you know, you're signing up new clients, you need paperwork, and you obviously go and sit down with someone, and help them. Whereas this was, I'm going to email it to you, you then have to fill it out online, then you're going to have to send it all back to me. So it's a bit of an adjustment." (Louise).

These narrative excerpts demonstrate the ways participants had to adjust to new aspects of their roles because of the inaccessibility of the office. As the office manager, Moira's role has always been focused on supporting the team through various tasks and duties. She gives the example of stocking the office, a task that is only required if people are in the office. Thus, Moira's role has changed, but the premise is still to support the team. It is now checking in with people and seeing if they are coping in lockdown. Similarly, Eric discusses how his role is now less physical and more theory-based. A large part of Eric's role is to be in the field for various training exercises, and he only undertook two missions during lockdown so the rest was spent ensuring his knowledge was up to date. Louise also experienced having to adjust to being more digital and having to coach clients through the same. Further, she had to find new ways to deal with private information that previously was not electronic.

Increase in workload and hours

Alongside having to adjust to new roles and ways of doing things in the life of Covid-19, the workload and/or hours reportedly increased for five of the participants (Connor, Brooke, Louise, Grant and Moira). This demonstrates a paradox within some of the participants that will be analysed further in this category. These first four extracts exemplify the increase in workload and hours for these participants.

"I think I was the busiest, I mean, if I look back over that lockdown period, I've never attended so many meetings. So I was in crisis meetings and management meetings, and leadership meetings and in meetings, virtual team meetings to try and keep the team morale going. We were even doing virtual morning teas or virtual wine o'clock on a Friday. So I feel like I was busier than I normally would be. So it was <u>really</u> busy." (Louise).

"And then the hours that I worked were extended hours. They could be any time from when I first opened up an email, say seven in the morning, and then I might go past my office and think, oh I'll just have a look. Eight o'clock at night...nine o'clock at night, you're

looking at stuff and you're wondering, you know, what's going on with clients? Do they need us? You know, it was definitely not a normal period. It was definitely working all kinds of hours and even then being guilty, so log in on a Saturday and Sunday. It's a danger to your own well-being and work-life balance." (Louise).

"Um yeah so thinking about it, I'd started a new role. Um, there was a lot to learn and there was a lot to get my head around. So I found myself putting in extra time what I would ordinarily do at a normal job in an office anyway. But I found that once I'd gotten into the swing of it, you know, a week or two into the job, I would still put in extra because I knew that my machine was set up. It was right there. I could just quickly log in, check my emails and answer this one and answer that one. Ahh so I did find that, you know, if you were contracted or mandated to do an eight-hour day, I was probably doing longer than that, you know, nine or ten hours every day simply because of all this. It's really convenient. Wake up at six, oh quickly login, check your emails, answer a couple then again, you know, it's quarter past seven, you've done an hour and 15 minutes extra. So I did find myself creeping into, you know, what would be deemed overtime, doing extra work." (Grant).

"I worked my butt off during the lockdown. I absolutely worked my butt off. I was having back surgery in June and so I was trying to get ahead of the game and get all my renewals. So I do like annual renewals with clients. I was trying to get them all ticked off." (Brooke).

Two of the three participants spoke about working longer hours because of the proximity of the home office. Louise discussed how her management role meant the challenges the pandemic brought to her workplace increased the number of meetings, subsequently increasing her hours and workload. Louise's voice during this part of her interview was strained and it was clear she was not looking back on a fond time. Louise displayed feelings of stress and helplessness. Juggling the pressures of meetings, supporting the team and the unknowns of Covid-19 had clearly taken a toll on Louise and while this has improved since lockdown, it was evident she struggled during that time. Further, Louise's tone when she was telling me about her hours worked was sheepish. She appeared to know working such long hours was not something she should be doing, but rather something she was unable to help. Due to the home office, she found herself drawn to checking her emails at all hours and days of the week. Grant discusses a similar experience where he would start work early and then find himself working extended hours.

Louise also mentions wondering if her clients needed her. This demonstrates a sense of empathy and commitment to her clients and work. Over this lockdown period, Louise patently

wanted to provide additional support to clients, even if this meant it was at her expense. In Louise's closing sentence she notes these extended hours are a danger to well-being and work-life balance. Clearly, Louise was feeling overwhelmed because of the quantity of work being placed on her, and with no appropriate system to deal with it she ended up working considerably more than she would in the office. Interestingly, in theme one Louise was one of the participants that stated her well-being was better over the initial lockdown. In contrast, in the next category, Louise comments that her work-life balance decreased.

Two participants (Connor and Moira) initially said neither their workload or hours had decreased, but later stated their workload or hours had increased. This demonstrates the tensions within the dialogue of these participants. Here Connor discusses the decrease in hours worked. His tone and actions are not captured in what you can see here, but during the interview, his slightly sheepish demeanor demonstrated that the reduction in motivation Connor was experiencing meant he was working reduced hours and was taking up more of an 'on-call' or 'as-needed' position with his company.

> *"Um yeah…at the start, I mean, I tried to be as good as possible. So I'd be like, eight thirtyish, nine til anywhere between four to five. So I tri-I tried my best. Then second, third lockdowns is pretty much get on, do what I had to do, and then just had my phone on me and checking emails and taking calls if I needed to, but I wasn't really sitting there trying to really get into it. As long as I had my phone on me and the emails I was generally pretty fine." (Connor).*

Shortly after these comments, Connor talked about the increase in his workload.

> *"The actual work is all the same, because of our accounts and whatnot but I guess the flow of emails coming through and people wanting questions and asking what's going on? I guess that that made it a lot busier for the first little while. So yeah, I guess the workload did um increase, not not to an unmanageable level but it did add another layer of work to do I guess." (Connor).*

Initially, Connor discussed the reduction in hours worked and later discussed the increase in workload. This may tie into what participants were saying earlier about there being fewer interruptions and distractions while WFH. The inference is that Connor was able to manage an

increased workload while working fewer hours because he experienced fewer interruptions and thus, could be more productive in a shorter amount of time.

Contrary to Connor, Moira discussed having a reduced workload but working more hours. Here she is discussing how her workload dropped and comparing it to others in her office.

> *"Personally, mine dropped, but everyone else in the office? Not so much. Surprisingly, our company was a lot busier, because everybody needed to all of a sudden get online and get businesses online. So our company, being Microsoft based, was doing all the Teams and setting everybody up. So our business actually improved." (Moira).*

Here Moira is again talking about the extended hours she was working.

> *"Yes. Yeah. Ummm triiiied to stick to the usual eight hours, but you ended up doing more? Just because you're there and you're sitting at your computer, and yup you just ended up doing so. So you do try and get out and go for a walk and whatever. But yeah (laughs), I do find now even if I do work from home, I tend to end up working longer. Next thing you look at the time you're like, oh, flip it's half past six I better stop working." (Moira).*

This demonstrates a paradox within what Moira is saying. With less work to do she was working extended hours. It could be inferred that going for walks meant there were more breaks taken and as a result, Moira's days were longer, yet the workload did not increase. These contrary intrapersonal and interpersonal statements from Moira and Connor demonstrate the paradoxes brought about by Covid-19 and the sudden transition to WFH. The pandemic created multifaceted challenges these participants had to find ways to deal with and evidently, there were differences in how they were handled.

Work-life balance

In theme one, one participant (Connor) reported no changes to work-life balance and one participant (Eric) reported positive changes to work-life balance. Four participants (Grant, Moira, Louise and Brooke) reported poorer work-life balance. This is a demonstration of the interpersonal differences and what contributed to this category being represented in both theme one and theme two. There have also been several intrapersonal contradictions that have been highlighted so far.

Louise quoted earlier that working longer hours is a danger to well-being and work-life balance, however, she also reported that her well-being increased. In this next quotation, Louise discusses that her work-life balance was out of kilter.

> *"Yeah, so during COVID, it was not in balance at all. Now that I'm back to normal, it's as balanced as I can get it (laughs). It's pretty good. It's pretty good really. We now have flexibility, and I can nip out and go and get something from I dunno where I need to get it from, and still come and do my work." (Louise).*

It is a brief statement, but enough to demonstrate that during the pandemic lockdown, she experienced poorer work-life balance compared to normal. Louise had kids and step-kids in her house that may also have impacted on work-life balance. While they are not young kids, there was still an expectation to play the 'mum' role. Moira was another participant that had kids in the house. Similarly, they were primarily self-sufficient but still required occasional help with schoolwork during the day, which may have contributed to work-life balance becoming more unstable. To recap, Louise worked longer hours, had an increased workload, experienced poorer work-life balance but improved well-being. This is an interesting example of how these factors do not necessarily impact one another. It could be inferred that having more flexibility in her day to create her own schedule as she has noted multiple times, is positively impacting her well-being.

The next extracts from Grant and Brooke demonstrate two different examples of how work-life balance was negatively impacted. Grant discusses the ease in which he fell into checking his emails because of the proximity of the home 'office'. Although Grant mentions his work-life balance was poorer, this new flexibility around hours worked meant he could work around his family's schedule. Grant has two young kids and had to juggle this alongside starting a new job over lockdown. Grant was also one of the participants that noted no changes to his well-being, so similar to Louise, poorer work-life balance does not always equate to reported poorer well-being. On the other hand, Brooke had a strict routine and attempted to treat her home office as similar to her actual office. However, many of her colleagues did not have the same boundaries and this began to encroach into her non-work time effectively impacting Brooke's work-life balance.

"I feel like my work-life balance was more work and less life working from home, simply because I'd wake up in the morning and put the kettle on to make a cup of coffee, and go and check my emails and come back 45 minutes later, I haven't made the coffee as an example. But having said that, because of the flexibility that came out of it, while the family was sleeping, I could do my work. Then when they were awake, as I mentioned, I could bolt on another hour at lunchtime and spend two hours of quality time with my family during the day when they're all awake. So it kind of compensated for it." (Grant).

"Um, just a comment with the lockdown, the big one, colleagues would spam you with emails and texts in the evening. Like reply all and it got a bit annoying because I sort of feel that when you're working from home, you do have to be disciplined and have a start time and a finish time. It just got-it got a bit annoying even. This hit reply all and your phone's going beep beep, you know and I use my business phone personally, and so you didn't want to turn it off because it could be family or someone. So that was a bit annoying. I actually said something in the end. I said, 'you know, could we just stick to business hours'?" (Brooke).

These participants describe the ways their work-life balance was impacted by Covid-19 and WFH. There are differences in the way this occurred, with Grant discussing the impacts of being close to his computer contributing to an extended working day. Contrarily, Brooke describes how she attempted to stick to her usual eight hours, but her colleagues who were taking advantage of the flexibility of WFH would now be sending emails and texts at times they would not ordinarily. This demonstrates one of the challenges WFH brings about and what these employees had to adapt to. Brooke attempted to convince her colleagues to stick to business hours, but for participants like Grant who had young children, this presented more of a challenge. All participants reported at one stage or another having to combat challenges such as these.

Well-being

Moira was the only participant to directly report that she experienced poorer well-being over the Covid-19 lockdown. Moira's father passed away back home in South Africa after he fell ill with Covid-19. This was a traumatic event for her and a major factor in her reduced well-being.

"Mmmm my well-being overall personally, because I have been affected by COVID on a personal level. I find like I don't, I'm not sleeping as much probably as I should do, but that's just like I said because I've personally been affected by it. It's not so much because of COVID in New Zealand, it's more the COVID in another country. So because South

Africa wakes up when we're going to bed people tend to want to talk so then you're waking up or like with my dad's estate, having to wrap things up and meetings with the lawyers, but it's during our night." (Moira).

It could be inferred that Moira's earlier quote about enjoying lockdown was a result of being able to spend quality time with her family during this tough period.

While Brooke did not directly report reduced well-being, her distress around being cut off from New Zealand and family resulted in feelings of depression. This demonstrates a reduction in well-being directly linked with the challenges of WFH throughout Covid-19. Further, both of these participants reported feelings of isolation or disconnect with family that broke down a sense of collectivism that was present prior to the pandemic.

State of mind

There is a disparity between participants' state of mind. Some participants saw no changes, while others struggled mentally with the lockdowns and WFH. Two participants expressed frustrations around the lockdown and the impact this had on their state of mind. Both of these participants were in Auckland and as a result, had longer and more frequent lockdowns than the rest of New Zealand. This appeared to have taken a toll on these participants and it is evident, particularly in Brooke, that there was a sense of despondency as they reflected on that time. Connor expressed frustrations around the lockdowns and working exclusively from home.

"Um I guess during the first one it was okay, but then it kind of gives you the sense of well, how long are we gonna be doing this for kind of thing, and if it becomes a permanent thing or not. Um yeah, the first one was okay, and I dealt fine. I guess the other ones were a bit more of a struggle because I wanted to be in the office obviously. Um, I wouldn't say it-it got me down or anything like that just kind of a bit like, ah I'd much prefer...ah a bit of frustration I guess." (Connor).

"So with the subsequent Auckland lockdowns, that was really hard. Really hard. You weren't sure what was happening, and I know my daughter who lives outside of Auckland sent me a photo and they were at a cafe, and I'm like, how-how can you be at a cafe? Then it twigged, they're not in Auckland. So it was-it was really hard. I know my daughter in Auckland, she struggled big time." (Brooke).

"Um, the first one was fine. The subsequent ones were not good. Yeah, it was stressful. It was that sense of not knowing. Are we going to come out of this lockdown? Are we gonna go to level two? Is it going to be extended? When they did have a date in mind to review it, I didn't want to go booking meetings, work review meetings until I knew that we were going to be out of it. I didn't do so many like with the big lockdown I would do phone reviews with clients, I didn't do that during those subsequent ones because I thought well, we might be out of it the following week. So it was that sense of unknowing. I felt a bit depressed as well." (Brooke).

The subsequent Auckland lockdowns appeared to play more of a role in participants' state of mind than those who did not have to do the extra lockdowns. These participants seem to attribute changes to state of mind, to these subsequent lockdowns. Connors' language clearly demonstrates his frustrations, particularly around the unknown. He did make it clear he did not get down over it, whereas Brooke clearly feels deeply about these subsequent lockdowns. During this stage of the interview, her tone was emphatic, she was frustrated and it seemed to be taking a toll on her mental health. Brooke states in the last sentence that she felt depressed and she attributed this largely to the subsequent lockdowns. Seeing her family doing normal day-to-day things while she was having to stay home induced frustration and confusion. It could be inferred that Brooke felt a sense of ambiguity and separation from the rest of New Zealand that had negative effects on her state of mind. Both Connor and Brooke discussed the unknown and not having a grasp on what was happening. These factors combined with being the only place in New Zealand in lockdown distinctly caused some harm.

Ergonomic setup

Another key factor discussed in this research was ergonomic setup and equipment challenges. The majority of these participant's organisations allowed employees to take office equipment home with them such as monitors and keyboards, but none of the participants took a desk home. This meant some of the participants were working from their bed or dining room table and in some instances, this resulted in negative physical impacts and more distractions.

"What I did find is that my shoulders used to take the strain in my neck because of the height difference. I'm six foot five, and my dining room chair and my dining room table aren't height adjustable. So working for hours at a time being locked down on my dining room table wasn't ideal." (Grant).

"Yes, I did have ergonomic chairs and a desk all that stuff, I didn't notice anything. Others, did though, myself personally, I have, like the laptop at the right height and I get up and do stretches and move around a bit. Some people were working over a little tiny laptop screen as an example, but I had a monitor set up at home so I mean, that wasn't an issue for me. It's probably one thing we learned. So I did deploy monitors to those people that want to continue to have an office station at home, that have asked for it. I think that was important because crunching over like that over a little computer, you know sore neck, shoulders, back." (Louise).

In these reflections, it is evident there were ergonomic challenges that led to negative physical impacts. Grant noticed negative physical impacts from working at the dining room table without an adjustable chair. Louise discusses not personally noticing any physical impacts but noted that her colleagues did. Eventually, Louise's organisation had to deploy more equipment to try and minimise these impacts after lockdown.

Equipment challenges meant some of the participants had to adapt to being more digital or find alternatives. Participants noted the use of paper rather than being more digital was an old-school mentality. The access issues demonstrated below were inconvenient and incited frustration at not being able to carry out simple tasks you would usually be able to in an office.

"But subsequent to all this the worst part was not having a printer or scanner. So what I used to have to do is get stuff, email it to our home computer so that I can print it off there, which was a pain in the ass, or take photos of documents because we didn't have a scanner. But my company kindly purchased me a printer scanner that I have in the home office here. It makes a phenomenal difference. If I had had that during the big lockdown life would have been heaps easier." (Brooke).

"Well, one of the challenges was we had no printers, right? So you go from I can walk across the room, I can press print, pick up something and have it like this (holds up a piece of paper) on my desk, which is old school. We had to adjust. During that lockdown period, weren't purchasing 800 printers, so you had to learn how to do a lot of stuff online, and for a lot of people that was a mega challenge. Because not only just doing it online, it's then where do you, where do you put it? How do you safely send out the right documentation to the client so that all the privacy and everything isn't put at risk of any kind, so that was probably the one thing you know, you're signing up new clients, you need paperwork? (Louise).

"Me personally, the first little while was all right, but then I think after a while I realised how helpful it is to have your office and everything set up for you there. You've got all your screens and everything so it's much easier to come into the office. So after a while, I was definitely ready to get back." (Connor).

"And there was, (laughs) there was asking for help with customers as well, that was something that I had to do too. So y-yeah, absolutely. I felt like they were quite receptive to it. Often if you didn't have, for example, information on hand, you had to call the customer and say, hey, listen, I don't have this information, because it's in a file at the office. We can't access it yet. Would you mind sharing your last known version? They were very accommodating. Everyone kind of understood. We were all in the same boat." (Grant).

These participants were still able to carry out their normal tasks, but they had to figure out new ways of doing things. This was also a challenge for clients. Employees were having to coach clients on how to access private information digitally and this added a layer of complexity. Grant experienced access challenges in his role whereby many of the files his company uses are hardcopy and locked in the office, so Grant had to find other ways to access this information. Brooke was frustrated by not having a printer, but after her company bought her one it made her role easier and more time-efficient.

Family and friends

Two participants spoke extensively about challenges, struggles and concerns with family over the lockdown. Missing friends and family over lockdown is something every participant discussed. Grant and Louise voiced these concerns more than most.

"I'll just add that I suffered a little bit not connecting with my elderly parents. They were half an hour out of town and they really shouldn't have had visitors coming in to connect with them at all because of their age and their health conditions. So going to visit them was tough, because I'd pull up outside the gate and I'd stand on the other side, and that's not nice to drive away and leave them you know. What was missing was the connection with the other people that matter the most as well, and the worry about that….I would say 'stay home where you're safe'. 'Don't tell me to stay home, I'm allowed to go to the grocery store' (imitating her parents). 'Oh mum I really wish you wouldn't go to the grocery store

but I can't stop you. You are in the highly vulnerable group. But also you never were very good at listening to others.'" (Louise).

"I've got three family members at the moment with the Delta variant. One's got a six-month-old child who was breastfeeding so she can't do that anymore. She has to self-isolate from her child so the husband and daughter are living in the lounge while the mother-my sister lives in the main bedroom. There are 18,000 new cases every day. So it's pretty bad. Yep, and amongst my friends, we've had four deaths in the last five weeks (talking about South Africa)." (Grant).

"One way, we realise now that we're in this lockdown that you know, you can't see your family. When are we going to see our family actually? Borders are locked and closed, we-we, I've had a child in the interim, and no one's seen my child, and it's two years already since then. So we realised that our goals to go back and see family have had to be pushed out and we have changed our goals to have them come here and assist them with getting here." (Grant).

Being separated from family is evidently difficult for these two participants. They emphasize that being separated in combination with having at-risk family members causes stress. Their depiction of detachment from loved ones demonstrates another dimension of the lockdown. Grant has family contracting Covid-19 and friends passing away in South Africa. The realisation that he and his family will not be able to visit family in South Africa was clearly upsetting and was noticeable during the interview. Similarly, Louise struggled with not being able to spend the time with her parents she usually would. Concerns about her parents who were not in her bubble being exposed to the virus created an extra stressor that contributed to family and friends being another challenge in the Covid-19 lockdown.

On the other hand, family within the same bubble also created some challenges. Grant and Louise's reflections portray their reactions to the proximity of family for the five-week lockdown.

"Yeah, so we had a family meeting the night before. So this was when we knew things were going to change the next day. Two of the five in the house were emergency workers so they were able to leave and come back in. So there was that dynamic of how you're going to keep yourself hygienic and safe when you reenter the home. Yeah, so there was that Then we sort of tried to, well I tried to, and I'm gonna say it was unsuccessful, set boundaries and a few sort of limits and things. The very first night, all of that got blown up and nobody

listened. We woke up to cans of this and cans of that or whatever all over the place and it made for an angry start...It's like I'm not putting up with this for four weeks. This will not happen. I don't care what you do but clean it up and be mindful of the neighbours and be respectful of us. That was the only time it happened. Let's just say it was pretty tense that first day that was afterwards. Day two was yeah-day two was pretty tense. So yeah, we managed to all keep it together and you know, there were no fistfights or anything like that. God it was hard." (Louise).

"Um and th-the dynamics between myself and ah my wife was, well that was quite interesting working from home all the time (laughs). That obviously changed during that period of time, whereby we had to just you know learn to live with each other. Yeah, in each other's pockets for 24 hours a day. Our dynamic would have changed then. Um since then, it's kind of gone to well we actually appreciate the time that we had together. We should do that more often now." (Grant).

"So we walk, go out, the kids absolutely hated walking past the park and not being able to touch the park or go ahead play on the swings or etc etc. So we had a couple of problems there. But we would do lighthearted things like have picnics in the garden. You know, I'd play with the kids to go and find butterflies or something along those lines, just to keep them motivated to keep the mood light-hearted." (Grant).

Grant and Louise emphasize that just as the distance between family members creates challenges, spending all their time together for five weeks creates challenges too. These participants suggest there were some tough moments in their bubbles but they managed to cope okay. Grant puts a positive spin at the end of both of his quotes which shows how reflections can impact feelings at the time of lockdown, and also the efforts Grant made to alleviate stress during the lockdown. This is evident when he talks about trying to keep things light-hearted with his young kids because they were not able to understand why they could not play on the playground.

Theme three: Personal factors influencing PWB:

This theme demonstrates personal factors that had an effect on PWB. There were seven categories assigned to this theme. Multifaceted and complex, the personal factors influencing PWB while WFH over the pandemic show variation, contradictions and complexity in the way people coped. Both positive and negative personal factors that have had an impact on PWB over the pandemic are highlighted.

Trust in government

All six participants reported having trust in the government and its response to Covid-19. They supported the science-backed decisions and thought generally the government handled Covid-19 arriving in New Zealand well. However, two participants did have comments around how their feelings have changed a bit now, but this includes policies not centered around Covid-19. Louise explained her feelings about the New Zealand government.

> *"Ummmm I attended those one o'clock briefings almost every day, and I was, yeah, I mean, I think I'd like to say I had a high level of trust through it. We seemed to get the ahh epidemic you know, the pandemic under control. The numbers were not rising, not getting out of, you know. Ummm yeah, I think the way I feel now is a little bit different, but that's only because there's a whole lot of different topics going on which government making us privy to, but no, I didn't have, like I'm quite y-you know, I'm gonna say I'm labour supportive. I wouldn't-I wouldn't have wanted anyone else in charge, I think in that period." (Louise).*

Louise seems hesitant to make this statement and did not elaborate on what the government is currently doing to change her level of trust. Connor and Grant discuss their levels of trust in the below excerpts.

> *"I've got pretty high trust, I think. I feel like they dealt with the scientific information and evidence appropriately and swiftly. I felt like they had the best interest of the nation at heart. So yeah." (Connor).*

> *"How would I describe my feelings? Um, I feel like I strongly trust the New Zealand government with how they reacted to the pandemic. Um, so I don't I don't have any criticism. I've come from a country where there's been practically no rule and I've seen how other countries have handled it. I think that the team of five million and this government has done really well and continue to do well. (Grant).*

Evidently participants, at least during the time of the lockdowns, had trust in the government. Participants praised the government's response to the pandemic and seemed to believe the government did the best it could with the resources it had. Grant's phrase of the 'team of five million' aligns with his dialogue throughout the interview that emphasized teamwork. Teamwork

was clearly an important and defining factor in Grant's lockdown and it was clear he used it as a way to remain connected.

Communication

Three participants (Grant, Connor and Louise) spoke in-depth about communication with colleagues and bosses during the lockdowns. This communication was largely construed by participants to be necessary and a show of support. Participants discussed questions from employers around how employees were doing and the genuine concerns expressed for employees' well-being at the time of the lockdown. They reported being grateful for these open lines of communication.

> *"There was also the personal check-in. So we would check in with each other. How's everyone doing e-emotionally? You know, do they need support? How's their family doing because we were all traversing this COVID thing without knowing where we were going, and a good couple of us have family all over the world. So everyone's worried about not only themselves but families everywhere else. So we would spend some time just you know, sharing and talking around that sort of stuff." (Grant).*

> *"I have quite a good relationship with my manager and my boss anyway so I could call them up if I needed to. There weren't really any issues with that. Um so no, I wouldn't say that that changed too much. I could go to them whenever I needed to, and I think a lot of people were anyways because of the situation so all of those channels of communication were still open. If not, they probably got better I'd say. Because they wanted to make sure everyone was okay and all the work was still being done. So I think that probably got better." (Connor).*

Throughout the interview, it was evident teamwork and cohesion were important to Grant. When he spoke about these check-ins his gratefulness and sincerity were evident. Grant's immediate family is in New Zealand but his entire extended family lives in South Africa, so seeking reassurance and a tight-knit workplace appeared to be his way to cope and create a support system in New Zealand. Similarly, Connor discusses the support he felt and how his company actually improved their communication over lockdown. Throughout the interview, Connor often referred to his strong relationship with his manager and never expressed concerns about his

organisation. For both Grant and Connor, these check-ins and open lines of communication appeared to contribute to a sense of security.

The category of communication in theme one links with communication in this theme. Communication throughout these lockdowns was clearly important to all participants. It meant connecting with friends, family and colleagues and appeared to be instrumental in well-being. Being able to easily communicate with participants' teams and bosses made participants like Connor feel at ease.

State of mind

State of mind was a personal factor that decreased for three participants (Grant, Brooke and Connor). This was mentioned in theme two as being particularly tough for those in Auckland. The feelings of uncertainty, frustration, and loss of motivation were described. The implications of a diminished state of mind seemed to have a direct impact on well-being. This could be seen in Brooke who stated she felt depressed. At the surface level, this clearly is a negative impact brought about by Covid-19 forcing the transition to WFH. On a deeper level, the feelings of isolation and vulnerability that coincided had severe negative impacts on Brooke.

Grant also reported a sense of anxiety because he had just started a new job as lockdown hit and had not yet met everyone in his office. The added stress of wanting to impress everyone and make a mark through a computer screen clearly created strain and a sense of worry. Grant tried to show a more personal side of himself to encourage colleagues to understand who he is as a person.

> *"Um I-I don't feel like I was negatively impacted by it. I don't feel like I was (brief pause) um in a state of anxiety all the time around it. What I was anxious about is that I just started this brand new job. One, is how am I going to prove myself on a little screen in front of everybody? How am I going to prove myself that I'm the right person in this role when I can't meet my customers face to face? So there was anxiety around how my company is going to perceive me and all these new people that are meeting me on the screen going to perceive me by seeing just my face on an image on an image on a computer?" (Grant).*

> *"Every now and then to-to show that more personal side of myself, which I-I don't mind doing to colleagues, I'd have my kids sitting on my lap, while I'm in a meeting because they knew that they needed to keep quiet, and not talk. So if it was a non-distraction to have*

them there, every now and then, I would do that every now and then. The novelty eventually wore off. They didn't care. I was sitting at the dining room table working, eventually, they just leave you alone." (Grant).

Showing this personal side was Grant's process for forging new relationships and trying to insert himself into this new company. It also served as a way for him to keep his children entertained and relieve some pressure for his wife. It could be inferred this was Grant's coping mechanism to reduce the anxiety around being judged and trying to improve his state of mind.

Direction, meaning and goals

Direction, meaning and goals for most were largely unchanged. No participants reported that Covid-19 negatively impacted these personal factors.

"Um I mean, it made me appreciate the office but work is still the same, and I guess I enjoy what I'm doing so I-I wouldn't say it's changed for me or anything. It's still fairly the same." (Connor).

"I still believe they are what they are. Well, I'm very goal orientated and what I started in lockdown when I started this role, my goal is to do ABC. Those goals are still the same, COVID hasn't impacted that." (Grant).

These two short extracts demonstrate the minimal changes in direction, meaning and goals. Most participants did not have much to say about these factors. It could be inferred that during the Covid-19 lockdown it was more difficult to further any goals or progress because of the limitations set in place by the government. One participant was able to finish her diploma which had been a goal of hers for a while.

"I did take advantage of finishing my diploma in COVID, because I did have you know, like the time and when we came out of that first lockdown I just took some more leave because we were lucky enough with our business that no one was put off or made redundant or anything so everyone carried through, all roles we carried through. Um but we were encouraged to take some leave and so I took extra leave on top of it and then finished my diploma that I'm supposed to have done years ago and that felt really great. So, so my goals don't, ha-haven't really changed. I still achieved them regardless of that situation." (Louise).

Louise embraced the opportunity to take leave after reportedly having a busy lockdown period at work. Her company enabled her to achieve her goal and it was evident this was something she was proud of.

Resilience and personal growth

Below are two participants reporting on growth around resilience and how Covid-19 tested this.

> *"In terms of my personal growth, I think it would probably be more around resilience and actually going, well hold on a second, we actually can do this and people can work together as a team. I've always tried to be that way, but now there's evidence of it around." (Grant).*

> *"Well, I got my diploma and that was my personal growth. So I would say, yeah. Tested my resilience levels, but I came through really well with the resilience piece. So no, I don't think other than other than um the diploma and just being kind." (Louise).*

These participants have a distinct sense of pride around their ability to emerge from the lockdowns strongly because of that resilience. There is also positive talk around resilience within a team. As aforementioned, Grant frequently talks about teamwork and it is evident he has a desire to foster this in his workplace.

Autonomy and Communication

All of the participants reported they felt they had autonomy where they wanted it, but also that their organisation was available for help if they needed it. Eric did have some communication issues in his organisation and lockdown was a revelation for Eric in terms of who was a poor communicator outside of the office environment.

> *"I don't think relationships changed. I think what they did maybe reveal, is when people aren't very good at communicating via other means than in person. It became quite clear when somebody isn't very good at, you know, either using their phone or, you know, through zoom, any of those electronic methods. I guess that kind of was, yeah, that was quite revealing to see who wasn't so good at communicating that way." (Eric).*

Prior to Covid-19 Eric's organisation did not have any WFH practices in place. Due to the line of work he is in, it is not as easy for them to conduct their jobs remotely. Thus, Eric infers that because they have always communicated in person, some employees were not as familiar or good at using tools like Zoom, or even taking phone calls. For many of the participants, using these tools was an adjustment, and based on Eric's statement, some coped with these changes better than others.

Theme four: Organisational support:

This theme encompasses dialogue from participants around organisational support when WFH during the pandemic. There were five categories assigned to this theme. Organisational support is the act of communication, deployment of resources, and empowering employees to do their job. All participants spoke highly of their company culture and generally felt supported during the pandemic. When analysing what is meant by the term 'support', participants talked in terms of communication, company values and keeping their jobs during Covid-19.

Company values and culture

All six of the participants reported that their companies had positive values and culture with a focus on 'people'. There was particular emphasis on participants' appreciation of the compassion expressed by management. This primarily relates to regular check-ins on how employees were coping. Participants felt supported when their organisation expressed concerns and offered help, demonstrating their understanding of the innate needs of their employees. Here are two examples of the types of questions Louise's company was asking its employees.

> *"Yeah taking the time, not just to be focused on the business stuff, but actually, how are you? Are you coping? What do you need? Is there anything that's too hard? What are you finding most difficult at the moment? So there are those types of questions." (Louise).*

> *"Are you under stress? Is it more effective for you to be working while the children are asleep for example? You know, what can we do to make your experience easier? It's just now, we want to make it all happen." (Louise).*

> *"There was also the personal check-in. So we would check in with each other. How's everyone doing emotionally? You know, do they need support? How's their family doing*

because we were all traversing this COVID thing without knowing where we were going right. (Grant).

These quotes clearly illustrate organisational empathy towards the Covid-19 situation. Covid-19 presented new challenges to these organisations and as such, they reached out to employees ensuring their needs were being met whilst also enabling them to successfully work from home. These employees experienced support and satisfaction when their organisation exhibited concern. Participants expressed gratitude for their company's ability to ask these kinds of questions during that adjustment period.

Redundancy

Participants also spoke of their gratitude around their companies not making any redundancies or cuts.

"We weren't sure what the impact was going to be to our business in quarter two. So, you know, as a manager, you sort of wear that heavy on your mind because you're thinking well you know, you don't want to lose any of your employees. I'm with you. Um but you just don't know whether you know, remuneration will be the same and all those sorts of things. It sometimes played heavy on my mind. Turned out fine, actually better than I expected (laughs) which is weird. Yeah, but you didn't know at the time right....We were lucky enough with our business that no one was put off or-or made redundant or anything so everyone carried through, all roles we carried through." (Louise).

"Fortunately, with us being a Microsoft-based company, we were online quite a bit already. So from a working from home aspect of it, we were all fine, we all survived, we all managed to carry on as normal. Um, there were no retrenchments, or anything like that, that came about from it." (Moira).

"Then of course, the other side of it was, as we all know, what was the economic impact on it? You know, did I have job stability at that point? The company, never once made me feel like I was on a list and that I could, I could lose my opportunity to work there. They never made me feel like that, but I'm quite the realist and I always thought that in the back of my mind that, if you know, if things did turn poor or-or there was a bad outcome for the organisation, you know, last in first out principle. So I was a bit anxious about that. " (Grant).

From these extracts, it is evident participants are thankful no jobs were lost as a result of Covid-19. Louise, who is in a management role expressed her concerns for employees during the initial stages of the pandemic. Her gratitude that they were able to keep all of their staff is evident. Similarly, Moira expresses her gratitude towards her company for not having to let any of their employees go and attributes this to their business being online-based. This is further to Moira's earlier comments about her company being busy over the lockdown setting up other companies on Microsoft Teams. Grant does express his anxiety around potentially losing his job because he had just started as the lockdown hit. Again, he expresses gratitude towards his company for never making him feel like redundancy was an option. This focus on being grateful demonstrates a key factor of organisational support.

Tools for connection

As seen in theme one, participants valued and appreciated the Zoom/Teams call check-ins as well as the way they were used for happy hour on Fridays or for quizzes and activities. They provided a tool for connection and an outlet for fun and enjoyment.

> *"I started trying to do things like on our weekly call, we dressed up in themes, or we'd have a hat theme day, someone had to wear a different hat from around the house or change your shirt. It's a bright yellow day, everyone had to wear a bright yellow shirt. So with those little quirky things we tried to do changing the backgrounds on our Teams environment. Everyone's like, oh, where'd you get that background from? I want that background." (Grant).*

> *"The other things we did, we would have funny little zoom meetings with friends. We'd all put funny wigs on. Do dumb stuff. For the team, I created a couple of liiiike quizzes. One was around Easter, so I looked on Google and found all these silly questions. Yeah. I mean, we just did that we were connecting and as best you could and as regularly as you could was helpful. Yeah, cause it was really, it was a strain not seeing your friends." (Louise).*

> *"We had one where we had to share pictures of our pets and stuff which was kind of funny. There was also another one where we had to send in recipes for some recipe book so yeah, things like that with the colleagues at work, so yeah." (Connor).*

These examples of participants expressing the way they used Zoom and Teams meetings in a casual context demonstrates the fun side of these tools. These extracts imply a lighthearted

side of lockdown that five of the participants (Grant, Louise, Connor, Moira and Brooke) reported they enjoyed. Louise discusses missing that connection with her friends. Using Zoom or Teams as tools to try and bridge that gap helped her to still feel somewhat connected to friends.

This category of 'tools for connection' was considered positive and beneficial across both themes one and four. It was discussed as a way to connect with family, friends, and colleagues and replaced normal face-to-face interaction. No participants spoke negatively about these tools and they ended up being a defining feature in the experience of all participants lockdowns.

Changes in practice and policy

This final crossover category reflects participants desires to have hybrid work options. Participants discussed wanting these WFH options so that they could have uninterrupted time to work on projects. Half of the participants believed they were more productive when WFH, and as such wanted to split their time between office and home.

> *"Absolutely. Yes, most definitely. It was not something that was encouraged before. Um, it was, from what I hear, would have come from a place of distrust as well. You know, are you actually doing your work when you're working from home kind of feeling because that's what people have told me about before. Also, it wasn't like a widely accepted practice, whereas now the company has actually formalised the practice, and they've got a guideline as to what you need to do in order to do it. It's up to everyone, every employee to discuss it with their line manager, and the line manager can sign off on you doing it or not doing it or coming to an agreement." (Grant).*

Though these organisations did not have flexible working practices in place prior to the pandemic, these participants contributed to organisational changes through their demonstrations of effectiveness and productivity. It is evident from Grant's statement that he is relieved hybrid work is now an option and that there is organisational trust in its employees.

Summary of Findings

This study provides insights into the experiences of six people who were WFH during Covid-19. Four themes were developed from the interviews that capture the significant findings.

These are illustrated in Table 4 and resulted from interpretative thematic coding. The key themes clearly complement and extend existing research in the area, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The results of this study indicate that among these participants there are tensions between the group of participants and also within the dialogue of individual participants. These dialogues illustrate the tensions and paradoxes as a result of the pandemic and the diversion of normality. The tensions will be explained in more detail in the next few paragraphs, but they pertain to the following: some participants worked longer hours but experienced a decreased workload, while some participants worked less hours but experienced an increase in workload; some struggled with proximity of family while others struggled with the distance; as well as several minor paradoxes between participants in theme four.

Significantly, it emerged that prior to Covid-19 these participant's organisations had a lack of trust in their employees to work from home. Some participants expressed having wanted these opportunities prior to the pandemic. The main reason identified for participants wanting to have the option to work from home was the reduction in distractions. Moreover, it seems having this flexibility contributed to an increase in productivity for some participants. As a result of the lockdown and the forced WFH trial, all participants' organisations have now put in place various practices and policies allowing participants to work from home. This autonomy appeared to be an important factor for many participants and allowed them to work more flexibly and foster new trust between their organisations and its employees.

Well-being was generally stable among participants with the exception of one from Auckland and one from Christchurch. The Auckland participant expressed frustration, loss of motivation, depressed feelings, and poorer PWB than those in other areas of New Zealand. This was attributed to the longer and more frequent periods in lockdown with emphasis on feelings of isolation because the rest of New Zealand had freedoms Auckland was not allowed. The Christchurch participant was personally affected by Covid-19 and had a close family member pass away. She attributed her reduced well-being to this and the difficulties she was facing in being unable to be with family overseas during this time. The remaining participants reported stable or increased well-being.

Work-life balance was variable amongst the participants and this was demonstrated through its appearance in both theme one and theme two. Those that reported higher workload and

longer hours worked, also reported that their work-life balance became unbalanced over the lockdown. This was an expected finding due to the notion of more time working means less time to focus on life balance. An unexpected finding was participants could have an increased workload, increased hours, poorer work-life balance but improved well-being. This was attributed to the flexibility provided when WFH. Being able to create their own schedule and manage their own time was empowering to participants. A notable finding is women appeared to be more strongly affected by work-life balance challenges than men. All of the women reported work-life balance issues and one man reported work-life balance issues. Two of these women did report poorer well-being but neither associated this with working more, rather it was the inability to engage in tasks of usual, such as spending time with family, and specific personal impacts of Covid-19.

Participants were clear and consistent about the benefits tools like Zoom and Teams had during lockdown. Primarily, these tools provided connection to friends, family and colleagues that was reported to be lacking during the lockdown. They conceptualised these tools as an outlet for fun, humour and business. Fun was enacted by dressing up, creating funny quizzes, or having happy hour on a Friday. Participants identified they had difficulties not being able to spend time with friends and family, and Zoom and Teams provided a sense of connection that otherwise would have been absent. Zoom and Teams were the most positively talked about factors in this study. It was noted on more than one occasion that participants craved human contact and appreciated being able to communicate on-screen. This was clear when Moira spoke about her colleagues turning their cameras on for video calls when previously they had never done this. These tools helped to bridge the isolation gap and strengthen and maintain relationships with colleagues and friends.

An interesting finding was one participant reported an increased workload but was working less hours. A few of the participants reported the distractions and the effect this has on productivity when in the office. Therefore, this finding could be attributed to participants' ability to avoid distractions and increase productivity in a shorter amount of time when at home. Contrarily, one participant reported a decreased workload but an increase in hours worked. This is specific to the lockdown so could be attributed to full houses, having to manage children as well as work and as such, taking more frequent breaks which inevitably extends the working day. Further, by removing the commute to work, participants reported they would start working earlier when they would

ordinarily be driving to work. These tensions demonstrate how different individuals operate and the situational and environmental factors that impact these findings.

In this study, participants identified a range of challenges brought about by the pandemic that required adjusting to their new WFH roles. Although task changes were identified, physical challenges such as access to documents and equipment were consistently discussed throughout the interviews. In addition, participants with more hands-on roles had to focus on studying and being theoretically ready more than they would normally. All participants generally felt their organisation enabled them to do their jobs well from home. Equipment was taken from the office to assist with functional ergonomic setups, though this did not come without its challenges. Equipment such as printers and lack of desks presented problems both physically and logistically. Having to make the sudden transition to becoming digital was a challenge for many and created an added stressor.

Participants who experienced subsequent lockdowns in Auckland discussed their frustration and loss of motivation over that period. The sense of separation from the rest of New Zealand, as well as the unknown, did play a role in the reduction of the state of mind in these participants. The negative effect was so pervasive in one participant that it ultimately resulted in feelings of isolation, uncertainty and frustration.

Another notable finding was all six participants discussed their trust in the New Zealand government during the lockdowns and praised the handling of the pandemic. A few participants commented on science-guided decisions with New Zealand's best interest at heart. While two participants made comments around recent policies they do not agree with, it was noted these are not necessarily Covid-19 specific.

These findings provide insights into the views of employees that had to make the sudden transition to WFH. The positive aspects and challenges contributed to varying well-being. Personal factors that were affected because of the lockdown appeared to play a role in the PWB of participants. Further, organisational support played a role in participants feeling enabled to work from home.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The current study aimed to develop an understanding of employee well-being while working from home during Covid-19. In particular, it sought to investigate organisational, societal and personal factors that impacted employee psychological well-being for six New Zealand participants. The results of the thematic analyses, outlined in the previous chapter, indicate the well-being of participants varied depending on factors such as location, connection to others and organisational support. The majority of participants reported stable or increased well-being. This is a significant finding, as overseas evidence has overwhelmingly highlighted the decrease in well-being for those WFH during the pandemic (Xiao et al., 2020; Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Majumdar et al.,2020; Evanoff et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2021). It should be noted the lockdowns in New Zealand varied from those overseas and the qualitative nature of this study may have provided more in-depth results. The limitations of this will be discussed in the conclusion. A strong element that ran through all participants' accounts were the reports of their organisations implementing new flexible working practices that allow these employees to work from home.

I presented the analysis under four overarching themes: 1) Advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19; 2) Challenges WFH throughout Covid-19; 3) Personal factors influencing PWB and 4) and Organisational support. This study revealed several paradoxes and tensions between and within participants that illustrate the complexities of WFH throughout Covid-19.

Addressing the Research Questions

Overall, findings helped to answer the proposed research questions regarding PWB for six employees living and working in New Zealand. The main research question was: *How has working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic impacted employee psychological well-being?* Conducting this research as qualitative allowed participants to recall their experiences and share rich, in-depth personal insights about their WFH experiences. Positive and negative experiences were shared during the interviews and helped to shape my interpretations of well-being for these participants during the pandemic. Questions prompted participants to interpret and answer how various factors such as work-life balance, organisational support, resilience and state of mind affected their well-being. Specifically, participants identified aspects that helped their PWB such as the use of Zoom and Teams, and factors that negatively impacted their well-being, such as

increased workload. Participant and researcher were able to co-create these understandings and make interpretations around the effects to participants PWB during the pandemic. Modelling some of the research questions around the six aspects of Ryff's PWB model and the six aspects of Keyes social well-being model assisted in identifying and understanding participants' ideas of their PWB. Keyes' social well-being measures were particularly useful because of the collective nature of the model being relevant to the approach New Zealand took to the pandemic.

The first sub-question asked: *What, if any changes to the employee's perceived work-life balance were noticed during Covid-19?* This was answered through in-depth accounts from participants who described changes to their work-life balance and what specifically was affecting it. Participants discussed work-life balance, unprompted in some instances and the potentially detrimental effects that imbalance had on their well-being. Participants considered work-life balance in several aspects including the difficulties of separating work and home life due to proximity, overworking to keep up with new Covid-19 protocols and because of the ease of accessing the work computer. These results were supported by previous literature that looked at spillover effect (Standen et al., 1999), gender differences (Wilkinson, 2013; Shams & Kadow, 2019) and more specifically, WFH and work-life balance that takes into account changes in workload and hours worked (Grant et al., 2013). However, none of these prior studies were conducted during Covid-19, which in many cases came with additional constraints. These constraints were largely due to the inability to participate in activities they may otherwise have, such as the gym, going out for a meal or other ways participants may previously have balanced work and life.

The second sub-question asked: *What do organisations do to support individuals to successfully work from home?* All participants spoke about ways in which their companies supported them to work from home. For many this was providing equipment to create a home office, and for some it was asking questions, such as: "Are you coping? What do you need? Is there anything that's too hard?" There was also gratitude expressed by some participants around keeping their jobs during such a difficult time for businesses. Further, it appeared participants felt empowered by Zoom and Teams. These created connections within the organisation and were used frequently for both business meetings and activities that were usually done in-person, such as

Friday drinks. In some instances, tools encouraged by these organisations brought employees closer because of the personal side they were seeing of their colleagues. Thus, support from organisations did appear to influence these participants' well-being. This sub-question was supported by Evanoff et al.'s (2020) research around supervisor support during the pandemic.

The third sub-question asked: *Does social capital affect psychological well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic?* Through the current research I was able to gauge participants levels of trust and their perspective on New Zealand's social fabric. All participants reported they trusted the New Zealand government and the handling of the pandemic. This indicated there was a level of trust which may have contributed to PWB. Further, some participants commented on the 'team of five million', a phrase that was often referred to in terms of banding together as a nation to support one another. This indicates these participants felt there was a strong social fabric in New Zealand, which has been found to maintain or increase social capital (Helliwell et al., 2014). Social networks were largely maintained through the aforementioned tools of Zoom and Teams, and though social norms differed, it appeared the connections participants attempted to uphold helped to maintain well-being in most participants.

Questions from the interview schedule, in particular relating to government trust were created to reflect research by Helliwell et al. (2014) and Lindström & Giordano (2016). The notion that countries with higher social capital can respond to crises more effectively and maintain well-being was crucial in helping to understand why these participants generally had higher well-being than did overseas participants. Prior studies have not considered hybrid working in the context of a pandemic. Instead Helliwell et al. and Lindström & Giordano looked at the financial crisis. However, the pandemic brings with it new and unique stressors that may have increased reliance on the government for guidance. Further, the connections to friends, family and colleagues the participants attempted to uphold through Zoom demonstrate the desire to foster a cohesive environment.

Advantages of WFH throughout Covid-19

One of the most significant findings in theme one was that all participants reported after WFH during the initial lockdown, practices and policies in their organisations were adapted to

accommodate more flexible working. It was found that prior to the pandemic, these participants' perceived their organisations lacked trust in them to be productive when WFH. This has been found in previous studies whereby moving to working away from the office usually starts with mistrust by employers because of the beliefs that not all employees will put in appropriate effort without the presence of management (Kaplan et al., 2017). However, employee conscientiousness is linked to job performance and where employees have more autonomy, they are believed to set challenging goals, stay on task, and meet deadlines (Kaplan et al., 2017). Consistent with what was found in the current study, the forced WFH trial brought about by the lockdowns resulted in participants' companies allowing them more autonomy. Participants in this study were able to demonstrate they were capable of working productively from home, in turn resulting in new WFH practices and policies being implemented.

This extends the literature because of the necessity of WFH due to the pandemic which then demonstrated to participants and their organisations that WFH can be advantageous. More flexibility when working was something some participants in this study indicated they had previously wanted. For these participants, WFH meant fewer distractions and the ability to juggle work, home and family life, two major drivers in the desire to work from home. These participants appeared to enjoy having control over their own demands, which Robertson and Cooper (2011) assert increases PWB at work.

Another notable finding in this study was the significance of tools like Zoom and Teams for well-being. Participants consistently discussed the frequency and benefits of their use. They helped participants to stay connected to friends, family and colleagues and one participant reported it made her feel less alone. These tools were seen as positive and are associated with connection, a source of laughter and jovialness that came from activities such as Friday drinks, dressing up on camera or trying to make one another laugh. Zoom and Teams were used in a work context, but many also adopted these practices with friends and family. They provided a lighter side of lockdown through doing activities such as quizzes where participants reported having a laugh with friends. This finding is synonymous with what Plester (2021) found in her study. Plester asserts that allowing oneself to laugh in difficult situations can relieve some of the work, family and home pressures that may be felt during lockdown. An example of how this is relevant to the current study

is where traditions like Friday drinks still occurred where participants were able to chat and unwind with one another and before signing off for the weekend.

Tools such as Zoom or Teams allowed participants to see a more personal side of colleagues. Glimpsing someone's house or meeting colleagues' kids on-screen provided a window into people's lives and for many, this created a sense of connection. This is congruent with Plester's (2021) findings that saw participants discussing how seeing a colleague in their home environment showed a more personal side. One participant reported they were seeing co-workers' faces for the first time over Teams when previously they would not turn their cameras on. Another participant reported having their children on their lap during Zoom calls to show a more personal side. In the literature review, the question was posed as to whether or not these tools that allowed participants to see these personal sides could strengthen colleague relationships. All of the above factors help to confirm that relationships with colleagues were strengthened for most participants over Covid-19.

Challenges WFH throughout Covid-19

In this study, it was found that all participants were successful in overcoming challenges when WFH. Every participant came up against challenges in their transition to WFH they did not necessarily have the resources to deal with. An example of a challenge was the lack of ergonomic setups and equipment. Where participants would usually have an office setup when WFH they were working from dining tables or their bed and using boxes to adjust their computers to the right height. Instead of being able to use printers they were having to take photos and convert these files on their computer. Tasks that were usually done manually were adapted to become more digital such as face-to-face meetings or handling documentation between clients and the organisation. Despite most participants not having worked from home before, resources they already had such as knowledge of how to use a computer to start moving documents online or become accustomed to tools like Zoom meant they were able to successfully find ways to overcome these new challenges. Thus, overcoming these challenges and demonstrating resilience likely contributed to well-being for participants.

Ungar (2008) describes the collective nature of factors contributing to sustained resiliency. The biological, psychological, social, cultural and ecological factors of resiliency are interconnected and Ungar asserts they can influence one another but they are essential to resiliency in the face of adversity. An example of the interconnected nature is the change in one's ecology, namely our physical environment. Lockdown and transitioning to WFH is an uncontrollable external factor these participants experienced, impacting normal relationships with participants' place of work and day-to-day activities. Due to this change in environment, social aspects were impacted because of social distancing and in turn, psychological functions, such as well-being were impacted for some participants. Examples of overcoming these challenges include the use of Zoom for social connection and attempts to create 'mock offices' at kitchen tables or spare rooms. These actions appeared to contribute to sustained resiliency for these participants and demonstrated their ability to cope in the face of adversity. Ungar's factors provide a useful framework to assess participants' resilience in this study and while less than half of the participants actually discussed resilience, all participants gave various examples of the ways in which they were resilient, such as their ability to overcome and navigate new systems when WFH.

All of the women in this study reported reduced work-life balance with just one man reporting poorer work-life balance. Women appeared to be more strongly affected by work-life balance challenges, and of the two people that reported poorer well-being, both were women. Of these women, one was in Auckland and one was in Christchurch. When exploring the reasons for the reduced work-life balance and well-being further, the participant Moira who lives in Christchurch disclosed that her father had passed away from Covid-19 in South Africa. Being away from South Africa and not being able to attend the funeral, help with arrangements and or be with family was really hard for her. Due to the time difference, she was having to be on calls in the middle of the night. She also reported she was working longer hours from home and as such, felt her work-life balance was out of balance. She attributed her reduction in well-being largely to having lost her father from Covid-19 as opposed to reduced work-life balance.

Brooke, the participant in Auckland, spoke about how her colleagues began to send emails and texts outside of traditional business hours. She felt this encroached on her personal time and may have impacted her work-life balance. Therefore, it is possible Brooke's well-being was

partially impacted by her work-life balance being affected, though she associates most of her reduced well-being to isolation and separation from others in New Zealand. Robertson and Cooper (2011) also noted that this flexibility afforded by WFH is a challenge, in that it makes collegial communication difficult. People begin to work different hours which not only reduces the overlap of colleagues working together, but also means emails are being sent at all hours of the day. Other factors contributing to Brooke's reduction in well-being, were the feelings of detachment from the rest of New Zealand, as well as a lack of organisational support.

Prior research suggests work-life balance is more of an issue for women and particularly so when they have children at home (Wilkinson, 2013). The results from the current study show it was predominantly females who had an imbalance (three females, one male), and two of the women had children at home over lockdown. When participants were asked how their work-life balance was over lockdown, most discussed the ways in which they tried to keep work and home separate and balance these elements. For those that had kids, it was using the flexibility associated with WFH to ensure they were spending enough time with kids, particularly young kids that may not have understood that while their parents are at home, they are having to work. These boundaries had not been crossed for many of the participants prior to the pandemic. It seemed that participants with kids at home benefited from job flexibility whereas those without kids at home tended to set stricter boundaries on their time spent working to help to reduce any spillover. Previous literature has suggested it is women who benefit from the flexibility of WFH and it is men who try to set stricter boundaries to minimise crossover (Wilkinson, 2013). However, in this study, one of the defining factors for work-life balance appeared to be the presence of children in the house during lockdown. Support from organisations and tools to help employees draw boundaries between the two realms may be able to help maintain work-life balance. An example of this could be encouraging participants to work more flexibly to be able to care for those in their house but implementing a system that shows when a user is online so colleagues know if they are available to chat.

Participants spoke about the lack of commute that comes with WFH. In the literature review, it was noted that this removal of commute, though seen as positive, could actually have negative effects. The reason for this is that people use their commute to switch on and off from

work. Thus, by removing the commute it increases the likelihood of spillover effect leading to the potential of reduced well-being (Standen et al., 1999). Spillover coupled with previous research by Felstead and Henseke (2017) and Olsen and Primps (1984) discussing longer hours worked when at home could contribute to lower well-being, despite this removal of commute being desirable. This was not overwhelmingly the case in the current study with just one of the participants who reported reduced well-being and stated a preference for no commute and working longer hours.

Some participants found they were working longer hours and some had a higher workload. In line with previous research, much of this is attributed to the proximity of the home office leading to higher effort when WFH (Felstead, & Henseke, 2017). The temptation to check emails because the computer is right there meant participants reported working hours and days they usually would not be in an office. Further, many participants were learning new systems due to Covid-19, congruent with what Evanoff et al. (2020) found in their study, contributing to this increased effort at work. Another explanation for increased hours as reported by Grant et al. (2013) is that in an office there are set time boundaries of an eight-hour day, as well as physical boundaries of an office. Without these time and physical parameters, participants may have found it challenging to switch on and off as they usually would when entering an office. Olsen and Primps (1984) also reported employees might work longer from the home because they are unable to gauge what their colleagues are doing and as such, overwork to impress management. One participant did report working significantly more than he usually would because he was new at his job and felt he needed to prove himself which he thought would be tougher from behind a computer screen.

Workload and hours worked were a source of tension within and between participants. Some participants reported they had worked longer hours, but had a decreased workload while others reported they worked fewer hours but had an increased workload. This could be due to having more flexibility in the day to spread the workload over more hours or because as participants reported, the fewer distractions at home meant increased productivity. Another factor could be role changes such as not being able to do client visits, stock the office or do hands-on tasks. These could contribute to reduced workload in one respect or contrarily, picking up new tasks in their place and learning these systems could contribute to an increased workload or hours.

A final explanation for working more hours over lockdown comes from a study conducted by Majumdar et al. (2020). They found that during lockdown there was an increased reliance on digital use, in particular, laptops to potentially help to curb the isolation factors brought about by lockdown. Thus, participants may have been working long hours as a way to feel more connected to others at work during a time when there were limitations on leaving the house and even when you were able to, there were social distancing measures in place.

State of mind was negatively affected only in participants that lived in Auckland. The main factors reported to contribute to this were a sense of frustration, lack of motivation, and the unknown. These factors experienced by the two participants could be explained by the longer and more frequent lockdowns Auckland experienced. The isolation associated with lockdowns appeared to affect Auckland participants who had these subsequent lockdowns more than the other participants who had only had one lockdown at the time of the interviews. While there were frustrations around having to stay home, most of these stemmed from the rest of the country being able to move on and function more as a regular society. An example of this is when one participant received a photo of her daughter at a café outside of Auckland. She spoke about the moment she clicked that because they were not in Auckland, they could do normal day-to-day things. She reported finding this really hard. Further, recency effect for these Auckland participants may have played a role in their reduced state of mind. The interviews were conducted between mid-July and early September 2021, with the national lockdown having ended in late April 2020. Auckland had been in its most recent lockdown until early March 2021. Thus, it is possible this recency effect meant the memories of lockdown and its negative effects were more salient for these participants (Baddeley, & Hitch, 1993).

Another paradox for participants in this study was coping with family and friends during lockdown. Two participants discussed the tensions that increased with family when WFH due to proximity of them in their ‘bubbles’. This could be at least partially explained by the spillover effect. Standen et al. (1999) discuss how the physical and abstract boundaries between home and work tend to become blurred when they are in the same location. Work-life flows in home-life and vice versa and as a result, work-family conflict has been seen to increase. With interaction between

the two facets of life becoming more frequent, stressors from either side can easily be carried between.

Despite commutes being generally perceived as negative, they actually provided the opportunity for people to switch between the roles, which in turn decreased work-family conflict (Standen et al.,1999). Further, having family and work in the same place created uncertainty around work-life balance which has been shown in previous studies to aggravate work-family conflict (Ekpanyaskul and Padungtod, 2021; Standen et al.,1999). Felstead and Henseke (2017) also discussed how waking every morning in your place of work and home when previously it was a family place, is now full of stress and deadlines (Felstead, & Henseke, 2017). In some respects, these double demands did have an impact on participants, particularly in households where not every family member was working.

The participant that discussed having most problems with the proximity of family, considered how boundaries were crossed leading to tensions within the house. These boundaries and limits were set in a family meeting prior to entering lockdown but were broken down that same night. She discussed the tensions in the days after these boundaries were broken and how hard that period was. Combining work and home in this instance was a significant challenge due to the loss of rituals previously demarcating the lines between work and home. Thus, a clear understanding is needed from all of those in the household that while this space has traditionally been only a home, it is now a place of work as well. Creating this understanding and fostering respect in this area could help to reduce work-family conflict. With the increase in flexible working practices since the onset of Covid-19, organisations could provide employees with ideas on how to successfully navigate these situations in order to minimise spillover between work and home.

The other side of this paradox is that some participants mentioned the difficulties of being separated from family and friends. Not being able to see friends and family as participants usually would was reported as being a strain. They discussed how it was hard not to be able to hug family or wanting to protect vulnerable family members but being unable to. Thus, proximity and distance between family and friends were challenges, each in their own respect. Organisations could provide support in this area by advising staff to check in on colleagues, particularly those with

family overseas. Encouraging employees to show compassion and support for colleagues could be a way to help minimise work-life conflict.

Personal Factors Influencing Psychological Well-being

All participants reported having strong trust in the government which is associated with social capital (Helliwell et al., 2014). Helliwell et al. (2014) have shown high social capital and trust are related to increased well-being. In the literature review, it was mentioned that New Zealand's response to Covid-19 was commended around the world. It appears in this instance, the approach the New Zealand took was able to contribute to keeping these participants' well-being stable over this uncertain time. In the study by Helliwell et al. after the financial crisis in England, social capital and well-being reduced largely because of the downfall of social norms and trust towards the government's ability to respond to crises. In a New Zealand Covid-19 context, the nation was encouraged to band together to try to combat Covid-19 using the phrase 'team of five million' (Morton, 2020). The idea was that the New Zealand population needed to work not just to maintain but increase the quality of the social fabric, which in turn supports positive well-being. In the current study, all participants reported having trust in the government and praised the governments' response to the crisis. Helliwell et al. assert nations with more trust can maneuver crises more happily and effectively. Social capital for these participants in New Zealand may be one of the major factors as to why well-being did not decrease for most of the participants, in contrast to the overseas evidence (Xiao et al., 2020; Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Majumdar et al., 2020; Evanoff et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2021).

However, it seems since the interviews were conducted and New Zealand went back into new lockdowns, there has been a slight erosion in trust. According to a Stickybeak poll created for The Spinoff (Manhire, 2021), 80 percent of the New Zealand population supported the New Zealand government at the start of lockdown. This increased to 85 percent in June 2020 and got to its lowest point in July 2021 at 69 percent shortly after Wellington moved to partial lockdown. It increased again to 78 percent after Auckland moved back into lockdown in September 2021. The Auckland lockdown finished after three and a half months as New Zealand moved into the new 'traffic light system'. There is very little evidence about government trust after the recent lockdowns so it is difficult to know if trust levels have increased or decreased.

Most participants in this study reported having a preference for WFH at least some of the time. The main reason participants reported having this preference was the flexibility WFH allows. Having control over one's life appeared to be important to these participants and this has been found in prior research (Ekpanyaskul and Padungtod's study, 2021).

Organisational Support

Most participants reported they felt supported by their supervisors. There is research suggesting strong supervisor support, particularly in relation to family can strengthen well-being (Evanoff et al., 2020). Support by supervisors in relation to family was demonstrated in a few ways in participants' accounts. One example is participants feeling comfortable to have their kids on their knees in meetings and this not being an issue with supervisors. Further, allowing participants to work more flexibly to accommodate kids that were homeschooling or balance duties with partners demonstrates supervisor support. Supervisor support has previously been found to reduce work-family conflict and improve well-being and job satisfaction (Evanoff et al., 2020). While participants did not discuss this relationship directly, the majority of participants did not report work-family conflict which could suggest a level of supervisor support. Some participants reported that communication from supervisors improved over lockdown which again demonstrates this support. Evanoff et al. (2020) highlight the importance of supervisors helping employees to reduce the spillover between work and home in order to reduce work-family conflict and improve well-being.

Colleague communication was a factor frequently discussed by participants in a positive light. One participant reported she spoke with her colleagues every day and this helped her to feel less alone. This same participant demonstrated colleague support by offering to help others that were extra busy over the lockdown period. Xiao et al. (2020) found colleague support to be a measure of increased mental health. Xiao et al. (2020) propose it is not just communication with colleagues that increases mental health, but also the feeling of being part of decision-making. With the sudden transition to WFH many who had not worked from home in the past had to learn new ways of working. Team meetings to work through new processes were a way for participants to feel as though they were part of important decisions.

Ryff's (1989) Model of PWB

Two major theoretical models were used to develop an understanding of well-being in this study. The first model was Ryff's (1989) six-factor model of PWB. Ryff asserts the following factors contribute to positive PWB: purpose in life, autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery, positive relationships and self-acceptance. This model has historically been useful in understanding what makes up stable PWB, but lockdowns brought about unique challenges that made PWB difficult to assess using this model. This model has a large focus on the control people have over their life and their ability to influence and make decisions about their life. In the current study, due to the lockdown, much of the control these participants had over their lives was challenged and they had to adapt to new ways of living. Such examples include social distancing, restrictions on physical activity and only being able to physically associate with those in your 'bubble'. These restrictions removed some of the decisions participants were able to make over their lives which meant some of the factors in the model became difficult to assess. Thus, while I found Ryff's model of well-being relevant to my data where participants described autonomy, environmental mastery and positive relationships, for reasons to be explained in the next paragraph, it was not sufficient to account for the aforementioned factors and isolation brought about by the lockdowns.

Ryff's (1989) model suggested that autonomy over one's life played a major role when assessing for PWB. Those that felt they had a good amount of autonomy at work generally had better well-being. Participants described environmental mastery primarily in terms of how they were handling WFH. For some, this was their ability to juggle family and work-life, while for others this was adhering to traditional business hours when WFH. The one participant that appeared to struggle somewhat with environmental mastery was a participant that had family overseas. It was evident being unable to visit family during the pandemic was hard for her and the lack of control over this situation, as well as some negative family events were contributing factors in her reduced well-being. The final factor from Ryff's model related to the lockdown situation was positive relationships. Positive relationships were discussed in relation to colleagues, friends and family. For some, colleague relationships were strengthened as communication increased. The significance of staying connected to family and friends was evident, particularly where participants spoke about organised Zoom calls or seeing family in-person from a distance. These three factors

from the model were more evident in participants' accounts than purpose in life, personal growth and self-acceptance which I assert were difficult to assess for in lockdown.

The findings illustrate that personal growth and purpose in life were factors not strongly discussed or associated with well-being in this study. These two factors were reported in the literature review as being highly correlated and as such could be a contributing factor as to why both of these did not appear to be strong indicators of PWB in the context of Covid-19 (Chin et al., 2013). Further, the limitations of lockdowns meant for many participants, pursuing goals became more of a challenge within the confines of a home. One participant was able to finish her degree during lockdown because of this confinement. She reported she had been trying to finish it for a while and the restrictions meant that because she was unable to do her normal activities, she had the opportunity to finish the diploma. This was reported as personal growth. The other participants did not make any significant mentions of personal growth.

The extent to which participants had purpose in life was challenged by the pandemics unknown factors. These unknowns included the virus itself, how long lockdown would be, whether there is a suitable vaccination and so forth. These challenges appeared to make it more difficult for participants to plan ahead and as such, they seemed to be living more in the moment and focusing day-to-day. Most participants discussed what they had done up to this point or what they were doing currently at work and home, but few spoke about plans for the future. Thus, while most participants did not report a lack of purpose in life, there were very few discussions on future direction.

Self-acceptance was another challenging concept to assess in the context of WFH during Covid-19. There were very few discussions on self-acceptance and no significant mention of increased or reduced satisfaction within oneself. The comments that did pertain to self-acceptance surrounded how much work could be conducted at home, since those with primarily hands-on roles were not able to carry out tasks of usual. Environmental mastery and self-acceptance were also reported as being highly correlated in the literature (Chin et al., 2013). Thus, it could be that elements of environmental mastery were able to capture some of the concept of self-acceptance because of the crossover between the two. Earlier points around having to juggle work and home

life and the effect this had on the hours they worked could therefore reflect some aspects of self-acceptance.

Ryff's (1989) model was described in the literature as being an intrapersonal well-being assessment, separate from how one operates in society. Due to the emphasis on trust and reliance on society during Covid-19, it became evident this intrapersonal model was not able to capture all six factors it intended to in the context of Covid-19. However, when considering the relationship between PWB and SWB, there are elements of SWB that appear to be suited to assessing some factors during the pandemic. For example, PWB was discussed as being a proactive approach to well-being whereby stable skills and resources a person has developed over time helps them to maintain well-being when faced with external challenges. An example of this is how participants were able to quickly adapt to meetings online as opposed to face-to-face meetings.

Contrarily, SWB was considered to be more of a reactive approach to well-being whereby it is more strongly determined by emotional reactions to current stressors. An example of this is the frustration and lack of motivation some participants experienced because of the unknowns associated with Covid-19. As the literature helped to identify, these two models are intertwined and can both be useful in identifying factors associated with well-being (Chen et al., 2013; Dodge et al., 2012). Further, both models are valuable when considering well-being at work (Robertson & Cooper, 2011). SWB assesses for whether someone feels good at work (affective psychological state) while PWB assesses whether someone feels their work is meaningful and has a purpose (purposive psychological state). Workplace well-being is influenced by the interplay between personality and situational factors like management, supervision, communication and resources. To assess these in the current study, PWB and SWB are both able to assist in explaining different elements that contribute to well-being during Covid-19.

Keyes (2002) Model of Social Well-being

Another model that helped to make sense of well-being for these participants during the pandemic is Keyes' (2002) model of social well-being. Keyes' model of social well-being is described as being an interpersonal well-being assessment and posits five dimensions: social coherence, social actualization, social integration, social acceptance and social contribution. This

approach to well-being can be viewed as a collective and societal approach and was useful in assessing participants' position and understanding of their community during the lockdown. Participants spoke about the 'team of five million', a term New Zealand used to encourage a collective approach to handling the pandemic (Morton, 2020). Further, most of the participants discussed showing more empathy, being kind and relating to others more than they would usually. These are factors directly associated with the model that has been shown to lead to increased well-being (Keyes, 2002). Through using these models, I contend most participants in this study maintained relatively stable well-being when considering social, subjective and psychological well-being.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The literature showed PWB is contingent on several factors such as work-life balance, supervisor support and social capital during normal times. There is little research examining how these concepts affect PWB when WFH during a pandemic. Further, the studies that have been conducted are generally quantitative so there is a lack of research reflecting the voices and individual accounts of people. Due to this gap in the research and the evolving pandemic situation, the following research questions were raised and addressed.

- How has working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic impacted employee psychological well-being?
- What, if any changes to the employee's perceived work-life balance were noticed during Covid-19?
- What do organisations do to support individuals to successfully work from home?
- Does social capital affect psychological well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic?

This study was conducted using qualitative research methods allowing for stories and nuanced understandings from these participants' experiences which provided content not yet seen in a New Zealand context. The current research found the majority of participants had stable well-being when WFH during Covid-19. This differs from studies overseas that found well-being generally decreased (Xiao et al., 2020; Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Majumdar et al., 2020; Evanoff et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2021). There are several explanations for this paradox, such as the high social capital in New Zealand or less initial time in lockdown than overseas (Fielding & Knowles, 2021).

This study also found participants shared the positive side of lockdowns, something not found in other studies. These positive aspects included time with family, changes to organisation’s WFH practices and a decrease in workload. Work-life balance was a challenge for the majority of participants, in part due to dealing with new work protocols and learning new systems, but also because of spillover (Standen et al., 1999). Home and work became more intertwined and for some participants, they found it difficult to switch off at home, checking their computer at times they

would not ordinarily. While spillover can help to explain some changes in work-life balance, this concept has not been considered in the context of a pandemic. With tighter restrictions on freedoms, these participants were home more frequently which may have blurred the work and home boundaries even more, creating a stronger spillover effect.

Generally, it seemed organisations supported these employees to work successfully from home. Participants reported good company cultures, being able to take home office equipment and also frequently discussed their appreciation for the use of Zoom and Teams. Most participants discussed seeing a new side to colleagues, strengthening those relationships and allowing their company to remain cohesive. Inferences were drawn from these positive remarks that organisational support was a contributing factor in most participants stable well-being. As previously found, supervisor support had positive effects on these participants (Evanoff et al., 2020). Though prior research had not been tested in a pandemic, it still appeared supervisor and organisational support does influence PWB.

Perceptions of social capital were generally high among participants. There was high trust in the government and comments around the collectivity of New Zealanders and supporting one another were strewn throughout the interviews. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, participants were able to give in-depth responses about their feelings towards the government's handling of the pandemic and whether they felt connected to society. Participants that appeared to feel less connected to family had lower well-being than those that reported still feeling connected to family. Thus, social capital appeared to play an important role in well-being. Previous literature supports this notion (Helliwell et al., 2014) and this current research offers new insights obtained during pandemic conditions.

Overall, the present study supports and adds to current knowledge and evaluations of well-being when WFH. The findings provide empirical support for factors associated with stable PWB when WFH during Covid-19. The findings from this study may emphasize the importance of a collective society for feeling supported both at home and at work.

As this study ended, I reflected on Alvesson et al.'s (2017) questions around the rigour of my study. These primarily surround whether the research is novel and insightful and whether it holds any value. Through the co-created meaning in this study involving the participants' voices and my interpretations, it has led to new findings in the area of PWB when WFH during a pandemic. With the pandemic having global reach, accounts from these participants may be relatable to others and could help them to understand impacts on PWB. Currently there are very few studies in New Zealand that have looked at PWB when WFH during Covid-19 using a qualitative framework and as such, this contributed to a new and emerging field of enquiry. Previous research has helped to understand the impact of well-being, but much of the literature used to understand PWB was pre-Covid-19. Gaining an understanding of the main factors that impact PWB such as organisational support, social capital and work-life balance can extend understanding about PWB when WFH.

Implications

The results of this study suggest the participants' conceptualisations and interpretations of their PWB throughout the pandemic are contingent on several factors. Participants demonstrated their awareness of factors that may have been impacting their PWB, which highlights the individual nature of well-being. The majority of participants conveyed that while the pandemic brought with it unique challenges, keeping connections with others was a strong way to maintain PWB. Similarly, those that experienced reduced well-being felt a sense of disconnect and isolation that appeared to play a significant role. This suggests these participants may benefit from supportive environments at work, home and in society. This study offered the opportunity for participants to reflect on their WFH experiences during Covid-19 and for some, it was evident this was the first time they had done so. This contributed to the tensions and paradoxes in the study as participants' understandings and interpretations developed throughout the interviews. The findings around PWB have implications for supervision, social capital and work-life balance that can directly impact well-being.

This thesis study adds to the limited research on New Zealanders WFH during the Covid-19 pandemic. There are a number of implications to come out of the current study and highlight

the need to focus on the well-being of individuals who work from home. The impact of online tools such as Zoom or Teams highlight the positive aspects that contributed to participants' well-being in this study. Communication and a sense of connection to family, friends and colleagues appeared to significantly support an individual's well-being. Therefore, it may be useful for organisations to encourage the frequent use of internet tools to create or maintain a cohesive working environment when not in an office. Positive aspects of lockdown, such as having fun on Zoom or Teams, were surprising and unique to this study. Many other studies in this area considered mainly negative aspects impacting poorer well-being. Most participants in this study shared stories about how they maintained or improved their well-being through various ways, such as creating more family time, exercising or making more of an effort with friends and colleagues. One of the reasons this study was able to collect these positive experiences, is most studies in this area are quantitative. Thus, they may have been looking at averages and not necessarily stories of participants, which tend to offer more nuance and depth.

This research also suggests the importance of social capital and collective responsibility for well-being. Overseas evidence mainly highlighted participants that had reduced well-being when WFH during Covid-19 (Xiao et al., 2020; Ekpanyaskul & Padungtod, 2021; Majumdar et al., 2020; Evanoff et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2021). The current study found less than half of the participants experienced a reduction in PWB. The reported trust in the New Zealand government appeared to contribute to higher social capital and in turn supported well-being for most participants. The approach New Zealand took to the pandemic was commonly reported as being a strong approach across the world. The quality of New Zealand's social fabric was maintained and some participants attributed this to the government's response to the pandemic. Thus, considering the stringent and unique response New Zealand had to the pandemic, this may have had an impact on the generally sustained well-being of participants. The implications of this finding support the notion that social capital directly impacts well-being and as such, governments, institutions, community and families could endeavor to support one another. It is important to consider social capital when thinking about well-being because of the impact it has on individuals and their immediate context.

Organisations that have employees WFH could also benefit from training on how to minimise work-family and work-life balance challenges. This training may involve the earlier mentioned possibility of encouraging flexibility in both location and hours in order to balance their lives as necessary, but implementing a system that shows when a user is online so colleagues know if they are available to chat. Further, hybrid working offers a possible solution and there could be specific days during the week that employees are required to be in the office to maintain cohesion and culture. These findings could aid organisations in understanding impacts on well-being and encourage them to foster productive, connected and flexible workplaces. In this study, many participants thought they were more productive at home because of less distractions, thus hybrid working could in turn lead to greater output and happier employees. Further, half of the participants indicated that hybrid work would be their preference after having worked from home during lockdown.

The final implication is the importance of resilience for PWB. It was found that some participants associated their ability to successfully work from home during lockdown with their levels of resilience. Thus, challenging oneself and experiencing new things may be a way for people to increase their resilience levels. Similarly, Ungar (2008) acknowledges that in order to cope with adversity, individuals should face challenges and learn to overcome these. Being out of your comfort zone in terms of your environment, social and psychological functions may in the future help to minimise any factors that threaten resilience and well-being.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study. My research is relatively small with six participants. However, even though this was a small study, this demonstrates the potential for further research in New Zealand. The rich, nuanced and in-depth responses as well as the volunteering of information that wasn't specifically asked demonstrated the complexities of WFH during a pandemic.

A further limitation is possible because all of the participants were managers which may be an overrepresentation of one level of employee. Managers have increased responsibility which may have had a larger impact on these participants well-being.

This small study cannot be generalised, it could however be argued that this research could be naturalistically generalised (Stake, 1978). That is, because of this research being about WFH during Covid-19, readers may recognise similarities that are familiar to them. Due to the evidence provided about the participants' lives through demographic information, interview quotations and field notes, these contextual details and conceptual statements allow readers to make a connection with their own experiences (Smith, 2018).

Another limitation is my role as a researcher impacting these findings. Having also worked from home in New Zealand during Covid-19, the interpretations from participants' accounts must be seen as collaborative and co-created with myself as the researcher. The interviews were also interpreted as I understood them to mean in the context of my knowledge, background, culture and understanding of the participants' experiences (Gale & Wyatt, 2017). Specifically, having worked from home myself during the pandemic, I had my own preconceived ideas about factors that affected my well-being over that period of time. These factors would have impacted the way I interpreted the interviews through having gone through the same experience myself. The notion that I would impact on the research was discussed earlier in the study, and as such I made attempts to be reflexive largely through keeping a journal of my thoughts and reflections to check myself and understand the differences in experiences. As previously acknowledged, there is a subjective component to qualitative research and this should be kept in mind when reading the current research (Breen & Darlaston-Jones, 2007).

A possible limitation in this study was social desirability. Attempts were made to minimise social desirability through trying to identify responses that seemed like they were attempting to align with the researcher. Further, participants were asked to be in a private room away from others to avoid any socially desirable answers due to friends, family or colleagues being within earshot. Lastly, my supervisors were able to share their experiences of social desirability so that I was able

to look out for it. Despite this, social desirability cannot be removed completely so this study may have captured responses that were not true reflections of the participants.

The final limitation pertains to comparing the current research with overseas research. As previously mentioned, New Zealand had a relatively short lockdown compared to overseas lockdowns. Thus, the length of time spent in lockdown and WFH would likely have impacted PWB more than a shorter lockdown, like in New Zealand. The participants in Auckland struggled with their state of mind which indicates that longer lockdowns may indeed cause further strains. Thus, it should be noted that comparing this research with overseas research does have its issues due to the different governmental ways of handling Covid-19. These differing exposures likely produced different results. However, that is what makes this study unique, the lack of research in a New Zealand context makes a timely contribution to this emerging research field.

Future research

During the research process it became evident that there were other research perspectives and avenues that needed to be explored. This is particularly the case as Covid-19 continues to evolve and as New Zealand and the world tries to adapt to the unpredictable and changing situation. For example, since the writing of this thesis, New Zealand endured another lockdown with Auckland staying in this further lockdown for 107 days (New Zealand Government, 2020). This lockdown is a contrast to the initial lockdown which was comparatively short, demonstrating the need for longitudinal research. Studies may want to look at the implications of these extended lockdowns in New Zealand to ascertain the impact on individuals.

The next area of enquiry that requires further exploration is the effects of the hybrid working model. Of particular interest is whether the loss of rituals that demarcate the lines between home and work can be repaired when there is only partial WFH. The findings in this study around the positive effects of using tools such as Zoom and Teams have also at times been associated with ‘digital exhaustion’ (Microsoft, 2021). Microsoft (2021) found that employees were having higher intensity and more frequent meetings online, contributing to this digital exhaustion. Microsoft also reported that over 70 percent of employees would like to continue WFH, while over 65 percent

want to work with their teams in-person. This aligns with what was found in the current study with half of the participants reporting they wanted hybrid work. Further, Microsoft reports that 40 percent of the global workforce are considering leaving their employer this year, therefore there is a need for research to explore what makes successful hybrid working so that organisations can retain staff. Thus, while the current study found that generally well-being was stable, according to Microsoft, they found that employees were being as productive, if not more productive but they felt there was no regard by their organisations for work-life balance. While collaboration and interactions with close colleagues still remains higher than before the pandemic, larger organisations are becoming more distant which reduces the cohesive and collective nature. Juggling in-person and remote employees will create challenges, suggesting that leaders need to foster social capital, organisation-wide collaboration and more unprompted conversations that have always been such a large and normal part of traditional workplaces. Thus, future research could look at what makes a successful hybrid work environment in order to preserve and improve employee PWB. Aspects of this could also consider spillover effect and whether split remote and office working could help to reduce these effects.

Another important factor from the current study that should be looked at in regards to PWB, is social capital. In this research, social capital and in particular government trust, was found to be high among participants. As previously mentioned, some of New Zealand endured further lockdowns. It is possible that this may have led to a reduction in government trust which could be associated with poorer well-being. Further, New Zealand collectivism may have been broken down as over a quarter of the population was separated from wider New Zealand. This may also have impacted social capital and well-being. Therefore, further research is needed in New Zealand on social capital while WFH during a pandemic to ascertain what it is that instills trust in the government and what can be done to foster this when times get tough.

Finally, in the current study it was found that Ryff's model of PWB was not that well-suited to measuring PWB during a pandemic. The unprecedented challenges brought about by Covid-19 made it difficult to assess for PWB using Ryff's model because of the partial loss of control individuals had over their lives. This model is largely focused on the influence the individual has over their life, however challenges such as lockdown, social distancing and work

changes were not controllable elements. Thus, factors such as environmental mastery or achieving goals were no longer as manageable. The emphasis of this model is intrapersonal, but in the context of Covid-19, an interpersonal model of PWB is needed for assessment. Thus, further research could look at modifying or creating a new measure of PWB that takes into account uncontrollable factors and assesses how individuals handle this adversity and the extent of their resilience.

The Covid-19 pandemic is ongoing and constantly evolving. Many things have changed in the short time since writing this thesis, including extended lockdowns in New Zealand, new strains of Covid-19 and the roll out of vaccinations and boosters. Continual research is critical as we continue to transition to new ways of life and work. Understanding what contributes to PWB will be crucial in ensuring the sustained mental health of workers. This thesis provides insights into the factors that can assist and preserve well-being and my hope is that these can be put into practice in New Zealand and globally.

Appendices

Appendix A

QUESTION SCHEDULE

Demographic questions:

What is your age?
What gender do you identify with?
What ethnic group or groups do you identify with?
What is your work role?
What is your tenure?

Lead in questions:

Tell me about your job? - what do you do, what does the company do?
Has your job changed because of Covid-19? If so, how?
Tell me about your WFH experience and how you felt it went? Was anyone else working from home at the same time? A general overview of your experience.
Are you still WFH, if not how long did you WFH for?

Organisation questions:

1. What was your organisation's protocol for hours worked? Was there flexibility or did you have to login to work at a certain time?
2. How long did you find you were working each day and did it differ from the office?
3. Did you notice any changes in your workload?
4. What practices does your organisation use when WFH ie daily zoom calls?
5. Did you feel there were any changes to your autonomy while WFH? Did you feel okay about asking for help?
6. Have your work goals shifted at all throughout Covid-19? Do you still have a clear direction?
7. Do you find meaning in your work? Has the pandemic changed this at all?
8. Did you notice any changes in your relationships with colleagues? If so, in what way?
9. Are there any specific values upheld by your colleagues and organisation that stand out to you? Have these always been prominent or did this change throughout Covid-19?
10. Do you think your employer changed their view on WFH as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown? If so, in what way?

Individual questions:

11. How do you manage boundaries with family/others in the house? Did you put in place any techniques, rules or practices?

12. What was your ergonomic setup like? Did you have your own office space with a door? Were there any physical impacts?
13. At times Covid-19 had a heavy impact, what did you do to keep things lighthearted and fun both in and out of work?
14. Can you discuss your state of mind while WFH?
15. Have your personal goals shifted at all throughout Covid-19?
16. How would you describe your feelings and sense of trust towards the NZ government and it's response to Covid-19?
17. Did your family dynamic change throughout Covid-19 while WFH? How?
18. Do you feel that you have had/have experienced any obvious personal growth while WFH?
19. How would you describe your work-life balance while working from home? Does it differ when you are in the office?
20. Having worked in the office and from home - do you have a preference for one over the other and why?
21. How is your well-being overall? Do you feel as though this has changed at all since Covid-19?

Appendix B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Fun and well-being in workplace social spaces

(Working from home and well-being throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic)

Principal Investigator: Barbara Plester

Masters Student: Molly Coutts

Researcher introduction

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Dr Barbara Plester, Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland and Molly Coutts, a Masters Student at the University of Auckland. The study involves interviews with employees about workplace well-being and social work activities as well as working from home throughout Covid-19.

Project description and invitation

The study involves an interview of 40- 45 minutes, at a location of your preference or by zoom, and is about your experiences of working from home and well-being in your organisation. The research will shed light on some New Zealand perspectives of working from home as a result of Covid-19. The results may be used to write academic publications. Themes only will be presented, with no participant or organisation being identifiable. As a participant, you will benefit from any policy implications that arise from this study. Participation is voluntary, and you can decline without giving a reason. Please be assured that participation or non-participation will have no effect on your relationship with your organisation. There are no risks associated with participation. The project is expected to finish within eight months.

Right to withdraw data

You may withdraw from the study and withdraw your data at any time within 15 days of signing the consent form, without giving a reason.

Handling of data

There will be an audio recorder used in your interview, and you may stop the interview at any point without giving a reason, at which point the recording will also be stopped. You can review your recording/transcription any time within 15 days of the interview; if you ask, we will provide it immediately and you may make amendments within two weeks of receipt.

Only three people will have access to your data: the principal investigator (P.I.), interviewer, and transcriber. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement. It is possible that there may be some incidental findings in the interview. In the case of incidental findings, we will consult with you to ascertain whether you want these to be removed from the transcript and the study. We will also guide you to appropriate assistance agencies should you need this.

Your identity will remain confidential within any reporting / publications. Any identifying information will be removed. Please note that your consent form will be stored by the P.I. and destroyed after six years. She will hold the recording, deleting it straight after transcription, with proper procedures. The transcription will be stored on a secure University of Auckland drive and held indefinitely for future analysis by the P.I.

Contact details and approval wording

This participant information sheet is yours to keep. If you have any questions contact:

Researcher: Dr. Barbara Plester Lynette Stewart	Head of Department: Professor Kenneth Husted
b.plester@auckland.ac.nz Ph: 64 9 3737599 ext 82484 University of Auckland Business School, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142 Molly Coutts molly.coutts@gmail.com Ph: 021 022 80361	k.husted@auckland.ac.nz Ph: 099236829 University of Auckland Business School, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, at the University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, telephone 09 373-7599, ext 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 25th March, 2020, **REF: 024713**

Appendix C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project Title: Fun and well-being in workplace social spaces

(Working from home and well-being throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic)

Principal Investigator: Barbara Plester

Masters Student: Molly Coutts

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that results may be used for academic publications.
- I understand that my interview will be recorded, and later transcribed, and that I may terminate the interview at any point without giving a reason.
- I can withdraw my consent any time within 15 days of signing the consent form without giving a reason.
- I understand that I can review my recording or transcription any time within 15 days and make amendments within two weeks of receipt.
- I understand that three people will have access to my data: the principal investigator, the interviewer, and transcriber, and they will treat the data and my participation as confidential.
- I understand that the consent form will be kept for 6 years, after which it will be destroyed.
- I understand that my interview transcription will be stored and held indefinitely on a computer.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Email: _____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON **REF: 024713**

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