Cape Peninsula University of Technology

EMERGENCY REMOTE WORK DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES AT A TERTIARY INSTITUTION, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nongqabutho Falala, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

25… / 01… / 2023

Signed   **Date**

ABSTRACT

The emergence of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in campuses around the world to be closed. Following the implementation of the lockdown restrictions, traditional South African universities were forced to adapt their way of operation to emergency remote work (ERW). While not a completely new method of work, the concept is novel to residential university administrators who must quickly transition from a face-to-face setting to one that allows for remote work to take place.

The research aims to explore the lived experiences of the senior administrative staff in academic departments. To achieve this, qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions from seventeen non-randomly and purposefully selected senior administrative staff. The participants were in various academic departments in four faculties on the upper campus. Microsoft Teams platform was used for interviews as face-to-face meetings were prohibited due to lockdown restrictions.

Hanging between national load shedding and connectivity issues, three of the interviews had to be rescheduled to accommodate the participants. One participant pulled out an hour before the actual interview due to being overwhelmed with remote work and mental health issues. The interview was then carried out three weeks later. Thematic analysis was done on the transcribed data collected during the interviews.

Although the participants had unique experiences, key findings show that there were similarities as well. Participants have embraced remote work, enjoyed the flexibility of work from home and would welcome a three-day office week and two days' working remotely, or vice versa. Increased productivity at home was identified as a result of less disruptions at home. Mental health issues were a concern to participants although they understood that these were exacerbated by the psychosocial impact of COVID-19.

Keywords: Coronavirus (COVID-19), emergency remote work (ERW), lived experiences, senior administrative staff.

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DEDICATION

In honour of my late mother, Girlie Siso Falala, who passed away in January 2021 in the midst of my research, this thesis is dedicated to her for her love and support throughout the years— a woman who instilled in me a passion for learning that has propelled me to the pinnacle of my profession. Thank you mama for all your sacrifices and prayers!

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1.1   Introduction

The outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in South Africa caused many socio-economic challenges across all spheres of life. The impact of the pandemic will still be felt for many years to come. It fundamentally changed many people's and organisations' lives. Rethinking how things are done is still the order of the day. One such challenge is the remote work culture that was introduced.

This study explored the experiences of senior administrative staff in academic departments at a South African university in relation to emergency remote work (ERW) as result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. This chapter outlines the background of the research, followed by the problem statement, research aim, objectives, research questions, research methodology, ethics, delineation, limitations, main findings, conclusion and contributions of the study. The chapter ends with a summary and the outline of each chapter.

According to Kurland and Bailey (1999:53), Nilles coined the term "telecommuting" in 1973 to refer to remote work, e-work, telework, flexible work, virtual office and other forms of virtualisation. In this context, it is described as a situation in which an employee substitutes commuting to and from work by working electronically from a desired workplace using telecommunication channels (Internet, e-mail, computer and/or telephone). In this scenario, the organisations or individuals volunteer or intend to telecommute/work remotely from their homes.

Remote work in response to a crisis (in this case the COVID-19 pandemic) varies from voluntary to enforced remote work (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020). This corresponds with the notion that planned remote work experiences differ from emergency remote work in reaction to a crisis (Johnson et al., 2020:7).

This study was conducted with employees who had no choice but to work from home because of COVID-19 regulations that restricted staff members to their homes. Working from home during the lockdown was considered an emergency because universities had to shut down immediately without making prior plans for their staff members. For the purpose of this study, the term emergency remote work (ERW) was adopted.

1.2   Background to the research problem

Campuses across the country were confronted with a disruption of routine work arrangements due to the prolonged and indefinite closure of campuses as a result of lockdown restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Universities had to shift their modes of teaching and learning. The administration of academic institutions had to rapidly adapt to the new environment because of the changes in teaching and learning.

The concept of remote work is not new although the process has changed in many ways. In 1973, Nilles, whilst working at NASA, first came up with the concept of 'telecommuting' when he helped with the invention of space investigations that could relay messages back to Earth. The idea of 'telecommuting' has evolved and has different, titles e.g., Flexiplace (Schiff, 1983:26), electronic cottage (Toffler, 1980:26) and remote work (Olson, 1983:182; Kraut, 1987). Working remotely is made possible by the use of telecommunication and technology. According to Waters (2016:1), flexibility in the workplace is necessary in meeting family and work demands in today's society.

There are opposing views on remote work. Gourdreau (2013) writes about how Yahoo! stopped the work from home programme, arguing that it weakened the culture of collaboration in the organisation (Gourdreau, 2013; Lavey-Heaton, 2014). Rajapakshe (2021:37) claims that the "success of remote work among female professionals declined during the pandemic as a result of changes in duties and lifestyle habits". Effectiveness of remote work is only considered when there is a trade-off between work and family responsibilities, rather than a compromise of other responsibilities in the lives of female employees, according to Rajapakshe (2021). The findings of this research, which were conducted on 17 participants, 16 of whom were females, contradict the findings made by Rajapakshe (2021).

In defence of remote work, Choudhury et al. (2019) have proven that there is an increase in production as a result of remote work. However, they highlighted that work from home and work outside of the office are separate forms of remote work. This study focused on work from home due to travel restrictions introduced to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Prior research has reported on planned remote work. However, little research has been conducted on remote work as a result of a crisis where workers abruptly shift from office work to working remotely from home, as in the case of the COVID-19 lockdown. Eriksson and Petrosian (2020:54) raise concerns that the abrupt shift to remote work in response to a crisis can be disruptive to workers and may result in decreased productivity.

For the purpose of this study, ERW has been used since planned remote work experiences are different from emergency remote work in response to a crisis (Johnson et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has made the need for remote work greater than before, and universities are increasingly depending on their staff to work remotely (Hodges et al., 2020). Previous research generally confirms an increase in productivity when employees work remotely (Choudhury et al., 2019). However, Costa and Tumagole (2020:31) posit that many employees in South Africa experienced extreme mental health issues as they did not have adequate resources for ERW during COVID-19. This research explored the experiences of senior administrative staff in order to understand the benefits and challenges of ERW.

Research on the virtualness in higher education institutions (HEIs) tend to be more focused on teaching and learning than on administrative duties and activities (Adam et al., 2016). This is consistent with the findings of Hedding et al. (2020), who found that while the South African 2015 student protests under the hashtag #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall may have prepared specific universities' administrative staff, severely affected by student protests, for remote work. The complete shutdown of virtually all sectors of society has created many unexpected obstacles.

Pre Covid-19, there have been various studies on the virtual work environment in other businesses, including the financial services sector (Hurd, 2011; Carlson, 2014; Ransone, 2014). The topic has, however, been covered in a variety of ways in unpublished literature since the beginning of 2020. The difficulties and concerns that students, administrators, and institutions faced as they decided whether and how to continue providing education in the face of the rising number of COVID-19 cases were highlighted in a number of blog posts, editorials, and brief reports that were published online (Johnson et al., (2020). Academic duties at higher institutions of learning are functional and interrelated with administrative responsibilities spanning several units, departments and faculties. It is important to understand the remote work experiences of administrative staff in traditional universities as they may differ from those in many other organisational settings.

1.3 The problem statement

While there has been an abundance of research on virtualisation in HEIs (Keller, 2009; Rae & Samuels, 2011; Songkram & Puthaseranee, 2015; Adam et al., 2016), most of it has been on online learning environments. As a result, less emphasis has been given to the remote work of administrative work environments within HEIs.

According to Hedding et al. (2020), every member of staff at an HEI in South Africa has been affected in some manner and to varying degrees by COVID-19 and remote work. No one will be able to emerge from this experience unscathed. Hedding et al.'s (2020) findings revealed that better resourced academic institutions, such as the University of South Africa, which is an open distance learning institution, was well-suited to address the challenges presented by COVID-19 restrictions. However, they have struggled to develop frameworks to allow operations and administration staff to work from home.

Sahu (2020), in their research on the impact of remote work on education and mental health at HEIs, excluded administrative staff. Instead, they focused their research on students and academic staff. Mickey et al. (2020) report on how best academic administrators can support academics during a pandemic. However, the experiences of administrative staff are not reflected in their research. As one of the major stakeholders in the learning process, ERW

experiences of administrative staff during COVID-19 are worth examining to inform future policy decision making. This current study was exploratory in nature, as it aimed to explore the experiences of senior administrative staff within remote work arrangements associated with COVID-19, and the coping mechanisms used to deal with the crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in campus closures worldwide to enforce social distancing. Universities in South Africa shifted their mode of work to remote work during this crisis. While not entirely a new way of work, the concept of remote work is relatively new to residential university administrators. Almost overnight, these non-remote workers were taken out of their normal environment and forced to adapt and adjust to cope with increased roles and responsibilities.

According to Dolan (2011:65) and Martin and MacDonnell (2012:603), previous research largely focused on academic/teaching staff with not enough attention given to administrators. Similar research by Johnson et al. (2020) supports these views, with conclusions that much is known about how academics and students at HEIs relate to online learning or remote teaching, while little is understood about the experiences of administrative staff in these educational institutions. Similarly, Jiang and Tanaka (2022) respond that practically all academic institutions have structures of administrative staff actively involved in the daily activities of students on campus. However, little research has been done on the type of influence that support staff has on students.

There are various social and economic impacts on university administrative staff regarding ERW, including demoralisation due to the lack of social interaction (Faust & Foglio, 2020:17) and Internet connectivity challenges, amongst others. According to Addo et al. (2020:101), prior to COVID-19, administrative work has been mostly done in the offices of residential universities, and this required limited virtual platforms. Addo et al. (2020:101) further demonstrate that universities had to devise enabling structures to support administrative staff in order to improve ERW. Administrative staff face both challenges and opportunities for ERW. Unfortunately, it is unclear what the lived ERW experiences of senior administrative staff entail.

1.4 Aim of this study

The aim of the study was to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff at a higher education institute as they negotiate the realities of ERW with their various responsibilities.

1.5 Objectives of this study

i)   To explore challenges associated with ERW for senior administrative staff
ii) To determine the factors affecting the work experiences of senior administrative staff
iii) To explore the opportunities of ERW

iv) To determine factors considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff

v) To determine the effect of ERW on performance

vi) To determine the effect of ERW on stakeholder engagement

1.6 Research questions

Table 1.1 presents the research questions (RQ), research sub-questions (RSQs), objectives and methodology used to answer the questions.

Table 1.1: The research questions, research sub-questions, objectives and research methodology

Research Question (RQ) 1	What are the lived experiences of ERW for senior administrative staff?		
	Question	**Objective**	**Methodology**
RSQ 1.1	What challenges are associated with remote work for senior administrative staff during the COVID-19 lockdown?	To explore challenges associated with ERW for senior administrative staff	Interviews; semi-structured questionnaires
RSQ 1.2	What are the opportunities of ERW?	To explore the opportunities of ERW	Interviews; semi-structured questionnaires
RSQ 1.3	What are the factors considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff?	To determine factors considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff	Interviews; semi-structured questionnaires
Research Question (RQ) 2	How do senior administrative staff manage ERW?		
	Question	**Objective**	**Methodology**
RSQ 2.1	How has ERW affected the work performance of the senior administrative staff the during COVID-19 lockdown?	To determine the effect of ERW on performance	Interviews; semi-structured questionnaires
RSQ 2.2	How does ERW affect the engagement of senior administrative staff with stakeholders of the institution?	To determine the effect of ERW on stakeholder engagement	Interviews; semi-structured questionnaires

*RSQ – Research sub-question

1.7 Research methodology

Qualitative research was used in this study to gather primary data, as the study required in-depth understanding of the experiences of senior administrative staff with ERW during the pandemic. According to Merriam (2002:3), qualitative research is based on the notion that meaning is socially constructed by individuals as they interact with their surroundings. Furthermore, numerous constructions and interpretations of reality are constantly changing. The ontological stance taken in this study was subjectivism.

The interpretivist epistemological perspective and an inductive approach were adopted for the study's qualitative data. An inductive approach allows the researcher to collect data, identify patterns and themes, and draw meaningful inferences from themes that emerge through interviews (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012; Thanh & Thanh, 2015:25). The research onion of Saunders et al. (2007:102) was used as research framework. These stances and approaches

are based on qualitative research methods, allowing "the exploration the world and phenomenon under study as it is from participants subjective experiences" (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:24).

1.8 Research strategy

Research strategy is defined as "the plan that helps a researcher identify relevant answers to research questions" (Saunders et al., 2009:173). It is a step-by-step plan of action that directs thoughts and actions, allowing the researcher to do research systematically and on time, resulting in high-quality data and accurate information. There are several different strategies. Below are some of the strategies linked to methodological choices.

Table 1.2: Research strategies linked to methodological choices

Research Strategy	Method
Ethnography Narrative Inquiry Grounded Theory Action Research	Qualitative research
Archival and documentary research Case study	Quantitative or qualitative research or mixed methods
Experiment Survey	Quantitative research

This study followed a case study approach.

1.8.1 Case study

According to Yin (2018:44), a case study is "an empirical method that fully explores a contemporary phenomenon within its practical framework". Yin (2018:45) further explains that "the boundaries between phenomenon and the background may not be clear". A case study therefore offers the researcher an opportunity to explore and understand a 'real world case'. Thomas (2011) elaborates that "case studies are studies of people, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods". One of the primary characteristics of a case study as a method of doing research is that it adopts a holistic rather than a reductionist approach (Verschuren, 2003). A case study is typically qualitative and inductive, and is influenced by the researcher's assumptions and understanding, which is often informed by an interpretivist philosophy. The case study was chosen as a research method since it is the most adaptable of all research designs, allowing the researcher to preserve the holistic qualities of real-life experiences while exploring empirical events (Verschuren, 2003).

This research explored and examined the experiences of senior administrative staff in academic departments at a South African university in relation to emergency remote work

(ERW) as a result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The case study was chosen as a research method since it is the most adaptable of all research designs, allowing the researcher to preserve the holistic qualities of real-life experiences while exploring empirical events (Verschuren, 2003).

1.8.2 The case

A South African university was used as the case. Unit of analysis

1.8.3 1.8.3 Unit of analysis

Dolma (2010:169) defines a unit of analysis as "the entity that is being analysed in a study". Choosing the appropriate unit of analysis for the study, or at least keeping it in mind while doing so, is an essential step in doing any type of research. Bhattacherjee (2012:9) agrees that "the population, persons, or items having the attributes that one desires to investigate constitute the unit of analysis". The ERW as phenomenon was chosen as the unit of analysis in the current study.

1.8.4 Unit of observation

According to Dolma (2010:171), the idea of the unit of observation is most frequently mistaken with the unit of analysis by even the most experienced researchers. In a majority of studies, the unit of analysis and the unit of observation are the same because the observational unit is defined as the entity for which measurements are acquired (Dolma, 2010). However, this is not always the case. The unit of observation in this study was the senior administrative staff (17 in total).

1.8.5 Sampling

Coyne (1997:1) states that sampling is a "very complicated issue in qualitative research because there are many different types of qualitative sampling described in the literature, as well as a great deal of confusion and overlap between the different types of sampling". Choosing a study sample is a critical stage in any research project because studying entire populations is rarely practicable, efficient or ethical (Marshall, 1996). A somewhat small and purposefully selected sample may be used in a qualitative investigation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Marshall (1996:522) agrees, stating that, "an ideal sample size for a qualitative study is one that effectively addresses the research question with the goal of enhancing the depth of understanding". Purposive sampling is used to identify participants who are more likely to provide meaningful information, as highlighted by Palinkas et al. (2015:533).

This study adopted a purposive, non-random and conveniently sampling technique. The rationale for using a purposive technique is founded on the assumption that given the study's aims and objectives, specific types of people may hold varied and important viewpoints on the ideas and issues under investigation, and must hence be included in the sample (Robinson,

2014). This is in line with Etikan et al. (2016:2) who state that "the researcher deliberately selects with specific qualities relevant to the study". Furthermore, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014:142), purposive sampling is "when the researcher selects who to interview (who to include in the sample) based on a set of characteristics". In the current study, senior administrative staff are key members of staff at this academic institution and understanding their lived experiences can help to streamline processes and develop new policies for similar occurrences.

1.8.6 Data collection

According to Carter and Henderson (2005), qualitative research utilises a wide number of techniques for data collecting, all of which are supported by a wide range of distinct methodological and theoretical approaches. These may take on the form of in-depth interviews, either structured or unstructured, as well as group discussions, reports, diaries, or films, amongst others. However, deciding how data will be collected can be difficult for a researcher. Cost is an important factor to consider in all data collection procedures (Newcomer et al., 2015).

Interviews provide the researcher the opportunity to gain deep insight into the subject being explored (Saunders et al., 2009). Interviews are a "practical, flexible, and relatively economical way of gathering research data" (Carter & Henderson, 2005:217). For this research, a semi-structured questionnaire was used and the interviews were guided by an interview guide (Appendix E).

1.8.7 Data analysis

To do credible qualitative research, data analysis is essential, as stated by Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3351). The qualitative researcher is frequently referred to as the research instrument because the researcher's capacity to comprehend, describe and interpret experiences and perceptions is essential to the process of unearthing meaning in a variety of settings and conditions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the researcher applied Braun and Clark's (2006:86) process of thematic analysis, which consists of the following phases:

i) Familiarisation with data, and transcribing of the interviews.
ii) Transcriptions were mailed to the participants. The participants then checked for correctness and validity of the transcription.
iii) After point (ii), the researcher read the transcripts several times to become acquainted with the data.
iv) Key codes and key concepts were identified.
v) Searched for categories or meaningful classifications.
vi) Refined categories, ensuring appropriateness and relevancy to its category.

vii)   Categories were then formally classified.

1.9   Ethics

Every research project should make it a priority to safeguard human participants by adhering to a set of ethical guidelines appropriate to the circumstances (Arifin, 2018). Because of the more in-depth nature of the research procedure, a qualitative study lends itself particularly well to the consideration of ethical concerns, as stated by Arifin (2018). It is essential to keep these in mind as it is crucial to all research endeavours. Researchers have serious ethical obligations to participants when they encourage them to speak openly and honestly (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Cacciattolo (2015:56) concurs, stating that "unethical research almost always leaves participants and researchers feeling vulnerable and exposed in negative ways".

A letter from CPUT was obtained for this research and submitted to the UCT Ethics in Research Committee as part of the supporting documentation. Further to this, the researcher had to apply for permission to conduct research with UCT's Human Resources department after the ERC reviewed and approved the application.

1.9.1   Consent

When doing research, one of the most important ethical standards to consider is facilitating free and informed consent (Shaw, 2008). For this research, the data collection procedure only began once ethical clearance was submitted and obtained from CPUT Ethics in Research Committee. An email request was sent to each participant, who was required to sign a consent form to participate in the interview. The consent form (Appendix B) complied with all the protocols of data collection.

i)   During the interviews, the researcher explained all interview protocols to the participants and reminded them that whatever they shared would be treated as confidential.

ii)   Before the interview process began, an introduction was done; this included the topic of study and interview questions.

iii)   Participants were reminded of their rights as stipulated in the informed consent form sent to them before they participated in the study.

iv)   All interviews were held using Microsoft Teams and once participants gave permission to record the interview, the recorded interviews were automatically uploaded to Microsoft Stream together with the closed caption transcript.

v)   Interviews commenced as permission was granted.

vi)   After the interviews were done, the interviews were transcribed and validated.

1.9.2 Confidentiality

According to Kaiser (2009), qualitative researchers face unique challenges in ensuring participant confidentially while providing rich, detailed accounts of social life. The ultimate goal is complete confidentiality for all research participants, referred to by Baez (2002) as the confidentiality convention. The confidentiality convention is upheld as a means of protecting all people's privacy, building trust and rapport with study participants, and maintaining ethical standards and the integrity of the research process (Baez, 2002).

To safeguard the participants' right to privacy and ensure anonymity throughout the entire process of data collection, analysis and dissemination of the findings of the study, neither their names nor their identities were revealed in any of these steps. Instead of using the participants' real names, the researcher assigned a random number from 1 to 17 to identify them (P1-P17).

1.10 Delineation

This study adopted a qualitative and exploratory approach, employing a case study to understand the senior administrative staff's experiences as the negotiated realities of ERW. Due to time, resources, and accessibility, the study only collected data from four faculties within this university. Despite this, the 17 senior administrative staff members from the four faculties that were interviewed made it possible to extrapolate the data to include all senior administrative staff members from academic departments within the university. To obtain valuable insights from the diverse factions while also achieving the study's objectives, the participants examined in this study are key university senior administrative staff members within the four faculties.

1.11 Limitations

According to Connelly (2013), it is critical to acknowledge the constraints present in any research study. The following limitations were present in this research:

i)   Purposive sampling was used for this study, and 25 participants were identified and invited to participate. However, three (3) participants declined the invitation for personal reasons and five (5) participants were either sick with COVID-19 or caring for family members who were sick with the virus and did not provide alternative interview dates, so only 17 participants were interviewed. Data saturation, on the other hand, was achieved. According to Fusch and Ness (2015:1-2), data saturation occurs when there is sufficient information to replicate the study, when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible.

ii)   The period of time during which the data were collected occurred between March and June of 2021, a year after the ERW occurrence. It is possible that some

participants were overly familiar with ERW at the time, and some of their experiences may have been different and their perspectives could have changed.

iii) Face-to-face interviews could not be conducted because of COVID-19 restrictions, and Internet connectivity and reception issues caused some interviews to be disrupted or to have lags between participants' responses, which were a limitation of this study. Before conducting interviews, the researcher performed research to determine the most appropriate platform and time for each participant in an attempt to avoid this limitation.

iv) Due to the large number of academic administrative staff at the chosen tertiary institution in various positions, this study was limited to senior administrative staff members in four faculties. Academic staff members, other support staff in service areas as well as students were not considered for this study.

v) The university selected for this case study is the current employer of the researcher. Participants may not have been as forthright with experiences as they might have been concerned about their anonymity having known the researcher, even though the researcher highlighted the confidentiality of the process.

1.12 Main findings

Main findings of this research were as follows:

i) Lack of appropriate skills for managing remote colleagues, particularly those with emotional health issues.

ii) Some township infrastructure is below standard. As a result, staff members living in these areas experienced unreliable Internet access. This gives staff members doubt about whether or not there will be a reliable line of communication to carry out processes.

iii) It is necessary to provide sufficient resources for the home office in order for administrators to carry out their responsibilities effectively. These must be applied consistently across all faculties.

iv) Staff members appreciate the flexibility and control that comes with working from home, and as a result, they would welcome a hybrid work system.

1.13 Conclusion

When it comes to the operation of a successful university, the senior administrative staff are critical because they ensure that the academic administration is well-functioning across all operations. The findings indicate that ERW presents a variety of challenges and opportunities, as well as personal factors that have had an impact on the experiences of senior administrators. It is therefore important to understand the experiences of senior administrative staff as they negotiate the challenges of ERW in order for the university operations to run smoothly.

1.14 Contributions

This qualitative case study presents findings that contribute to the understanding of ERW. Remote work is likely to continue to grow in popularity, and as a result, universities must acquire additional knowledge about administrative staff experiences. This study adds the existing body of knowledge on the subject and summarises the experiences of senior administrative staff forced to adopt ERW.

1.15 Summary

The global spread of COVID-19 compelled universities to adopt ERW. This study explored the experiences of senior administrative staff in academic administration at a South African university as they navigated the issues of ERW. Research on remote work in higher education has been extensive, but little is known about the lived experiences of senior administrative staff working from home. The following main research questions were formulated for the study:

    i)   What are the lived experiences of ERW for senior administrative staff?

    ii)   How do senior administrative staff manage ERW?

The subjectivist position is the ontological stance. An interpretivist epistemological perspective has been adopted using qualitative data and an inductive approach. The research employed a case study approach, with the University of Cape Town serving as the study's case. A total of 17 participants from four faculties were interviewed. The semi-structured questions were linked to the research questions, sub-questions and interview questions. Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis process was used to analyse the data. Each participant was required to sign a consent form and confidentiality was maintained throughout the data collection process.

The main findings are: a lack of appropriate skills for managing remote colleagues; insufficient resources provided to staff; and also that a hybrid work structure is preferred going forward. Regarding the running of a successful university, understanding the lived experiences of administrative staff is vital, as top administrative professionals ensure that the academic administration is well-functioning across all of its operations.

1.16 Outline of the thesis

This research is divided into six chapters, followed by references and appendices. The chapters are organised in such a way that the argument of the thesis is formed. The following are the specifics of the thesis' organisational structure:

Chapter One: This chapter introduces the study and presents the background to the research problem, followed by a statement of the problem, the research objectives and questions, as well as a delineation and discussion of the study's constraints and limitations. The theoretical

framework, methodological issues and the organisation of the study are all included in this chapter.

Chapter Two: This chapter presents an in-depth review of existing literature about the experiences of administrative staff in the context of ERW, as well as identifying gaps in the body of knowledge that have been identified. The theoretical underpinnings of the study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Three: This chapter delves into the study's research design and methods, as well as the choice of ontological and epistemological positions and why they are relevant paradigms. The methodology considered the research strategy, data collection techniques and qualitative data analysis. This chapter contains the study's ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: The data analysis of the fieldwork and the results are indicated. This chapter presents findings that emerged from the case study on senior administrative staff's ERW experiences. The presentations are based on the categories and themes developed during the data analysis. Key findings are highlighted in the summary.

Chapter Five: This chapter discusses the emerging themes in relation to the literature and research questions. The newly developed constructs and concepts are incorporated into the conceptual model of the research.

Chapter Six: Conclusions, recommendations, future research and a reflection are presented.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW
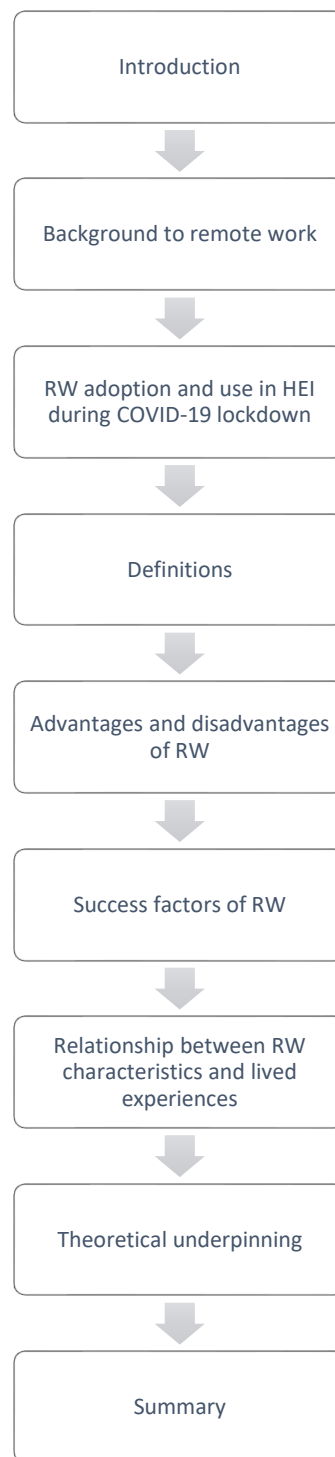
Figure 2.1: Layout of Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly and rapidly impacted higher education institutions worldwide. Administrative staff have been asked to perform unusual tasks with regard to administrative processes that they have never seen on this scale in their careers.

According to Hodges et al. (2020), even student protests such as the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall In 2015 did not prepare any university for the significant remote work enforced by the epidemic. Despite the fact that this crisis has been stressful, institutions should evaluate how successfully they were able to implement ERW (Hodges et al., 2020).

The study investigates senior administrative staff's ERW experiences in a higher education setting during the COVID-19 lockdown. In conducting the literature review, key words from the title, problem statement, research questions and study aim were used to guide searches through the search engines of the online databases of the University of Cape Town and Cape Peninsula University of Technology online libraries. Databases such as Google Scholar, university websites, media releases and internal policies were searched for relevant articles.

The literature review provides an easy-to-understand overview of research, highlighting where study findings confirm and/or contradict one another. According to Rozas and Klein (2010), literature reviews remain a useful and important method for identifying existing patterns and gaps in relation to research. In essence, because they depend not only on quantitative but qualitative research as well, their scope is considerably broader. Snyder (2019) agrees with this notion and elaborates that literature review is an effective technique of aggregating research findings to demonstrate evidence on a meta-level and to identify areas in which additional study is needed, which is a vital component of developing theoretical frameworks and developing conceptual models.

The literature is presented as follows: i) background to remote work; ii) remote work adoption in higher institutions during COVID-19 lockdown; iii) definitions; iii) advantages and disadvantages of remote work; iv) success factors of remote work; v) theoretical framework; and vi) summary.

2.2   Background to remote work

The word "telecommuting" to describe remote work, e-work, telework, flexible work, virtual offices and other forms of virtualisation was first coined by Nilles in 1973 (Nilles,1988:301). It is defined in this context as a circumstance in which an employee works electronically using telecommunication channels (Internet, e-mail, computer and/or telephone) instead of physically traveling to and from work. In this situation, organisations or people volunteer or plan to work from home. Organisations or workers volunteer or intend to telecommute in this circumstance.

According to Kłopotek (2017:40), the first references to the phenomena of remote work may be traced in the source literature as early as 1983. As described by Olson (1983:183), remote work is "organisational work performed outside of the typical workplace boundaries of

geographical locations". Olson's (1983) research on remote office work and subsequent publications have essentially been the basis for other researchers' debates (Kłopotek, 2017).

Several jobs are no longer performed in specified places of work or within restricted hours. According to Messenger (2019:26), "diverse connectivity technologies have made it possible for work to be performed in different places other than normal workplaces". Khlypovka (2020:310) agrees with this view in that remote work in the 21st century uses the most sophisticated technology making remote work more feasible.

Harpaz (2002) posits that one disadvantage of working remotely from home is the difficulty to separating professional and personal responsibilities during the day. According to Makowiec and Bober (2008), there is a risk that remote work may lead to workaholism. However, MacRae and Sawatzky (2020) state that remote work is rapidly expanding, and technological, demographic and sociological trends indicate that it will continue to expand. Many employees prefer flexible scheduling and remote work choices, which have been related to increased productivity, job happiness and work engagement.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, many restrictions were imposed on all human activities including the work environment. Restrictions such as travel were strictly imposed, and as a result, many organisations, including universities, had to adjust to these changes. One of the major strategies followed by organisations was remote working, with many employees work from home.

Although there has been little research on remote work for administrative staff in higher education, there have been several studies on the virtual work environment in other types of businesses, such as the financial services sector and others (Carlson, 2014; Ransone, 2014; Hurd, 2011). According to Adam et al. (2016), these studies do not investigate the experiences of administrative staff in such environments. Given the contextual uniqueness of the university in terms of academic tasks being functionally and interconnected (Musselin, 2006), and administrative tasks spanning several units, departments, faculties and directorates, remote work experiences may differ from those in many other organisational settings.

2.3 Remote work adoption and use in higher institutions during COVID-19 lockdown

Research on virtualness in higher education institutions is inclined to be more focused on teaching and learning than on administrative roles and activities (Adam et al., 2016). As a result, there is a knowledge gap regarding virtual work environments for administrative staff and how they are constructed. The COVID 19 outbreak has accelerated the expansion of remote work worldwide. Prior to 2019, literature on remote work found that regions such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe had a higher proportion of remote employees than other regions (Aboelmaged & Subbaugh, 2012; americanbanker.com, 2013). This could

be attributed to the fact that the global south does not have adequate technology access, to begin with. Shieh and Searle (2013:2) estimate that more than 16 million people in the United States work from home at least one day per month, accounting for around 10 % of the total workforce.

In the South African context, student protests such as #FeesMustFall in May 2015, followed by #RhodesMustFall in October of the same year, compelled all academic institutions to adopt remote work for their administrative staff. However, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work became the only alternative available to people all around the world, as each government-imposed travel restrictions. Many of these universities were caught unprepared.

2.4   Definitions

2.4.1   Remote work

Using the definition provided by Waters (2016:16), remote work is defined as "work that is performed outside of business locations and is enabled by Internet technologies". Khlypovka (2020:310) provides a similar concept, adding that "workers commonly work from libraries, coffee shops, their houses or any other location using technology, and they do not travel to traditional offices". This study was conducted while employees were working from home (WFH) as a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions, which restricted everyone, including university staff members, from leaving their homes and thus working remotely.

2.4.2   Work from home (WFH)

WFH, as defined by Savić (2020), can be broadly interpreted as employees working outside of offices. "Telecommuting" and "remote work" are two other common words used frequently and interchangeably to refer to working from home. For this study, WFH refers to employees working from home or a residence as a result of travel restrictions and social distancing protocols that were put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 virus.

2.4.3   Emergency remote work (ERW)

Anderson and Kelliher (2020:678) pointed out that "enforced remote work in response to the COVID-19 epidemic differs from voluntary remote work". This corresponds with the notion that planned remote work experiences differ from emergency remote work in reaction to a crisis (Johnson et al., 2020). This study was conducted while employees had no choice but to work from home because of COVID-19 regulations that prohibited staff members from moving away from their homes. WFH during the lockdown was considered an emergency because universities had to shut down immediately without making any plans for their staff members.

2.4.4 Lived experiences

Given (2008:489) defines lived experiences as "a representation and understanding of a participant's everyday experiences influencing perception of a situation". Frechette et al. (2020:3) elaborate on this definition, stating that "lived experience means experiencing the raw resources to be formed into its lasting form through interpretation, reinterpretation, and communication". A lived experience is more than just something that is experienced; it leaves an indelible imprint on the person who has it. An account of lived experience is insufficient if it is only descriptive; it must also include an interpretation of meaning for the individual (Frechette et al., 2020). The study aims to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff in ERW during COVID-19 lockdown.

2.4.5 Administrative staff

Academic and non-academic staff are the two types of employees typically found working in universities. The non-academic staff members have been referred to by a variety of names throughout the relevant literature. According to Graham (2012:438), common phrases that have been used by experts, universities, government organisations, and the media have included "non-academic staff, academic administrators, support staff, professional employees, and administrative staff". For the purpose of this research, the phrase "administrative staff" has been be adopted. Addo et al. (2020:95) highlight in their research that academic administration is a distinct discipline vital to accomplishing the desired outcomes in an educational institution. Administrators play a critical support role in the areas of teaching, learning and research.

2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of remote work

2.5.1 Advantages of remote work

According to Klopotek (2017:41), the advantages of remote work "are brought by the improvement in online communication". Online communication is mainly responsible for the introduction of several online platforms, e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and WhatsApp video calling, amongst others. Khlypovka (2020:311) highlights that workers benefit from not spending time travelling. The employer saves on building costs and other office overheads. In this study, there is the added and important health benefits to employees, as the restrictions reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Table 5.1 of this study contains a comprehensive list of the advantages of remote work found in this research.

2.5.2 Disadvantages of remote work

Klopotek (2017:41) lists disadvantages of remote work as "difficulty in separating home and work chores, feeling isolated from work colleagues and work environment". Songsangyos and Iamamporn (2020:86) support this statement and indicate that "workspace and personal space are not separate".

Rajapakshe (2021) argues that female employees with children were less satisfied with their remote work because they had more responsibilities than males/fathers. The researcher claimed that during the pandemic, the success of remote work among female professionals decreased due to changes in duties and lifestyle patterns. The research argument is that the effectiveness of telecommuting is only regarded if there is a trade-off between work and family, rather than a compromise of other duties in the life of female workers. This has resulted in the success of remote work dwindling during the COVID-19 epidemic. Table 5.1 of this study contains a comprehensive list of the disadvantages of remote work found in this research.

2.6 Success factors of remote work

According to Rajapakshe (2021:37), the success of remote work is "dependent on a number of factors, including high-speed Internet, selection of appropriate software and other technologies, effective planning processes, regulations and guidelines, and a sufficient budget". South Africa is experiencing load shedding, which necessitates the need for reliable electricity supply in this country. Consequently, organisations need to ensure that alternate sources of electricity are available to them in the first place. In terms of implementing a telecommuting system, the most important factor to consider is user satisfaction (Rajapakshe, 2021).

Communication is key to the success of remote work or remote workers. Employers should be "proactive and strategic" in their approach to remote work rather than responding to new remote work regulations and practices that arise from COVID19 (Makarius et al., 2021). According to the results of a poll performed by MIT in April 2020, employees agreed that effective communication was critical to the success of remote teams. Rosquist (2021) believes that it is beneficial for managers to perform routine check-ups on their employees and to provide assistance to newly hired workers as they become acclimatised to remote work. The sensation of being alone can also be alleviated by using video communication and maintaining regular face-to-face engagement in addition to using technology to facilitate more casual conversations. To contribute to the success of remote workers, it is critical to have a thorough understanding of the challenges faced by remote workers as well as the factors that have an influence on their well-being (Park et al., 2021). In addition, a distinction should be made between what managers can do to help remote workers succeed and what individuals must do for themselves (Manko & Rosiski, 2021).

2.7 Relationship between remote work characteristics and lived experiences

Individuals' ability to fully benefit from remote work is likely to be influenced by the manner in which they must perform their work activities (Golden & Veiga, 2005). Lived experiences of remote workers are "shaped by the characteristics of virtual work in the unique context created by the epidemic" (Wang et al., 2020:16). Existing knowledge on remote working, according to

Wang et al,. (2020), can be called into question in the event of a pandemic. In their research, Wang et al., (2020) used a mixed methods approach to investigate the challenges faced by remote workers during a pandemic, as well as how virtual work characteristics and individual differences influence these challenges. The researchers identified four key remote work challenges (work home interference, ineffective communication, procrastination, and loneliness) as well as four virtual work characteristics that affected the experience of these challenges (social support, job autonomy, monitoring, and workload) and one key individual difference factor (workers' self-discipline). This study used a similar methodology, conducting semi-structured interviews with 17 participants who conducted their work from home during the pandemic.

The following are characteristics of remote workers:

i) Skilled communicator

Good communication skills are essential for remote workers because colleagues and managers are unable to read body language to determine whether a colleague is having difficulties with their work (Wang et al., 2020). When a remote worker is unable to communicate with their co-workers about difficulties they are experiencing or anything else related to their work, the work suffers. During the pandemic, this became even more critical because face-to-face meetings were no longer possible, and remote workers were not only expected to be good communicators, but also to have strong computer skills because all communication has been conducted through ICT-mediated platforms (Wang et al., 2020).

ii) Independence of the worker

According to Van Ham's (2022:117) research findings, making decisions independently and choosing which materials to utilise, "is essential for becoming a successful remote worker". When working remotely there are daily obstacles to overcome and no one is available for face-to-face assistance. Personal issues and increased workload can easily derail remote workers, especially during a pandemic. It is therefore critical for a remote worker to be independent and avoid distractions to the greatest extent possible (Van Ham, 2022). When problems arise, a remote worker conducts independent research into the situation and documents possible solutions. If the same problem arises again, the documentation will be useful and can be shared with anyone else on the team who might be interested in learning. Wang et al. (2020:21) concur and state that remote work can "significantly alter job demands, autonomy, and relational aspects of work, all of which influence employee outcomes".

iii) Computer skills

According to Wang et al. (2020:49), remote workers depend largely on information and communication technologies (ICTs) to communicate and collaborate with colleagues, students,

and other stakeholders. During the COVID-19 lockdown, computer-mediated communications became the only option because workers were unable to participate in face-to-face meetings and were forced to stay at their homes. It is therefore essential for remote workers to have excellent computer skills in order to carry out their responsibilities effectively (Wang et al., 2020).

iv) Assertiveness

Establishing clear boundaries and being assertive in doing so is critical. The inability to be assertive can have a negative impact on one's well-being and level of job satisfaction. The ability to say no is extremely important for a remote worker to remain focused and complete tasks. It will also be difficult for remote workers to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives, as not being assertive may result in an employee having to spend the majority of their time working as a result of being afraid to say 'no' (Wang et al., 2020).

v) Motivated

To make WFH a successful undertaking, the remote worker must be responsible and self-motivated. Since no managers or supervisors are to present to ensure that a remote worker is at her home office or actually working, the remote worker is responsible for staying focused on the task and completing their work. To complete the job successfully, the remote worker need to manage procrastination and interruptions at home, and exercise self-discipline. This can result in increased job satisfaction and overall health and well-being (Wang et al., 2020).

2.8   Theoretical underpinning

To understand the experiences of senior administrative staff as they manage EWR, the study adopted the following:

i) In terms of the shift from on-campus office work to ERW, the problem was approached by using work design principles. Essentially, work design relates to "the content and organisational structure of work-related tasks, activities, interpersonal interactions and responsibilities" (Parker, 2014:662). The notion of work design includes remote work because working remotely provides a different setting for an employee's activities as compared to working in an office environment, as well as other contemporary work changes, such as those related to the current digital age (Parker & Grote, 2020:13; Wang et al., 2020).

ii) Grounded theory (GT): To record first-hand narratives of senior administrative staff's experiences, successes and challenges while working remotely, GT was adopted. GT has its origins in the works of Glaser and Strauss (2017) and is now a family of methods (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). GT emphasises the importance of developing new context-specific theories from the data. According to Gibson and Webb

(2012:160), GT is particularly helpful "in understanding how people who are experiencing the phenomena under research understand and think about it". GT is primarily concerned with individuals' internal understandings and interpretive drives. In summary, a GT approach enables the researcher to uncover informants' naive interpretations of their experiences. This method is especially beneficial when the phenomenon being researched is not clearly observable, such as virtual work. Although this theory has become widely used as a practical approach to both theory building and data analysis, it is still a misinterpreted paradigm (Suddaby, 2006:634). Adopting a social constructionist approach (Bryant, 2002) allows for acknowledging and appreciating the researcher as an active agent in meaning making and theory development. Theory develops as a co-construction arising from the unfolding interactions between participants and the researcher (Cassidy et al., 2017).

2.9 Summary

Sophisticated technology in the 21st century has made it easier for people to stay connected, and for employees to do their work outside the traditional office. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the acceleration of this remote work phenomenon. Remote work refers to employees working in various places outside their normal workplace. The study explores the lived experiences of senior administrative staff working under ERW during the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges and opportunities of remote work as well as personal factors need to be considered. All of these are influenced by the characteristics of remote work. It is therefore important that the experiences of administrative staff are understood, as they play a vital role in achieving the teaching and learning goals of these universities.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
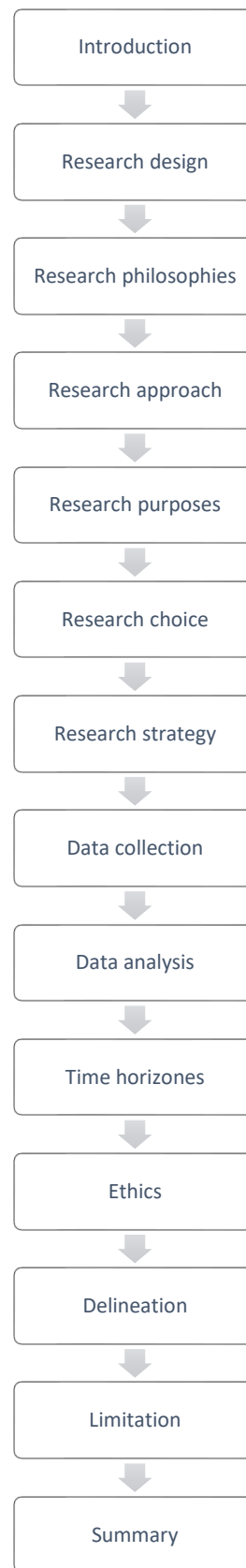
Figure 3.1: Layout of Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction

The process followed by researchers to conduct their research is defined by the research design and methodology. It describes the research techniques used to achieve the study's objectives. This chapter elaborates on the nature of the project as well as the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative approach, sampling, and techniques adopted for data collection and data analysis, and the standard used to interpret the data.

A monomethod and an inductive approach were adopted as the study focused on qualitative data. The qualitative research approach enables the researcher to comprehend the world and phenomena under investigation because it is based on the subjective experiences of the participants (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:25). An inductive approach enables the researcher to collect data, find patterns and themes, and thereby drawing meaningful conclusions from the themes that emerge during interviews (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012).

The aim of the study was to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff at an HEI as they negotiate the realities of ERW with their various responsibilities. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with participants and used semi-structured questionnaires to explore and understand these senior administrative staff's lived experiences.

3.2 Research design

Research design is a technique for answering the research question(s) using empirical data (McCombes, 2021). It is a set of directions and instructions to achieve a specific goal. According to Mouton (1996), research design enables the researcher to predict what the appropriate decisions should be in order to capitalise on the validity of the ultimate results. Making decisions about the overall aim and approach, the research design, sampling methods, data collection, and the procedures to follow for data collection and data analysis are all part of creating a research design (McCombes, 2021).

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to investigate the lived experiences of employees who were forced to work remotely as an emergency arrangement due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Research Onion design of Saunders et al. (2007) was used in this study to explain the research process (Figure 3.2). Saunders et al. (2007) explain that every investigation begins with the outer layer and progresses to the inner layer. The following components are included in this process: research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, research options, time horizon, data collection methods, and data analysis methods.
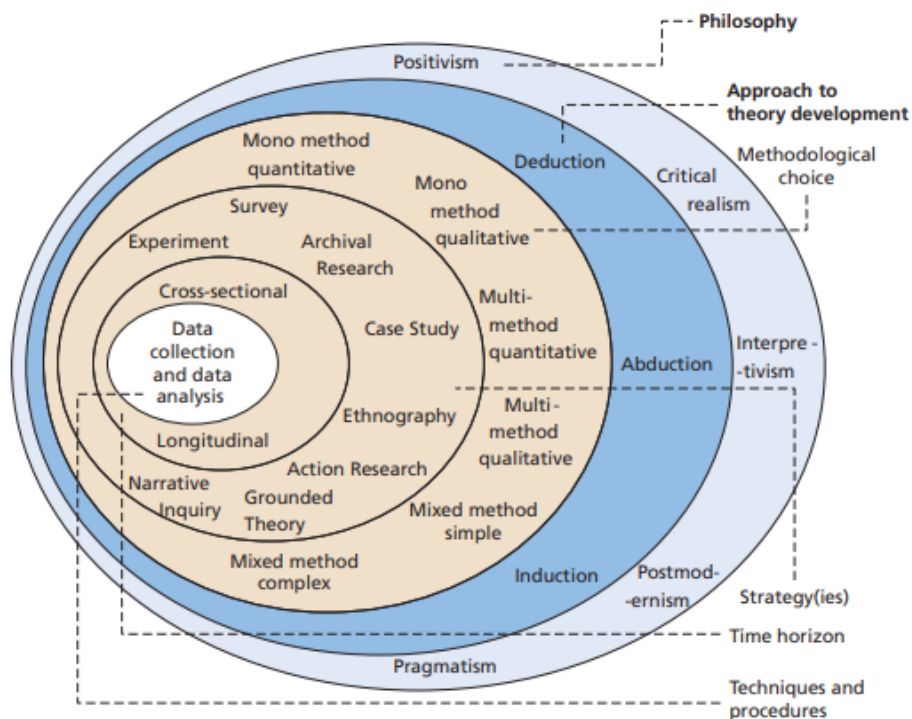
Figure 3.2: Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2007:130)

3.3 Research philosophies

According to Saunders et al. (2007:130), a research philosophy "is the overall ideas and assumptions that contribute to producing knowledge about a certain issue or issues, as well as providing answers to specific difficulties". They further state that research should be conducted from a philosophical standpoint since it aids in developing a deeper grasp of an area of study. Business research is based on five major philosophies: positivism, interpretivism, critical realism, pragmatism and postmodernism (Saunders et al., 2007:144).

3.3.1 Positivism

Positivism is focused on developing knowledge of social reality with the goal of producing generalisations comparable to those found in scientific sciences; these generalisations are similar to those seen in everyday life (Saunders et al., 2007:144). The positivist worldview is almost always founded solely on theories subjected to exploratory research. It leads to unquestionable confidence or empiricism in the data that were observed, and it rejects any attempt to argue away from the facts that can be witnessed (Bhattacherjee, 2012:18). Phenomenalism, which asserts that there is only one experience and that all conceptions regardless of whether they are based in matter or spirit should be disregarded, is included within positivism. The aim of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of administrative staff as they navigate the realities of ERW. While acknowledging the study's limitations, it has largely demonstrated that positivism is not appropriate.

3.3.2 Realism

Realism, sometimes known as critical realism or post-positivism, emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with positivism's lack of humanism, narrow focus, and emphasis on the unplanned nature of general rules. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014), there was also dissatisfaction with interpretivism's passive, pragmatic, subjective and relativist perspective. Realism attempts to describe what the researcher experiences in actuality by emphasising and illuminating the various elements of the occurrence. The goal here is to "reduce inaccuracies while remaining as objective as possible in explaining the real events and procedures" (Saunders et al., 2007:147).

3.3.3 Pragmatism

According to Saunders et al. (2009:130), pragmatism emphasises the "necessity of asking questions". Pragmatism research should be centred on an issue that is analysed to contribute to future practices. Researchers develop actual outcomes rather than theoretical ones based on their thinking.

3.3.4 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is related to communication; it seeks to understand reality without biases and ambiguity by allowing marginalised voices to express themselves. This research philosophy seeks to demonstrate that expression is dominated by others, and minority groups should have a voice. Postmodernism emphasises that organisational ideas can be questioned in the sphere of business. Therefore, postmodernist scholars have the power to show what is concealed and examine it in order to generate new understanding (Saunders et al., 2007:149).

3.3.5 Interpretivism

Interpretivism explains actual events and has been adopted as the basis for this current research. Essentially, interpretivism is the study of "real-life situations involving individuals or organisations with the aim of better understanding their subjective experiences" (Saunders et al., 2007:148). The nature of remote work is complex and context specific, and it varies from person to person. Because there is no single right or correct way to knowledge, knowledge is essentially subjective. As a result, "acts of interpretation are what determine the nature of the reality" (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:25).

To this end, interpretivism takes an inductive approach to research, employing qualitative research methods to gain a better understanding of individuals' lives and situations (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012; Munyua & Stilwell, 2012). This philosophy is distinguished by its subjectivist perspective. In the field of business, it aims to demonstrate that assumptions differ and that each person or group of people has their own perspective about an organisation. This means that each person can build a new interpretive understanding based on "his or her own beliefs,

assumptions and experiences" (Saunders et al., 2007:149). Interpretivists, according to Walsham (2006:320), aim to understand a phenomenon by analysing the interpretations that participants assign to it. Thus, researchers critically reflect on the study's background and their role in the study to ensure that a good interpretation of the participants' views is captured correctly; they indicate how data findings match or contradict previous theory and relate the findings to the theory by demonstrating an understanding of misrepresentations and biases.

This research followed the interpretivist philosophy to understand the lived experiences of senior administrative employees as they navigate their daily duties working remotely as a result of ERW.

3.4 Research approach

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017:31), research approaches are "the steps that lead to the framework of a research, beginning with addressing the basic ideas and theories, moving on to data collection, data analysis, and finally interpreting outcomes". Saunders et al. (2007:152) point out that theory construction demands the use of appropriate reasoning. The researchers highlight three different approaches: deductive, abductive and inductive.

3.4.1 Deductive approach

The deductive approach is commonly associated with a positivist scientific research paradigm and quantitative research methodologies in social sciences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Thomas (2006), the deductive approach refers to data analyses that are carried out to determine whether or not the data are consistent with prior assumptions, theories or hypotheses that have been identified or constructed by the investigator. Because of the assumptions imposed by investigators on the data gathering and data analysis techniques, essential themes are frequently concealed, reframed or rendered invisible when using this approach.

3.4.2 Abductive approach

The abductive approach usually starts with "an incomplete collection of observations and works its way to the most likely probable explanation for the set" (Dubois & Gadde, 2002:559). This approach uses both deductive and inductive reasoning and is always shifting from empirical to theoretical dimensions of analysis. According to Dubois and Gadde (2002), abductive reasoning is more useful than pure inductive or deductive logic. Lukka and Modell (2010:467) agree to this notion by highlighting that abductive reasoning is becoming more widely regarded as an important component of research. However, because abductive reasoning produces the type of daily decision making that does the best it can with the knowledge at hand, it is frequently imperfect (Alrajeh et al., 2012).

3.4.3 Inductive approach

The inductive approach enables the researcher to collect data and uncover patterns and themes, thereby drawing meaningful conclusions from themes that emerge during interviews (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This is consistent with Thomas (2006), who states that the major goal of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to arise from the frequent, dominant or noteworthy themes present in raw data, without the constraints imposed by organised methodologies.

The researcher used an inductive approach in this study, performing semi-structured interviews to collect data and uncover patterns and themes by listening to recordings and reading transcripts several times to ensure that all possible codes were identified. Finding similarities and differences among participants was used to summarise similar meanings of phrases and concepts.

3.5 Research purpose

This section discusses the purpose of the study, considering there are many different reasons why research may be carried out. According to Saunders et al. (2003:138), researchers have defined three primary objectives for research activities: i) descriptive; ii) explanatory; and iii) exploratory, which are discussed next.

3.5.1 Descriptive research

Descriptive research is used to describe or define a specific phenomenon. This method seeks to investigate and explain a topic while also providing extra information. This is where research attempts to describe what is happening in greater depth, filling the gaps and broadening our understanding. This is also where much information is gathered rather than creating educated assumptions or sophisticated models to forecast the future—the 'what' and 'how', rather than the 'why'.

Descriptive research is the act of exploring something unknown to create a more complete picture of what the researcher is looking at. It is not as speculative as exploratory research (DeCarlo, 2018). According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014:76), descriptions can be "grouped according to the classification of systems that might be used to compare various responses". Additionally, it is possible for descriptive research to be founded on statistical data, such as a study showing that 87% of South Africans are opposed to the e-tolling system.

3.5.2 Explanatory research

Explanatory research explains why certain phenomena work the way they do, answering the 'why' questions. The researcher attempts to determine the effects of the event they are investigating (DeCarlo, 2018).

3.5.3 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is described as a preliminary investigation into a hypothetical or theoretical concept. A researcher has an idea or has noticed something and wants to learn more about it. According to Dash (2019:2), exploratory research seeks to answer research questions rather than provide definitive answers to existing problems. This type of research is typically carried out to investigate a problem that has yet to be clearly defined and endeavours building the framework for future investigations or discovering whether what is observed, can be explained by an existing theory.

This study adopted the exploratory approach, which means the researcher intended to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff while working remotely during COVID-19 lockdown and dealing with qualitative concerns.

3.6 Research choice

The fourth layer of Saunders et al's (2007) research onion is the research choice. This layer determines the data analysis to be employed in the investigation, whether qualitative or quantitative. There are three choices: monomethod, mixed method, and multi-method.

A mixed method approach uses both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. For this, a survey may be used to collect quantitative data and then statistically analyse the results, providing quantitative results in addition to qualitative results (Saunders et al., 2003). For a multi-method approach, according to Saunders et al. (2003), the researcher employs a broader range of methodologies, including more than one quantitative or qualitative approach.

A monomethod employs only one type of data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2003). Using only one method allowed the researcher to analyse participants' ideas and opinions about a phenomenon. The mono method (qualitative) was chosen for this study because the lived experiences of administrative staff were investigated as they manage ERW.

3.7   Research strategy

3.7.1   Introduction

Research strategy, as defined by Saunders et al. (2009:173), is "the approach that assists us in identifying relevant answers to the problems that we are facing". Both the nature of the research question and the topic that is being examined will decide the approach to be used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:58). According to Schell (1992:2), a case study is the research strategy that has the greatest amount of flexibility. It enables the researcher to maintain the holistic qualities of real-life events while analysing empirical occurrences. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, a case study strategy was adopted.

3.7.2   Unit of analysis

A unit of analysis, according to Dolma (2010:169), is "the entity that is being studied". When conducting any type of research, one of the most important steps is determining or keeping in mind the proper unit of analysis for the study (Dolma, 2010). According to Bhattacherjee (2012:65), who agrees with Dolma's (2010) definition, the unit of analysis consists of the population, people or things that have the traits that one wants to investigate. The ERW as a phenomenon served as the unit of analysis for this qualitative research.

3.7.3   Unit of observation

According to Dolma (2010:171), even the most seasoned researchers are "prone to conflating the concept of the unit of observation with that of the unit of analysis. In the vast majority of the investigations, the same entity serves as both the unit of analysis and the unit of observation". This is attributed to the definition of the observational unit, which states that it is the entity about which measurements are obtained (Dolma, 2010), although there are times when this is not the case. The senior members of the administrative staff (17) served as the unit of observation for this study.

Invitations to participate in the study were extended to 25 senior administrative staff members working in four faculties on the upper campus. However, three individuals declined the invitation for personal reasons, and five participants were either sick with COVID-19 or cared for family members who were sick with the virus and did not provide alternative dates for an interview; as a result, only 17 participants were interviewed.

There was only one male among the group of 17 participants. A large proportion of the university administrative staff members are women, which explains the reason why only one male participated in the research. There were no notable themes that emerged from the only male participant in the study.

3.8 Sampling

Robinson (2014:25) asserts that sampling is an essential part of the implementation of qualitative research methods. However, according to Coyne (1997:1), sampling is a "very complicated issue in qualitative research because there are many different types of qualitative sampling described in the literature, as well as a great deal of confusion and overlap between the different types of sampling". In addition to this, there is a great deal of overlap between the different types of sampling. The selection of a study sample is "an essential step in the process of conducting any kind of research because it is almost never feasible, productive or ethical to examine an entire population" (Marshall, 1996:522).

This study adopted a purposive, non-random and convenient sampling technique. The rationale for using a purposive technique is founded on the assumption that given the study's aims and objectives, specific types of people may hold varied and important viewpoints on the ideas and issues under investigation, and must therefore be included in the sample (Robinson, 2014). Furthermore, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014:142), purposive sampling is "when the researcher selects who to interview (who to include in the sample) based on a set of characteristics". This is done to ensure that the sample is representative of the population, which aligns with the findings of Etikan et al. (2016), who state that the researcher purposefully chooses participants that have particular qualities relevant to the study. In addition, according to Palinkas et al. (2015:533), the use of purposive sampling is "employed in order to determine which participants have a greater likelihood of providing information that is relevant to the study". In the current research, senior administrative staff are key members of staff at this academic institution. An understanding their lived experiences can help to streamline processes and develop new policies for similar occurrences.

In a qualitative investigation, "the sample size might be kept relatively low but it would still be purposefully chosen" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:27). According to Marshall (1996:522), who agrees with this statement, "the ideal sample size for a qualitative study is one that effectively addresses the research question with the intention of enhancing the level of comprehension". A total of 25 participants were purposively selected; however, only 17 were interviewed. The data obtained from the 17 interviews effectively addressed the research question and it was possible to reach saturation.

3.9   Data collection

According to Carter and Henderson (2005:215), qualitative research "utilises a wide number of techniques for the data collecting, all of which are supported by a wide range of distinct methodological and theoretical approaches". These may take the form of in-depth interviews, either structured or unstructured, as well as group discussions, reports, diaries or films, amongst others.

Interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to gain deep insight into the subject that is explored (Saunders et al., 2009). Interviews are a "practical, flexible and relatively economical way of gathering research data" (Carter & Henderson, 2005:217). For this research, a semi-structured questionnaire guided by an interview guide (Appendix E) was utilised.

According to Newcomer et al. (2015:367), the "process of preparing for the interviews, actually conducting the interviews, and then analysing the interviews, is not a simple one". The amount of time and work required to complete is quite significant. On the other hand, because of developments in technology, doing so is now much easier. For this study, data were collected through the use of semi-structured questionnaires using interviews to collect data on the Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) platform. The interviews were recorded and then automatically posted on MS Teams Stream. This also included a transcript of the interviews. After that, reading through automated transcripts while listening to recordings was a much more straightforward process.

3.10   Data analysis

The process of searching through qualitative data in search of recurring themes or patterns is known as a "thematic analysis" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3352). According to Braun and Clarke (2006:78), "it is recommended that it be the first qualitative approach that is mastered because it gives essential abilities that will be valuable for doing a variety of different types of analysis". The reason for this recommendation is that it gives essential abilities that will be valuable for mastering the next qualitative approach. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), the purpose of a thematic analysis is to find themes, which are patterns in the data that are significant or intriguing, and then use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue.

The researcher replicated the thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by becoming acquainted with the Microsoft Teams Stream recordings and downloading interview transcripts directly from MS Teams Stream. The transcriptions were then mailed to the participants for validation and accuracy. Following confirmation, the researcher read the transcripts several times to become acquainted with the information. Key codes and key concepts were identified as a result. The researcher then sought out categories or meaningful classifications and refined

them to ensure they are appropriate and relevant within their category. Finally, categories were classified.

3.10.1 Qualitative content analysis

The interviews with participants were audio recorded on Microsoft Teams and automatically posted on Microsoft Streams, generating transcripts. This was followed by editing the closed caption transcript after the recording was automatically uploaded to Microsoft Streams (Appendix F). The transcriptions were then transferred into an Excel spreadsheet, linking every interview question to the answers from each participant. After thoroughly reading the transcriptions several times, codes and concepts were identified, followed by drawing conclusions from coded data and findings.

3.10.2 Data quality assurance

By following the quality standards of validity and credibility established by Saunders et al. (2003:156), it was possible to ensure that the data quality was considered. According to Yin (2011), a valid study accurately collects and interprets its data in such a way that the conclusions accurately represent and reflect the real world under investigation and vice versa.

3.10.3 Validity

The importance of validity and reliability in research cannot be overstated. Meticulous attention to these two characteristics can mean the difference between good and bad research as well as helping to ensure that findings are accepted as credible and reliable by other researchers (Brink, 1993). This is especially important in qualitative research, where the researcher's subjectivity can easily cloud data interpretation, and study conclusions are frequently questioned or viewed sceptically by the research community (Brink, 1993).

The in-depth interview questions successfully measured what was intended and the researcher gave participants insight into the research. The title, aim and objectives of the study were provided to participants a week before the interview to allow them to prepare. The following procedures were followed to ensure the validity of the data collected:
   i)   Before conducting in-depth interviews with participants, questions were both pre-tested and pilot tested.
   ii) The researcher made ensured that the participants were clear about the nature of the research.
   iii) The interview schedule with participants was carefully chosen.
   iv) Data were gathered from credible sources.
   v)   The recordings were transcribed and returned to the interviewees for validation.
   vi) The findings were compared to other evidence.

3.10.4 Reliability and confirmability

Meticulous attention to research reliability can signify the difference between good and bad research, as well as assisting in ensuring that findings are regarded as credible and reliable by other researchers (Brink, 1993). Confirmability refers to how other researchers confirm a study's research findings (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). Reviewing the research techniques and outcomes is the greatest way to establish reliability and confirmability. According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009:2-2), reliability is established by examining the consistency of the study methods, whereas confirmability is found by examining the consistency of the research result, which includes the data, findings, interpretations and recommendations. Recordings of all 17 interviews with the participants are attached to this thesis for confirmation of the data collection.

3.11 Ethics

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), researchers have serious ethical obligations to participants when they encourage them to speak openly and honestly. Cacciattolo (2015:56) agrees with this observation, noting that "unethical research almost always leaves participants and researchers feeling vulnerable and exposed in negative ways". In light of the challenges that arise while conducting research and the significance of upholding ethical standards in research procedures, universities will make significant effort to protect the research participants from harm and retain their dignity. Any research conducted at UCT in any faculty that involves human subjects requires approval from the Ethics in Research Committee (ERC). This Committee will not grant retrospective approval for previously initiated research. To approve research, UCT requires an ethics approval letter from the researcher's home institution. A letter from CPUT was obtained for this research and submitted as part of the supporting document to the UCT ERC. After the application was reviewed and approved by the ERC, the researcher had to apply for permission from the Human Resources department to conduct research with UCT staff members. When students are the unit of analysis, approval must be obtained from the Department of Student Affairs.

Ethics clearance was obtained from the ERC and then from the departmental Human Resources. Several ethical considerations were considered throughout all stages of qualitative research to maintain a balance between the potential risks of research and the likely benefits of the research (Arifin, 2018).

All participants provided written consent to be interviewed and to participate in this study in order to comply with ethical considerations. Appendix B contains the consent form that was used as a guideline for the research/consent process. Participants were reminded during the interviews that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and that they could opt out at any time, including during or after the interviews, with no repercussions. As a result, the participants willingly participated and their identities were protected throughout the process

(Arifin, 2018). Participants were randomly assigned a number to maintain their anonymity and protect their true identities (P1–P17). The number appears in both the transcripts and the final thesis write-up and presentation of the findings. Permission to record the interview was also obtained from the participants, who all agreed to being recorded.

The participants all seemed to freely participate in the discussions, indicating that the interview process allowed them to share their experiences in a safe and non-judgmental environment. Some participants may have found this experience relaxing because it allowed them to express their emotions; this is especially important in an environment where administrative staff in universities felt excluded or overlooked. As stated in Chapter One, understanding the experiences of senior administrative staff as they navigated the ERW challenges is critical to ensuring that university operations run smoothly.

3.12 Time horizons

The fifth layer of Sanders' onion is the time horizon. This simply specifies how many points in time a researcher intends to collect data from. There are two-time horizon options: cross-sectional and longitudinal. Longitudinal time horizon happens over multiple timelines, which could be weeks, months or even years. Cross-sectional study investigates a specific phenomenon at a particular time. This study followed a cross-sectional time horizon as it only investigated a specific phenomenon, namely, to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff as they managed EWR during COVID-19 lockdown.

3.13 Delineation

In this study, a qualitative and exploratory approach was taken and a case study was used to gain an understanding of the experiences of the senior administrative staff as they negotiated the realities of ERW. This study only collected data from four of the six university faculties because of limitations in terms of time, resources and accessibility. Despite this, the 17 senior administrative staff members from the four faculties of the university that were interviewed made it possible to extrapolate the data to include all senior administrative staff members from academic departments throughout the university. The participants for this study were key university senior administrative staff members from each of the four faculties. This was done so that the study's objectives could be met while also obtaining valuable insights from a diverse range of groups.

3.14 Limitations

There were some limitations to this study:

For this study, 25 participants were identified and invited to participate using purposive sampling. However, three participants declined the invitation due to personal reasons and five participants were either sick with COVID-19 or caring for family members who were sick with the virus and did not provide alternative interview dates, resulting in only 17 participants being interviewed. In contrast, data saturation was achieved. Data saturation occurs when there is enough information to replicate the study, when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015:1-2).

The time span over which the data were gathered happened between March and June of 2021, a year after the ERW occurrence. It is possible that some participants were overly familiar with ERW at the time, and their experiences and perspectives changed as a result.

As a result of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 lockdown, face-to-face interviews could not be done. In addition, challenges with Internet access and connectivity led some interviews being disrupted or having gaps between the responses of participants, which was a drawback of this study. To circumvent this limitation, the researcher did some preliminary research before actually conducting any interviews in a bid to determine the best appropriate platform and time for each participant.

This study was restricted to senior administrative staff members in four different faculties because there are a considerable number of academic administrative staff members working in diverse roles at the chosen tertiary institution. This research did not consider academic staff members, other support personnel working in service sectors, or students in any way.

The researcher is currently employed by the selected university to be the subject of this case study. Participants may not have been as forthcoming with their experiences because they may have been concerned about their anonymity as they knew the researcher, despite the fact that the researcher emphasised the confidentiality of the process.

3.15 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter described the methodology and design of the research study, and the research problem was restated. It also provided a philosophical positioning of qualitative research, as well as a description of the research design. The general research process was explained using Saunders et al. (2007:130) research onion symbol. The chapter describes the research philosophy, research approach, strategy, choices, time horizon and data collection methods, as well as the processes chosen and the reasons for these choices.

The ontological stance was subjectivist and an interpretivist epistemological perspective was adopted using qualitative data and an inductive approach. A case study was selected as research strategy to answer the research questions, as it is the most flexible of all research designs. The senior administrative staff served as the unit of observation, and ERW as the unit of analysis. Data were gathered through a review of the literature, a review of documents, and semi-structured and in-depth interviews. The data were analysed using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis process. The study's quality was realised by addressing validity, reliability, confirmability and ethical issues throughout the study.

Chapter Four reports on the fieldwork, data collection, data analysis, and the interpretation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Figure 4.1: Layout of Chapter Four

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and results of the qualitative data collected and used in the study. The research focused on four faculties located at the upper campus of the University of Cape Town. The chapter provides details of the in-depth interviews with 17 participants that were conducted between April and July 2021. For the convenience of the reader, the problem statement, research questions and aim of the study are once again stated.

Problem statement: The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in campus closures worldwide to enforce social distancing. Universities in South Africa shifted their mode of work to remote work during this crisis. While not entirely a new way of working, the concept of remote work is relatively new to residential university administrators. Almost overnight, these non-remote workers were taken out of their normal environment and forced to adapt and adjust to increased roles and responsibilities.

RQ1:   What are the lived experiences of ERW for senior administrative staff?
RQ2:   How do senior administrative staff manage ERW?

Aim of the study: To explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff as they negotiate realities of ERW.

Objectives: i) To explore challenges associated with ERW for senior administrative staff

ii) To determine the factors affecting the work experiences of senior administrative staff

iii) To explore the opportunities of ERW

iv) To determine factors considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff

4.2   The case

The research was based on a case study and examined the experiences of senior administrative staff in academic departments at a South African university in relation to emergency remote work as a result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The university that was chosen is located in the Western Cape, South Africa. The university has six faculties located on several campuses. This study focused on four faculties based on the upper campus, namely, Commerce, Humanities, Science, and Engineering and the Built Environment.

4.3   The participants

Twenty-five (25) employees from the four faculties were invited to participate in the research. The offer was accepted by 17 participants (Table 4.1). Three (3) participants declined the invitation for personal reasons, while five (5) participants were either sick with COVID-19 or cared for families afflicted by COVID-19 at the time of the invitation and could not provide alternative dates because they were unsure how long their situation would last.

Table 4.1: Population, number of actual interviews per faculty

Faculty	Population	No. of actual interviews
Engineering & the Built Environment	6	4
Commerce	6	5
Humanities	8	5
Science	5	3

Table 4.1 show the number of participants in each faculty in relation to the number of actual interviews conducted. Participants provided written consent for the interviews to be conducted and were recorded for the purpose of this study (Appendix B).

Table 4.2: Number of participants per rank

Rank	Participant count
Administrative Officer	3
Departmental Manager	8
Ops and Finance Manager	2
Senior Admin Officer	4
Grand Total	**17**

Four administrative ranks were represented by the 17 participants who took part in the study.

4.4　Analysis

The analysis began by editing the closed caption transcript after the recording was automatically uploaded to Microsoft Streams (Figure 4.2; Appendix F). The recordings were then transcribed and returned to the interviewees for validation. The transcriptions were transferred onto an Excel spreadsheet, linking every interview question to the participants' answers.

Table 4.3: An example of a transcribed interview (blue fonts) presents the interviewer's questions, and the red fonts present the key words and concepts

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION P1
RQ1: What are the lived experiences of ERW for senior administrative staff?
Interviewer: Which part do you find most difficult when working remotely? What are the challenges associated with this?
P1: I think that the difficulties is isolation; it's not having your colleagues around you, you know. To ask a question, you know, you're alone most of the day. Like I work mostly alone. I mean even in the house, my husband is here, but my daughter's gone to school. So I'm on my own, my husband wouldn't know, because he doesn't work with me. So the isolation, and I would say, like for me initially, the challenge was also printing. We had left very much in a hurry, you know. Nobody had really thought things through; So I had to purchase cartridges on my own, which is expensive. Access to stationery, because we had left the office quick and so we didn't think in terms of these things. I had to find a space to work, although I do have a little study, but you know, I had to work around... so all of a sudden it was home life and it was work all combined and jumbled together in one. And then also initially we had connection issues like with the VPN, and things like that. So just hanging... so it was frustrating at times with then having to work through initially, how I'm going to work through these challenges.
Interviewer: What do you miss the most when working remotely instead of the traditional office?
P1: I missed most was being able to chat to people face-to-face, you know, have a coffee break and lunch time. And just coming in the morning and chatting to the ladies about how the weekend went and so on. So I miss that face-to-face, and I also miss taking my walks lunchtimes. I used to enjoy walking on upper campus, it was lovely.
Interviewer: What are the opportunities of ERW?
P1: I found I had more time to advance myself with training and there was the opportunity if I wanted to study, I would have time for that. And I also find an opportunity of network with other people across the faculties. I found that normally when you go, you know, you wouldn't normally maybe speak as long as you do now with people... You sort of start chatting about your challenges and how do you do things, you know. So the network I found was a good opportunity as well. And then the time I have to actually do training sessions.
RQ2: How do senior administrative staff manage ERW?
Interviewer: Do your teams require more help when working remotely than when they are in the office, and are their challenges similar or do you believe they have different issues?
P1: I find that initially people need more support, you know, because emotionally they are going through... they lost family members because of COVID and that sort of things. So you've got to be supportive, I've got to check in how they're doing, you know. Because there's all those things to think about. And there's other people that have young children, you know. So I maybe work differently to somebody else because they've got to see to younger children, that sort of things. So I find that, you know, it's easier to communicate at work. But this way I find people need more of my time, more of my support, that sort of thing.
Interviewer: What are your routines throughout the day and how have they changed from when you worked in the office?
Trying to separate my home life and work. It is very difficult, and I found that I'm work harder. I found that, you know, when people start sending emails at night, you tend to respond to them. So it was difficult to separate the two. To put in boundaries was very difficult. And I had to, you know, for the sake of looking after yourself, and your health and so on, I've had to start, you know, putting these boundaries in. But then I find others as well, they don't, they work until very late. There's many a night that I find myself work till 12 o'clock at night. Because you know, if I was at work, I certainly wouldn't have been work these late hours. But you find everybody's doing it and sometimes you need to respond. It's the HoD, so you respond. It's some deadline, some important person.

* IQ = Interview Question; P = Participant

Table 4.4: Example of the codes and concepts (highlighted in red)

IQ #	Research Question	P1	Codes
1.1.1	Which part do you find most difficult when working remotely? What are the challenges associated with this?	I think that the difficulties is isolation; it's not having your colleagues around you, you know. To ask a question, you know, you're alone most of the day. Like I work mostly alone. I mean even in the house, my husband is here, but my daughter's gone to school. So I'm on my own, my husband wouldn't know, because he doesn't work with me. So the isolation, and I would say, like for me initially, the challenge was also printing. We had left very much in a hurry, you know. Nobody had really thought things through;. So I had to purchase cartridges on my own, which is expensive. Access to stationery, because we had left the office quick and so we didn't think in terms of these things. I had to find a space to work, although I do have a little study, but you know, I had to work around... so all of a sudden it was home life and it was work all combined and jumbled together in one. And then also initially we had connection issues like with the VPN, and things like that. So just hanging... so it was frustrating at times with then having to work through initially, how I'm going to work through these challenges.	Anxiety Depression Work-home-balance Isolation Connectivity issues with VPN
1.1.2	What do you miss the most when working remotely instead of the traditional office?	P1: I missed most was being able to chat to people face-to-face, you know, have a coffee break and lunch time. And just coming in the morning and chatting to the ladies about how the weekend went and so on. So I miss that face-to-face, and I also miss taking my walks lunchtimes. I used to enjoy walking on upper campus, it was lovely.	Engagement with staff/social activities Student buzz Physical exercise getting to campus
RSQ 1.2	What are the opportunities of ERW?	P1: I found I had more time to advance myself with training and there was the opportunity if I wanted to study, I would have time for that. And I also find an opportunity of network with other people across the faculties. I found that normally when you go, you know, you wouldn't normally maybe speak as long as you do now with people... You sort of start chatting about your challenges and how do you do things, you know. So the network I found was a good opportunity as well. And then the time I have to actually do training sessions.	Less interruption Flexibility Time with family Taking care of sick parents Less work traffic on PeopleSoft after hours Learning opportunities Time to do small business Savings on transport costs
2.2.2	Do your teams require more help when working remotely than when they are in the office, and are their challenges similar or do you believe they have different issues?	P1: I find that initially people need more support, you know, because emotionally they are going through... they lost family members because of Covid and that sort of things. So you've got to be supportive, I've got to check in how they're doing, you know. Because there's all those things to think about. And there's other people that have young children, you know. So I maybe work differently to somebody else because they've got to see to younger children, that sort of things. So I find that, you know, it's easier to communicate at work. But this way I find people need more of my time, more of my support, that sort of thing.	Technological challenges Anxiety Stress Boundaries nightmare! Loss of lives due to COVID-19

IQ #	Research Question	P1	Codes
	What are your routines throughout the day and how have they changed from when you worked in the office?	Trying to separate my home life and work. It is very difficult, and I found that I'm work harder. I found that, you know, when people start sending emails at night, you tend to respond to them. So it was difficult to separate the two. To put in boundaries was very difficult. And I had to, you know, for the sake of looking after yourself, and your health and so on, I've had to start, you know, putting these boundaries in. But then I find others as well, they don't, they work until very late. There's many a night that I find myself work till 12 o'clock at night. Because you know, if I was at work, I certainly wouldn't have been work these late hours. But you find everybody's doing it and sometimes you need to respond. It's the HoD, so you respond. It's some deadline, some important person.	Lack of sleep Anxiety Depression Binging on food Illness Stress Failing to switch off Setting boundaries

*IQ = Interview Question; P = Participant

The process of identifying codes and concepts was completed after listening to the recordings and reading through transcripts several times to ensure that all possible codes were identified. Similar meanings of phrases and concepts were summarised by identifying similarities and differences from various participants. Table 4.5 shows how codes and concepts were identified and linked.

Table 4.5: How codes and concepts were identified (highlighted in green)

(P) 4	(P) 6	(P) 13	Summary
Not able to connect directly with teams; staying on my own with her dogs; husband passed away in 2018; No family close by, could go for months without seeing another real human face to fact; the amount of emails has also grown and responding to those take time, this is so because you are not able to pop into anyone's office; It's just unbelievable the amount of emails that I get through in a day. It's an absolute nightmare; There are just so many emails. One day, one of my worst days, I actually sat and I counted them, and there were 270 email. Load shedding in different times; went through a bad patch and I had to go on anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medicine. I know a couple of my staff are on anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medicine. I'm coming off it now, because I've got myself over that hump. It was a case of losing my husband, losing my mother, having the lockdown, you know.	I think that the difficulties is isolation; it's not having your colleagues around you, you know. To ask a question, you know, you're alone most of the day. Like I work mostly alone. I mean even in the house, my husband is here, but my daughter's gone to school. So I'm on my own, my husband wouldn't know, because he doesn't work with me. So the isolation, and I would say, like for me initially, the challenge was also printing. We had left very much in a hurry, you know. Nobody had really thought things through; So I had to purchase cartridges on my own, which is expensive. Access to stationery, because we had left the office quick and so we didn't think in terms of these things. So there was things like I had to purchase stationery, I had to find a space to work, although I do have a little study, but you know, I had to work around... so all of a sudden it was home life and it was work all combined and jumbled together in one. And then, that was the sort-of... And then also initially we had connection issues like with the VPN, and things like that. So just hanging... so it was frustrating at times with then having to work through initially, how I'm going to work through these challenges.	With staff that are working pretty well I feel somedays we don't even have to check in. But the staff that has dropped performance over this period of time, it was very difficult to manage them. It was very difficult to keep them motivated. And also with the limited resources, we couldn't really spend a lot of money on things that the staff were used to. Ja, so I think that was the biggest difficulty for me. I think as supervisor your biggest role is to maintain the team's morale, maintain the team's happiness, and to make sure that there's a balance in all of it. And without seeing everybody in the office or being in the same space, it's very, very difficult to manage that. So there would be times possibly weeks, where you would go by and not even know when somebody else is going through a difficult time, because they're just not opening up. You are fully, fully reliant on people opening up. And that's not really what most people are used to doing.	Senior administrators felt isolated, limited engagement with teams and colleagues Managers struggled with management of teams due to everyone working remotely Stress experienced by senior administrators as they were overwhelmed with changes of their work environment

*P = Participant

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After carefully listening to recordings and reading the transcriptions several times, codes and concept were identified (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Summary of the responses of the participants linked to the IQs

Interview questions	Codes (phrases)	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16	P17
	Lack of direction from management							√		√		√						√
	Lack of workspace / Lack of work resources		√					√					√					
	Disruptions at home				√		√		√			√				√		
IQ.1.1.1 Which part do you find most difficult when working remotely? What are the challenges associated with this?	Difficult in management staff	√		√		√				√			√					
	Isolation				√		√		√	√						√		√
	Fear, Anxiety, Stress, depression				√						√							√
	Connectivity issues and load shedding				√		√			√					√	√		√
	Work-home balance											√				√		
IQ.1.1.2 What do you miss the most when working remotely instead of the traditional office?	Colleagues	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√
	Students				√		√	√	√					√	√			√
	Work social				√		√							√				
	Physical exercise getting to campus	√				√										√		
	Flexibility		√	√	√	√						√			√			
	Paperless systems						√		√	√	√			√	√	√		
	Less interruption =more work done	√		√	√	√		√							√	√		
IQ1.2 What opportunities have you experienced with ERW?	Studying				√	√				√								
	Financial savings		√							√		√	√					
	Less time sitting in traffic		√										√			√		
	Quality time with family	√			√						√		√	√				
	Caring for older parents or sick relatives												√					
	New hobbies/business opportunities						√			√								
	Policy to guide administrators	√	√		√						√							
	Hybrid work model		√		√													
IQ1.2.1 How have you adapted your operations in response to ERW?	Safe platforms to offload				√	√			√	√								
	Avoid isolation				√	√	√			√								
	Empathy				√			√	√	√	√							
IQ1.2.2 How will this situation change your way of working after COVID 19	Flexibility	√	√	√	√		√		√	√			√					
	Hybrid work model		√	√														
	After hours work to continue																	
	Paperless systems						√		√	√	√			√	√	√		
IQ 1.2.3 What were your expectations of ERW and how did they turn out to be? What has been your surprises?	Work Pressure	√				√	√					√						
	Fear, Anxiety, Stress, depression			√						√								√
	Lack of workspace / Lack of work resources		√			√						√						
	Increased throughput						√											
	Prolonged lockdown	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√	
	Working long hours																	
	Clear communication	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Developing empathy	√																
SQ1.3 What are the factors considered necessary for improved ERW for this category of workers?	Developing clear boundaries	√		√		√				√		√					√
	Reliable home office equipment							√		√					√			
	Stable/reliable internet			√			√								√			
	Staff satisfaction		√							√				√				
IQ1.3.1 How would you judge your own productivity when working remotely vs working at the office? Does it take the same time to fulfil a task remotely as at the office?	Less productive: difficulty in working without usual resources; additional steps added								√	√	√							
	More productive: time saved from not travelling to and from office												√					
	Longer to process due to additional steps							√	√	√								
	Longer as a result of technology challenges			√						√								
IQ1.3.2 Does it take the same time to fulfil a task remotely as at the office	Longer as a result of Wi-fi issues									√						√		
	Longer as a result of lack of resources									√								
	Longer as a result of procrastination				√										√			
	Less time as a result of multi-tasking								√				√					√
	Less time due to less interruption from students and							√	√				√					√
	Work allocation	√	√		√						√	√		√				
	Connectivity/communication issues			√					√									√
SQ2.1 How does ERW affected the work performance of the senior administrative staff?	Technology challenges															√		
	Lack of direction from management								√									
	Managing small children			√														
	Work overload				√						√	√						
	Managing teams		√		√				√			√						
IQ2.1.1 Do you know if the university or faculty has an ERW policy? Do you think such a policy is necessary?	Not aware	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
	Policy necessary	√	√	√									√					
IQ2.1.2 Where do you work from at home and what have you done to improve ergonomics?	No dedicated space	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√			√	√		√
	Shared space with family members						√	√										
	Bedroom		√										√					
IQ2.1.3 What resources has your dept provided yto improve ergonomics?	All resources required		√	√			√											
	Limited resources																	√
	Failing to find work-life balance	√		√		√		√	√			√			√	√
IQ2.1.4 What are your routines throughout the day and how have they changed from when you worked in the office?	Lack of sleep								√								
	Procrastination								√								
	Setting boundaries					√			√				√				√
	Failing to switch off from work mode				√		√	√						√	√	√	√
	No changes in routine						√										
IQ2.2.1 What communication channels are used to stay in touch with your stakeholders? What works well with the channels and what would you like to change?	Whatsapp	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Microsoft Teams	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Email	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
IQ2.2.2 Do your teams require more help when working remotely than when they are in the office, are their challenges similar or do you believe they have different issues working remotedly?	Technology challenges	√								√							
	Team members and ERW			√													
	Emotional health and lack of motivation				√	√		√	√				√		√	
1Q 2.2.3 What are your experiences with student engagements in ERW?	Increase in email and Vula communication	√					√	√		√			√			
	Increase in vulnerable students		√					√				√				
	No changes in engagement				√	√				√			√			

*IQ = interview question; P = participant

Table 4.6 presents a summary of the reactions of the participants associated with the IQs. The following section (Section 1.4) expands on this description in greater detail. It is given in accordance with the research questions based on the information gleaned from the interview

transcriptions (RQ). The participants are listed as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16 and P17.

4.5   Findings

This section elaborates on the findings generated from the interviews performed during the study. The information from the interview transcriptions is provided according to the research questions (RQs), research-sub questions (RSQs) and the specific interview question (IQ), linked to the RSQ.

4.5.1   Research question 1

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of ERW for senior administrative staff?

4.5.1.1   Research sub-question 1.1

RSQ 1.1:   What challenges are associated with remote work for senior administrative staff during the COVID-19 lockdown?

IQ 1.1.1: Which part do you find most difficult when working remotely? What are the challenges associated with this?

The purpose of asking this question was to identify whether or not the participants encountered any difficulties with ERW.

P7, P9, P11 and P17 indicated the lack of management direction as a problem. P7 said:

> What was problematic was they make decisions and then implement it and then a week later, it changes. So we are left in limbo. Or they make a statement that just hangs there in the air. As much as I have sympathy for the university, I also wish that there had been more guidance, more concrete things that said, 'This is what you do, this, that and the other' (Appendix L).

P17 also indicated that she had no idea what was expected or what resources were available. While leading the team on the unknown, she found herself fumbling and picking up pieces along the way and developing procedures and processes to deliver tasks. P17 said: "It was irritating and disrupted my routine. It took me a time to adjust to the new surroundings and our plan. I was astonished that most of the decision-making was left to the lower levels, departments" (Appendix V).

Three participants (P2, P6, P13) mentioned lack of workspace as a challenge. P2 said that s/he does not have a dedicated space to work from at home. This was also a challenge for some of the other team members. P6 indicated lack of resources, specifically office stationery and connectivity issues.

P6 elaborated that,

> We had left very much in a hurry, you know. Nobody had really thought things through; So, I had to purchase cartridges on my own, which is expensive. Access to stationery, because we had left the office quick and so we didn't think in terms of these things. So, there was things like I had to purchase stationery, I had to find a space to work, although I do have a little study, but you know, I had to work around (Appendix K).

A further challenge experienced was the disruptions at home, identified as a challenge by P5, P7, P9, P12 and P16. P12 said the following:

> There isn't a clear separation. So, I'll drop the kids at school, and I come back home. But I sit here, I have lunch in front of my desk, right, everything happens in the same space. And then I will go fetch the kids later, but I come back to sitting at my desk. And then suddenly somebody will say, "Mom, what are we having for supper?" And you realise, "Oh my God, it's six o'clock!" (Appendix Q).

P7 shared similar sentiments and said that "it was hard, because you had the kids at home and you had to find a way to work from home, you know. You had to find that balance with kids at home and work and different demands in how things were getting done" (Appendix L).

The management of teams was also seen as a difficulty by P1, P3, P4, P5, P8, P10, and P13. P1 said: "I'm the line manager in my office and I find it a challenge to try and support my team when I can't be there to see what they're having trouble with" (Appendix F). P4 said she is staying alone with her dogs and struggles to connect with her team when working remotely. P10 stated that "the engagement with my team has been incredibly poor. I mean we did chat a bit on email, but very little. And there wasn't really a chance to pause and touch base and things like that" (Appendix N). P10 further said that "it was little bit difficult, as I struggled with delegation. Generally, I struggle with it. So, in terms of ERW, it was probably even harder" (Appendix N). According to P13, the most difficult aspect of being a manager is maintaining the team's morale and happiness without seeing everyone in the office or in the same area. She went on to say that there might be periods, possibly weeks, when she would not know what was wrong with someone else because they would not open up. P16 also contributed by saying that to "getting people to a work time, a set time period of when we needed to be available is a challenge" (Appendix R).

P4, P6, P8, P9, P12, P14, P15 and P17 mentioned isolation as a challenge. P4 stated that staying alone with the dogs after the spouse passed away in 2018, with no other family members living close by, left him/her isolated. P4 also indicated that this isolation resulted in her not seeing a human face for months. P6 shared the difficulties of isolation: "It's not having your colleagues around you, you know. To ask a question, you know, you're alone most of the day. Like I work mostly alone" (Appendix K). P17 expressed that, "for me it was mostly having

to now change to absolutely working at home, in silos, by myself, behind a computer. I also felt a little bit strange in working from home" (Appendix V). At the same time, emotions such as fear, anxiety, stress and depression due to workload were also experienced. P4 and P11 mentioned that the isolation resulted in anxiety, stress and depression. P11 said,

> It was very difficult to deal with people who were under so much pressure and fear, anxiety, depression, coming to you for so much help. We were now constantly having so many meetings to meet on a frequent basis, and by the end of the year we were all extremely tired and overwhelmed' (Appendix P).

Finding 1: A lack of direction from management

Finding 2: Difficulty in managing teams

Finding 3: Isolation due to ERW

Finding 4: Pandemic-induced anxiety and worry as a result of a lack of information about the virus

Finding 5: Connectivity challenges created by national load shedding

Finding 6: Disruptions at home

Finding 7: Fear, anxiety, stress and depression resulted in working from home

IQ 1.1.2: What do you miss the most when working remotely instead of the traditional office?

The purpose of this question was to collect information on specific experiences that participants missed when working remotely. Three main issues were mentioned by the participants: i) work colleagues; ii) missing students; and iii) exercise. With the exception of P2 and P15, all participants reported that they missed their work colleagues. P5 stated that,

> I love human interaction so I miss the interaction with my colleagues. And you do, besides just having a work relationship, you have sort of a type of personal relationship. And when you know staff who are in your team who are experiencing challenges and who you've assisted through those challenges, and me as line manager being there, and they could always come and talk to me. Yes, so I miss that and I worried about my staff where that was concerned (Appendix J).

P8 indicated that she missed people. Having been at the university for twenty (20) years, her colleagues are now like family and she missed the face-to-face connection with them. P14 expressed the same emotions as P8 and stated that she missed having face-to-face interaction with her colleagues and students as well. She longed for the days when she could stroll into someone's office and get immediate help. She also mentioned the monthly celebrations in her department, and that she missed being in that type of social setting. Moreover, she expressed

difficulty adjusting to working without resources such as a printer and scanner and expressed a desire to have such facilities back.

Eight participants indicated that they missed students and the buzz they bring on campus. These were P4, P6, P7, P8, P13, P14, P16 and P17. P4 said she missed colleagues, switching off from work, especially on weekends and the buzz created by students. P7 shared the same sentiments and said that "the students drive me insane, but I love work[ing] with them. I miss students, I miss the fighting with them, I miss the asking them, 'What is wrong with you?'" (Appendix L). P8 indicated that she has been at the university for twenty years and said: "So you can understand that it's my colleagues, it's the students. They're not just a colleague, they're my family, and the students are my family. And I've built very close relationships with people in my space, you know, and so it was that interaction" (Appendix M).

The lack of physical exercise on campus seems to be an important part of the routine on campus. Several participants (P2, P4, P6, P10, P13, P17) said they missed going to and from campus, since it is like physical exercise for them. P2 also indicated physical exercise getting to campus, climbing steps and walking to the car. P6 said s/he enjoyed the campus life and missed walking around campus.

Finding 8: Missing work colleagues and work social events

Finding 9: Missing the students and the buzz they bring on campus

Finding 10: Missing the physical exercise of getting to and from campus

4.5.1.2   Research sub-question 1.2

RSQ 1.2: What are the opportunities of ERW?

IQ 1.2.1a: What are the opportunities of working remotely that you have encountered?

The purpose of asking this question was to identify whether or not the participants encountered any opportunities with ERW.

Opportunities identified by the participants are: i) flexibility; ii) paperless system; iii) less interruption and getting more work done; iv) study time; v) financial saving from travelling and car maintenance and sitting in traffic; vi) quality time with family/taking care of older parents or sick relatives; and vii) new hobbies/business opportunities.

According to P2, one advantage of working from home was the ability to fulfil other commitments, such as visiting and staying with unwell parents who live in nearby towns.

Another contributing factor mentioned is the infections that accompanied COVID-19. P5 shared the same emotions and highlighted that flexibility was an advantage:

> This has certainly opened the door for more flexibility for admin staff as there are times where it's quiet in the office. I found that with marks processing the system is quieter at night. And it's much easier and quicker to do some work at night than during the day, because then you don't have all the traffic that you have during the day of working hours (Appendix J).

P15 also highlighted the flexibility that accompanies ERW:

> I like the flexibility when I am at home. If I need to do something, I just see that I have work in my hours. And I can set up an appointment if I need to go somewhere and then just come back and continue work. I love that flexibility. Also, one doesn't have to worry about the traffic. There's a saving on petrol costs, parking fees (Appendix T).

Another advantage of ERW mentioned is that it forced organisations to adopt a more paperless system. P9 said the following:

> Where before it used to take a bit longer to process certain things, and even the same with getting signatures from certain people where sometimes with a hard copy document it would be on one person's desk like for 5 days. But with the electronic things, it assisted in certain aspects (Appendix N).

P14 also highlighted the benefits of paperless processes fast tracked by ERW, which was a huge relief for both administrative staff and students. Online HR document filing improved document tracking for the entire university. The Postgraduate (PG) Funding office also migrated online, making administrative work considerably easier. Adding to the benefits of a paperless system, P16 stated that her department went paperless at the drop of a hat, which she credits to the paperless system. This entailed learning new ways of communication and mastering previously learned abilities, such as using Microsoft Teams. In the same way as P14 did, she experienced the joy of not having to deal with students who were waiting in long lines outside her office to complete manual paper registration. P1 stated that with ERW, there is less interruption and more work is done:

> I find that I get a lot more done, because you don't get interrupted by people coming to your desk or asking questions. Our office also has a window that the students can come to, so we get a lot of students as well as a lot of tutors and staff. So, I find that being able to concentrate without being interrupted does make a big difference. I get a lot more done (Appendix F).

P3 also mentioned increased productivity in the absence of office social aspects such as milling around in the staff area and 'smoke breaks'. This provided a quieter time and fewer distractions. P6 said:

A lot of things add to it, because for example I don't have to travel in the morning. That takes up a lot of time. That used to take up to even two hours of my day. So, I find that I'm more productive, I work through my tasks quicker (Appendix F).

P17 agreed that there were fewer interruptions at home and mentioned that "personally, the positive has been the fact that I've seen an improvement in terms of my work" (Appendix V). Training and studying are perceived as a major advantage of ERW. P6 stated: "I had more time to advance myself with training and there was the opportunity if I wanted to study" (Appendix K). P11 agreed by indicating the following: "Opportunities to learn, to learn how to navigate through, even just if it is MS Teams" (Appendix P).

Financial saving from travelling and car maintenance are all advantages of ERW. P5 argued: "I live in Simon's Town. So, you know, for me having to go onto campus every day, it's a long way, you know. I normally leave here by six o'clock in the morning" (Appendix J). P11 mentioned financial savings as an advantage: "I'm not travelling from the northern suburbs all the way to southern suburbs every day. So fewer costs, car maintenance costs. I'm not spending that much" (Appendix P). P17 also highlighted financial savings: "The traveling time between home and office, I much appreciate not sitting in traffic between going to work and home" (Appendix V). Quality time with family/taking care of older parents or sick relatives was for many participants a huge advantage. P16 said the following:

Because now I don't have to travel, I don't have to sit in traffic and, you know, sort all those things out. I've got all that time to put in and complete my tasks, you know; but I can honestly say I'm happy that this has happened. And especially last year when xxx had his brain haemorrhage, you know. He needed to stay home for like a couple of months. And I wouldn't have been able to do that had this pandemic not happened, I can honestly tell you, I would have had to ask for unpaid leave, because my child needed me, because he needed to recover. But it was nice (Appendix U).

P8 also mentioned that there was time to do other things such as new hobbies/business opportunities. "So, I do gardening, I did a hanging garden, I planted all sorts of things, I started sewing, I got a sewing machine, I started sewing I made pillows, pillowcases, scrunchies. Scrunchies is these big pom-poms. And I made headbands and I started to sell it" (Appendix M).

Finding 11: Administrative staff were able to work remotely

Finding 12: New learning opportunities for administrative staff

Finding 13: Paperless systems created for the university

Finding 14: Cost savings and more free time available as a result of ERW

IQ 1.2.1b: How have you adapted your operations in response to ERW?

The purpose of this question was to gather information on the manner in which the participants modified their operations in the advent of ERW.

All participants emphasised the paperless system that has been implemented by the institution, in departments, and even within smaller groups. Papers from several offices may now be tracked more effectively with these. Participants also stated that online registration has improved administrative operations as well as making processes more user-friendly for students and staff.

P2 and P9 mentioned that they instituted weekly meetings with their teams to ensure everyone was on the same page with work challenges. Teams were also encouraged to communicate with each other one-on-one to address mental health difficulties. P9 further highlighted the difficulties she faced as a result of her low computer abilities while working from home, which she found frustrating. To manage these limits, she enrolled in short courses given by the *SuccessFactors Learning platform* to further her professional development. P8 observed a significant amount of cheating on the side of students due to online submission. Together with her academic teams, they developed novel methods of checking cheating, such as establishing specified periods for project submissions. Later on, her department returned to face-to-face examinations as the lockdown limitations were relaxed. P11 indicated that,

> Dealing with staff's emotions was a challenge. I felt that not enough was done on the university's side to actually equip line managers to deal with the psychology that goes along with this remote work. I had to adapt my operations in order to ensure that my team was given enough time to finish off task[s] at the same time taking care of their emotional health (Appendix P).

In the case of P12, her faculty instituted specific meetings on MS Teams for managers to gather and share best practices in managing their operations. This platform enabled her to improve department operations by incorporating ideas from other managers.

Finding 15: The faculties adapted to the demands of the ERW environment

Finding 16: Business processes changed to the needs of the ERW environment

Finding 17: Employees acclimated to success factors for on-going training

Finding 18: The main adaption is towards a paperless environment

IQ 1.2.2: How will this situation change your way of work after COVID-19?

This question was asked to investigate the modifications participants will make to their operations when they return to campus following ERW.

In their responses, P1, P2, P3, P5, P8, P10 and P14 expressed their wish that the university will allow staff members to have more flexibility so that they do not have to be in their offices from 08:00 to 17:00, as they believe there are instances in which one can be more productive working from home. P1 and P2 both recommended a three-day work week for the office, as well as a rotational arrangement. P2 emphasised the advantages of traveling at non-peak hours when traffic is less congested. P5 said the following:

> Like I said before, that because of the flexibility of working remotely and you are able to attend to personal things during the day, which you can't do after hours, so you have that flexibility to do that. I think it's been good for family. I don't have to have my child sitting at school at school for an hour, and me sitting in the office and watching the clock go to four, because I'm waiting on somebody else to send me something (Appendix J).

P5 furthermore said there could be reasons why administrators are not productive on particular days, and that a three-day work week would be more ideal. According to P6, she is now afraid of returning to the office since she believes doing so will cause her anxiety. P6 mentioned that she is now accustomed to writing emails to staff and students and participating in MS Teams meetings and cannot imagine working in a face-to-face environment again. Both P6 and P17 stated that remote work has been successful for them as they do not work with students who might need face-to-face meetings with them, and therefore do not see why the full-time remote work should be changed. P12 stated that because her department has provided her with home office equipment, she would be able to continue working after hours even when staff are required to work from their offices. P14 said the following:

> In terms of how this situation will change the way of work after COVID-19 lockdown, I think it will just allow for more flexibility, you know, with regards to office hours, or possibly even allow staff to work from home on certain days, possibly on a rotational basis. And I think also work smartly in terms of a more online paperless environment, definitely (Appendix S).

P16 agreed with the comments expressed by others and stated that,

> Registration is now no longer having new students standing outside your offices doing manual paper registration. That was a big thing for us, you know, we went now online. But I'm hoping now when we go back we will be able to still work remotely, because we work better. I can't sit at my desk like this and have a meeting, because everybody's knocking at the door (Appendix U).

Finding 19: The work environment will become more flexible

Finding 20: Employees prefer the flexibility that ERW offers

Finding 21: Online student registration will increase efficiencies and minimise unnecessary paperwork

Finding 22: Traveling during off-peak hours will save time and money

IQ 1.2.3: *What were your expectations of ERW and how did they turn out to be? What have been your surprises?*

The goal of asking this question was to discover the participants' expectations about ERW as well as any surprises that occurred as a result of these expectations.

P1, P7 and P8 highlighted that they expected work pressure to increase as a result of ERW. P1 said:

> The one surprise for me is how much more I do work. I start work at 6.30 in the morning. And although I'm at home, so I can clean the kitchen, or I can start supper, but I will keep work until 6 o'clock, 8 o'clock at night. I will still check email. But I wouldn't do that when I was in the office, you know. I would come home and the office was done. So, I find that I'm putting in a lot more hours simply because I'm at home (Appendix F).

The prolonged shutdown has been a surprise to many of the participants. P5 said that, "I think we were thrown in on the deep end and we thought it was going to last for three weeks and it's now a year later and we still at home" (Appendix J). P7 agreed to this statement and highlighted that they were left in limbo as some of the statements from the leadership were left in the air and changed quite quickly as a result of the epidemic. P9 reported that many students wrote emails after hours and late at night, which could have been influenced by a scarcity of data during the day and the consequent use of free data during the evening. This contributed to her working long hours to accommodate students.

The unexpected occurrence and level of depression and anxiety has been a surprise for some of the participants. P8 did not anticipated how long ERW was going to last and said: "I fell into a depression and had a few episodes of anxiety, which is not me, or well I haven't had prior experiences. Maybe a slight anxiety, which I didn't even know it was, but through lockdown all through last year was quite tough" (Appendix M). Asking if P8 ever used the university wellness services, s/he said: "No, I didn't, I didn't feel that was my space. I was just not comfortable to do that. So, I worked around how to manage it" (Appendix M). P11 did not expect the amount of loss of human lives: "I did not expect that was going to happen rapidly" (Appendix P). P3 was surprised that "most team members tend to work longer hours resulting in increased throughput: "Throughput is better in terms of delivery" (Appendix G).

Finding 23: ERW was expected to last only a few weeks

Finding 24: Increased work pressure due to ERW

Finding 25: Anxiety and stress increased as a result of the pandemic

Finding 26: Inadequate workspace for team members at their homes

Finding 27: Due to a lack of data, students sent the majority of their emails at night

4.5.1.3 Research sub-question 1.3

RSQ 1.3: What are the factors considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff?

IQ 1.3.1: What do you believe is required for improved ERW for senior administrative staff?

To better understand and evaluate the factors that are necessary for improved remote work for senior administrative staff, IQ 1.3.1 was posed.

Communication was mentioned by all participants as a significant factor in improving ERW. They all agreed that a lack of communication from management or within teams stifled productivity and affected the morale within teams. P15 said this about communication: "I think communication is key, we can improve on our communication. We work on trust, so my team will notify me, you know. And I have to take their word for it, because I trust them, you know. So, I think that is vital" (Appendix T). According to P2, developing empathy is an important factor when work remotely and dealing with others. She expressed the following:

> We've seen on a daily basis people being desperately sick with COVID-19. We've had close colleagues passing away. And you know, quite often in the middle of work you find yourself thinking about it. However, we were all expected to carry on work. This was a huge thing, so now we also have to find that balance of emotional well-being because of what's playing out with our work. Some people talk about it, others don't (Appendix G).

In the opinion of P3, P5, P10, P13, and P17, it is critical that the institution establishes clear boundaries in terms of the expectation of staff members replying to phone messages, calls, or emails after hours. The participants stated that some academic staff members and students expect to receiving responses from administration after hours and become frustrated when they are not responded to.

Home office equipment and connectivity are important factors in ERW for increased productivity, as P8, P11, P14 and P16 pointed out. Every single one of them expressed the same irritation with inconsistent electricity, which resulted in the lack of WI-FI. It is critical for the institution to ensure that all staff members have access to the necessary recourses. P14 said the following about technology:

I think definitely in terms of equipment, better new laptops, more stable Internet connectivity. Because those are obviously things that we need to consider if we will continue work remotely. Some staff had been complaining, you know, their laptop isn't adequate. So, we are looking into obviously better laptops to allow for more effective remote work (Appendix R).

Finding 28: There was a lack of clear communication from management

Finding 29: Reliable home office equipment is needed for improved productivity

Finding 30: Employees did not have reliable Wi-Fi at home

Finding 31: No clear boundaries were set for employees in terms of work expectations

Finding 32: Some colleagues felt isolated due to a lack of empathy from management

I.Q 1.3.2: How would you judge your own productivity when working remotely vs. working at the office?

This question was posed to better understand how and to what extent productivity was affected by ERW when compared to working in an office environment.

In P6's opinion, there had been countless additional processes she needed to do and had to perform numerous times as a result of changes to the lockdown protocols itself. An example of this would be last-minute requests from central administration, which prompted her to work late into the night to complete the task and make the due date. Productivity suffered as a result of this. She made it clear that she had no objections about working late. She did, however, believe that some members of the staff had high expectations of her after hours. P7 reported similar experiences to P6, and she stated that ERW had made her "lazy". She said there were too many emails to read and she eventually stopped reading because of the demands. When she was working in the office, she would generally stroll into someone's office to discuss issues. However, with ERW, staff members reverted to sending emails, and reading these emails took up a substantial amount of her time and hampered her productivity.

Also sharing the same experiences, P8 indicated that she did not feel she was productive during ERW:

> I feel I wasn't productive last year. I definitely got through all my work, but I'm quite hard on myself. I didn't feel that I was productive enough for my clients, which is the staff and the students and my HOD. I just felt last year was a mess and I wasn't productive. And I wish we can be more empathetic, or sympathetic, with our fellow members, fellow staff members. Because these are not just a number for me, these are my people (Appendix M).

Furthermore, P8 expressed her preference for holding books, files and pens in her hands for references. Due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, she was unable to collect these from the office. She went on to remark that when she is at the office, the job gets done faster. Working on a laptop was also a source of frustration for her, as she felt it made her work slower.

As a result of not being exposed to traffic going to and from work, while working from home, P12 claimed that working from home has resulted in her being substantially more productive. She went on to say that despite the fact that she needed to pick up her children from school, she could still log into a meeting while parking her car somewhere along the route and participate in the discussion. When she attended meetings at home, she explained that she was able to complete other chores or continue to work on other work-related tasks because she did not have to travel to a meeting location or pay attention to meetings that were not critical.

Finding 33: Working at a slower pace, using a laptop is not as efficient as using an office desk PC

Finding 34: Remote work added more stages to processes, slowing down the pace of work

Finding 35: Others saw an increase in productivity as a result of the time saved by not having to sit in traffic on their commute to and from work

IQ 1.3.3: Does it take the same time to fulfil a task remotely than at the office?

This question was presented to determine whether or not participants spent more time performing work when working remotely as opposed to working in the office.

As a result of the new online processes that were implemented, the majority of participants stated that it took longer to complete tasks when ERW was first introduced. They said the university had many processes that were modified without warning, and the participants were required to embrace the new processes quickly. Because a number of them experienced difficulty with technology and did not receive assistance from colleagues in a face-to-face setting, they took longer to complete their work than they would have normally. P6 stated that "there were so many additional processes that we had to do and often things had to be redone because of requests. I found that you would just work late night and make sure that you just complete that task and that you meet your deadline" Not having enough resources at home contributed to being less productive, according to P8. She stated that working just on her laptop presented a significant barrier, which was exacerbated by the fact that she was unable to access her files for reference. P8 said,

I wasn't productive, I need to have books and pens in my hands, I need to see the things in front of me, that's how I work. I need to have files and I'm the kind of person that refers back to things that how it was done last year and the year before. It goes quicker when I'm at the office. When having to work with only this laptop, I got extremely frustrated because it would take ten times longer to do one thing (Appendix M).

P7 said working from home caused her to become extremely lazy, albeit that she was not necessarily less productive. She said that "this at home thing makes you lazy sometimes. I can't say that I'm less productive at home than at work. Because as with all jobs, you're not work all the time. You have lull periods that there's nothing to do" (Appendix L). P12 and P17 both indicated that working from home allowed them to be more productive because they were less interrupted by students and work colleagues. During meetings where they did not have to concentrate, they took advantage of the fact that they were muted and the camera was not turned on, allowing them to continue with their other work obligations.

Finding 36: Due to a lack of resources, work was completed at a slower pace

Finding 37: No interruption from staff and students increased productivity

4.5.2   Research question 2
RQ2:   How do senior administrative staff manage ERW?

4.5.2.1   Research sub-question 2.1
RSQ 2.1: How has ERW affected the work performance of the senior administrative staff the during COVID-19 lockdown?

IQ 2.1.1:   What are the factors that have impacted your work performance as a result of ERW?

This question was posed to better understand how ERW affected the work performance of senior administrators.

P1 stated that she was having difficulty coming up with anything to do for those staff members whose primary responsibility was to interact with students face-to-face. She also saw that student participation dwindled as a result of mental health difficulties, which had an impact on her own performance. According to P2, because she recognised that some of her team members did not have the advantages she did, such as the absence of small children to interrupt, she was forced to tolerate many of their requests that she would not normally tolerate in an office environment. Because some of her employees were caring for ailing relatives, she felt even more pressure to do so. Also, she needed to be kinder to her students. P2 said: "Especially those in disadvantaged areas without resources, one committed suicide" (Appendix

G). As P2 above, P4 also indicated it was a challenge to assign work to their receptionist whose main role is interacting with students face-to-face. P4 added that,

> But I still have staff who are suffering badly; I just wake up in the morning and I start crying and then I can't stop. What can you do? And I think on the whole, everybody kind of learnt to be a lot more patient with everybody, because you just have to be. Because it's no good throwing your toys out the cot. Everybody's in the same boat (Appendix I).

P10 and P11 indicated the same sentiments in terms of work overload. P10 said she overburdened herself at some point with work coming from all angles:

> But my biggest thing was responding to queries. And that was anything from "I don't know where to register", "How do I do the service request?" to "The system is giving me problems", I kind of worked for the max a week at a time (Appendix N).

According to P6, lack of direction from management affected her work performance as there were times when decisions were made and changed soon after, making it difficult for teams to meet their responsibilities. P8 and P11 reported that ERW affected their performance in that they had to work and manage teams remotely and believe what they were reporting. They both emphasised the necessity of creating trust within teams and avoiding micromanagement as a result.

According to P16, ERW caused various mental health issues as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown, disrupting social life. She felt that administrative staff were not necessarily taken for granted, but were not acknowledged given the difficult circumstances under which they worked. While conditions were not easy, management expected employees to stay on board and carry on as usual. P13 explained how she had to shift her perspective. She admitted that it was initially quite aggravating, but that she was ultimately responsible. She had to adjust the way she interacted with her team, for example, holding one-on-one meetings with them instead of weekly meetings.

P13 also mentioned that she could relate to some of the behaviours because she came from a lesser position and jumped into this senior administrative job with the majority of the team staying in the same position.

Some senior administrative staff found it challenging to integrate new appointments into the university in the middle of ERW. According to P16, she had to start by learning the new technology herself to properly integrate the new member of staff into the team. P16 said: "I now needed to learn how to use Teams to share the files to go step by step as to what needed be done. Setting a new person up remotely, and then still teaching the job, and still making sure that the job gets done was a big challenge" (Appendix U).

Connectivity issues created challenges in work performance within teams, according to P3. P7 said that she communicated less. P7 elaborated as follows: "Before, it was easy to walk into their offices and have a chat about something. Now, you actually have to consciously make the phone call, and I hate these Teams meetings" (Appendix L). P17 claimed that senior members of her team were unfamiliar with G-drive or other Internet platforms. She had to teach them on these and spent a significant amount of time doing so, which interfered with her ability to complete her other tasks. P17 further said: "Administrative-wise, I saw my team taking a lot of strain in terms of work. We had lots of queries from students. You'll find one student sending one email to four different people" (Appendix V).

Finding 38: The majority of participants struggled to assign work to staff members whose main role is to interact directly with students

Finding 39: Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance

Finding 40: Communication between staff and students has been reduced as a result of ERW

Finding 41: Senior administrative staff found it challenging to integrate new appointments into the university in the middle of ERW

Finding 42: Senior administrative staff micromanaged

Finding 43: Senior administrative staff lacked technological skills

IQ 2.1.2: *Do you know if the university or faculty has an ERW policy? Do you think such a policy is necessary? How so?*

This question was posed to determine whether or not participants made use of the policy and processes that were available, and whether or not the university had any policies in place.

All the participants stated that they were not aware or not sure if the university had a specific policy on ERW. Although they considered that the majority of faculties and departments had internal agreements with their staff members, they believed that a university policy would be beneficial in this situation. This policy should contain working hours, how to treat employees who are unable to be reached, and other pertinent information. P1 stated:

> I don't know if there is anything official. I know my department certainly doesn't, because we figured it out as we go along. They haven't actually put in any guidelines for how administrative staff should do their jobs. I mean they do a lot with academics on how online teaching should work. But I haven't heard of anything with administrative staff (Appendix F).

P2, P3, P4 indicated that they are not aware of a formal policy. P2 further said many administrative staff understand that they are required to be at work and to deliver. P4 said the following about her department:

> We met as an admin team every week. We communicated a lot, but we didn't draw up any policy at all. What we've agreed is that if an email comes in after hours, we're not expected to look at it until the next day, because a lot of our academics do work very late hours at night (Appendix I).

P10 indicated that,

> The university reacted more than they should have had there been a policy in place. We could have said, here's a policy framework, and here is how you do this. I think moving forward, we need to think about having a proper policy in place (Appendix O).

Finding 44: Faculties/departments use internal policies

Finding 45: No clear policy for administrative staff

IQ 2.1.3: Where do you work from at home and what have you done to improve the ergonomics of your workspace?

This question was posed to understand whether the area where participants were working affected their experiences.

P3, P8, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16 stated that they did not have a dedicated workspace at home, but instead shared places with family and children who were doing online learning as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown, or utilised their bedrooms to work from. All participants recorded that their departments allowed them to fetch their office chairs for those that did not have the right chairs at home. P3 indicated that some of her team members were using beds to work on as they did not have tables. Her department provided them with laptops only and could not purchase laptop stands due to the lack of funding. P8 revealed that she worked from her dining room table. Her department bought her a laptop, and she was allowed to fetch her office chair from the office.

According to P10, P12, P13 and P14, they received all the resources they needed, which included laptops, laptop stands and connectivity resources. Some of the challenges recorded were the living conditions at home, especially for those having small children, which became unmanageable during meetings and work, or school going children who shared space with them.

P1, P2, P6, P15, and P17, on the other hand, said they have a dedicated area in their home where they work. According to P1, despite having a designated home office, the challenge arises when her child finishes school because she can be disruptive. All five participants stated that their faculties/departments provided them with appropriate resources/equipment for their home offices.

Finding 46: No dedicated space and sharing workspace with family members

Finding 47: The living conditions at some homes are not conducive to productivity

Finding 48: Some (5) have designated home offices

IQ 2.1.4: *What resources have been provided to you by your department to create a better work environment at home and do you feel you have all that you need to perform your duties? If not, what equipment do you think you will need to be more effective?*

This question was posed to gain a better understanding of the resources considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff.

Ten (10) of the 17 participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P8, P9, P10, P12, P13, P15) indicated that they had received sufficient resources from their respective departments to use at home as a result of ERW. P3 stated that she received all the equipment needed, including a contribution towards her Internet connection. P4 also indicated that she received all the resources needed. P4 stated that,

> Everything that staff members have asked for, was provided. Most of my admin staff have a printer at home; So, I bought them all printers, scanners, copiers. If they wanted extra screens, they got screens. If they wanted laptop stands, they got that too (Appendix I).

P4 further said that some of her team members "worked on their beds because they did not have any tables available" (Appendix I). As a result of this, laptop stands were purchased for them. P7 mentioned that her department had the first COVID-19 case at the institution. They went on lockdown approximately a week and a half before the rest of the university.

P4 further stated that,

> The Sunday we were informed that we had been in contact with somebody and we were home, just before lockdown. So, we were given all the hardware and then most staff then paid for data and stuff like that. That is a big thorn, because they only provided x amount and data is expensive. And it only lasts so long. So, but otherwise we got the necessary that we needed to work (Appendix L).

P8 mentioned: "My HOD is 100 percent supportive of what we need at home and that we get it. I didn't have a desk, so I bought a little desk and an excellent typist chair" (Appendix M). P9 also reported that her HOD wrote to all staff and asked what they required, and that they all received the resources provided. According to P10, P12, P13, and P14, despite receiving all of the resources they required, some of their team members still experienced connectivity issues due to the locations where they live, or a lack of room to mount their laptop stands or desks due to their cramped living spaces. P11 indicated that the resources were supplied, but some of the challenges were the living conditions at home, with some team members having small children which became unmanageable during meetings and work. P17 said that in her faculty, departments that have the funds did subsidise the data allowances for their employees. Those without financial resources did not make any contributions. P17 said:

> If your department didn't have funds then you were not going to have that resource. So, people needed to figure out how they were going to actually connect. So, in actual sense most of us sat down and said, Listen, I'm not using money for petrol to go to the office, so maybe I can reroute that money to connectivity (Appendix V).

When asked if she received any resources, P17 answered: "No, absolutely not, not at all. I think also for me being where I am, it was always called upon to be available at all the hours of the day" (Appendix V). P7, P11 and P14 did not receive adequate resources from their respective departments. According to P7, even though they received computers, they were required to subsidise their data, which proved to be too expensive for her and some of her staff members. The other participants (P2, P5, P6, P16) did not require any additional resources at home.

Finding 49: Resources were given by some departments, whilst others did not provide

Finding 50: There were Inconsistencies in the resources that have been made available

IQ 2.1.5: *What are your routines throughout the day and how have they changed from when you worked in the office?*

This question was asked to understand the experiences in terms of changes of work routine as a result of ERW.

According to P1, the morning routine have not changed, as she continues to work the same time each day in order to pick up her child and drop him off at school. It is after the youngster leaves school and arrives at home that the situation becomes more difficult. P1 said:

> He usually comes home at two o'clock on a Friday but at three o'clock for the rest of the week. So, then I find I'm a lot more distracted, because he's too active. When I am work in the lounge and he will be behind me, so I'll hear a lot from him. And he

doesn't keep quiet, I mean he's eight, so he should understand – but he doesn't seem to (Appendix F).

In many ways, P9's experiences were similar to those of P1. P9 expressed difficulty in establishing a routine that would satisfy both herself and her child, who was studying at home at the time. Their schedule was once again disrupted as soon as the schools began to open, and her child was permitted to attend school two days per week, just when they believed they were finally settled in.

P10 stated that coping with commitments outside of work was difficult because everyone's obligations are different. The other obstacle to the routine was the lack of connectivity during working hours as a result of load shedding, which occurred during the day. Because of load shedding, she was unable to attend all of the meetings required of her; also, she was not able to finish her work by the deadline. Because she was unable to fall asleep for a couple of weeks during lockdown, P8 admitted to binge-watching movies and television programmes. P10 went on to say: "I would literally have an hour's sleep, or two hours' sleep max, and I would be up at four awake for the rest of the day, awake all night. Sleep one hour, two hours, and that was the routine" (Appendix 0).

When the university announced an extension to the end of the year, P8 became overwhelmed and fell ill as a result of the stress of not being able to return to her normal work environment. P8 remarked:

> I fell into deep sleeps for some weird reason that I could not explain. I fell into very deep sleeps where I couldn't wake up again. And that happened all of May where I just like, my body just collapsed. And I thought, 'No, this is not who I am, I need to find things to do' (Appendix M).

Failing to switch off from work was highlighted by six (6) participants, (P3, P6 P13, P15, P16, P17). P3 acknowledged her struggles to switch off from work but said she has gained something from the experience:

> …when working in an office there's the challenge of making it through to the office on time with morning traffic. So that hour and a half that I would have spent in traffic, I log on earlier. I would log in at seven o'clock instead. I rarely take a lunch break. That's one thing that hasn't been good. So, you know, I'll take a break in the evening to cook dinner at about four o'clock, but then you log back on at like six, seven o'clock again. There's just no switch off (Appendix H).

P6 further argued that attempting to maintain a balance between home and work is quite challenging. P6 furthermore said that she has found herself working even harder during ERW

because certain staff members and students were sending her emails late at night, and she has found herself responding to them. She expressed that,

> It was difficult to separate the two. To put in boundaries was very difficult. And I had to, you know, for the sake of looking after my health and so on. I've had to start, you know, putting these boundaries in. There's many a night that I found myself working until 12 o'clock at night. If I was at work, I certainly wouldn't have been working these late hours. But you find everybody's doing it and sometimes you need to respond. It's the HoD, so you respond. It's some deadline, some important person and so forth (Appendix K).

P13 similarly said it was really tough to switch off from work. She claimed that it took her about three months to develop a schedule that worked. However, she still found herself working late at night while the kids were sleeping. She would also wake up early, before they got up so that she could empty her inbox. During the day, she would take care of the kids and the house while checking emails. P15 stated the following:

> I find that I cannot switch off. If I have a project going I find it hard to switch off. If I were at the office, I would log off and then I would be heading home and, you know, maybe pop in at the shops or somewhere, and that's it. And I'll pick it up the next day. But I find now that I'm working at home my mind is sort of overwork, you know. I'm thinking of things all the time, and actually I should be switching off (Appendix T).

P16 responded by saying that "sometimes you don't cut yourself off work because you're work until whenever, you know. Okay, so initially it was all over the place, because it was, you know, you were working as if you were working 24/7" (Appendix U). According to P17, she would get a work call at 7am:

> It's expected that you should be available at all times. As a single parent, I mean I have my son to juggle at the same time as doing this online work. It was a real battle, you know. The long hours and trying to balance home, work, studies. It was a total nightmare. It took a lot of time to find a balance and be assertive and say, you know what, yes (Appendix V).

P7 indicated that her routine has not changed as she wakes up at the same time each day and starts work at the same time because her little child attends crèche in the morning and returns home in the evening.

Finding 51: Participants struggled to switch off from work

Finding 52: The inability to establish a routine resulted in mental health problems

Finding 53: Difficulty in finding a routine with smaller children at home

Finding 54: The routine was disrupted due to load shedding

4.5.2.2 Research sub-question 2.2

RSQ 2.2: How does ERW affect the engagement of senior administrative with stakeholders of the institution?

IQ 2.2.1: What communication channels are used to stay in touch with your stakeholders? What works well with the channels and what would you like to change?

The question was posed to determine whether different modes of communication have varied effects on the experiences.

P5 created WhatsApp groups for her teams to communicate with one another. She stressed that these groups were formed not just for the goal of working together, but also to keep tabs on one another. She expressed herself as follows: "If people didn't respond for a week, I would then call them. So, in general I called my team members, once a week" (Appendix P5). She stated that staff members did not stay online throughout the day because it consumed a large amount of data. In such circumstances, she explained that she would typically send them a message through Microsoft Teams.

P13 mentioned that at first, everything was done through email communication. The difficulty with this was that one would have to wait for responses for an extended period of time, which became frustrating because everyone's inboxes were completely full. P13 then made a point of saying: "The team and I then slightly moved to using MS Teams a lot more, because we could load it on our cell phones. And then I still use my cellphone to make cellphone calls to call the team" (Appendix R). P13, however, also mentioned that for academic staff members, communication was done purely via email.

Finding 55: Different communication methods for academics and administrative staff

Finding 56: WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams and Outlook were the preferred channels

IQ 2.2.2: Do your teams require more help when working remotely than when they are in the office, and are their challenges similar or do you believe they have different issues?

This question was presented to determine whether senior administrative staff were experiencing specific issues as a result of ERW or whether they were experiencing the same issues than when they were in a normal office environment. Technology challenges were highlighted by P1 and P10. The majority of her colleagues, according to P1, struggled with information technology, which resulted in stress and anxiety problems. P10 stated that technology challenges varied depending on the individual's personal knowledge of information

systems. According to P3, team members tend to call more often when working remotely. P3 stated that,

> There is no boundary. It's blurred, it's completely blurred, if not fallen away completely. You'll find people needing you at 7 pm. Because people work so differently from home, you might have someone who is work at six o'clock at night who has no idea that you might be busy with homework or dinner or whatever. And they tend to think that it is okay to call (Appendix H).

The lack of motivation and emotional health difficulties within teams were common themes amongst P5, P6 and P13's teams. P5 stated that one of her team members was having difficulty with ERW and that she needed to be encouraged and motivated. She went on to clarify: "I had daily calls with her for a long period. And she's up to speed now, so now we have weekly meetings. As soon as I see that she's busy failing off the bus, then we have daily calls" (Appendix J). P6 mentioned that some of her staff members required extra help because they were going through a lot emotionally, including the loss of family members as a result of COVID-19. In cases when they had been quiet for a time, she had to keep checking on them to make sure they were okay. In the case of P13, she had two of her staff members whom she assisted in getting counselling for various issues they were experiencing. She added that she did not believe that would have happened if they were on campus. P16, on the other hand, argued that ERW caused the team members to become a little more independent as a result of the situation. P15 said:

> They are forced to figure things out for themselves if I'm busy with something else. And I think that just made the team a bit stronger. I had this little proud mommy moment when one of the team members actually took initiative, booked themselves on a specific training, opened it up to the rest of the team. Because usually it would come from me. I would find a new training programme and then I would ask everyone to join (Appendix U).

Finding 57: Technology challenges were experienced by participants and within teams

Finding 58: Lack of motivation within teams due to isolation

Finding 59: No boundaries due to ERW—teams sought help after hours

Finding 60: ERW triggered stress and anxiety, resulting in teams requiring additional assistance

IQ 2.2.3: What are your experiences with student engagements in ERW?

The question was posed to understand how ERW affected the experiences of senior administrators.

P1, P6, P9 P11, P12 and P16 stated that they had a lot of correspondence with students in the early days of online learning, which was great for everyone. However, they noticed that students became deafeningly quiet toward the close of the year. P1 was regularly emailing students to check on them, mainly postgraduates. Many students were having a difficult time submitting their essays. Additionally, many pupils were suffering from mental health difficulties. According to P12, she communicated with her students through a variety of platforms, including *Skype for Business*. P16 made the following statement in connection with the same theme: "There's chats, forums, MS Teams, telephone, and email. So, what we've done is we've advertised on the Vula site how the students should communicate with the administrators and with the department" (Appendix U).

P2 observed that many students were feeling vulnerable and struggled to complete their assignments. Students were not responding to communication via the Vula platform, so she resorted to emailing or calling them on their cell phones for urgent notices, which created a quandary, considering that some of the students were international students. P2 went on to say that there were many mental health difficulties among students, and tragically, one of their students committed suicide, which caused several students to seek counselling. P2 also mentioned that staff members were unable to keep up with student issues, which led to some of the staff members experiencing mental health issues. P13 stated that,

> There was a very big disconnect with students at the beginning and I was quite worried about that, because as an administrator, communicating with my students is basically my job. But as we worked through on what works for us, what doesn't work for us, students started realising that they can actually phone us via Skype or via Teams, communication definitely increased (Appendix R).

P4, P5 and P14 reported that there were no changes in their interaction with pupils—their engagement with students has always been minimal. The usual emails sent to students were sufficient during ERW. P8 created a special Vula site for students to communicate their challenges and experiences during ERW. This platform was very active and gave students a platform to vent their problems. According to P10, her communication with students has not changed because she mostly deals with Masters and PhD students who have registered for a full dissertation/thesis. This means they could be located anywhere in the world at any time, even before ERW. Through email, phone calls and the use of the Vula platform, she continued to interact with them. She did see, however, that the field work of these students had been hampered, which resulted in a delay in submitting their theses.

Finding 61: At the beginning of ERW, students over-communicated

Finding 62: Close to the end of the year, students became deafeningly quiet

Finding 63: The most efficient means of connecting with students was to call them on their cell phones using Skype for Business

Finding 64: Student doing research had their field work delayed due to the COVID-19 restrictions

4.6   List of findings

Seventeen (17) participants were interviewed, and 64 findings (Table 4.7) emerged from the interviews. The findings are linked to the research questions (RQs), research sub-questions (RSQs), and interview questions (IQs).

Table 4.7: List of findings linked to the research questions, research-sub questions and Interview questions

RQ	RSQ	IQ	F#	Response from Participants
1	1.1	1.1.1	1	A lack of direction from management
1	1.1	1.1.1	2	Difficulty in managing teams
1	1.1	1.1.1	3	Isolation due to ERW
1	1.1	1.1.1	4	Pandemic-induced anxiety and worry as a result of a lack of information about the virus
1	1.1	1.1.1	5	Connectivity challenges created by national load shedding
1	1.1	1.1.1	6	Disruptions at home
1	1.1	1.1.1	7	Fear, anxiety, stress and depression resulted in working from home
1	1.1	1.1.2	8	Missing work colleagues and work social events.
1	1.1	1.1.2	9	Missing the students and the buzz they bring on campus
1	1.1	1.1.2	10	Missing the physical exercise of getting to and from campus
1	1.2	1.2.1	11	Administrative staff are able to work remotely
1	1.2	1.2.1	12	New learning opportunities for administrative staff
1	1.2	1.2.1	13	Paperless systems created for the university
1	1.2	1.2.1	14	Cost savings and more free time available as a result of ERW
1	1.2	1.2.1	15	The faculties adapted to the demands of the ERW environment
1	1.2	1.2.1	16	Business processes changed to the needs of the ERW environment
1	1.2	1.2.1	17	Employees acclimated to success factors for on-going training
1	1.2	1.2.1	18	The main adaption is towards a paperless environment
1	1.2	1.2.1	19	The work environment will become more flexible
1	1.2	1.2.1	20	Employees prefer the flexibility that ERW offers
1	1.2	1.2.2	21	Online student registration will increase efficiencies and minimise unnecessary paperwork
1	1.2	1.2.2	22	Traveling during off-peak hours will save time and money
1	1.2	1.2.2	23	ERW was expected to last only a few weeks
1	1.2	1.2.3	24	Increased work pressure due to ERW
1	1.2	1.2.3	25	Anxiety and stress increased as a result of the pandemic
1	1.2	1.2.3	26	Inadequate workspace for team members at their homes
1	1.2	1.2.3	27	Due to a lack of data, students sent the majority of their emails at night
1	1.2	1.2.3	28	A lack of clear communication from management
1	1.3	1.3.1	29	Reliable home office equipment is needed for improved productivity
1	1.3	1.3.1	30	Employees did not have reliable Wi-Fi at home

RQ	RSQ	IQ	F#	Response from Participants
1	1.3	1.3.1	31	No clear boundaries were set for employees in terms of work expectations
1	1.3	1.3.1	32	Some colleagues felt isolated due to a lack of empathy from management
1	1.3	1.3.1	33	Working at a slower pace, using a laptop is not as efficient as using an office desk PC
1	1.3	1.3.1	34	Remote work added more stages to processes, slowing down the pace of work
1	1.3	1.3.2	35	Others saw an increase in productivity as a result of the time saved by not having to sit in traffic on their commute to and from work
1	1.3	1.3.2	36	Due to a lack of resources, work was completed at a slower pace
1	1.3	1.3.2	37	No interruption from staff and students increased productivity
1	1.3	1.3.3	38	The majority of participants struggled to assign work to staff members whose main role is to interact directly with students
1	1.3	1.3.3	39	Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance
1	1.3	1.3.3	40	Communication between staff and students has been reduced as a result of ERW
1	1.3	1.3.3	41	Senior administrative staff found it challenging to integrate new appointments into the university in the middle of ERW
2	2.1	2.1.1	42	Senior administrative staff micromanaged
2	2.1	2.1.1	43	Senior administrative staff lacked technological skills
2	2.1	2.1.1	44	Faculties/departments use internal policies
2	2.1	2.1.1	45	No clear policy for administrative staff
2	2.1	2.1.1	46	No dedicated space and sharing workspace with family members
2	2.1	2.1.1	47	The living conditions at some homes are not conducive to productivity
2	2.1	2.1.1	48	Some (5) have designated home offices
2	2.1	2.1.2	49	Resources were given by some departments, whilst others did not provide
2	2.1	2.1.2	50	There were Inconsistencies in the resources that have been made available
2	2.1	2.1.3	51	Participants struggled to switch off from work
2	2.1	2.1.3	52	The inability to establish a routine resulted in mental health problems
2	2.1	2.1.3	53	Difficulty in finding a routine with smaller children at home
2	2.1	2.1.4	54	The routine was disrupted due to load shedding
2	2.1	2.1.5	55	Different communication methods for academics and administrative staff
2	2.1	2.1.5	56	WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams and Outlook were the preferred channels
2	2.1	2.1.5	57	Technology challenges were experienced by participants and within teams
2	2.1	2.1.5	58	Lack of motivation within teams due to isolation
2	2.1	2.1.5	59	No boundaries due to ERW– teams seeking help after hours
2	2.1	2.1.5	60	ERW triggered stress and anxiety, resulting in teams requiring additional assistance.
2	2.2	2.2.1	61	At the beginning of ERW, students over-communicated
2	2.2	2.2.1	62	Close to the end of the year, students became deafeningly quiet
2	2.2	2.2.2	63	The most efficient means of connecting with students was to call them on their cell phones using Skype for Business
2	2.2	2.2.2	64	Student doing research had their field work delayed due to the COVID-19 restrictions

*RQ = Research Question; RSQ = Research Sub- Question; IQ = Interview Question; F# = Finding Number

The 64 findings are utilised to create themes in the following section.

4.7   Theme development

Themes were developed based on the 64 findings (Table 4.7). The findings were coded and recoded several times before being used to build the categories.

Table 4.8 shows the development of categories (12) from the findings.

Table 4.8: The codes, recodes and categories developed from the findings

Finding number	Findings	Code	Recode	Category
1, 2, 23, 28, 31, 32, 44, 45, 49	A lack of direction from management; Difficulty in managing teams; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; There was a lack of clear communication from management; No clear boundaries were set for employees in terms of work expectations; Some colleagues felt isolated due to a lack of empathy from management; Faculties/departments use internal policies; No clear policy for administrative staff; Resources were given by some departments, whilst others did not provide.	Management's lack of effective communication	Policies and processes	Ineffective Communication
8, 9, 17, 19, 23, 25, 26, 33, 39, 51, 52, 53, 60	Missing work colleagues and work social events; Missing the students and the buzz they bring on campus; Employees acclimated to success factors for on-going training; The work environment will become more flexible; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; Anxiety and stress increased as a result of the pandemic; Inadequate workspace for team members at their homes; Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance; participants struggled to switch off from work; The inability to establish a routine resulted in mental health problems; Difficulty in finding a routine with smaller children at home; ERW triggered stress and anxiety, resulting in teams requiring additional assistance.	Work-home balance	The necessity of face-to-face communication	Social support from colleagues
1, 2, 23; 28, 31; 38, 39, 41, 43	A lack of direction from management; Difficulty in managing teams, ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; There was a lack of clear communication from management; No clear boundaries were set for employees in terms of work expectations; The majority of participants struggled to assign work to staff members whose main role is to interact directly with students; Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance; Senior administrative staff found it challenging to integrate new appointments into the university in the middle of ERW; Senior administrative staff lacked technological skills.	employee satisfaction	Ineffective communication	Managing junior staff
2, 5, 23, 24, 25, 34, 39, 41, 51, 52, 53, 59, 60, 61, 62	Difficulty in managing teams; Connectivity challenges created by national load shedding; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; Increased work pressure due to ERW; Anxiety and stress increased as a result of the pandemic; Remote work added more stages to processes, slowing down the pace of work; Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance; Senior administrative staff found it challenging to integrate new appointments into the university in the middle of ERW; Participants struggled to switch off from work; The inability to establish a routine resulted in mental health problems; Difficulty in finding a routine with smaller children at home; No boundaries due to ERW–teams sought help after hours; ERW triggered stress and anxiety, resulting in teams requiring additional assistance; At the beginning of ERW, students over-communicated; Close to the end of the year, students became deafeningly quiet.	Emotional health	Employee satisfaction	Workload
1, 5, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 46, 47, 49, 54	A lack of direction from management; Connectivity challenges created by national load shedding; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; Increased work pressure due to ERW; Anxiety and stress increased as a result of the pandemic; Inadequate workspace for team members at their homes; Due to a lack of data, students sent the majority of their emails at night; Reliable home office equipment is needed for improved productivity; Employees did not have reliable Wi-Fi at home; Working at a slower pace, using a laptop is not as efficient as using an office desk PC; No dedicated space and sharing workspace with family members; The living conditions at some homes are not conducive to productivity; Resources were given by some departments, whilst others did not provide; The routine was disrupted due to load shedding.	Employee satisfaction	Inconsistencies in the accessible resources	Limited resources

Finding number	Findings	Code	Recode	Category
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; 22, 35, 56, 57, 63	Administrative staff are able to work remotely; New learning opportunities for administrative staff; Paperless systems created for the university; Cost savings and more free time available as a result of ERW; The faculties adapted to the demands of the ERW environment; Business processes changed to the needs of the ERW environment; Employees acclimated to Success factors for on-going training; The main adaption is towards a paperless environment; The work environment will become more flexible; Online student registration will increase efficiencies and minimise unnecessary paperwork; Others saw an increase in productivity as a result of the time saved by not having to sit in traffic on their commute to and from work; WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams and Outlook were the preferred channels; Technology challenges were experienced by participants and within teams; The most efficient means of connecting with students was to call them on their cell phones using Skype for Business.	Learning opportunities	Streamlining processes	New opportunities
2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 24, 25; 39. 51, 52, 53; 54, 60, 64	Difficulty in managing teams; Isolation due to ERW; Pandemic-induced anxiety and worry as a result of a lack of information about the virus; Fear, anxiety, stress and depression resulted in working from home; Missing work colleagues and work social events; Missing the students and the buzz they bring on campus; Missing the physical exercise of getting to and from campus; Increased work pressure due to ERW; Anxiety and stress increased as a result of the pandemic; Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance; Participants struggled to switch off from work, The inability to establish a routine resulted in mental health problems; Difficulty in finding a routine with smaller children at home; The routine was disrupted due to load shedding; ERW triggered stress and anxiety, resulting in teams requiring additional assistance; Student doing research had their field work delayed due to the COVID-19 restrictions	Staff motivation	Prolonged lockdown	Emotional instability
3, 23, 24, 52, 53, 59	Isolation due to ERW; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; Increased work pressure due to ERW; The inability to establish a routine resulted in mental health problems; Difficulty in finding a routine with smaller children at home; No boundaries due to ERW–teams sought help after hours.	Work-home balance	Communication	Interferences between work and home life
3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 23,32, 39, 58, 60	Isolation due to ERW; Pandemic-induced anxiety and worry as a result of a lack of information about the virus; Fear, anxiety, stress and depression resulted in working from home; Missing work colleagues and work social events; Missing the physical exercise of getting to and from campus; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; Some colleagues felt isolated due to a lack of empathy from management; Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance; Lack of motivation within teams due to isolation; ERW triggered stress and anxiety, resulting in teams requiring additional assistance.	Lack of human interaction	The necessity of face-to-face communication	Loneliness
1, 2, 23, 32, 39	A lack of direction from management; Difficulty in managing teams; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; Some colleagues felt isolated due to a lack of empathy from management; Junior administrative staff and students' mental health difficulties had an impact on senior administrative personnel's performance.	Ineffective communication	Employee satisfaction	Procrastination

Finding number	Findings	Code	Recode	Category
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 35; 48; 56	Administrative staff are able to work remotely; New learning opportunities for administrative staff; Paperless systems created for the university; Cost savings and more free time available as a result of ERW; The faculties adapted to the demands of the ERW environment; Business processes changed to the needs of the ERW environment; Employees acclimated to Success factors for on-going training; The main adaption is towards a paperless environment; The work environment will become more flexible; Employees prefer the flexibility that ERW offers; Online student registration will increase efficiencies and minimise unnecessary paperwork; Traveling during off-peak hours will save time and money; Others saw an increase in productivity as a result of the time saved by not having to sit in traffic on their commute to and from work; Some (5) have designated home offices; WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams and Outlook were the preferred channels.	Employee satisfaction	Flexibility	work freedom
2, 4, 11, 12, 23, 33, 52, 53	Difficulty in managing teams; Pandemic-induced anxiety and worry as a result of a lack of information about the virus; Administrative staff are able to work remotely; New learning opportunities for administrative staff; ERW was expected to last only a few weeks; Working at a slower pace, using a laptop is not as efficient as using an office desk PC; The inability to establish a routine resulted in mental health problems; Difficulty in finding a routine with smaller children at home.	Procrastination	Laziness	Self-discipline

Three (3) themes emerged from the 12 categories listed above. The themes are shown in Table 4.9 and are linked to the findings, research questions (RQs), research-sub questions (RSQs), and interview questions (IQs).

Table 4.9: The themes developed from findings and linked to the Interview questions, research-sub questions and research questions

Finding Number	Theme	IQ	RSQ	RQ
1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,24, 25,26,27,28,29,30,31, 32,33, 34,36, 37, 38, 39,40,41,42,43, 45,46,47, 49, 50,51,52, 53,54, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61,62, 64	ERW challenges	1.1.1; 1.2.1; 1.2.3; 2.1.1; 2.1.2; 2.2.2	1.1; 1.3; 2.1	1, 2
11,12,13, 15, 16,17, 18,19,21, 35, 44,55,56,63	ERW opportunities	1.1.1; 1.2.2; 1.2.3 2.2.1	1.2; 1.3	1, 2
8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23, 48	Personal factors	1.1.2; 2.1.3; 2.1.4; 2.2.3	1.2; 2.2	1, 2

*IQ = interview Question; RSQ = Research Sub-Question; RQ = Research Question

Table 4.10 illustrates the link between findings, themes, interview questions (IQs), research sub-questions (RSQs) and research questions (RQs). The themes are: i) ERW challenges; ii) ERW opportunities; iii) Personal factors.

Table 4.10: Themes and sub-themes from the findings

Themes	Sub Themes	Report from Ps
Challenges of ERW	Isolation	* Two of the Ps live alone, and remote working has resulted in severe isolation.
		* 8 Ps gave detailed experience on isolation
	Ineffective Communication	* Two Ps reported that there are no boundaries set within teams
		* Connectivity issues result in poor communication
		* Management must ensure that resources are made available to all staff for effective communication and productivity
		* Ps believe that a clear policy on ERW must be established in order to manage processes effectively
		* Perceived management lack of communication resulted in staff accepting what they read in social media
		* First month saw students over communicating, at the end of semester, there was almost silence from the students
		* Exams a major communication challenge
	Managing teams	* The senior administrative staff have not been given the tools to manage teams remotely
		* Staff engagement poor without the face to face component
		* The majority of Ps have average IT skills
		* Those not technological savy struggled with own work and managing team
		* Staff members who lost loved ones or were caring for them, this became a challenge to manage
		* Time management skills are vital for effective ERW
	Health and wellbeing	* Ps suffered mental health due to stress of managing teams remotely
		* Isolation caused health issues which became difficult to manage without face to face interaction
		* Work overload added to health matters
		*Dealing with psychological aspects of ERW caused anxiety to some managers
Opportunities of ERW	Paperless systems	*Paperless systems were introduced across campus
		* Good online tracking for documents
		* This became a development area for others
		* Lots of financial and environment savings
	Flexibility	* Flexibility considered as a factor to increased productivity
		* All the Ps are happy about working from home as it can save them hours of commute time each way to and from work, as well as reduce overall traffic congestion, save the environment and remove traffic-related stress.
		* Enabled Ps to spend quality time with family and pursue hobbies
		* Some Ps started a small business as a result of the flexibility
	Personal/Professional development	* Ps enrolled for training on technology in order to effectively work remotely
		* Time spent with family
Personal factors	Factors unique to the individual	* Persued hobbies and started a business
		* Having to take care of sick relatives without taking official leave

*P - Participants

Table 4.10 summarises, in table format, the sub-themes that are covered in greater depth in Section 5.3.

4.8   Summary

The findings of the study, which are discussed in this chapter, provide support for the objectives of the study. These findings investigated the challenges that are associated with ERW for senior administrative staff; determined the factors that affect their work experiences; investigated the opportunities; and also determined the factors that are considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff. A total of 64 findings were identified with 12 categories and 3 themes. According to the findings, the vast majority of the participants found isolation to be challenging because they were forced to spend all of their time at home as movement was restricted due to Covid-15 lockdown. This was especially true for the participants who lived alone or did not have a support structure at home. As a consequence,

some of the participants experienced issues with their mental health. This is consistent with the findings of Cooper and Kurland (2002) and Wang et al. (2021), who found that during epidemics, feelings of isolation were a significant concern for remote employees who worked from home.

A number of the participants found that managing teams was difficult for them, particularly those who struggled with technology because all of the work and meetings were conducted online. The opportunities that were found included spending more time with family, having more spare time to study, and learning new skills through the use of technology. In support of Carnevale and Hatak (2020:185) assertion, the vast majority of participants reported having some degree of flexibility in their lives, despite the fact that for some, this was perceived as a burden due to procrastination and the collision of their work and home lives.

In Chapter Five, the research questions, findings, and themes are discussed in relation to the existing literature.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION
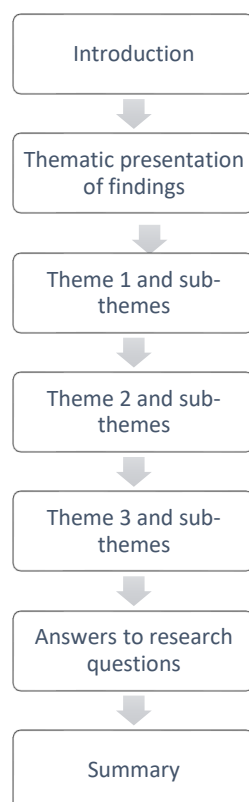
Figure 5.1: Layout of Chapter Five

5.1 Introduction

The research aimed to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff at a higher institution of education as they negotiate the realities of ERW in their various responsibilities. The research also explores the factors that can affect their work experiences and the resources that are required for improved ERW. Chapter Four offered an overview of how fieldwork was carried out. It also provided a description of the participants as well as the case study. It included methodologies and procedures for how data analysis proceeded, as well as categories and themes that emerged once the data were analysed.

This chapter presents the themes from the 17 interviews conducted with senior administrative staff from four faculties on the upper campus, namely Commerce (5 participants), Engineering and the Built Environment (4 participants), Humanities (5 participants), and Science (3 participants). Due to the exploratory character of this study, the data acquired from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed directly from the MS Teams recordings, and then Braun and Clark's (2006:15) process of thematic analytic research was applied to the information gathered. The themes are discussed in the following sections.

5.2 Thematic presentation of findings

The themes are connected to their associated categories, which are composed of a chain of codes deemed to share specific features throughout the analysis process. The categories and themes described here were derived from the analysis of interview data, interview questions and theoretical literature knowledge and understanding of the topic under investigation.

The themes and sub-themes (Table 4.6) are described under three headings: (i) ERW challenges; (ii) ERW opportunities; and (iii) personal factors. The key themes that emerged from these interviews are described in the Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Challenges of ERW	Isolation
	Ineffective communication
	Team Management
	Health and wellbeing
Opportunities of ERW	Paperless systems
	Flexibility
	Professional development
Personal factors	Factors unique to the individual

5.3 Theme 1: Challenges of ERW

This theme is linked to RQ1, RSQ 1.1 and RSQ 2.2. The following challenges of ERW were identified: i) isolation; ii) ineffective communication; iii) team management; and iv) health and wellbeing.

5.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Isolation

Participants said that living alone made them feel isolated and as a result they found it difficult to focus on their jobs. Some other participants stated that they thrive on the social aspects of their jobs, and that being forced to work from home has made them feel more isolated. This was the longest period of time participants worked from home and prevented from leaving their dwellings due to COVID-19 restrictions. Participants gave detailed experiences on isolation.

P4 stated that she does not have any family members at home and that she solely spends time with her pets. This presented a significant challenge for her, which resulted in depression. P1 stated that her spouse had to go to work as a front-line worker, and that she felt isolated on her own as she tried to get to work without communicating with anyone. P6 indicated that she was unable to perform her job to a high quality because she missed the opportunity to walk into colleagues' offices and ask for assistance.

According to previous research, remote workers are concerned about professional isolation as a result of the loss in informal social interactions with colleagues in the home office (Cooper & Kurland, 2002:527). The findings of this research support Cooper and Kurland (2002) and Wang et al. (2021) that during epidemics, loneliness is a significant concern for remote employees who are working from their homes.

5.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Ineffective communication

When asked how ERW affect the engagement of senior administrative staff with stakeholders of the institution, the lack of quality communication was reported as a key challenge for most of the participants. Remote workers acknowledge the barriers of online communication using various channels and assume that poor communication experience in online communication is a major impediment compared to face-to-face engagement (Raghuram et al., 2019:13). Ineffective communication experience in virtual collaboration has been empirically addressed primarily in virtual teams and computer-mediated communication literature instead of research on remote work (Chang et al., 2014:1318).

Participants expressed their frustration with the university leadership's perceived lack of communication with staff during the first few weeks of ERW. This was especially prominent among participants from one faculty, who indicated that they were not notified of the next steps. Due of the virus's fluidity, last-minute communication was commonly given to staff in terms of procedures. The website and social media provided little information about the processes. Because of a lack of communication, staff began to accept what they heard from others and on social media, resulting in the creation of fake news stories that lacked accuracy and caused unnecessarily high levels of anxiety among the staff. Tytherleigh et al. (2007:267) affirmed that "a lack of communication and informing of employees contributes to employee stress". These findings substantiate the claims of Tytherleigh et al. (2007).

At the beginning of ERW, emails became the primary mode of communication due to a number of staff members not having access to their office telephony, experiencing connectivity issues or encountering technological challenges. Additionally, students were unable to visit staff members in their offices or call them when they required assistance as a result of a lack of telephonic accessibility. For example, P13 reported that "for a week, people did not answer to emails" (Appendix N). As a result, there is a significant breakdown in communication because many emails may require something to be addressed within a specified time frame. Staff members' inability to respond to students' inquiries made students anxious. The absence of clear communication from leadership stifled production and had a negative impact on team morale and motivation. This was exacerbated by the fact that ERW had been the result of an unknown pandemic, and communication was either delayed or inconsistent due to the fluidity

of the situation. Several participants stated that they expected ERW to end in a month or two, but this turned out to be nearly two years.

Exams were a major communication challenge for participants. There were so many changes, and students relied on them for responses and found themselves having to address to situations they were not sure about. Due to lack of constant communication in terms of processes, participants felt that there were unrealistic expectations from their teams in terms of performing their administrative duties. They were unable to perform some of these duties, due to them being unable to make decisions. Participants believed that better all-around communication from the university was essential to effectively convey messages to their teams and students.

5.3.3   Sub-theme 3: Managing teams

When participants were asked which component of working remotely they found most challenging, team management was one of the most prominent themes that emerged. This was also obvious when they were questioned if their teams required more support while working remotely as opposed to in the office, which is in agreement with Parker et al. (2020) who stated that managing remote workers posed distinct challenges even before the pandemic. According to Parker et al. (2020), managers who cannot "see" their subordinates have a difficult time believing that they are actually working. They further claimed that when these doubts arise, managers may establish an excessive expectation that team members be available at all times, disturbing their work-life balance and increasing job stress. According to P10, "engagement with team has been incredibly poor" (Appendix O). P1 observed that her team required additional help, particularly in terms of technology, because they were now required to work with everyone online.

As the participants were also plunged into the deep end with their own technological barriers, this was a challenging experience for P1 and many other participants. P2 describes it as "boundaries nightmares", since some team members requested assistance outside of work hours while she was otherwise occupied with family obligations. P13 and P16 stated that delegating became a major difficulty when working remotely. According to P16, "Getting individuals to agree on a work schedule or a specific time period during which we needed to be accessible, was a difficult task" (Appendix U).

Some individuals were afflicted by or infected with the COVID-19 virus, and some of them lost loved ones, including colleagues as a result of the virus. This resulted in challenges in emotional health amongst teams, which resulted in difficulties in managing themself or their team.

On-campus resources were inaccessible due to COVID-19 restrictions, and teams were unable to access some documents, which made it difficult to complete their day-to-day work. As a result, teams were completely reliant on senior administrative staff, and many of them were unprepared to manage teams remotely because it was a new experience for them.

5.3.4 Sub-theme 4: Health and wellbeing

According to Mostafa (2021;48), the experience of never being free from or mentally and digitally disconnected from work may lead to an increased amount of stress, and in the long run, damage wellness in a manner that is detrimental. Mostafa (2021) continues by stating that employers are required to provide the appropriate training that facilitates employee work not only on work-related matters but also on psychological issues that are related to how employees manage work remotely, work overload, level of stress, and home boundaries.

Work-related stress is experienced by employees when they find their external demands within their daily work roles do not match their personal needs, expectations, physical capacity, skills or knowledge on how to handle a situation accordingly (Harshana, 2018:1-2). Participants who had difficulty managing teams or who lacked technological competence were more likely to have mental health problems. It is believed that the stress of caring for sick relatives as a result of COVID-19, as well as anxiety triggered by this unknown virus that changed variants rapidly, contributed significantly to the participants' mental health problems.

During ERW, some participants became anxious as a result of work overload induced by many steps added to processes. This was more prevalent among participants who experienced technological limitations. These unpredictable work conditions during ERW induced mental pressure to build up for certain participants, resulting in them not being in the proper mental state to perform their work tasks efficiently. P16 reported that ERW, as a result of COVID-19 lockdown, resulted in a variety of mental health difficulties for her. P11 stated that "coping with the emotions of her team was a significant challenge that caused her additional anxiety" (Appendix P). She noted that the university did not do enough to prepare line managers to deal with the psychological aspects of ERW, which she believes is a problem.

Several participants said they had to adapt their operations to ensure that teams were given adequate time to complete their tasks while also taking care of their emotional well-being. Teams' mental health issues had a significant impact on participants performance.

5.3.5 Theme 2: Opportunities of ERW

This theme is linked to RQ1, RQ2 and RSQ 1.2, RSQ 1.3. The following opportunities of ERW were identified; i) paperless systems; ii) flexibility; iii) professional development.

5.3.6 Sub-theme 5: Paperless systems

When asked what opportunities are presented by ERW, all participants responded that one of the most significant opportunities is the use of paperless systems. This is a game changer for the institution, and the findings corroborate assertions made by numerous studies, such as Amankwah-Amoah et al. (2021). COVID-19 compelled many organisations to become progressively paperless organisations. Paper-based processes, methods and routines are being replaced with electronic versions. In collaboration with Amankwah-Amoah et al. (2021:602), P14 stated that ERW 'fact-tracked' paperless procedures for her faculty and the institution at large.

It is believed that the epidemic has acted as a catalyst for the transition to paperless electronic prescriptions (Tsimtsiou, 2021). Similarly, the registration processes of the university can be described in this way: As a result of the epidemic, more and more paperless processes were implemented, with the registration process serving as a major example of this. The entire process was moved online, which has proven to be a significant benefit and game changer.

Approximately 29 000 students were enrolled at the institution in 2021 and all students have been required to complete their registration manually, resulting in the use hundreds of paper reams. Because of the paperless approach, the university has been able to save money while also helping to protect the environment. To highlight this, P16 remarked that her department was able to become paperless at the drop of a hat. Learning new modes of communication as well as perfecting previously gained skills, such as using Microsoft Teams, were required as part of this process. In the same way that P14 experienced the joy of not having to deal with students who were waiting in long lines outside her office to complete manual paper registration.

The university also produced large volumes of study handouts to students, hard copies of minutes and agendas were distributed in face-to-face meetings, all HR and Finance documents were manually signed and archived later. Overnight this became impossible, given the fact that all staff were required to work remotely without access to files or documents in their respective offices on campus. As a result, the university was compelled to implement online systems and digital signatures in order for work to continue. P1 remarked that the use of paperless systems has allowed her to be more productive because she is no longer interrupted by staff or students who come to her office requesting that she sign documents for them. P9 stated that the process of obtaining signatures from one person to another has been streamlined because no one is required to walk from one office to another to acquire signatures, whereas previously this was necessary. She is able to e-transmit documents from the comfort of her own home and signatories are able to return documents in a relatively short period of time as well.

Although paperless systems presented a challenge to those participants and their teams who were technologically challenged, this presented an opportunity for development, as in the case of P14 and P16, who had to learn and master new ways of communicating and working and began learning new skills in Microsoft Teams and other computer packages.

5.3.7   Sub-theme 6: Flexibility

According to Pérez et al. (2002:775), "the success of existing telework operations may be attributed mostly to the advantages of flexibility that are provided to both the organisation and the remote workers". This notion is supported by the findings of 13 participant interviews. However, Carnevale and Hatak (2020:185) argue that forced flexibility as a result of instances such as EWR result in a collision of work and home lives, which may lead to higher demands from both spheres through increased interruptions and a loss of routine, as well as increased demands from both domains. The interconnections between work and family appear to be the most difficult aspect of working remotely for P participants s who have children or caregiving responsibilities. However, it is important to note that employees without children are not exempt to the adverse repercussions of ERW on their health as they may feel sense of isolation when working remotely.

Supporting Carnevale and Hatak (2020), P3, P5, P10, P13 and P17 highlighted that checking emails after office hours or on weekends is one of the difficulties of ERW flexibility. They all indicated that they do respond to emails that they would not ordinarily respond to. Instead of switching off and taking a break, the workload is dictated by students and academics who take advantage of the flexibility in a way that is unpleasant for the administrators. Because there are no office social aspects, P3 claims "to be more productive". Her ability to manage her time more effectively has resulted in more quiet time and less interruptions, although she sometimes find herself working late into the night. P6 reported that she has saved two to three hours every day as a result of not having to go to and from work. This has allowed her to be more productive at her job.

There is also financial saving element from travelling in terms of petrol and car maintenance highlighted by P5, 11 and 15. P5 stated that she resides in Simon's Town, which is more than 32 kilometres away from the university. She described how she would generally leave her house about 06h00 in the morning and arrive on campus just before 08h30. This commute left her very fatigued at times, and she would arrive back home very late depending on traffic. Work from home is a huge relief for her because it helps her to save money on travel and car maintenance while also allowing her to spend more time with her loved ones. This view is supported by Klerk et al. (2021), who said that when employees work from home, they save money since they are not traveling to and from work. They also save money from buying meals

at work or purchasing work clothes. The majority of them spend their entire week in a tracksuit and leggings, saving money on new outfits.

Forty-five percent (45%) of the participants expressed their desire that the university allow staff members to have more flexibility going forward so that they do not have to be in their offices from 08h00 to 17h00 as they believe that there are instances in which one can be more productive working from home. Traveling at non-peak hours and when traffic is less congested, provides several advantages, according to P2.

Employees benefit from the flexibility afforded by remote work since it allows them to attend to personal and family responsibilities and to deal with uncertainties (Choudhury et al., 2021). P16 agreed with the aforementioned remark and stated that working from home allowed her to spend more quality time with her family. She went on to explain that her son had suffered a brain haemorrhage and that she needed to stay at home for a couple of months to take care for him. She would not have been able to accomplish this if ERW had not occurred. She would have needed to apply for leave without pay since her child needed time to heal.

P8 stated that she was able to find time to pursue gardening as a result of her ability to be flexible. She planted a variety of plants. She also enjoyed sewing and did a lot of it; she made pillow cases, scrunchies and headbands, all of which she has begun to sell. This has given her more time to pursue her hobbies and has resulted in her starting a small business for her efforts. Her experience supports what Prasad (2021) stated, that an employee has the chance to pursue long-standing hobbies, professional aspirations and other interests that were previously unable to be fulfilled due to time restrictions or a lack of freedom to pursue them at work.

5.3.8   Sub-theme 7: Professional development

To enable the remote workers to adapt quickly to the new settings, they must undergo proper training in both the technology and the work practices made possible by the technologies (Waizenegger et al., 2020). It is well acknowledged that ERW has significant advantages in terms of education and training. After completing an online training, P6 believes she has more opportunities to enhance her career. In addition, P11 expressed the same feelings and stated that there are numerous opportunities to learn, "to learn how to navigate via multiple platforms, even if it is simply Microsoft Teams" (Appendix P).

Participants believe that there are both challenges and opportunities in ERW. Isolation, mental health issues, ineffective communication, a lack of resources, and technological challenges were all experienced. Participants also saw opportunities in the areas of flexibility, professional development and a paperless system. Personal factors included participants having to care

for sick relatives as a result of flexibility, as well as having time to pursue hobbies and start a small business.

Although paperless systems presented a challenge to those participants and their teams who were technologically challenged, this presented an opportunity for development, as in the case of P16, who had to learn and master new ways of communicating and working and began learning new skills in Microsoft Teams and other computer packages.

5.4 Theme 3: Personal factors

5.4.1 Sub-Theme 8: Personal factors

This theme is linked to RQ 2, and RSQ 2.1. Self-motivation and self-discipline are personal factors that were identified.

P8 stated that she was able to find time to pursue gardening as a result of her ability to be flexible. She planted a variety of plants. She also enjoyed sewing and did a lot of it; she made pillow cases, scrunchies, and headbands, all of which she has begun to sell. This has given her more time to pursue her hobbies and has resulted in her starting a small business for her efforts. Her personal experience supports what Prasad (2021) stated, that an virtual employee has the opportunity to follow long-standing hobbies, professional aspirations, and other interests that were previously unable to be fulfilled due to time constraints or a lack of freedom to pursue them when working in the office. Employees working from home like the flexibility to set their own work hours, as well as the opportunity to spend more time with their families and pursue their hobbies (Lentjushenkova & Simenenko, 2021).

Additionally, P16 remarked and claimed that working from home allowed her to spend more quality time with her family, which was consistent with past findings. In her subsequent explanation, she stated that her child was sick and hospitalised and that she had to be at home for a couple of months to care for him. If the ERW had not occurred, she would not have been able to support him fully as she would have been expected to report to the office to work.

Table 5.2: Summary of the themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub Themes	Report from Ps
Challenges of ERW	Isolation	· Two of the Ps live alone, and remote working has resulted in severe isolation.
		· 8 Ps gave detailed experience on isolation
	Ineffective Communication	· Two Ps reported that there are no boundaries set
		· Connectivity issues result in poor communication
		· Management must ensure that resources are made available to all staff for effective communication and productivity
		· Ps believe that a clear policy on ERW must be established in order to manage processes effectively
		· Perceived management lack of communication resulted in staff accepting what they read in social media
		· First month saw students over communicating, at the end of semester, there was almost silence from the students
		· Exams a major communication challenge
	Managing teams	· The senior administrative staff have not been given the tools to manage teams remotely
		· Staff engagement poor without the face to face component
		· The majority of Ps have average IT skills
		· Those not technological savvy struggled with own work and managing team
		· Staff members lost loved or were caring for them, became a challenge to manage
		· Time management skills vital for effective ERW
	Health and wellbeing	· Ps suffered mental health due to stress of managing teams remotely
		· Isolation caused health issues which became difficult to manage without face to face interaction
		· Work overload added to health matters
		· Dealing with psychological aspects of ERW caused anxiety to managers
Opportunities of ERW	Paperless systems	· Paperless systems have introduced across campus
		· Good tracking for documents
		· This became a development area for others
		· Lots of financial and environment saving
	Flexibility	· Flexibility considered as a factor to increased productivity
		· All the Ps are happy about working from home as it can save them hours of commute time each way to and from work, as well as reduce overall traffic congestion, save the environment, and remove traffic-related stress.
		· Enabled Ps to spend quality time with family and pursue hobbies
		· P8 started a small business as a result of the flexibility
	Personal/Professional development	· Ps enrolled for training on technology in order to effectively work remotely
		· Time spent with family
Personal factors	Factors unique to the individual	· Persued hobbies and started a business
		· Having to take care of sick relatives without taking official leave

*Ps - Participants

5.5   Answers to the research questions

5.5.1   Research question 1

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of ERW for senior administrative staff?

Participants indicated that there are both challenges and opportunities in ERW. Isolation, mental health issues, ineffective communication, a lack of resources and technological challenges were all experienced. Participants also saw opportunities in the areas of flexibility, professional development and a paperless system. Personal factors included participants having to care for sick relatives as a result of flexibility, as well as having time to pursue hobbies and start a small business.

5.5.2   Research question 2

RQ2: How do senior administrative staff manage ERW?

Participants purchased resources to allow them to work from home, while those who did not receive funding from their faculties or departments obtained resources from their offices. The participants' technological challenges were reported. Participants met with their teams on a more frequent basis.

To manage team morale, opportunities for remote social interactions were created and participants practiced empathy with their teams who were facing challenges.

5.5.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of senior administrative staff at a higher education institution as they navigated the realities of EWR in their various responsibilities. While acknowledging the limitations of this study, it has largely achieved its aim by successfully recruiting the 17 participants in the four faculties that were identified at the outset of the study. The 17 participants provided very valuable information to the study as they answered the research questions outlined in section 1.7.

The aim of the study was achieved by showing the following:
  i)   ERW brought with it its own set of challenges, opportunities and personal factors. These are covered in detail in section 5.3.
  ii)   Despite the fact that participants had different lived experiences, a number of themes emerged from the study that were very similar—these were covered.
  iii) Anxiety and mental health issues were experienced by almost all of the 17 participants as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a theme that has been previously discussed in the literature.

5.6 Summary

Chapter Five discussed the themes that emerged from the findings, as well as discussing and answering the research questions using existing literature. Table 5.1 shows the emergent themes, while Table 5.2 provides a summary of the themes. The findings show that isolation is one of the most difficult challenges of ERW, as highlighted by eight participants, two of whom lived alone. Effective communication is a fundamental and critical component of all administrative functions. Management's perceived lack of communication created communication challenges, which were exacerbated by a lack of technology skills and load shedding. Another finding is a lack of management skills among remote workers. All of these difficulties have a negative impact on one's health. The findings also revealed opportunities, such as the creation of paperless systems for the university and the ability for employees to do their own professional development and pursue personal hobbies.

The next chapter (Six) is the final chapter of this research study. It summarises the key research findings in relation to the research aims, questions and themes, and discusses their significance and contribution. It also includes a personal reflection and a discussion of the study's limitations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
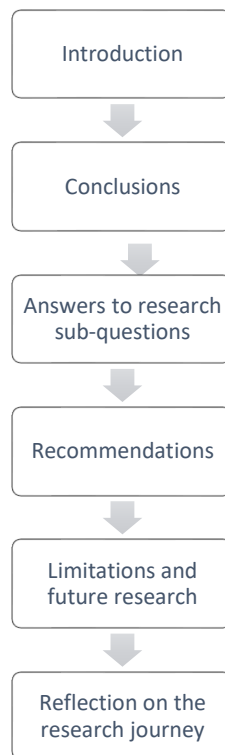
Figure 6.1: Layout of Chapter Six

6.1   Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by summarising the key research findings in relation to the research aims and questions and themes, as well as discussing the significance and contribution of the findings and themes. The study's limitations are discussed and recommendations for future research are made. The chapter ends with a personal reflection.

6.2   Conclusions

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff at a higher education institute as they negotiate realities of ERW during COVID-19 lockdown. To fulfil the aim of the study, a problem was identified, which was that there is little understanding of the experiences of administrative staff on ERW at higher educational institutions. The findings of the study support the aim and objectives of the study.

The senior administrative staff play a critical role in the operation of a successful university as they ensure that the academic administration is well-functioning in its operations. Despite well-documented studies on forced remote work, referred to as ERW in this study, there has been little research on administrative staff in higher education institutes. As discussed in section 2.3, virtualness in higher education institutions has tended to focus on teaching and learning rather than administrative roles and activities (Adam et al., 2016).

Sablock (2022) reports that in the future, remote work will become an increasingly important part of how administrative tasks are completed at many traditional universities. Institutions must be prepared to create a remote work policy that meets the needs of their respective businesses to remain competitive. The results indicate that ERW comes with various challenges and opportunities, as well personal factors that have impacted senior administrators' experiences. The literature review in section 2.8 identified a conceptual framework that showed the relationship between five virtual remote work characteristics and lived experiences recorded in this study. The findings of this study support this framework while highlighting the challenges of ERW, as previously documented in the literature. It also highlighted ERW opportunities including paperless systems, which was a significant finding given that the university was forced to shift its mode of teaching and working to a virtual environment. Presented below are the main findings to answer the main research question through the research sub-questions (Table 1.1).

6.3 Answers to the research sub-questions

6.3.1 Research sub-question 1.1

RSQ 1.1: What challenges are associated with remote work for senior administrative staff during the COVID-19 lockdown?

The findings presented below highlight the main challenges identified during the 17 interviews:
  i)   Isolation leads to anxiety and mental health problems.
  ii)   Technological challenges and leadership's perceived lack of communication resulted in ineffective communication.
  iii) Some township infrastructure is be below standard, which caused staff members (participants) to experience unreliable Internet access and doubt the reliability of the line of communication to carry out processes.
  iv)   Some participants lacked technological skills.
  v)   There was a lack of proper skills for managing colleagues who had emotional health issues.
  vi)   An overwhelming workload was experienced.

6.3.2 Research sub-question 1.2

RSQ 1.2: What are the opportunities of ERW?

Opportunities identified during the participants' interviews include:
  i)   Paperless systems that allow for effective document tracking and management.
  ii)   Quality time with family, including time spent caring for young children and the elderly.
  iii) The ability to pursue hobbies as a result of the flexibility afforded by ERW.

iv) The opportunity for professional development. Some of the participants enrolled in online courses during ERW.

6.3.3 Research sub-question 1.3

RSQ 1.3: What are the factors considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff?

The answers below address this sub-question:
   i) Sufficient resources for the home office to allow administrators to do their tasks effectively.
   ii) Managers must have emotional intelligence to manage teams.
   iii) The majority of participants indicated that team support and trust are critical for successful remote work.

6.3.4 Research sub-question 2.1

RSQ 2.1: How has ERW affected the work performance of the senior administrative staff the during COVID-19 lockdown?

The answers below address this sub-question:
   i) The findings were that ERW enabled participants to better manage parental priorities, spend more time with their spouses and families and be more flexible in completing household tasks. The participants valued the flexibility and control of working from home.
   ii) Participants stated that they worked longer hours and outside of normal business hours to complete work tasks and manage home priorities.

6.3.5 Research sub-question 2.2

RSQ 2.2: How does ERW affect the engagement of senior administrative staff with stakeholders of the institution?
   i) According to the findings, MS Teams meetings are the preferred platform for engagement, although Skype for Business and Zoom platforms were also used. Due to prolonged load shedding at different intervals, connectivity issues arose.
   ii) Student engagement dropped significantly at the start of ERW. This was suspected to be due to technological challenges and a lack of data.
   iii) Participants perceived a lack of direction or effective communication from the university's senior leaders on the way forward. Some participants stated that they relied on information from third parties, which was not always reliable.

6.4 Recommendations

In light of the findings above, the following recommendations are presented:

i)   For ERW, the university should communicate future changes and requirements, as well as contingency plans, well in advance. Because of COVID-19's enforced remote work, universities were unable to plan for an organisation-wide ERW strategy. The findings and insights from this study can be used to inform universities about administrative staff experiences with switching to ERW and the importance of adequate resourcing.

ii)   Prior experience managing remote teams is valuable and can be obtained by providing opportunities within roles such as acting appointments for future managers.

iii)   Encourage all senior administrative team members to attend 'helping managers manage' training.

iv)   The findings also revealed that there are senior administrative staff who would prefer to work primarily from home and only go to their offices for specific tasks such as face-to-face meetings because they are more productive at home. This interest should be encouraged and bolstered by the development of clear remote policies.

v)   Clear remote work policies should be developed and drafted to outline the accountabilities, duties, roles and responsibilities of administrative staff who work remotely. These policies will also serve as a foundation for measuring performance when work remotely.

vi)   The findings also revealed disparities in the home office resources made available to staff. Having the same resources fosters a sense of community and a shared identity, which may help to address perceived disparities in treatment between faculties. For this approach to be successful, faculties must ensure that similar resources are available to staff members.

vii)   The university should consider the areas where staff members work remotely, as this has an impact on connectivity resources. A staff member who lives in the township may require more resources than someone who lives in the suburbs.

This study has contributed to an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of remote work for senior administrative staff in higher education.

6.5 Limitations and future research

This research assisted to better explore and understand the challenges and opportunities that face university senior administrative staff who work remotely. While the majority of the findings are consistent with previous research, there are some limitations that should be mentioned. COVID-19 and remote work have affected every member of staff at a South African higher

education institution in some way and to varying degrees. No one will be able to emerge from this experience untouched (Hedding et al., 2020).

i) The first limitation is that it has not been possible to show which administrative staff has presented which interview information to ensure that members of the university could not identify the identities of the participants. Individual differences between faculties and their possible links to different staff responses could not be considered, limiting the depth of analysis for the qualitative data.

ii) Another limitation was the short amount of time available, which meant that only senior administrative staff could be interviewed. These were purposively chosen in four faculties. The study was able to gain valuable insight into these factors as a result of this, but the 17 participants are not representative of the many senior administrative staff at the university.

iii) There is limited research on this topic in higher education institutions because most researchers are more concerned with student and academic issues (Adam et al., 2016; Sablock, 2022). More administrative staff opinions should be gathered to further develop this research so that a larger sample can result in more conclusive and meaningful data. It is also suggested that, in addition to the views of senior administrative staff, perspectives from other key stakeholders such as junior administrative staff and those working in service departments be surveyed. This ensures that other viewpoints are considered.

iv) These recommendations may not be appropriate for service departments because they do not deal with students and different contexts may necessitate different approaches. As a result, they should be considered in a broad and principled sense.

Future research could be conducted at another university in South Africa using the same research design. A comparative study could be carried out to determine the experiences of administrative staff members in relation to working remotely, and the scope of the research could be expanded to include the hybrid mode. A number of the experiences drew attention to problems relating to mental health; consequently, forthcoming research might need to concentrate on this facet in greater depth. To obtain additional row data, qualitative research could be conducted using focus group data collection methods. The findings from that study could then be compared to the findings from this study. Because administrators play such an important part in the overall quality of the student experience, additional research into their roles could assist educational institutions in shifting their focus away from students and teachers and toward the administrators themselves.

6.6   Reflection on the research journey

Procrastination in research is a reality. This is how a three-year Masters journey turned into a six-year journey! I began this journey in 2016, and I finished my coursework in record time. Doing the research portion of my Master's degree has been the most difficult, but also the most rewarding. Each time my supervisor sends me that 'almost there Nonnie' message, I remind myself why I started this journey.

The years 2018 and 2019 were the most difficult years for me, and I was unable to focus on my studies, so I decided to put my research on hold. I almost decided not to continue my studies at one point, but in 2020, that feeling that I have always had, to finish what I started, resurfaced and I never looked back. I have faced numerous challenges, most notably the death of my beloved mother in January 2021. She has always been proud of my academic accomplishments and has been a strong supporter of this research. Her memory has fuelled my desire to complete my research.

Conducting interviews was both frustrating and rewarding because I could not do them face-to-face and had to reschedule a few of them to accommodate load shedding for my participants. I tried to be as objective as possible when conducting interviews with my participants. The experience helped to improve my interpersonal and communication skills, as well as my confidence. It also felt like a bonding session with most of the participants, who opened up to me and provided me with all of the information I required.

On September 15, 2021, I had the opportunity to present a paper titled 'Never let a crisis go to waste' at the CPUT Research, Innovation, Teaching, and Learning in the Age of COVID-19. I was extremely nervous and thankful that I had plenty of practice with my supervisor prior to the presentation. I also submitted a paper to the International Engaged Scholarship Conference, which will be held in Johannesburg from the 14th to the 16th of August 2022. My supervisor's tenacity in all of this has been remarkable and I am grateful for his assistance.

Overall, I enjoyed the journey and learned a lot about myself. Reading literature from a variety of researchers has broadened my knowledge base, and I am considering whether I should pursue a PhD as a result of this experience!

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DM	Departmental Manager
SAS	Senior Administrative Staff
SAO	Senior Administrative Officer
ERW	Emergency Remote Work
RW	Remote Work
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
HEI	Higher Education Institute
ERC	Ethics in Research Committee
UCT	University of Cape Town
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology

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APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix A: Introductory letter for data collection

From: Nonnie Falala
Sent: Wednesday, 24 March 2021 09:34
To: xxxx

Cc: Andre de la Harpe <andre@cencra.com>
Subject: Research Study: Emergency remote work during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Lived experiences of employees at a Tertiary Institution

Dear Departmental Manager

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study on **Emergency remote work during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Lived experiences of employees at a Tertiary Institution.** The findings of this study will contribute towards my Masters programme at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. By participating in this study, you are agreeing to MS Teams or Zoom meeting that should take approximately 30 – 45 minutes.

Please note that your participation in this study is **voluntary**, **anonymous** and **confidential** and that you may withdraw your participation at any point.

This study has been approved by the CPUT Business and Management Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 2 March 2021 and permission to access UCT staff for research has been granted (documents attached).

If you have any questions regarding participation in the study, please contact me at nonnie.falala@uct.ac.za or contact my supervisor, Dr Andre de la Harpe Andre, at DelaharpeA@cput.ac.za.

Let me know your availability and I will set up the appointment; anytime on the following dates:

- Wednesday 31 March 2021
- Friday 9 April 2021
- Monday 12 April 2021
- Tuesday 13 April 2021
- Wednesday 14 April
- Thursday 15 April
- Friday 16 April

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Nongqabutho (Nonnie) Falala

CPUT student number 215229193

9.2   Appendix B: Consent to participate in a research study

Faculty of Business and Management Sciences
Ethics Informed Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Category of Participants (tick as appropriate):

Staff/Workers	x	Teachers		Parents		Lecturers		Students	
Other (specify)									

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by **Nonnie Falala** from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards (tick as appropriate):

An undergraduate project		A conference paper	
An Honours project		A published journal article	
A Masters/doctoral thesis	x	A published report	

Selection criteria
You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are:

(a)   **Senior Administrative Staff**
(b)   **Departmental Manager**

The information below gives details about the study to help you decide whether you would want to participate.

Title of the research:

Emergency remote work during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Lived experiences of employees at a Tertiary Institution, Cape Town, South Africa.

A brief explanation of what the research involves:

The aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences of senior administrative staff, specifically departmental managers (DMs) at a higher institution of education as they negotiate realities of ERW in their various responsibilities. The objective of this study is to determine the factors that affect their work experiences and the factors/resources necessary for improved ERW. This study will also examine the challenges associated with ERW for senior administrative staff. A further objective is to evaluate the opportunities of ERW.

Procedures (semi-structured interview)

If you volunteer to participate in this study the following will be done:

1. Describe the main research procedures to you in advance, so that you are informed about what to expect;
2. Treat all interviewees with respect by arriving on time for all the interview schedules and well prepared;
3. Conduct an introduction with the interviewee in order to break ice;
4. All the interviewees will be asked for permission to record the interviews and also take some note where applicable;
5. In a case where there is no clarity, the interviewees will be allowed to ask for confirmation or clarity of words/sentences/phrases to ensure accuracy of the data collected;
6. Participants will be told that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs;
7. Participants will be given the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer or feel uncomfortable with;
8. Participants will be told that questions do not pose any realistic risk of distress or discomfort, either physically or psychologically, to them;
9. At the end of each interview all the interviewees will be thanked for their time and information provided for this study;
10. Participants will be debriefed at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study).

You are invited to contact the researchers should you have any questions about the research before or during the study. You will be free to withdraw your participation at any time without having to give a reason.

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

Tick the appropriate column		
Statement	Yes	No
1. I understand the purpose of the research.		
2. I understand what the research requires of me.		
3. I volunteer to take part in the research.		
4. I know that I can withdraw at any time.		
5. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me as a result of my participation or non-participation.		
6. Comment:		

Please sign the consent form. You will be given a copy of this form on request.

Signature of participant	Date

Researchers

	Name:	Surname:	Contact details:
1.	Nongqabutho (Nonnie)	Falala	084 489 7595 nonnie.falala@uct.ac.za
2.	Andre	De La Harpe	082 448 1058 andre@cencra.com

Contact person: Nonnie Falala	
Contact number: 084 489 7595	Email: nonnie.falala@uct.ac.za

9.3 Appendix C: Ethics clearance

Cape Peninsula University of Technology
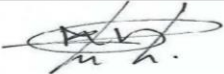
P.O. Box 1906 | Bellville 7535
Symphony Road Bellville 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 21 4603291
Email: fbmsethics@cput.ac.za

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	FACULTY: BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC) on **02 March 2021**, ethics **APPROVAL** was granted to **Nonnie Falala (215229193)** for a research activity for **M Tech: Business Administration** at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation / thesis / project:	**Emergency remote work during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Lived experiences of employees at a Tertiary Institution, Cape Town, South Africa** Lead Supervisor (s): Dr A. C de la Harpe

Decision: APPROVED

Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	**2 MARCH 2021** Date

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the CPUT Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study requires that the researcher stops the study and immediately informs the chairperson of the relevant Faculty Ethics Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, notably compliance with the Bill of Rights as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution) and where applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003 and/or other legislations that is relevant.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after two (2) years for Masters and Doctorate research project from the date of issue of the Ethics Certificate. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report (REC 6) will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Clearance Certificate No | 2021_FBMSREC_006

9.4 Appendix D: List of participants

Participant Number	Rank	Faculty	Objective	Status
1	Departmental Manager	Engineering	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
2	Senior Admin Officer	Humanities	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
3	Departmental Manager	Engineering	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
4	Departmental Manager	Commerce	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
5	Departmental Manager	Engineering	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
6	Senior Admin Officer	Humanities	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
7	Departmental Manager	Science	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
8	Ops and Finance Manager	Commerce	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
9	Departmental Manager	Science	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
10	Acting Departmental Manager	Commerce	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
11	Administrative Officer	Science	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
12	Ops and Finance Manager	Commerce	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
13	Departmental Manager	Engineering	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
14	Senior Admin Officer	Commerce	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
15	Senior Admin Officer	Humanities	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
16	Administrative Officer	Humanities	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved
17	Administrative Officer	Humanities	Explore and understand the lived experiences during ERW	Achieved

9.5   Appendix E: Semi-structured questions

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of ERW for senior administrative staff?

RSQ 1.1: What challenges are associated with remote work for senior administrative staff during the COVID-19 lockdown?

IQ 1.1.1: Which part do you find most difficult when working remotely? What are the challenges associated with this?

IQ 1.1.2: What do you miss the most when working remotely instead of the traditional office?

RSQ 1.2: What are the opportunities of ERW?

IQ 1.2.1a: What are the opportunities of working remotely that you have encountered?

IQ 1.2.1b: How have you adapted your operations in response to ERW?

IQ 1.2.2: How will this situation change your way of work after COVID-19?

IQ 1.2.3: What were your expectations of ERW and how did they turn out to be? What have been your surprises?

RSQ 1.3: What are the factors considered necessary for improved ERW for senior administrative staff?

IQ 1.3.1: What do you believe is required for improved ERW for senior administrative staff?

IQ 1.3.2: How would you judge your own productivity when working remotely vs. working at the office?

IQ 1.3.3: Does it take the same time to fulfil a task remotely as at the office?

RQ2: How do senior administrative staff manage ERW?

RSQ 2.1: How has ERW affected the work performance of the senior administrative staff the during COVID-19 lockdown?

IQ 2.1.1: What are the factors that have impacted your work performance as a result of ERW?

IQ 2.1.2: Do you know if the university or faculty has an ERW policy? Do you think such a policy is necessary? How so?

IQ 2.1.3: Where do you work from at home and what have you done to improve the ergonomics of your workspace?

IQ 2.1.4: What resources have been provided to you by your department to create a better work environment at home and do you feel you have all that you need to perform your duties? If not, what equipment do you think you will need to be more effective?

IQ 2.1.5: What are your routines throughout the day and how have they changed from when you worked in the office?

RSQ 2.2: How does ERW affect the engagement of senior administrative staff with stakeholders of the institution?

IQ 2.2.1: What communication channels are used to stay in touch with your stakeholders? What works well with the channels and what would you like to change?

IQ 2.2.2: Do your teams require more help when working remotely than when they are in the office, and are their challenges similar or do you believe they have different issues?

IQ 2.2.3: What are your experiences with student engagements in ERW?

9.6   Appendix F: Transcription for P1

> **Recording Name:** Research interview_Nonnie Falala_1
> **Recording Length:** 16min38sec

1		
2		
3	RESEARCHER	Okay, there you go. Lovely. Yes, just to say whatever you share with me will be treated with confidentiality. And your
4		name is not going to be identifiable if it is published. And also, you are free to withdraw your participation at any time.
5		Just let me know if you're uncomfortable with anything. And if there's any questions that I'm going to ask that you are
6		not sure of or you are not happy to respond, that's fine. [[unclear]]
7	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
8	RESEARCHER	Okay. So is there anything that you'd like to start before I commence with the questions?
9	PARTICIPANT	I just did my masters so many years ago. And I wish we had this sort of technology available then. I mean, when I did
10		my master's computers were barely a thing.
11	RESEARCHER	Yes.
12	PARTICIPANT	It must be a whole different thing to do a masters in this day and age.
13	RESEARCHER	It is, but I would have preferred face to face, but anyway.
14	PARTICIPANT	Yes, it might be easier face to face. But at least you can record.
15	RESEARCHER	Yes, at least I can record, you are right [[chuckles]] That's a big one! Anyway, my first question to Marchelle [[sp?]], is
16		how long have you been working in this role?
17	PARTICIPANT	Seven years.
18	RESEARCHER	Lovely, and in terms of the size of your department, admin staff and also academics and your students... How big is it?
19		Just rough numbers.
20	PARTICIPANT	There are three admin staff, there's seven academics and we usually have about 2000 students a year.
21	RESEARCHER	Wow, that's a big number. And in terms of remote working, now which part do you find most difficult or most
22		challenging working remotely?
23	PARTICIPANT	For me, it's the management. I'm the line manager in my office and I find it a challenge to try and support my team
24		when I can 't be there to see what they're having trouble with. Because I have to rely on them to tell me that there's a
25		problem, otherwise I don't know. If we were usually in an open plan office, we all share an office, and so I can always
26		hear, okay something's going wrong or somebody needs help. But now I have to rely on them to say, "Look, here's a
27		problem."
28	RESEARCHER	Yes, I see, okay. And is there anything that you miss besides maybe having your team close to you? Is there anything
29		that you miss working in an office on campus?
30	PARTICIPANT	That's an interesting question. I miss the people, I miss seeing people and being able to... I also manage the tutors
31		and this year we have tutors that I have never met. And I find that very strange, because I'm talking to them, I'm
32		emailing them and we have conversations, but I've never met them. I wouldn't know them if I passed them on the
33		street.
34	RESEARCHER	Yes.
35	PARTICIPANT	So I miss the people.
36	RESEARCHER	You miss the people. And with this challenges, obviously there will be opportunities, hopefully. Are there any
37		opportunities that you have seen or that you have observed with working from home, working remotely?
38	PARTICIPANT	I find that I get a lot more done, because you don't get interrupted by people coming to your desk or asking questions,
39		or... Our office also has a window that the students can come to, so we get a lot of students as well as a lot of tutors
40		and staff. So I find that being able to concentrate without being interrupted does make a big difference. I get a lot more
41		done.
42	RESEARCHER	But in terms of the actual functions, you get a lot more done because there is no interruptions... [[some interference]]
43		Is it mine or yours?
44	PARTICIPANT	It could be either.
45	RESEARCHER	Let me just...
46	PARTICIPANT	Mine was very difficult this morning, but it's been good so far.
47	RESEARCHER	So in terms of the functions that you do, in terms of the time that it takes you to finish a function... Say for example, I'm
48		not sure if you deal with marks processing or if you do the budget for your departement... Do you find that you do it
49		quicker... I know that you cover quite a lot, because there are no interruptions, but in terms of speed do you get things
50		done faster at home or in the office?
51	PARTICIPANT	Faster at home, because at home my husband has set me up that I've got two screens. So I can, it's easier for me to
52		work on the two screens. So I find that I can do things faster.
53	RESEARCHER	Okay, perfect. And in terms of your expectations, what you assumed this remote work will feel like or will look like, are
54		there any surprises? Or what you expected is what you see?
55	PARTICIPANT	The one surprise for me is how much more I do work. I start working at 6.30 in the morning. And although I'm at home,
56		so I can clean the kitchen, or I can start supper, but I will keep working until 6 o'clock, 8 o'clock at night. I will still
57		check email. But I wouldn't do that when I was in the office, you know. I would come home and the office was done.
58		So I find that I'm putting in a lot more hours because I'm at home, and my PC is home.
59	RESEARCHER	And your space where you're working in - you said your husband managed to get you a second screen sorted - do
60		you float around the house, or do you have a specific area that you work in?
61	PARTICIPANT	I have a specific area.
62	RESEARCHER	A specific area to work in, that's good. And so in terms of the resources that you are using, did your department give
63		you any resources, any equipment to use at home?
64	PARTICIPANT	I didn't need any, because my husband works at IT, so we have a lot of IT stuff at home. But one of my colleagues did
65		need resources and the department did provide for her.
66	RESEARCHER	Okay, no that's good. And in terms of your routine, obviously your routine has changed from the normal offices, how
67		has your routine changed? Or maybe what is your normal routine on a normal day working from home?
68	PARTICIPANT	Well, I usually get up at about six o'clock, and then I'll get dressed and I'll start working from about twenty past six, half
69		past six. And then at about ten past seven I'll take my child to school, and then I'll be back by half past seven and then
70		I'll keep working. I do get up to have breakfast and I'll get up if I need to, you know, do something, make a cup of tea
71		or do something like that. And he usually comes home at two o'clock on a Friday but at three o'clock for the rest of the

72		week. So then I find I'm a lot more distracted, because he's... I'm sitting in the lounge and he's behind me, so I'll hear
73		a lot from him. And he doesn't – I mean he's eight, so he should understand – but he doesn't seem to... If I'm talking,
74		he wants to see who I'm talking to and what am I saying...
75	RESEARCHER	[[laughs]]
76	PARTICIPANT	And he wants to talk as well. So I get my best work done when he's not here.
77	RESEARCHER	Okay, and then your team you said that... You didn't say you struggled, but you said you find that a bit challenging
78		managing them when they are not in your space, but how are they coping? Do they need more help from you when
79		they are working remotely than when you are all on campus?
80	PARTICIPANT	Well, it's difficult because one of them's main function was to deal with the people who come to the office. So her main
81		function was to deal with the students at the window. But now we no longer have students at the window.
82	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
83	PARTICIPANT	So she's trying to deal with the students on email. But what the other colleague does, is she's usually dealing with the
84		students on email. So it was a bit difficult at the beginning to re-allocate their jobs really. So the one who usually deals
85		with email is now busy with mark sheets and she's busy with putting everything together and making sure that all the
86		marks are loaded onto GreatBook [[sp?]] and downloaded and re-uploaded. She does all of that, whereas the other
87		one is now responsible for email. I find what helped us quite a lot, is we now have a meeting every morning at 09.30
88		and then we will chat, and I will say, "What are you busy with?" And they'll say, you know, "I'm busy with this," or "I'm
89		busy with that." And then I'd say, "Well, I can help you with this, send me that." So I can do that. Last year, one of my
90		colleagues really struggled, because she had to re-do everything she had already done in the first couple of weeks.
91		Because everything changed with the emergency online learning. And we no longer had exams, we had to re-jiggle all
92		our assessments. And she really struggled, because now she had a tremendous amount of more work. She also had
93		to learn how to set up quizzes on Vula, because the convenors struggled with that. So I found that she was near to
94		breakdown. But the fact that we can now chat in the mornings... I arranged for her, she didn't have a head-set, so I
95		arranged for her to get a headset so that at least we can communicate. And then I can find out where she is and
96		what's going on with her and if there's anything that the other two of us can do to assist.
97	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. Okay, that's good. And then you said you also worked closely with tutors, you manage your tutors. Besides,
98		okay maybe just the entire student body - do you find them sending you more emails now? Or they've just also just
99		gone quiet, or it's business as usual with students?
100	PARTICIPANT	I find they went quiet towards the end of last year. In the beginning of last year, in the beginning of online learning we
101		had a lot of correspondence. And I was emailing them to check on them, because I was checking on the postgrads. I
102		deal with postgrads mostly. And they were emailing me and... but towards the end of last year, things got very quiet
103		and people were really struggling to submit essays. And there was a lot of mental health issues, and you know, a lot of
104		people were really not dealing very well with the isolation.
105	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes, absolutely. And if say, Covid disappeared - let's pray it does - and we are all free to go back to our offices,
106		do you think that things will change? I mean, do you feel there must be flexibility, or it must just be what it was in terms
107		of...?
108	PARTICIPANT	Yes, I'm just going to put my headphones on.
109	RESEARCHER	That's fine, don't worry, it's okay. Hello my [[unclear]] Hello! My name's Nonnie. How are you?
110	PARTICIPANT	Say gello.
111	CHILD	Hello!
112	RESEARCHER	How are you? How was school?
113	PARTICIPANT	How was school?
114	CHILD	Good.
115	PARTICIPANT	Good? Okay. [[chuckles]] Yes, as far as change goes, I would hope that there would be flexibility. Because it is
116		sometimes easier for some people to work... I mean we'd sometimes be in the office, but I'd like us also to have some
117		time at home, because you are so much more productive at home. So, you know, if I'm in the office for three days a
118		week and working from home two days a week, and then we can sort of alternate. I would like that to be possible. I
119		don't know if it will be, but that would be something that I'd be interested in.
120	RESEARCHER	That's good. And then, Marchelle [[sp?]] my last question, do you know if UCT or your faculty, or your department, if
121		they've got a policy or guidelines specifically for administrative staff who are working remotely?
122	PARTICIPANT	I don't know if they have anything official. I know my department certainly doesn't, because we figured it out as we go
123		along. And I don't think... I think the faculty has only put in things like "the faculty would prefer to have online teaching
124		rather than face-to-face teaching". They haven't actually put in any guidelines for how administrative staff should do
125		their jobs. I mean they do a lot with academics, you know, how online teaching should work. But I haven't heard of
126		anything with administrative staff.
127	RESEARCHER	Okay, that's good. And is there anything that you'd like to share that I've not asked you about that you think is
128		important to help me better understand your experience with remote working?
129	PARTICIPANT	Let me think. I've spoken about how one of my colleagues has really struggled. One of my other colleagues, my other
130		colleague, she struggles with IT. She struggles with technology and she finds it very difficult. It makes her very
131		stressed.
132	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
133	PARTICIPANT	So it took us quite some time to get her accustomed to working like this, but she's now much better. And she's having
134		a lot less anxiety. But otherwise, I do wonder what's going on in the office, but I don't have an urge to go and visit.
135	RESEARCHER	Absolutely, all of us – most of us – say that. [[chuckles]]
136	PARTICIPANT	We went back, I think, two months after I went back to clean out the fridge and, you know, just throw away all the old
137		stuff that was in the fridge. I didn't want anything to sort of, you know, be terrible. So I just went, knowing that we were
138		going to be gone for some time, I just went to clean out the fridge. But there was nobody else there, so it was safe. So
139		ja, but that's where we are.
140	RESEARCHER	Okay, thank you very much.
141	PARTICIPANT	I wish you all the best with your studies.
142	RESEARCHER	[[chuckles]] I need the luck! I am just going to stop the recording at this stage, just hold on. Did I stop it? No, it's still
143		recording. Stop recording. [[cuts off]]

9.7 Appendix G: Transcription for P2

RESEARCHER		Okay, let me just wait for the recording to start, then I can say that, because that must be recorded as well. There you go. So I was going to say if ther's anything that you're uncomfortable with in our discussion or there's a question that you're not comfortable with, you just let me know and you don't have to answer that question. And also whatever we discuss, it's going to be treated with full confidentiality. Your name will not be identifiable if this research is published, so I can assure you of that.
PARTICIPANT		No, that's fantastic, that's good, really. Okay, thank you so much.
RESEARCHER		Also just to say that if you want to withdraw from this process, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can just let me know and then I will just withdraw whatever you will have provided.
PARTICIPANT		Okay, no that's perfect. Understood perfectly.
RESEARCHER		Okay, so my first question, Ayesha [[sp?]], is how long have you been in this role?
PARTICIPANT		In this particular department in this role, I'm here eleven years now.
RESEARCHER		Eleven years. Let me just also... What I omitted in doing... I need to tell you exactly why I am doing this. So I'm doing this as part of my Masters degree. I'm with CPUT. And my topic, I came up with this topic just after we went on lockdown. So at the time was still an emergency situation. That's why my topic is called "Emergency remote work during Covid." So what I would like to understand are the lived experiences of senior administrative staff on campus or at tertiary institutions, and in my case I chose UCT. So I know that most of the things now, it's no longer an emergency. We are more or less comfortable, maybe, with what is going on. But I would like you to maybe tap into the space when this was still an emergency. It's still fine, even if you relate to the current scenarios.
PARTICIPANT		Okay.
RESEARCHER		Okay, so now and also how big is your department in terms of your admin team, your academics and your students? Just some rough numbers.
PARTICIPANT		Okay, in terms of the admin staff, we've got seven, but I would say six, because the one is more on an academic level. She's an admin staff, but it would be more on an academic level. So we are six admin staff. And we've got two sections – one is Main Psychology and one is, we've got a Child Guidance Clinic which is a section of our department. So very much run on its own, but also very much part of Psychology. So we see to that section as well. And our academic staff is about 25, that is the fulltime, permanents. And then we've got a host of contract staff, quite a lot of contract staff. And I think our students would be maybe 2000 plus, I might be very wrong, I can have a look quickly.
RESEARCHER		Yes, yes.
PARTICIPANT		But that's the area where I'm in. I'll just quickly have a look and check where we are in terms of our student numbers. I think that was the last that I had checked, but I might be off with that, but I'll just quickly tell you where we are with student numbers.
RESEARCHER		It's quite a big number, actually. 2000 is quite a big number.
PARTICIPANT		Ja no, it is a big department. I don't know if I'm going off this topic, but I think when I took on this position, I came from a place... I was 10 years in Commerce and then I went a year to Health Science. In Health science, I had like about 15 students, four staff and I practically relaxed most of the time, you know. So it was like a huge jump. But fortunately training in Commerce was good.
RESEARCHER		Yes.
PARTICIPANT		No, no I'm lying. We've got 4900 students. A healthy amount, 4900.
RESEARCHER		Because your courses are offered to Humanities, to Commerce Students and also to Health Sciences, I think.
PARTICIPANT		Yes, our Humanities of Psychology, that's correct. We've got a certain group in Health Science and in Humanities, You are correct 100% on that.
RESEARCHER		Okay, good. Now tell me, in terms of doing your functions or your working remotely, what is it that you find most difficult working remotely? And also, what are the challenges that are associated with... Okay, I must just warn you there's a bit of noise, I will be muting myself. I've got builders in the house, so there'll be some noise here. So what is it that you find most challenging working remotely?
PARTICIPANT		Okay, I'm talking now about initially, touch wood it seems to have been sorted out a bit now. I think remotely, one of the hugest challenges was our equipment. Fortunately, you know, we did have an advantage where... you know when we had loadshedding years ago, the admin staff we sort of without realising it I sorted out equipment for us, you know, in terms of laptops and that because we needed it for loadshedding. So when we went into remote there was no thing like... The four of us didn't have, the two on the other side had, and we four could grab even the research ones, you know. And I always smile and say thank God a month or two before lockdown I secured some screens from our IT department. So I could even grab a screen on the last day. That all was nice, but the problem was that the equipment in the start... I don't know, for some reason we were going through hell. Every day, every second day, every third day, it was playing up. We were spending hours... First of all, work didn't stop. Say we went on lockdown on the Friday and on that very day it was still very busy. So we just came in and we had to find space at home, which was not a problem, because I was sort of semi-set up. But the equipemnt, to me, was the biggest challenge. But the positive on that, I must say, is that over the time ICTS were really good. Yes, they all know me that I am one big squealer. But I explained to them that I have to complain, because our work doesn't understand that your equipment's not working. You know, all the deadlines. So to me the biggest challenge was equipment. I quickly realised the first day... If I can talk on behalf of my staff? Can I talk on behalf of them as well?
RESEARCHER		Yes, remember you are managing the space. So I would like you to maybe speak about yourself also because obviously your role affects the people that are beneath you. So you can also include them in your...
PARTICIPANT		Okay, so there were two of us that we understood immediately that you're in your work hours and you have to separate work form home. Perhaps, and not to be unfair to the others, perhaps our situation is such where, I would say, 85% we could do that. Or staff, who's got bigger families at home, who's got younger children who couldn't understand that they're now working, because they were at home, do they had bigger challenges. They had to explain to the children that they are not at home, but they are working. And in the start, to be honest, I think just like with a flashing moment, I probably didn't realise it. So I was communicating to them and telling them – this is work hours, so please don't tell me you're baking. And then I realised, I said there's a little child in that home who's now crying for mommy to help to bake, you know? So you have to balance it. Then I also had to chill a bit and then we worked out. And then we had another colleague, at that time it just so happened that she moved in with her mother-in-law, who was very sick. So that type of challenges. So yes, some of my staff did experience that of balancing home and work.
RESEARCHER		Balancing home and work, okay. And in terms of what is it that you missed most, or that you're missing still, I guess, working in an office, in a traditional office. What is it that you miss most about working on campus?
PARTICIPANT		On a very light, but honest moment, to be honest I absolutely don't miss anything. But the one thing that I do maybe miss, is just, you know, I think that physical exercise you get at campus. Because when you get in, you get out of your car, you walk up the stairs. And then if I wanted to go to the bathroom I would be up and down the stairs the whole day, because the bathroom's up one floor. Now here at home I forget, then I need to take that little walk. In fact, one day somebody even told, she said, "When I pass by your house, just wave." I said, "No, no, work time, there's no socialising." So she said, "but in your office, don't you now and again take a bit of a breather to chat to your colleagues?" I said, "Oh ja, I didn't think of that," you know. So that, yes, I think the environment, put it that way, the natural environment, I miss that the most. Because I'm still in contact with the staff, but I think now that I'm thinking about it – a year later – that time I kept on saying, "I'm not missing." But if I think of it now, I think there are certain aspects of the work that you do benefit. Like you know, sometime colleagues also where you see each other. The aspect of training – most of it you can do online, but a lot of it you can't. Because a colleague will quickly run into your office and you'll show them, or they'll show you, or you'll run by. But to be honest with you, what I've given you, my original answer, that was that I miss the natural environment the most, ja.

80	RESEARCHER	Okay, and what do you think are the opportunities of working from home? Are there any opportunities that you have realised?
81	PARTICIPANT	Yes, I have to be honest, I'm for working at home. I find there were a lot of benefits. Yes, it can make you a little selfish – I don't know if
82		that's the right word - because while we are in contact with our colleagues all the times, it somehow gives you some type of flexibility. Even
83		though I think we are working more hours from home, because we don't know sometimes when to cut off, you know?
84	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
85	PARTICIPANT	I find that mostly we're fine. But if I had to... You know as being the senior admin person in the department, if I was asked to make a
86		decision later when, you know, things are safe for us to be back, then I would say, I would suggest that each one of us – there are four of us
87		on upper campus, right – I would say that each one of us take a turn to be there at least one week in a month. Because the students do
88		benefit from a physical presence. I know they're getting used to it, but I can sense that the students do miss that or walk into your office and
89		ask for something. And we're not a remote university.
90	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. And do you think that if lockdown or if Covid disappears and everything is back to normal, how do you think the situation will
91		change? Do you still think you will be comfortable going to work everyday, or you'd like to shift things? Or you'll be more flexible, how do
92		you think? Or you've not really had time to think about that at this stage?
93	PARTICIPANT	No, I actually thought about it quite a bit, and yes I would strongly recommend, you know, what I've said in my previous answer. Things
94		have changed, and I've also heard our VC [[sp?]] saying a lot of times in her feedbacks that everybody needs to know that things have
95		changed. I think we've all recognised that our work can be done from home. So I would recommend strongly that yes, I think that most of us
96		are finding advantages of working from home. There's major advantages, you know, the travelling and other things. So I would make a
97		suggestion that yes, if we all in the department would like to work from home then maybe we must have a rotational system. Fortunately,
98		we are four of us on our upper campus. On our lower campus, this Child Guidance Clinic, they are already implementing that. Because
99		they've had to open up the clinic. And the two ladies there they are alternating there every day. One goes in and one is at home every day.
100		So I would like to implement that, but more on a weekly basis, you know. To say one week one staff, and you know all we can do is we can
101		try it and see how it works, but we've now proved that it can work.
102	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. And then in terms of your productivity, or the functions that you do – I'll give you an example, say maybe I'm nost sure if you do
103		marks processing, or if it's done by your team, or maybe you do your budget, whatever function you can think of – do you think that you are
104		more productive working remotely than working in an office? And also do you think that you take more time doing that function in an office
105		or at home?
106	PARTICIPANT	Okay, I think the environment at the home and at the office plays a huge role. So if you look at the overall picture both would end up being
107		the same. Because in both areas you need to be disciplined. In the office environment, you know I've come across a few scenarios in my
108		time at UCT where in some offices people are very understanding and we encourage that you close the door for a bit when you are doing
109		marks. In some offices people are not always adaptable – they are not always flexible, rather – and they don't like admin staff to close
110		doors. That it's a challenege, because now you're trying to get your marks done and you're attending to walk-ins. At home it's the same
111		thing. If you've got an environemnt where you can shut off, you're going to get your marks and that type of thing. Like with us, we're doing
112		finance and those things as well, salaries and all that that have got deadlines. So you need to shut off totally and have... So if you've got
113		that environment in either of the places, I would think it will balance out. Both conditions apply differently, but they apply.
114	RESEARCHER	Okay. And then you said earlier that you manged to sort out some laptops and some screens for yourself a nd your team. Now is there
115		anything else that you think the department or the faculty – in terms of resources – that they could assign or give to the administrative staff
116		that you think will make your job easier at home? Is there anything besides the laptops that you were speaking of?
117	PARTICIPANT	To be very honest with you, big thumbs up to Psychology department. Firstly, my HOD trusts me fully to get things, you know, to be
118		responsible when I make decisions and when I get equipment. So whatever we've, each one of us – and also the staff. You know, over the
119		years I keep on telling the staff, "We're all adults, we don't want to speak to each other as children. We don't want to also nitpick. So let us
120		all, as a unit, behave as adults," you know. And I must be very grateful that on that aspect I found that my staff played the game. There
121		were once or twice they've asked for things that seemed overboard. But if you think of it.... I'll give you an example – just say you're asking
122		for headphones, right. You find one staff has asked for one that is simple, that says it serves the needs, that costs like R300. And then the
123		other staff is insisting they get one for R3000. At the end like we're trying to work out... But they seemed to understand when we brought
124		the scenario through. The university has given us modems, those that needed modems, they are paying for, you know. So I would say
125		generally we're fine. There was a slight hesitation when our laptops were giving in. On my second attempt, when I wrote to our IT manager
126		– and I must be honest, he was saying, "Ayesha, you're saying too much in one email," but I think that played the game, you know.
127		Because immediately he sorted us out there. Last week my colleague Fulani, last year he had a very not a nice incident where they stole
128		from his home and his laptop got stolen. Now last week he collected his new laptop. Hopefully his production will be a bit easier now. And
129		the thing is with Fulani is he doesn't speak. You've got to probe and probe then you find out what's the problem. So to answer your
130		question, I must be thankful, I'm grateful. I don't think any of us has had a serious challenge to say, they're not giving us. If anybody said no,
131		it was maybe because somebody's asking for one that is not needed, or maybe saying, "Why don't you look at a model that's a bit more
132		realistic?" But it wasn't like something major. But generally we use the principle, look if you need a tool to do your work, talk about it. And if
133		it is within reason, ask for it. And I've asked now, they also said they're all sorted out.
134	RESEARCHER	Okay, perfect. And in you case, in terms of your space at home, are you like me who sits in an open plan? I'm in the middle of the kitchen,
135		that's why I've got this picture that is behind me, that is not even mine, but anyway... So do you have a particular space that you work in or
136		do you move around the house? Or you are sorted with an office?
137	PARTICIPANT	No, I'm working mostly within bedrooms. On my side, yes, I am a bit fortunate in that there is a choice of space. So in the start I had to
138		move a bit because of lighting. You know, the lighting, it was a bit difficult for me to see properly on my laptop. But now and again I do like
139		to move around. So I do move a bit, but no I'm fine, I'm sorted. I know my one colleague has said to me, recently our IT manager said to us,
140		"Ayesha, don't your colleague want to take her PC from their office?" And then I put that proposal to her and she explained to me she
141		doesn't have a dedicated space. So she's got to move around.
142	RESEARCHER	Yes.
143	PARTICIPANT	So a computer won't work for her. She needs a laptop, you know.
144	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
145	PARTICIPANT	Mostly my colleagues seem to be sorted out. I think two of them have got slight challenges in terms of space, but mostly I would say even
146		there we are sorted out, so we are very grateful for that.
147	RESEARCHER	Okay.
148	PARTICIPANT	I don't know if this might cover a little of something you've asked me earlier on, or it might still be coming, but you know something's just
149		come to my mind and I might forget it. In terms of remote working, from my personal side, okay I've even had colleagues where they've
150		expressed that they want to work remotely, you know. For me, one of the biggest advantages is that I've got a mom who's not well in terms
151		of she's got dementia. So she doesn't realise – even with this whole Covid thing – she can't fathom what is happening. So, like said I visited
152		her today, she'd think I hadn't visited her for a long time. She stays is Martizburg. So with us remote working I was actually to spend time
153		with her without taking leave. Because as long as she sees me sitting in her room and doing her office work... and I didn't feel concerned
154		about confidentiality, because Mom. as I said, she's got dementia so she doesn't even realised half the time... you know, sometimes she's
155		sleeping too. So to me that was like a major, major benefit: I could spend like a whole week with her and I didn't have to take leave. And I
156		was working comfortable, I had meetings sometimes when she was sleeping. Or if I really feel that I would need that space, she would go to
157		the next room, you know, to my sister's room. So that, to me, I must say, was a major, major help.
158	RESEARCHER	Absolutely, that's a very, very good one. And in terms of your team, your support staff, do you think they need more of your support when
159		they are at home more than they're in the office? Or are they running with things? Are they doing okay on their own?
160	PARTICIPANT	See, generally they are doing fine, I think they are doing... I've noticed now, last year when we went on lockdown, in fact the few meetings
161		we had... It was difficult for us to have a meeting immediately, you know, so it took us a few weeks before we had a meeting and in each of

162		the meetings I found that there were lots of questions, lots of how to, lots of emails of "Ayesha, Can we, Can't we, How can we?" You know,
163		those type of things. But this year, I mean the other day I... We have our regular one-on-one's as well, you know, and my one colleague is
164		just like, "No, there's nothing to say in terms of work," you know. She just wanted to talk about like what's happening in her private life, you
165		know. So maybe there was a touch of irritation, but it also told me that they are now setteld and they are working independently, which is
166		really good. And all their sections seem to be working fine. I've asked for feedback, nobody's complained so far, so you know, even if there
167		is a slight irritation, it can be with me, it can be with anybody. It might be that the academic staff are saying, "Look, it's something that is the
168		norm, not something that we want to complaing about," you know?
169	RESEARCHER	Yes. And then with your big number of students, I'm not too sure if they just used to walk into your office, you know students walk in and out
170		needing some help here and there? Now, how do you engage with them? Do they send you emails? Do they phone? Or maybe it's just
171		quiet now, they are just doing their own things?
172	PARTICIPANT	No, no, what happened last year in the start we reconised that the students are all feeling very vulnerable. I mean, to the extent that the
173		student that I talked to last on the day that we were leaving for lockdown... You know, I couldn't forget hime because of his impeccable
174		manners, and just a week... You know we were doing that EDL thing where we were sending the documents to the [[unclear]]. They told me
175		they can't send the document to him and I said to our IT manager, "No, there's no such thing as you won't. You will send it to him, because
176		you people promised me. And I'm not going back to anybody to say, "You won't get it." And then eventually they said to me, "Okay, Ayesha,
177		we will send it, everything's sorted out," right. And guess what, a week later I got two emails, one from the IT manager and one from our
178		colleague – the student had committed suicide. So I said to them, you know, not me, it's teamwork. Even because on other platforms too he
179		was getting support. We would have all felt that we failed him if we [[unclear]], you know. So yes, students were very vulnerable. So what
180		happened is – and I give kudos to our postgrad students. The senior ones, they all got together and they started creating platforms on Vula,
181		on Whatsapps. And apparently they were very busy. There were questions that were flooding in. Nwo compared to that, I think this year
182		quite a few of them have come back to Cape Town, but there seems to be more calmness this year. But last year they did need support
183		and a lot of our postgrad students came on board and they offered the department, they said, "Come, we are gonna help you guys," and
184		they were also taking on a lot of that. Now at the moment, what happened is yes, my phones are all available, my colleagues have said the
185		same thing to me. So it's just depending on what the student is comfortable with. We do get lots of phone calles the whole day, and we do
186		get emails. But you know, they do send all that.
187	RESEARCHER	Okay, no that's good. And my last question is do you know if the university or the faculty or your department, if you've got a remote work
188		policy? And do you think such a policy is necessary, specifically for administrative staff?
189	PARTICIPANT	Ja, not formally. I think everybody understands that we are required to be at work, we are required to still deliver. All that hasn't changed.
190		And very important, while we do understand that there's a lot of disruptions, I'm like... Last week, I needed something urgently. And my
191		colleague said to me, "Oh, I was busy with the maintenance guys," and I said, but maintenance is not on your portfolio, it's on Ross'
192		portfolio. He said, "No, no maintenance at home." Then I had to explain to him... but maybe he just forgot, because we all understand that
193		first you do your work stuff. Your private things you either let your colleague know, "Look, I'm going to be unavailable because I have to..."
194	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
195	PARTICIPANT	Or we make up our time. But look, there is an untold policy, there isn't anything formal. Because I found that there wasn't actually a need to
196		do that, you know.
197	RESEARCHER	Yes, that's true.
198	PARTICIPANT	And he seemed to have understood, when I explained to him he seemed to have understood where we were coming from, you know. That
199		this is how you do things. I supposed last year there wasn't a need... In our meetings I did mention to them that we're not going to put
200		anything hard and fast. But these are, you know, the guidelines of how we all need to work. It's like it slipped him or something so as I say,
201		not too serious. But I think we all have an understanding of what's expected. So we haven't put anything... And I think to be on a lighter side
202		Psychology, Humanities, they're more soft in terms of that than when we were in Commerce. Commerce is business, you know. Business,
203		business. Humanities... When I joined the department they said to me, "Ayesha, look here we're quite flexible. We want work to be done,
204		but we understand if somebody's got a sick child or somebody's got that." So that's where we haven't put something formally, because
205		there wasn't a need to, I would say.
206	RESEARCHER	Okay, and is there anything that you'd like to share that I have not asked you, that you think is important for me to understand your
207		experiences better?
208	PARTICIPANT	I think I've covered all... In fact I was wondering that I was talking too much. [[laughs]] But I think you know you've just brought about
209		something so interesting. Because I think, or this was something absolutely major in the life of humanity, you know.
210	RESEARCHER	Yes.
211	PARTICIPANT	And I think overall everybody at this moment in time is going through – even though sometimes we feel we're not going through it – there is
212		a bit of a balance. Because in the start I don't think any of us comprehended the vastness of this problem, the size of it.
213	RESEARCHER	Yes.
214	PARTICIPANT	And I don't think we even realised what was going to play out. And now a year later I think in this third wave overall, even if though
215		colleagues don't openly talking about it, but people are in some ways struggling. Because we've seen on a daily basis people being
216		desperately sick with Covid. We've had close, close colleagues passing away. And you know, quite often in the middle of work you find
217		yourself thinking about it. And even colleagues who are not openly talking about it, when you talk to them you can pick up that there is an
218		element. So we all have to be also mindful of that, that we cannot... Yes, we all, especially be grateful... Firstly, I think I need to
219		record that we are immensely grateful that we had work to come to, you know. We were given that certain time by the dean – I don't know
220		about Commerce, but in Humanities the deam said, "Twelve o'clock is your guys' cut off time. You must be out." Right? Okay, I only went
221		out a little later, but we went. But the very next day we were all expected to carry on working, right? Nobody put the hard and fast through,
222		but things were coming through, right. And over the time you've now all realised that there's a lot going on. This was a huge thing, so now
223		we also have to find that balance of emotional well-being because of what's playing out with our work. I think that's really, really important.
224		Some people talk about it, others don't.
225	RESEARCHER	Others don't, yes. Anyway, we have come to the end of the interview questions, Ayesha. I will stop the recording at this point. And thank
226		you very much for your time.
227	PARTICIPANT	Thanks for thinking about me. I must say, in some ways it was quite therapeutic talking about it. Sometimes you don't realise, you know,
228		until you talk about something. So thanks to you.
229	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. Okay, let me just stop the recording. [[cut off]]

9.8 Appendix H: Transcription for P3

3	RESEARCHER	Ah, there you go, there you go. So... Now I can't see you. Okay, it's fine, now I can see you.
4	PARTICIPANT	[[chuckles]]
5	RESEARCHER	Don't ask me what I did. But anyway, so Tracy[[sp?]], here we are. Thank you very much for agreeing to be part of my journey. So I'm doing a Masters in Technology, yes. Master of Technology, I'm at CPUT. I'm doing a Master of Technology in Business Administration. So I've done my courework, I'm just doing my last part, which is the half-dissertation. And I came up with the topic in 2020, last year, just after we went on lockdown and at that stage it was still emergency remote. So that's why it's titled Emergency Remote. I don't if I'm going to change this, but I think for now this is what it is. So I'd like you to tap into the space when this whole thing was an emergncy. Although really and truly, I think it's going to be much difficult now from where we are. And also Tracy, just to inform you that whatever we discuss, it's going to be treated with full confidentiality. It's not going to be identifiable. No-one is going to know this is Tracy, they won't come hunting for you [[chuckles]]. And also, if you'd like to withdraw from this research, please let me know. And ja, do you have any questions before we start with your interview?
15	PARTICIPANT	No, not at all. Just, hopefully you can put me in your "thank you" section. I've been mentioned in quite a few dissertations, so I'd like to keep that up if you don't mind.
17	RESEARCHER	Okay, Tracy, I'll do that. Anyway Tracy can I ask how long have you been in this role? That's my question to everyone. How long have you been in this role?
19	PARTICIPANT	One month and two days.
20	RESEARCHER	One month and two days. Well done and welcome and congratulations.
21	PARTICIPANT	Thank you.
22	RESEARCHER	And how big is your unit in terms of staff? I know that your department is different from everyone else's department. So maybe just give me a bakground of your department.
24	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so we have myself as a senior administrative officer and three administrative assistants in pay class 7. Our main responsibility is ensuring that students from our learnig partner are enrolled correctly and efficiently and grades are captured and certification process takes place at the end of it all.
27	RESEARCHER	Okay, that's good. Now, what is it that you find challenging working remotely?
28	PARTICIPANT	With team members that perhaps need a bit more assistance, not being able to gauge exactly what they need when there's no transparency. I find that transparency within Teams, at most times it's very vague. It's minimal, people aren't very forthcoming about their challenges.
31	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And what is it that you miss most working in an office than the current arrangement?
32	PARTICIPANT	I would have to say cameraderie, especially having started and the team was already almost established. Coming in and, you know, not being able to ascertain that team dynamic from the get go.
34	RESEARCHER	Okay, and also with the challenges there would be opportunities as well, or some advantages? So what opportunities do you think are there with remote working?
36	PARTICIPANT	In most cases it would be connectivity as a challenge for some team members and also just resources as a whole. And I would have to take into consideration socio-economic factors.
38	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. But now, what are the advantages of working remotely?
39	PARTICIPANT	I find that most team members – not that this is needed or, you know, something that should happen – most team members tend to work longer hours and you tend to get more out of them in that sense. Throughput is better in terms of delivery. But ja, so I would say throughput and then also just commitment. I don't know if it's unique to UCT or to the individuals, but I would say there is more of a sense of wanting to please your employer when working from home.
43	RESEARCHER	Okay, but now how do you think this will change, maybe for you and your team, if you are told tomorrow you are now 100% on campus? Do you think it's gonna be better for you, or it's just you'd rather be where you are?
45	PARTICIPANT	To be honest, with regards to the lifestyle changes that's taking place over the last year it would be much better suited to still work from home and gradually come in. It wouldn't be easier to just go in full time immediately. Mentally as well it would be a challenge for quite a few people. For myself, I'm speaking personally, mentally I wouldn't be prepared. I would feel that I would work better from home now as I've established my routine and my processes and that type of thing.
50	RESEARCHER	Yes, and what is your routine now? I mean, how does... I know that you said that now people can work for longer hours or whatever, so but now how has your normal routine changed from the time you were working in an office?
52	PARTICIPANT	So basically when working in an office there's the challenge of making it through to the office on time with morning traffic. So that hour and a half that I would have spent in traffic, I log on earlier. I would log in at seven o'clock instead. I rarely take a lunch break. That's one thing that hasn't been good. So, you know, I'll take a break in the evening to cook dinner at about four o'clock, but then you log back on at like six, seven o'clock again. There's just no switch off. Uhm, ja.
57	RESEARCHER	Yes, but now how do you switch off? How do you manage that switch off? Do you struggle with that switch off after hourse, for example?
59	PARTICIPANT	Yes, so what I've learnt is that I made this mistake from the get go. You cannot work in your bedroom, a personal space. You need to set aside a dedicated office space, like even the living room. So essentially when you work in your bedroom, you definitely don't switch off, because then you look at your phone. You look at your emails at night, even while lying in bed. So what I do, is I have tried – whether it be I take my lunch to fetch the kids – I make sure I do something for myself within that hour as well. Just to like make it feel like I'm out the office. Even if I go and sit outside in the backyard for an hour, that tends to help.
65	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. And maybe you can tap into your previous team seeing that you've got a fairly new team now... In terms of activity, do you find that your team, are they more productive working remotely compared working at home? Maybe you can also link that to them needing you more, I mean having to hold their hands or helping them. Are you better off where you are now than where you were when you were in the office?
69	PARTICIPANT	I do find that team members tend to call more often when working remotely. There is no, kind of, like boundary. It's blurred, it's completely blurred, if not fallen away completely. You'll find people needing you at... Because people work so differently from home, you might have someone who is working at six o'clock at night who has no idea that you might be busy with homework or dinner or whatever. And they tend to think that it is okay to call. Even on a Sunday, ja. So that's been quite challenging. I do find, though, that they are more productive. Ja, South African culture has always, work culture has always been bums in seats. And we haven't – a lot of senior management, I would say – they haven't shifted their mindset in order to trust employees enough. Whereas middle management, I find that they've been more relaxed and more understanding. Because most of your middle management tends to be, you know, women, women of colour especially who understand what goes into running a household as well as, you know, having a full-time career as well.

79	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. You raised something, I wanted to ask you, you said... Yes, they are more productive. So now do you think
80		they are more productive because now they can spend more time doing a function say, for example they are capturing
81		something for you, then because they can actually do this even after hours, by the time that they give it to you, you
82		think look, it's done. So they are more productive. But in terms of time factor, for example, do you think that they take
83		more time doing a certain function compared to the time that they take when they are in the office? If that makes
84		sense.
85	PARTICIPANT	Ja, I actually think that it's because they have that... that social factor of the office also comes into play now, where
86		you don't have people standing around in a staff room. You don't realise how much time and money smoke breaks, for
87		example, takes from the employer. And how it all adds up in a day. So what I find is that people have more quiet time,
88		there's less distraction. Because we are human, we're social creatures so we have that interaction at the office. But at
89		home it's quite unique where, you know, you can carve out that quiet time that you need.
90	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. Okay. And then in terms of your workspace? Do you have your... Like this is why my background is actually
91		a picture. Because I don't want you to see where I am. I am in the middle of an open plan, I'm in the middle of the
92		kitchen. So do you have a specific place where you work in? Do you move around your house, or do you have a home
93		office?
94	PARTICIPANT	So I don't have a home office. I am like currently now, I am in my workspace, which is my bedroom. I have one of
95		those fold-up tables usually. But I've actually mixed it and pushed it to the side, because it just doesn't work for me. So
96		I'll move around. Especially if we have the cleaning lady around. So I'll shift from quiet space to quiet space. So it's
97		always one of the bedrooms, ja.
98	RESEARCHER	Okay, and then in terms of the resources did you department, or your unit, were you offered equipment or resources
99		to do your job and was whatever you were given, is that enough? Or is there any specific thing that you think you need
100		to perform your duties?
101	PARTICIPANT	Yes, no. More than enough in terms of the correct equipment, the setup of the equipment, the contribution towards
102		internet. Then also the option to utilise office resources is there. So ja, it's more than efficient.
103	RESEARCHER	Now recently there's been load-shedding. Actually, it's been going on for a while. So now with people that have got... I
104		think many people have wifi which works when there is no power. So, I mean, how are you coping in that space? I
105		know that some departments they have offered UPS. ave you been offered that?
106	PARTICIPANT	Uhm, when you say UPS, can you breakdown the acronym for me?
107	RESEARCHER	What is UPS? It's the unit processor whatever system. It's like your power bank. So it can actually hold your internet,
108		or your wifi for [[unclear]].
109	PARTICIPANT	Oh, okay so it's a backup battery. No, I haven't been offered that, but I do have one.
110	RESEARCHER	You do have one, okay. So that's good. Tracy, my next question to you is on your engagement with your team. How is
111		the engagement? Is there a specific communication channel that you prefer or that you use? Ja, how's the
112		engagement in that space?
113	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so what I've done is I've initiated Daily Standups and we do this via Microsoft Teams. So what happens outside
114		– in corporate culture it's quite popular, especially in tech companies – to have a Daily Standup, because everyone's
115		so busy, there's no time for a full hour meeting. So a Daily Standup maximum is half an hour and what it would entail
116		is an actual standup where everyone is standing. So we've done this though via Microsoft Teams, so it takes the effort
117		of logging on and to literally keep your section to ten minutes max. And you basically go around saying what you are
118		doing today, what you need, whether you need anything from anyone. So I find that Miscrosoft Teams has really
119		helped with that aspect.
120	RESEARCHER	Okay, that's good. And your... I'm not so sure how much student engagement you have... So how's that
121		communication? Obviously there's no face-to-face, but now how are they reaching out? Is it emails, is it phone calls?
122		How is that engagement?
123	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so personally I've had quite a few calls for the Humanities Faculty and for some Commerce students. Shame,
124		they basically call whichever number they can find, whoever answers. So it's been little to none basically. But I would
125		say that people are reaching out via phone more.
126	RESEARCHER	Yes.
127	PARTICIPANT	And via email.
128	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. And do you feel that in terms of emotional support, and specifically for senior team – because you are
129		expected to ensure that your team is taken care of – but now how are you taken care of?
130	PARTICIPANT	How am I taking care of them, or...
131	RESEARCHER	No, I know that you are expected to be, sort of. But how are you managing in your own space. I mean, how do you
132		manage your own stresses, for example, if I may call it that?
133	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so my own stressors, what I would do is... I haven't really felt any impact as yet, but one thing that I have
134		coming into a team during a lockdown during a pandemic, it has been a bit challenging. I do take it quite seriously. I never
135		used to be so serious about taking that break that I need to to just reflect. Especially if you're getting no luck with
136		service departments that need to assist. I try not to take it personally. I try to... You know the old count to ten before
137		you respond or pick up the phone? So I really try to reflect on an issue first before reacting.
138	RESEARCHER	Okay, it's a good one. Okay Tracy, my last question to you is do you know if the university or your faculty or your own
139		unit, if they have a remote working policy? Or if they don't have, or if you are not sure if they have, if there's one, do
140		you think such a poliocyu is necessary?
141	PARTICIPANT	I haven't seen any remote working policies, like a formal policy. I do feel I have been exposed to a couple, having
142		been with previous companies last year at the start of lockdown. And I do feel that it feels like a set of rules in a prison,
143		perhaps. Or not even prison. It's like parole conditions, that's what it kind of feels like. And I think it could just be
144		something formal on the HR website and not a document that anyone needs to sign.
145	RESEARCHER	Okay, I like that. I forgot that you are a writer [[unclear]].
146	PARTICIPANT	[[laughs]]
147	RESEARCHER	Is there anything that you would like to share with me, that you feel or you think is going to help me understand your
148		experiences of remote working better?
149	PARTICIPANT	I actually don't know if you're going to have a part two to your research to look at perhaps the mental impact on people
150		personally. You know, more of the social impact. Well, the impact on one's family and one's personal, you know,
151		capacity. I think I would look forward to something like that.
152	RESEARCHER	Yes, but that will not be my... I will not tap into that space, I would not know what to do with it. I will need help myself.
153		So let's hope that when you do your Masters, maybe you can pick that up. I will recommend that [[unclear]]. But
154		otherwise Tracy, thank you very much for the interview.
155	PARTICIPANT	You're welcome.
156	RESEARCHER	It was short notice, but you were happy to help me. I'm really really glad and I appreciate that.
157	PARTICIPANT	Anytime.
158	RESEARCHER	So I'm just going to stop the recording.
159	PARTICIPANT	Okay. [[cut off]]

9.9 Appendix I: Transcription for P4

1		
2		
3	RESEARCHER	Not there yet. So I've got builders in my house. So there is a bit of background noise.
4	PARTICIPANT	Okay, we'll I'm expecting my alarm company to come along any minute now. I tried to fix it so that they wouldn't come during this
5		time, but unfortunately they're late.
6	RESEARCHER	That's fine.
7	PARTICIPANT	I'll have to jump up just now and let them in and then my dogs will go ballistic, and ja. [[chuckles]]
8	RESEARCHER	So this is actually about my research. I'm at CPUT, I'm doing an M.Tech. So my topic is based on UCT administrative staff,
9		specifically senior administrative staff in faculty departments. I'm actually looking at the four faculties on Upper Campus, that is
10		Humanities, Commerce, Engineering and Science.
11	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
12	RESEARCHER	So I would like to understand your experiences with remote working. So initially my topic was based on the emergency, part of it
13		because I thought about this topic just after lockdown. But I mean it's been a year already, and I think people are more or less
14		comfortable with what's going on in their spaces. And I would like to assure you that whatever we discuss will be treated with full
15		confidentiality. And if it is pubished, your name is not going to be identifiable. And if you'd like to withdraw from this process, just let
16		me know. And also if you're uncomfortable with any question, you must just say so, then we can skip that question.
17	PARTICIPANT	Okay, not a problem.
18	RESEARCHER	So XXX, how long have you been in this role?
19	PARTICIPANT	In this role as departmental manager?
20	RESEARCHER	Yes.
21	PARTICIPANT	Since 2016.
22	RESEARCHER	Okay, 2016. And how big is your department in terms of staff? Academic [[unclear]] staff and also your students. Just roughly.
23	PARTICIPANT	Wow, our full complement of staff is about 26. That's including some contract staff. And then our student numbers are normally
24		about 65 in each year, 60-65 in each year. We run two programs, so that's 6 times 65. In fact, let me just get my annual report up
25		and then I can give you the correct information.
26	RESEARCHER	Okay.
27	PARTICIPANT	Won't be a sec. Okay, 2020 we were 656 students in total. That's PhD right down to first year.
28	RESEARCHER	Okay, lovely. And tell me regarding the remote working, which part do you find most difficult working remotely? And what do you
29		think the difficulties or the challenges, what do you think those challenges are associated with?
30	PARTICIPANT	I think the most difficult thing about remote working is definitely that you are not there with the other people. So in the beginning w
31		found it quite difficult, because things were getting forgotten about, you know. Because you're not seeing a particular person and
32		saying, "Oh Karen, I forgot to ask you this," you know, or something like that. So things kind of like got a little forgotten in places.
33		And then just the collegiality, just being able to go into an office. Myself, I'm here by myself. My husband died in 2018, so it's me
34		and my dogs. In some ways I've been fortunate, because obviously I don't have children to educate, which some of my staff do.
35		And I don't have moms and dads around or, you know, all that kind of extended family that some of my staff do. But then in other
36		ways it's almost a disadvantage, because it's just me here by myself. I mean, you know, I would go for maybe ten days without
37		seeing another real human being, you know, face to face. So and the other thing that I found terrible about working from home –
38		and this is still carrying on at the moment, although we are all trying to do phone calls – is the amount of emails. It's just
39		unbelievable the amount of emails that I get through in a day. It's an absolute nightmare, you know.
40	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
41	PARTICIPANT	There are just so many emails. One day, one of my worst days, I actually sat and I counted them, and there were 270 emails.
42	RESEARCHER	Oh my goodness.
43	PARTICIPANT	And I thought to myself, you know, each one of those requires to be opened, read, dealt with, if necessary, or ignored. But you
44		know, that proces takes time, you know. I mean, you just add up, say, each one takes you a minutes, 270 minutes out of your day
45		That's a good whack, you know. It really is. So now I've tried to instill in my staff – and in my self – that I phone people. Because
46		you can resolve an issue that might take ten emails by just picking up the phone and saying, "Hey, what about this?" Because
47		there's to and fro the whole time. You ask the question, they come back with an answer, it's not the answer you wanted so you as
48		another one. It just goes on and it's endlesss, Nonnie, It's absolutely endless. I'm sure you know. Are you a full-time student, or ar
49		you still working?
50	RESEARCHER	No, I'm still working. I'm in Commerce, yes.
51	PARTICIPANT	You must know what it's like. I mean, you're trying to study. My undergraduate academic admin officer, Wadha [[sp?]], she's got
52		two young children, her granny and her mom live with her, and she's trying to do a diploma in business communication, a post-
53		graduate diploma in business communication. I mean, I don't know how she does it. As far as I'm concerned, she's like super
54		woman. Because what do you do? I honestly don't know how some people have coped. And I find I work... I get up at, I normally
55		get awake at half past five. By half past six I'm sitting at my computer just quickly checking anything that's urgent that's come in
56		overnight. And I deal with it and then I do gym in my lounge for an hour. And then I shower and I'm back at my computer again by
57		about 8, depending on how much the earlier session has taken of my time. And then I start my day. And it goes on til, the last time
58		I look at my computer most probably is about nine o'clock at night. You know, sometimes after dinner... I'd make myself dinner, ea
59		my dinner, watch an hour's TV and then come back and sit in front of the computer again to try and keep up with the workload.
60	RESEARCHER	Oh dear.
61	PARTICIPANT	I don't know what it was like in Commerce, but it just went crazy here.
62	RESEARCHER	Crazy, it's madness, it's crazy.
63	PARTICIPANT	Absolutely madness. And I know that some of my staff are working like that as well. Some of my staff, of course, are hardly
64		working at all, because their job is just not able to be done. Like a receptionist can answer the phone. That's all she can do, really
65		at home. And any other jobs that I happen to give her. And my departmental assistant, He, you know, he does things like copying
66		and messengering and he can't do that. He's back on campus. We're all back on campus one day a week. Except for one lady.
67		One of my ladies has...Marodia Fajodien [[sp?]], I'm sure you must know her.
68	RESEARCHER	Yes, I know...
69	PARTICIPANT	[[unclear]] so her doctor has advised her not to come back. But the rest of us, there's six admin staff. So there's five of us who go
70		once a week. I go in on a Friday, and each person has an allotted day. So there's always an admin staff member in the
71		department. Because our academics are to-ing and fro-ing. Some come in, some don't come in. Some of our programs are run
72		face to face, some of our courses. Ja, I know that Commerce is very much online still and not doing anything face to face. But we
73		are doing face to face. So we have to have some staff in the office. And that's how we're working it at the moment. I don't know
74		what's gonna happen when this third wave really hits us.
75	RESEARCHER	I just don't know what's gonna happen then. But now, what is it that you miss mostly in the offices? What is it that you miss on
76		campus?
77	PARTICIPANT	[[Exhales]] Miss on campus? I miss the collegiality. I miss seeing the people I work with on a daily basis, and having a chat. That's
78		what I miss. And I miss the buzz of the students to-ing and fro-ing, you know. Our department is a department that really interacts
79		with their students all the time. We have a large open area and our students are in and out all the time discussing things at tables

80		with staff, coming past my office, popping in, hi! you know. That kind of thing, I miss that. The other thing that I miss is being able to
81		close my computer at the end of the day and go home and not think about it. Especially on the weekends, because the weekends
82		are the worst. I mean, I sometimes sit here the whole of Saturday, or the whole of Sunday. Because I know that if I don't do that,
83		I'm not gonna be able to get through Monday's work.
84	RESEARCHER	That's the problem. But what are the opportunities that you have found with this remote working?
85	PARTICIPANT	Look, it definitely has its advantages. For one thing, I live in Simon's Town. So you know, for me having to go onto campus
86		everyday, it's a long way, you know. I normally leave here by six o'clock in the morning. So you know, I am an early riser, and I still
87		get up and I'm still at my computer by six, half past six. But then I have the ability to do gym, you know. Just leave my computer, go
88		and do gym and then have a shower. Nobody knows, you know, that that's what I'm doing. I mean I'm putting in more hours than I
89		should do, so nobody can moan about the fact that I do gym. But I do it at like seven o'clock in the morning, so it's not my working
90		day. But also, you know, just simple things. Like my gardener can come to me any day that he wants to, you know. That kind of
91		thing. And if I have to go to the dentist, the dentist is just down the way. And my vet is down the way, you know. So I don't have to
92		come all the way from Rondebosch. That's an advantage, a definite advantage to working from home.
93	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. And then your productivity, do you find yourself taking more time doing certain... say for example, I don't know whether
94		you do your budget for your department, or whether you do...
95	PARTICIPANT	Yes.
96	RESEARCHER	So now, do you find yourself taking longer when you are on your own at home than when you are on campus? And also like your
97		team that you work with, do you find then that whatever stuff that you need them to do for you, are they taking longer or are they
98		more or less the same time?
99	PARTICIPANT	I would say that they are quicker, that's it's happening quicker, that things are happening quicker. I mean if I'm doing my budget at
100		the office, I have to close my door and say to my staff, "Look, I'm going to concentrate on the budget for the next hour or two and
101		don't disturb me unless it's absolutely important. And that's the thing about being on campus, is there are these constant
102		interruptions. Because of our jobs as departmental managers we have to do everything, you know. Everything gets done by us, so
103		it's a constant crisis management thing. And I do crisis management from home. That's what happened this morning. But I would
104		say that I can close myself off much easier and concentrate on self, actually physically sit down and concentrate on one thing, a lot
105		easier at home than I can in the office.
106	RESEARCHER	Okay and your team, you said that they do things quicker, but in terms of support do you think they need more support when they
107		are working on campus or when they are working remotely? Or it's the same...
108	PARTICIPANT	What kind of support are you talking about, Nonnie?
109	RESEARCHER	Say, for example it's mark processing, and somebody's not sure how to post these results or that kind of thing. Can they do it on
110		their own now, can they run with things?
111	PARTICIPANT	Ja no, look I've got two academic admin officers. They're pay class 8 and they know what they're doing.
112	RESEARCHER	They're senior staff.
113	PARTICIPANT	Ja, and they do it well. And if there's a problem with anything and the one doesn't know what the other, then they talk together. And
114		if there's a bigger problem, then we'll talk as a complete team together. In terms of equipment support, everybody has what they
115		need at home. You know, our department is fairly, you know, well-off really, so we've all got double screens at home, we've got
116		laptops stands, I've got keyboard mouse screen in my office. So does the academic admin staff, you know. So all the equipment is
117		there. I've got a decent chair. The only problem that we experience is a lack of space in some of my staff's houses for the
118		equipment that they need.
119	RESEARCHER	Yes, that was my question.
120	PARTICIPANT	Ja, and you know, for instance their situation may not be as good as mine. Whereas I am sitting on a ergonomically good chair with
121		a foot stool looking straight at my screen. And if I look over the top, I see the sea, you know. And it's lovely. You know, one of my
122		staff is sitting on her bed with a laptop stand. And, you know, the other one is sitting on a couch leaning on a coffee table, you
123		know. And another one is sitting at the dining table as well, but there's no room around the dining table. So you know, it's difficult.
124		It's more difficult... I'm fortunate, as I said. I think, you know, being by myself in some ways is fortunate for myself, but in other ways
125		obviously that is what I miss the most, ss just having people around. But as well, you know, sometimes it's nice not to have people.
126		And you know what I am finding, Nonnie? You might find this quite funny, is that it takes me a while... Like tomorrow is Friday. So
127		I'm going in to the office tomorrow. And I get there and I've forgotten half of my stuff at home. And then I'm like, "Ah, I can't work on
128		that, I forgot that at home," and then I try and work on something else. And I find that working in the office is almost like it used to
129		be when I was working at home. So on the odd, you know, occasion I would bring my laptop home and some work home, and then
130		I'd sit down and try and work and never get there, you know, just never get there. And when I go into the office, it's just – to me -
131		it's like a wasted day. Because as soon as I'm there, people know I'm there so they come and interrupt me all the time. And then I
132		forget half the stuff at home, and then I don't get enough work done. It's crazy, it's weird.
133	RESEARCHER	It's really crazy, yes. But in terms of your communication or engagement with students, are they still communicating? Have they
134		disappeared? Or is it maybe one of the reasons why you've got all these emails flowing on your inbox?
135	PARTICIPANT	I'll be honest with you, our academic staff are very hands-on with our students. So they talk a lot to the students themselves. I tend
136		not to have a lot to do with students. Normally it's a wave as they're going past my office, you know, to go and talk to an academic.
137		I have not had a problem communicating with them, because obviously I hire them as tutors. So no, I haven't seen any, but the
138		funny thing is that the students are totally unaware of the amount of work that the academics and the admin staff are doing. They
139		think we're all sitting at home having a holiday.
140	RESEARCHER	Yeah.
141	PARTICIPANT	And they just, they can't get it. They can't get the fact that we are actually working twice as hard as we did in the office. It just
142		doesn't even enter their heads. And, you know, they think they are working so hard, and these other people are doing nothing, you
143		know. It's amazing, you know. So what can you do? "All they're doing is recording a lecture and putting it up." Well, excuse me,
144		hello. Ja no, our students are communicating well. The biggest problem with being at home was trying to deal with the
145		registrations, but I'm sure you know that. That was a nightmare. It went one for weeks and weeks and weeks. Oh God, it was an
146		absolute nightmare!
147	RESEARCHER	It was a nightmare. XXX, my last question to you is do you know if UCT or your faculty or your department, if they've got a remote-
148		working policy? And do you think such a policy is necessary, and specifically for administrative staff?
149	PARTICIPANT	We don't have a specific policy for remote work, no. And as far as I know, the faculty doesn't have one either. But if by policy you
150		mean like guidelines of how to work from home and what to do and what not to do... Is last year we met as an admin team every
151		week. Every Friday we met. Just because I just felt it was necessary for me, apart from anybody else, to talk to staff. So we
152		communicated a lot, but we didn't draw up any policy at all. What we've agreed is that if something comes in after hours, we're not
153		expected to look at it until the next day. So that is the one thing, because a lot of our academics do work very late hours at night.
154		And our staff, the admin stuff, us, we know that we... And we've told them that if it comes in after hours, it will only get dealt with
155		the next day. Nine times out of ten it gets dealt with when it comes in. But the fact is that we can't be held accountable for that. So
156		in terms of policy, no, we don't have an absolute policy, but we have an agreement with staff that we work our normal working
157		hours and I mean the fact that Manye [[sp?]] and I spent half of Saturday communicating with each other via email or phoning each
158		other, that just happens. But if I'm not here, then he won't phone me if I'm out. And none of our staff will phone the admin staff on a
159		weekend. They might email, but then they know that they mustn't expect anything back until the next working day. So that's it
160		really. But I don't know... I mean it is quite a good... Have you in Commerce got a remote work policy?
161	RESEARCHER	No.

162	PARTICIPANT	Interesting concept.
163	RESEARCHER	Yes.
164	PARTICIPANT	I don't know whether it's a necessary thing. What do you think? Do you think it is?
165	RESEARCHER	I think it all depends. Like the point that you are raising is very important, that ther should not be any expectations. So at least if
166		we... I think the other problem is when you are looking for an adminstrator at, say, nine o'clock in the morning and you can't find the
167		person there because the person maybe is going to drop off their child or something... I think for me if it is during working hours,
168		somebody must be reachable one way or the other, you know. But on the other hand also you want flexibility and want to do
169		whatever they want whenever they want. And also you say, Look after hours it' a no-no. So then what are you saying? So now
170		obviously if someone is flexible during the afternoon or in the evening then that means that person has not worked the full 7.5
171		hours for administrative staff. Ja, and stuff like that. And also, I guess also how, whatever we use at home in terms of our
172		resources, what does the university suppoert you with? Can they buy you a chair? Must you get a chair from the office? What
173		happens if you're going to go back to the office? Like in your case Fridays you go back to the office. I know that many departments
174		or many faculties, what they do is they say, "Take a chair from the office." But happens when you go back to the offce? Do you
175		carry that chair all the time you go up to campus?
176	PARTICIPANT	No, I bought this chair here.
177	RESEARCHER	Okay.
178	PARTICIPANT	And I offered chairs to all my staff. But they said they don't have room.
179	RESEARCHER	Yes, that's one big issue.
180	PARTICIPANT	And that is a problem. I mean, I bought myself and my HOD a chair. Because both of us were suffering badly from backache. And
181		so we bought, and at that time I asked everyone what they needed. And if they needed a chair. But they don't have the space to
182		put it in. That is the problem. But, you know, I mean the university can't be held responsible for that. But everything else that
183		people have asked for, we have provided. Most, well all of my admin staff have a printer at home.
184	RESEARCHER	Okay.
185	PARTICIPANT	Scanner and a copier. So I bought them all printers, scanners, copiers, you know. The combination one. If they wnated screens,
186		they got screends. If they wanted lap... well everybody got laptop stands. Because some of them were sitting on a bed. So I
187		bought proper laptop stands. So everything has been provided that everybody has wanted. So you know, but I know that in some
188		departments that might have not been the case.
189	RESEARCHER	Many departments. But in terms of when does loadshedding, just if I may ask, do they have UPS, or whatever you call them?
190	PARTICIPANT	So what we did have in the department we had, before I got there, everybody had a UPS. But that hasn't gone home with them.
191		And during the course of the moves that CEM and Architecture made while we were renovating some [[unclear]], a lot of those
192		UPS's broke. So I then when I joined I made sure that all our staff have laptops. All our admin staff have laptops. Because I don't
193		see... it just makes sense to me. Especially with Fees must Fall and all this nonsense when you had to constantly be at home and
194		not at home and whatever. So all my staff have laptops and they all last for two hours. So you know, we don't make use of UPS. If
195		there's a problem and the laptop dies on you, that's fine. You know, just whatsapp and say, "Sorry, my laptop's dead. I've got
196		loadshedding." I'm fortunate here, because my wifi is connected to... I have an inverter and a battery. So when the loadshedding
197		happens my television, computers, wifi, everything stays on. But we realise that if loadshedding is happening, they won't have wifi.
198		That's just not gonna happen. I'm fortunate, but not everybody has that. But they do have a laptop, yes. For us it was literally a
199		matter of, "Okay everybody, take your laptops home. What else do you want when you get home? Let me know what you need."
200		And within a week we were fully online. So it was the easy thing for us.
201	RESEARCHER	That's good. XXX, is there anything else that you'd like to share that I have not asked that you think...?
202	PARTICIPANT	I think one of the things that you must bring up in your study is the psychological stress.
203	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
204	PARTICIPANT	It has hit a lot of people. A lot of people feel by the wayside, a lot of my staff. I did too, I went through a bad patch and I had to go
205		on anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medicine. I know a couple of my staff ar on anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medicine. I'm
206		coming off it now, because I've got myself over that hump. It was a case of losing my husband, losing my mother, having the
207		lockdown, you know. Just a whole lot of... And all the extra work. Because our faculty office wasn't coping. And so we had to help
208		the faculty office as well. So I think that is, I think, the worst thing that hit most people. I had letters from some of our contract staff,
209		they just can't teach. They can't do it. They say, "No, we can't," Employed as a teacher, and then they say, "No, we can't." And
210		then I get an academic, an older academic, senior academic, professor writing to me, saying, "I'm just not coping, I can't do this
211		any longer." So I think that's a very, very real thing that's happening to a lot of people out there. A lot more than the university
212		knows about, I think. [[unclear]] all the stuff, you know. You can go with Nzima and you can have a feel-well workshop and
213		whatever online. But seriously, that's not coping, that's not dealing with it. It's not helpful. So ja, I've been fortunate, I managed to
214		get myself out of that trap. But I still have staff who are suffering badly. And that's a huge factor.
215	RESEARCHER	That's true. I mean I experienced that myself. I mean I could've done what I'm doing now last year already, but I just couldn't I just
216		couldn't at the time. So it's really been hectic.
217	PARTICIPANT	Ja, I've had staff phone me up and say, "I just wake up in the morning and I start crying and then I can't stop." What can you do?
218		And I think on the whole, everybody kind of learnt to be a lot more patient with everybody, because you just have to be. Because
219		it's no good throwing your toys out the cot. Everybody's in the same boat.
220	RESEARCHER	We are all fighting some things, you know, within us.
221	PARTICIPANT	Ja, good luck, my girl. I hope you get going well and get all your interviews done.
222	RESEARCHER	Lovely, thank you so much, thank you for...
223	PARTICIPANT	It's a pleasure, Nonnie.
224	RESERACHER	Thanks, XXX.
225	PARTICIPANT	All right, keep well. Bye-bye. [[cuts off]]

9.10 Appendix J: Transcription for P5

RESEARCHER	[[unclear]] to join, he has not joined me to any of my interviews. But anyway, I know he might not even join us again today, so I'm okay with that. So the recording has started now, Bev. So just to assure... So I'm saying the recording has started. So just to assure you that whatever we discuss, whatever you share with me, it will be treated as confidential information. If this is published, it will not be... your name will not be identifiable. So that assurance, and also if there are any questions that you would like to omit, that you don't want to respond to, just let me know and I will omit those questions. And also if you'd like to withdraw from this process, or from your participation, just let me know and I will do just that.	
PARTICIPANT	Okay.	
RESEARCHER	Yes, and is there any question, Bev, from you that you'd like to ask or clarity that you want to know before we start the real interview?	
PARTICIPANT	No questions at this stage.	
RESEARCHER	Perfect. Bev, if you may tell me, how long have you been in this particular role in the Stats department? For how long?	
PARTICIPANT	Oh, I joined the Stats department in January 2017, I think. No, 2018. January 2018.	
RESEARCHER	Okay, and how big is your department in terms of your administrative team, your academics and your students?	
PARTICIPANT	So we have... did you only want full-time staff, or do you want sort of contract staff included?	
RESEARCHER	Yes, maybe you can give me a breakdown, just roughly.	
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so we have 26 full-time academics, six sort-of contract lecturers, but contract as in full-time contract, 50% contracts. Then we have a consulting unit in which we employ two statistical consultants, and we have six admin staff members.	
RESEARCHER	Okay, I'll need to ask you about this one, but off this meeting regarding your consultants in that area, okay.	
PARTICIPANT	Okay.	
RESEARCHER	Okay, Bev, so I came up with this topic just after hard lockdown, and at the time it was also an emergency arrangement. And I know that at this stage we are more or less comfortable with where we are. It might not be, you know, it could be normal to us, to some people, at this stage. But I would like you to tap into the space when this was an emergency arrangement. So your challenges that you experienced then, what were those challenges associated with?	
PARTICIPANT	Is your question the challenges of working remotely?	
RESEARCHER	Yes. Or mabye if there were any specific... Because I know that maybe you might have done some remote work as a manager. Obviously, you might have taken some work home. However, this was a forced arrangement forced by, obviously, the lockdown, maybe without prior plans in place.	
PARTICIPANT	So I think if we go back to Fees Must Fall, Fees Must Fall sort of prepared us, yes, for working remotely. And Fees Must Fall was sort of an emergency where I think that came onto us more sudden than this hard lockdown. So what we actually did prior to lockdown was... I should only speak for myself, hey and not for the rest?	
RESEARCHER	Yes, but remember your role... There will be some questions whereby maybe I'll be asking you how you are relating to your team or [[unclear]].	
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so let me speak for myself only, and then you can ask me any other questions if you want to. I don't think I should talk about how we prepared the department and other staff. So for myself is I have a laptop and I have internet access at home. And like you say, there are times where we have to work after hours. So adapting to working remotely with the setup was much easier for me for doing my personal work, doing my work. Whereas it was sometimes difficult to get hold of people. The challenges were trying to get hold of staff members, and if they're not responding to emails or whatsapps there was no other way to get hold of them. So you weren't sure if they were well and if they were capable of working, or what the problem was. Does that answer your question?	
RESEARCHER	Yes, that answers my question, Bev. And is there anything that during this time you missed the most when working remotely instead of the traditional office, instead of your office? What is it that you missed working in your office?	
PARTICIPANT	You know, I'm bit of a social butterfly, and I love human interaction so I miss the interaction with my colleagues. And you do, besides just having a work relationship, you have sort of a type of personal relationship. And when you know staff who are in your team who are experiencing challenges and who you've assisted through those challanges, and me as line manager being there, and they could always come and talk to me. Yes, so I miss that and I worried about my staff where that was concerned.	
RESEARCHER	Okay, and were there any opportunities that you realised in working remotely?	
PARTICIPANT	What do you mean by opportunities?	
RESEARCHER	Say, is there something that you think was... I'll give you an example, maybe spending more time with... or maybe having to take your child to school without worrying about your office being locked, you know. Some opportunities that you found.	
PARTICIPANT	Ja, I think this has certainly opened the door for more flexibility for admin staff and that we can work remotely. We can also have the flexibility, because there are times where it's quiet in the office and people expect you to have that bum in that seat until four, because your working hours is from eight til four. Where you could leave earlier for family circumstances and sort and then still work in the evening. And that is what we often do. And I think it wasn't recognised before. So I would certainly like to continue this flexibility. Because there are things that come up late in the afternoon which you can spend more time on. Also, I found that with marks processing the system is quieter at night. And it's much easier and quicker to do some work at night than during the day, because then you don't have all the traffic that you have during the day of working hours. What I mean by work traffic, not everybody uploading marks during the day.	
RESEARCHER	Yes, but doing that do you struggle with switching off from the work mode or from the office mode when you work after hours? Do you know when to switch off, or do you have a routine where you tell yourself, "Enough is enough now. I'm just not going to look at any emails or phone calls at this particular time"?	
PARTICIPANT	I think at the start of lockdown one felt pressured, or sort of compelled to check your email all night, because you didn't want people to get the impression that you're not working. Because there are quiet times during the day. But due to circumstances... I actually had the conversation with my HOD yesterday where I actually said that I've now decided, sort of, due to the circumstances and other expectations, I've actually said that I've now decided that if we can't get to an agreement that I will now stick to my office hours of eight to four and then not working beyond them. Or if it means because I have to fetch my child at school, only make sure that I work my seven and a half hours. It did impact where I sort of didn't switch off. But I think what it was also, there were so many additional processes that we had to do and often things had to be redone because of requests. And also very last-minute requests from central admin that I found that you would just work late night and make sure that you just complete that task and that you meet your deadline. So on the other hand for me it's important to complete my work and make sure that my work is up to date and not worry about the office hours. That's why previously if there were deadlines, I didn't mind doing it after hours. But I think there are also unrealistic expectations from other people after hours.	
RESEARCHER	But in terms of productivity, do you find that you take more... Say for example doing your budget, or maybe your team doing your marks processing, do you think that you work faster remotely than when you are in an office? Or do you take the same time doing a similar job?	
PARTICIPANT	I think you work much faster remotely, because you don't have the interruptions of telephone calls and students. And yes, I think people just get to the point in the email whereas there is no, sort of, no personal touch to it. Because in the office there would be a conversation surrounding that. And I also think working remotely that everybody is... what's the word I'm looking for? That people are wanting to make sure that whatever information that's given is correct. Or just making sure that they're more efficient, people are more efficient. So that makes it much easier to do things remotely than from the office	
RESEARCHER	But in terms of the resources to do your work efficiently at home, did your faculty give yourself or administrative team any assistance, or any resources to work...?	
PARTICIPANT	What do you mean by resources?	
RESEARCHER	Like maybe your laptop, a chair, a desk and things like that.	

80	PARTICIPANT	Oh okay, so coming back to what I originally said when I started off...When we had Fees Must Fall we issued our admin staff with laptops. We
81		also made sure that those who didn't have an internet connectvity at home were issued with dongles, and we bought them data as required.
82		So now just prior to lockdown, we sort of anticipated lockdown, so the week before lockdown was announced, we actually made sure that all
83		staff had a laptop, and that those who didn't have an internet connection either had a dongle... But because of lockdown we couldn't issue staff
84		with dongles, and you know dongles were sold out everywhere. So we then funded staff to get dongles, yes. So we prepared the staff to work
85		from home. Those who... Our budget – I'm not sure if it works different in different faculties – but our budgets didn't allow us to provide staff
86		with furniture to work from home. But if staff wanted an office chair, they could collect their office chair from their office at work and take it
87		home.
88	RESEARCHER	Okay, and for you personally, do you have your own space where you work? Do you share a space? Do you have a study, what do you have?
89	PARTICIPANT	I don't have a study, but I do have my own space that I work in. And yes, it's sort of my desk at home. And yes, it's comfortable and it's sort of
90		my office at home, yes. I do have space.
91	RESEARCHER	And then your rountine, working remotely you said earlier that you do sometimes have to work outside your normal working hours, which you
92		were doing actually when you were also on campus, depending on what work that you have. But in terms of your routine now, do you think
93		that your routine has changed a lot, or not much, in terms of your normal routine during the day?
94	PARTICIPANT	Let me just think. My routine differs daily. Not daily, I have sort of two routines because I work from the office three... now that my daughter is
95		back at school now, I'll work from the office days a week and from home two days. So on the days I go to the office, I'm by the office at eight,
96		and then I leave at half past two and then I switch back online at quarter to four. Yes, and then on my other days I acutally work from eight til
97		four at home without a beak. So that's how my routine differs. And then I usually check emails again after eight or if I know that I've got
98		something that I'd like to finish I'll do that after eight again. However, with marks processing I found it very busy and I would easily work 16
99		hours a day.
100	RESEARCHER	Yoh, okay. But with your team, Bev, how often do you still meet with them and have you met them face to face throughout this period? Or it's
101		all online platforms?
102	PARTICIPANT	So, one of the team members lives out in Atlantis and she's been there since lockdown. So we have weekly meetings. There was a time she
103		struggled with working remotely and with her, she sort of had to be coached and motivated. So I then had daily calls with her for a long period.
104		And she's up to speed now, so now we have weekly meetings. As soon as I see that she's busy failing off the bus then we have daily calls.
105		With my other team members during lockdown, and when we all worked remotely – we have a whatsapp group where we chat and check in
106		and ask how they are. If people didn't respond for a week, I would then call them. So in general I called my staff, my team members, once a
107		week. Since, two of them have been back in the office on alternate days and the third one is now also back on alternate days in the office. It's
108		all depending on their kids' schooling. So I do see [[unclear]] we have one vacant position at the moment, so I do see three of them sort of
109		twice a week. And then the other lady who's out in Atlantis, I have weekly calls with her.
110	RESEARCHER	Okay.
111	PARTICIPANT	So we haven't had... We've had two staff lunches, but due to various reasons and co-morbidities some of them have not attended.
112	RESEARCHER	And do dou know if UCT has got an emergency remote work policy, if I may call it that? Do you think that such a policy is necessary,
113		especially for adminstrative staff at UCT?
114	PARTICIPANT	I heard they're working on a remote policy. I haven't seen the draft, or I'm not sure if it's being finalised. I think it is needed, however not
115		everybody can work remotely. And I think those working in academic departments are sort of a combination of working remotely and working
116		from their office but not 100% remotely for people in academic departents. But certainly those who are in administrative departments, I think a
117		policy to work remotely would work for them 100%.
118	RESEARCHER	Yes, and your student involvement... Are you still involved, or do they still communicate? Or now that actually all the courses are now offered
119		remotely, do you still communicate with students? And how is your experience in that regard?
120	PARTICIPANT	I didn't have much student interaction prior to working remotely. I would really only see students when there is a problem that can't be resolved
121		on a lower level. Now it's email contact, and I actually find that you get less and less communication or queries from students. I do with some
122		of our postgrad students, those who struggle, I built relationships with them and helped them along the way. Yes, but you find now – and as in
123		the past – that you only hear from a student when they need help.
124	RESEARCHER	Okay, my last question, Bev, is on your... obviously when we went on hard lockdown you had expectations, maybe you drew your expectations
125		from the Fees Must Fall era, so whatever your expectations where, were your experiences what you expected? Or where there any surprises?
126	PARTICIPANT	[[chuckles]] UCT is full of surprises all the time! [[laughs]] I think we were thrown in on the deep end and we thought it was going to last for
127		three weeks and it's now a year later and we still at home. I think it's difficult to draw up expectations and I think though my biggest concern is
128		making sure that the department is operational and the needs are seen to for staff and students. So ja, I don't know. I didn't think of
129		expectations working from home. For me at was making sure that you are able to do the job, you know and that the department runs smoothly.
130		Ja, I just don't see us ever going back to... or when we do go back, it will never be the way it was before. So that is certainly something to think
131		about for future. And ja, I already have my panics on invigilated exams. So on expectations, I think you can't do much planning, because
132		things change overnight. One thing is decided, and depending on how the virus spreads, things are changed overnight. So I think it's difficult to
133		set expectations, because you are setting yourself up for failure and disappointment if you have too many expectations at this stage. And at
134		the moment I think it's just making sure that you do your work, coping and your staff are producing and yes.
135	RESEARCHER	Bev, that was my last question, but do you have anything that you'd like to share with me that you think will help me better understand your
136		experiences in remote work?
137	PARTICIPANT	Like I said before, that because of the flexibility of working remotely and you are able to attend to personal things during the day, which you
138		can't do after hours, so you have that flexibility to do that. I think it's been good for family, it's been good for... I don't have to have my child
139		sitting at school for an hour, and me sitting in the office and watching the clock go to four, because I'm waiting on somebody else to
140		send me something. So I think that's one good out of this. And I think it also gives us an… or it has now allowed academics to understand that
141		admin staff can produce while working from home, and it is possible. It hink everybody has become more efficient. We don't... whether it's
142		finance or.. Some faculties are still delayed. I don't know when are they going to put a fire under their backsides, but certainly people are much
143		more efficient. And I think things actually happen now. And you don't have this long waiting period on people actioning it and putting stuff into
144		action. So this has definitely been good. It made people see a other side to life. Yes, and we don't have to sit in a building behind a desk all
145		day. You can work anywhere. On the other hand, I think we do... Because there is no interaction and you don't see your staff face to face, it is
146		more hard work on line managers keeping track of their staff and making sure the staff are mentally good and functioning. And also sometimes
147		just looking beyond why people are not producing on a certain day. So there might be underlying circumstances. However, on the other hand I
148		feel that there is nobody that worries about us. Nobody cares whether the line manager is doing good, is coping, because they think... I
149		sometimes feel that we are seen as machines and these are the expectations and you must just see that it's done and the dealine is met. So
150		certainly, I think that there also has to be a platform where we recognise staff. Because we would recognise our team members and praise
151		them for the good work they're doing. But to them it doesn't mean that much, because it only comes from the line manager and not from the
152		bigger department. So I think to boost our staff, there needs to be a platform that they can be appreciated. And I think also with this, we've lost
153		the human touch. And we're not always caring about the well-being of our staff and their families.
154	PARTICIPANT	Yes, yes. That's a good one, that's a good point. Anyway, thank you so much, Bev. We have come to the end of our interview, so I'm going to
155		stop the recording now.
156	RESEARCHER	Thank you.
157	PARTICIPANT	Let me do this. [[cuts off]]

Recording Name: Research Interview_Nonnie Falala_6
Recording Length: 20min28sec

3	RESEARCHER	There you go. Yes, also just to assure you that whatever we discuss, whatever information that you give me it's going to remain anonymous. We are not going to use your name, it's not going to appear as XXX [[sp?]] so your name will not be identifiable if this is published.
6	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
7	RESEARCHER	And also just for you to know that should you want to withdraw from this interview, just let me know. It does not matter when, just let me know and I will remove your information from the research.
9	PARTICIPANT	Okay, no problem, Nonnie.
10	RESEARCHER	Yes, and you can omit any questions that you are not comfortable with. So just let me know, XXX, how long have you been working in... you are in Maths department, am I right?
12	PARTICIPANT	Yes, yes I am.
13	RESEARCHER	So how long have you been in this particular positicion in Maths department?
14	PARTICIPANT	In this position, 15 years.
15	RESEARCHER	Wow, that's a good number. So you obviously will have more information to give me. [[laughs]]
16	PARTICIPANT	[[laughs]]
17	RESEARCHER	Because you have experiences more years, and it was just an emergency scenario. And XXX, how big is your department in terms of your staffing? Your academic, your administrative staff and alos your students, how big is it?
19	PARTICIPANT	Academic, we are about 30 permanent, another 10 temporary. And admin, we're around 10 admin total.
20	RESEARCHER	Okay, it's a big group.
21	PARTICIPANT	Yes, definitely. Students, we're about 8000 students across the different faculties.
22	RESEARCHER	Yes, because every...
23	PARTICIPANT	Remember, we're a service department.
24	RESEARCHER	Up til almost everybody does maths, one or the other. That's a good one. So tell me, which part do you find most difficult working remotely? And also, what are the challenges that are associated with whatever it is that you find challenging working remotely?
26	PARTICIPANT	Look, initially it was hard, becasue you had the kids at home and you had to find a way to work from home, you know. You had to find that balance with kids at home and working and different demands in how things were getting done. It was, the changes were happening daily, man. So obviously everybody was thrown in, so the university would come up with a set of plans, and a week later there would be a new set of plans. [[unclear]] Keeping up with all the changes that was happening, it was the most challenging. Right now, it's easier, because the kids are back at school. But what I miss most of all is the interaction.
31	RESEARCHER	That was my next question, okay. You missed the interaction with your colleagues?
32	PARTICIPANT	My colleagues, the students I love. The students drive me insane, but I love working with them. I miss students, I miss the fighting with them, I miss the asking them, "What is wrong with you?"
34	RESEARCHER	[[laughs]] Now, if you don't mind me asking, you said some of the challenges were maybe adjusting to working from home. You know, you must take care of the kids that might be at home. If you don't mind, what is their age group roughly, just range?
36	PARTICIPANT	[[laughs]] I have a... she will be five, she's five this month, I have a 15-year old and a 19-year old.
37	RESEARCHER	Wow, what a depth, but anyway. Ja, it must be a challenge.
38	PARTICIPANT	So I had a daughter in matric last year. So that was stressful for all of us concerned, because we didn't know what was happening.
39	RESEARCHER	You also became a teacher, I suppose?
40	PARTICIPANT	No, no! I said, shame, the two older ones sorted themselves out. I think it was because I had one in matric last year, and one that had just started high school. So, you know, they were at different parts of their growth and new things, missing out on that in different parts of their lives, man. The four year old, she got no stimulation from her mother. Her mother was just trying to cope.
43	RESEARCHER	Yes, but with these challenges, obviously there where, hopefully, there opportunites that you found with this scenario. What are those opportunities that you think are there with remote working?
45	PARTICIPANT	Look, a lot of things went faster. Communication, you know everything must be original signatures and this way and getting lost in the post. So the thing that came out for me the most, was how fast things went. Yes you know, there may have been a slow response here or there, but mostly things worked out a whole lot faster, because you didn't have to wait, you know, four days for three different people to sign and then only send off.
49	RESEARCHER	Yes, and also you didn't have to make copies of the papers.
50	PARTICIPANT	Oi, tell me about it. Keep a million copies of everything.
51	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And how do you think the situation will change if we go back – hopefully we will go back soon – if we go back to our offices, how do you think this wil change?
53	PARTICIPANT	You know, I think people still are very fearful. So I must admit, I don't anticipate us going back in the near future. But I mean that's just my feeling on the whole thing. Look, I think faculties, you know, various departments are going to have to find a way... Because people are now used to, like I say, sending emails, and not want to wait to go via the phone. There's a lot of growth that various departments are going to have to do, to have to deal with... You know, it's been working for the last year and a half. Why do you wanna change it now? Type of attitude.
58	RESEARCHER	Yes, and what are the factors that you think are necessary to improve remote working? Specifically for senior members of staff, departmental managers. Are there any factors that you think are necessary to improve?
60	PARTICIPANT	I can't think of anything. I mean look, remote working is great, but I think if we could find a way of – even if it's once a week, once every second week – not on Teams. Because yes, you have your Teams meeting with your staff. But get together with your staff, in a safe environment, not necessarily at work. But also to promote emotional and mental well-being to meet with your staff. Once a week, once every second week. You know, get together with them to hear their challenges and what they think or feel. But on a one-on-one basis. Yes, you can do it online, but it's not the same thing. We are not meant to be alone. We are not meant to live in isolation. [[unclear]] things differently. So I'm okay, but the next person is not necessarily, you know, that type of thing.
66	RESEARCHER	Yes. Have you had any opportunity to meet with your team as a group or maybe part of them face to face?
67	PARTICIPANT	I met with the whole team once last year. And I have seen one or two of them have gone into... I don't go in, but when if something is needed, you know, then I'll meet them on campus. So I've gone in once this year to meet two of my staff members. Because you know when you need to get printing done and stuff like that.
70	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. And judging your productivity working remotely and also comparing that to when you're working full-time in an office – how do you judge your productivity? Or do you think that you work faster when you are at home? Or is it the other way around?
72	PARTICIPANT	[[laughs]] I'm not so sure, hey. This at home thing makes you lazy sometimes. [[laughs]] I don't know, to be honest with you. I suppose you... because the time travelling to and from work, you know, cuts out. So I would say it's a 50-50. I can't say that I'm less productive at home than at work. Because as with all jobs, you're not working working working all the time. You have lull periods that there's nothing to do. But I must admit, I prefer the versatility of working from home. I mean I still get the job done, the work still gets done. But having the children of different ages, If I need to run away... like after our meeting I'm running away to buy some meat. [[laughs]] So I like that flexibility. Not that the university wasn't flexible to begin with. It was a lot more. And my thing is, if you're getting the work done, why not?
78	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.

79	PARTICIPANT	I'm really not keeping a watch on my staff, because the work is getting done.
80	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And did you have any expectations? I remember, I think some faculties closed earlier than the actual day. Actually at UCT we closed earlier than the actual day of shutdown. Were there any expectation when that was just dropped on us? And also were those expectations, did you experience what you expected with this emergency remote working?
83	PARTICIPANT	To be honest, we were one of the departments that closed before. Because we had, I think, maybe the first or the second case of the coronavirus in our department. So we closed about a week and a half before lockdown actually came in. So in a sense, we couldn't prepare. Everybody else could say, "Right, we can take laptops home, this home, blah blah blah. The Sunday we were informed that we had been in contact with somebody and we were home. And I think just before lockdown – because we had come out of quarantine – we were able to go to the office quickly and get [[unclear]]. So we didn't have the time. But I think pretty much even though we didn't have the time, I think we probably did very well. You know, and I'm proud that, you know, yes people moan, yes people complain, whatever. But my staff did damn well to deal with the academic and part-staff [[unclear]]. We moan, we groan, we say what we need to say, but we get the job done.
91	RESEARCHER	Yes, and in terms of resouces did your department or your faculty did they provide anything for you to make your work better at home? Was there anything provided for you?
93	PARTICIPANT	We could collect our PCs from the office and whatever we needed to work from home. So we were given all the hardware and then most staff then paid for data and stuff like that. That is a big thorn, because they only provided x amount and data is expensive. And it only lasts so long. So but otherwise we got the necessary that we needed to work.
96	RESEARCHER	Yes, and in terms of your workspace at home, do you have your own space, do you share a space, or do you work in the kitchen like I do?
97	PARTICIPANT	[[chuckles]] I work, I'm in a flat. So my dining room table is now my work station. There's no sitting at the dining room table.
98	RESEARCHER	Okay and your routines, throughout the day obviously there are some changes there from what you were doing when you were in an office. What are those routines, and do you like the new routines, do you find them challenging? What are they?
100	PARTICIPANT	No, they're actually quite good. Because I got to... because my baby goes to crèche, so I must get up in the morning, get here ready and she leaves at half past six already. So get up, get her ready. Once she's gone, sit down and work.
102	RESEARCHER	Okay.
103	PARTICIPANT	Work until a point, you know, have some lunch, take your break. Take a walk here, if you need to run to the shop quickly, go to the shop. But I mean, that's not an everyday thing. But I'm thinking it's working. Because if I need to, I can work a little bit later or I can work a little bit after she's gone to bed. So you know, it's working.
106	RESEARCHER	Yes, and do you find it hard to switch off, maybe? Like in an office you know that you knock off at half past four, four o'clock. At home...
107	PARTICIPANT	Yes, definitely. You know, there are days that I say... Right, initially I wokred Monday to Sunday irrespective of the time. [[unclear]] No, no, hey. I have small children, I have a family I need to tend to. And there are weekends where I say, "Right, that's it! I'm not looking at my email at all." I mean, you've just got to find the balance. Because then next time when it's budget time or exam time or whatever, you know you're gonna be working late, or working a little bit more. So find the balance in that and it can work.
111	RESEARCHER	Perfect. And do you know if UCT has an emergency remote working policy and do you think such a policy is necessary if it's not there?
112	PARTICIPANT	I'm not quite sure. Like I said, it's one of those things where there are changes all the time. Then, you know what, sometimes I just stopped reading all these emails that came through. It was just to much, and I don't know what the hell is happening anymore, so I just rely on my boss to say, "Oh no, this is there or that is there." I think there's something in place. Whether it's effective, I don't know. Because look, I feel sorry for them as well, because they're in the same boat. We're all in the same boat. And it's fine to figure something out.
117	RESEARCHER	Yes, and how has this arrangement – the emergency remote working – how has it affected your engagement with your team? I think you did touch on that earlier on, you said you have met with them. But your engagement, do you find yourself having to communicate more with them, or are you communicating less, or is it still the same?
120	PARTICIPANT	I must admit I do communicate less. Before, it was easy to walk into their offices and have a chat about something. Now, you actually have to consciously make the phone call, and I hate these Teams meetings and, you know, phoning. So we don't communicate as often on a one-on-one basis, but via email, workwise, we do.
123	RESEARCHER	But do you have meetings on Teams with them?
124	PARTICIPANT	We do have meetings on Teams. I try and have a meeting... Because you don't want to inundate people with meetings also. So we have maybe one every second week. Just to check in to see where everybody's at. Everybody bitches and moans about salaries and this and that and the other.
127	RESEARCHER	We all want more money [[laughs]]
128	PARTICIPANT	[[unclear]]
129	RESEARCHER	And tell me, do you think specifically maybe your administrators who maybe do marks processing and things like that, do you think that they need more assistance when they are at home or they are now managing, they are now flourishing on their own? Do you find yourself having to hold their hands now?
132	PARTICIPANT	My personality is such that I will continue holding their hands.
133	RESEARCHER	We have to do that, otherwise...
134	PARTICIPANT	Look, that remains my passion. So they do well with marks processing at home, but at the end of the day we also have meetings... you know that time of the year. Right, what's happening here? Emails. I will still check spreadsheets and they will come to me if they need help. So it's working, it is working.
137	RESEARCHER	Yes, and you said earlier on that your miss your students. So what are your experiences now with with engaging with them? Are they still looking for you, do they send emails, do you talk to them?
139	PARTICIPANT	At the beginning with registration I had... I don't really deal with the postgrads, because I have a postgrad administrator, but at the beginning of the year the first years – lot of emails from them and communication from them. But not so much now anymore. Unless they've got a problem, then they don't really communicate.
142	RESEARCHER	Okay, that's good. XXX, that was my last question. But is there anything that you'd like to share with me that you think will assist my to understand your experiences better?
144	PARTICIPANT	My feeling with this whole thing has just been that, you know, communication is key.
145	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
146	PARTICIPANT	And like I said, what pee'd me off the most was they make decisions and then implement it and then a week later, it changes. So we are left in limbo. Or they make a statement that just hangs there in there air. So this, what's happening, how. As much as I have sympathy for the university, I also wish that there had been more guidance, more concrete things that said, "This is what you do, this, that and the other." I mean I've been at UCT, oh my word, for 19 years this year. No, besides for the fact that I have three children that have to still go to university, no. I love my job, I love the university and, you know, I'm happy. I'm happy, basically.
151	RESEARCHER	I'm glad. Yes, XXX. Thank you so much for your time. There was a consent form that I sent, if you don't mind just signing that and sending it to me whenever you can, I'll appreciate that. But otherwise, thank you so much for the interview. And as I said earlier on, if it is published, your name will not be identifiable. And if you want a copy, I'll send you a copy.
154	PARTICIPANT	No problem. It would be interesting to read. So yes, I would like a copy. But I'll send you the consent form.
155	RESEARCHER	Lovely, thank you.
156	PARTICIPANT	Thanks Nonnie, have a good day. Okay, bye! [[cuts off]]

9.12 Appendix L: Transcription for P7

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2		
3	PARTICIPANT	Okay, you don't mind if the gentleman that's working here, if he needs me I will just have to attend to that.
4	RESEARCHER	I'm good with that. Just let me know when he needs your help. So I'm actually doing my studies at CPUT. I'm doing my M.Tech and I've
5		completed my coursework so I'm just busy with my little dissertation, or small thesis, yes. And my topic it's on, it was actually based... when I
6		came up with this it was just after we went on hard lockdown. So at the time, remote working was still an emergency arrangement. We didn't
7		know lockdown was going to be... so maybe that's why my topic says "Emergency Remote Working". I guess now it's more or less what we
8		are doing.
9	PARTICIPANT	Ja.
10	RESEARCHER	So what I would like to say to you, is that whatever we discuss, whatever you share with me, it will not be published as your name. So your
11		name won't be identifiable in the... ja. And also, if you would like to withdraw from the process anytime, just let me know and also if there are
12		any questions that you are not comfortable with, just let me know then I will omit those questions, yes.
13	PARTICIPANT	All right.
14	RESEARCHER	My first question to you is, how long have you been in this role, in your current role?
15	PARTICIPANT	In my current role I've been there since 2017, so that makes it 17, 18, 19, 20... Four years.
16	RESEARCHER.	Four years. And how big is the department in terms of your academic staff, your administrative staff and also your students?
17	PARTICIPANT	I don't have all that.
18	RESEARCHER	Just rough numbers.
19	PARTICIPANT	Roughly, we could be about let's say 60, 50 staff.
20	RESEARCHER	Okay, that's a big number.
21	PARTICIPANT	And post... are you talking postgrads? I'm gonna thumb suck, because I really don't know. These are not things I have been looking at
22		recently, or within the last year. Let's say 100 in total. Postdocs, masters, PhDs, honours. That could closely be to... Ja, I think 100. I can't give
23		you totals for undergrad, I don't know.
24	RESEARCHER	That's fine. And tell me, regarding remote working, maybe tapping into the time when this was still an emergency arrangement, when this
25		whole thing began with hard lockdown, what did you struggle with most, what were the challenges? I mean what is it that you found most
26		challenging working remotely?
27	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so when we went into lockdown for the first months it happened quite abruptly. There was no preparation – and I'm only speaking for my
28		office. There were no preparation prior, we didn't really know what was going on. For me, I didn't understand what it meant working from
29		home. I just didn't get that. So for the first two weeks, I monitored the office and I allowed my staff to come in, at about ten o'clock I would send
30		them home. And when I'm at the office, maybe by eight o'clock. Because I was at work five o'clock already. I would walk into my office at five. I
31		would wake up at four, I would walk into my office at five, and then I'm there prepping for the day and prepping my work. And so by the time
32		they would arrive for that particular two weeks, I would then just say... Ag don't come in, or go home. And then it happened quite abruptly
33		where we were not allowed on campus and I had to stay at home. So I battled with the fact that I had no place to go to. That it was taken from
34		me without prior... And I know it was the entire world, but if you ask me specifically that is what I battled with. I didn't know what to do with all
35		those hours. So you can stop me if I say to much, or...
36	RESEARCHER	No, that's fine. Interesting, I'm listening, ja...
37	PARTICIPANT	Ja, so I would still wake up at four, I wouldn't know what to do with all that time. There wasn't work coming in at four in the morning on an email
38		and I had no files, I had nothing at home. So I battled with time to my hands which I didn't know what to do with. Then for the first month, I
39		thought, "Okay, it's just gonna be a month." And so that month – because we were going to – that was March, I think was it March, or April? It
40		was April. We were going to go back end of April. And that didn't happen. And I binge-watched movies and series because I couldn't fall
41		asleep. I binged for like that entire March. For that couple of weeks that we were at home, I binged, I couldn't sleep. So I would literally have
42		an hour's sleep, or two hours' sleep max, and I would be up at four awake for the rest of the day, awake all night. Sleep one hour, two hours,
43		and that was the routine. And then when we were told that we can't go back to work, it's going to be another two months... So in May I got sick,
44		because in stressing that I can't go back to my space I then started stressing about that. And then I fell into deep sleeps for some weird
45		reason. I don't know, I can't explain that. I fell into very deep sleeps where I couldn't wake up again. And that happened all of May where I just
46		like, my body just collapsed. And I thought, "No, this is not who I am, I need to find things to do." And so remember I still don't have files, I still
47		only have to depend on an email and memory and, you know, making notes if I remember things. So ja, that was it. And I started venturing out
48		doing all sorts of stuff which wasn't... So I gardened, I did hanging gardening, I planted all sorts of things, I was on the road the entire day. So I
49		would go to nurseries, I would go to second hand building material places, just all over in Cape Town. I found little holes that I didn't even know
50		there was. And I started sewing, I got a sewing machine, I started sewing I made pillows, pillow cases, scrunchies. Scrunchies is these big
51		pom-poms. And I made headbands and I started to sell it.
52	RESEARCHER	[[unclear]] of that. I only did gardening, yeah.
53	PARTICIPANT	No, it was gardening, it was sewing, it was knitting, it was crochet. It was everything possible under the sun that you could think of, because I
54		had to fill my days with stuff to keep busy.
55	RESEARCHER	Yes, I'm glad you did that. But tell me, what did you miss most about working in an office?
56	PARTICIPANT	I miss the people.
57	RESEARCHER	You miss the people. I've been there for 20 years. 2000. So you can understand that it's my colleagues, it's the students. They're not just a
58		colleague, they're my family, and the students are my family. And I've built very close relationships with people in my space, you know, and so
59		it was that interaction. First and foremost it was that. And then secondly it was the fact that I couldn't go and play squash with friends. I'm not
60		the party type, I'm extremely loud and bubbly in my space, my comfort space. And I miss that extremely a lot, ja. Fell into a depression and
61		had a few episodes of anxiety, which is not me, or well I haven't had prior experiences. Maybe a slight anxiety, which I didn't even know it was,
62		but through lockdown all through last year was quite tough.
63	RESEARCHER	I hope that you did seek help. I mean, I had to consult, you know, the wellness UCT... I think they're very good. Because they not only help
64		you, they help... Because whatever you are going through, those around you also struggle one thing or the other. So they actually do
65		counselling. They can do counselling for your entire family if you have to.
66	PARTICIPANT	No, I didn't, I didn't feel that was my space. I was just not comfortable to do that. So I worked around how to manage it. I think I had an episode
67		in the clinic once and all I needed was somebody to just like take care of me. That's all, that was all.
68	[[phone rings]]	
69	RESEARCHER	My HOD. Can I just tell him I'm in a meeting?
70	PARTICIPANT	No, it's fine.
71	RESEARCHER	And then obviously with all this challenges the would have been some opportunites... He's going to phone me...
72	PARTICIPANT	Take your call, I just wanna check on the guy also. I'll let you know when I'm back.
73	RESEARCHER	Okay, she just cut off.
74	PARTICIPANT	I'll just mute.
75	RESEARCHER	No, it's fine, she will know. I will call her. So [[unclear]] tell me something, with all these challenges obviously you might have found some
76		opportunites also? You've spoken about you getting into other exciting things like knitting, I wish I could do that. So what opportunities did you
77		find that came with this working from home?
78	PARTICIPANT	You mean opportunities with the things that I did? The extra?

79	RESEARCHER	It could maybe something, I don't know, that you couldn't do in the office. Say for example - I'm trying to think of an opportunity that could have
80		cropped in there. Maybe, I guess spending time with your families could be one of them. Because obviously now the fact that you are no
81		longer going to eight or five to three o'clock job, you have got time you know, you can do other things during the day. So where there other
82		opportunities during the day beside the exciting stuff that you did? The gardening?
83	PARTICIPANT	No, because my kids are adults. So that wasn't really a big thing. I have heard people were saying all that stuff. But I think that to me, it just
84		went on normally. But you must understand, the one thing for me is I'm out at five. I'm out at 4:30 out of my house, I drive to UCT. I get to UCT
85		at five in the morning.
86	RESEARCHER	Yes, but isn't that too dark?
87	PARTICIPANT	Ja.
88	RESEARCHER	The building, are you sure it's safe?
89	PARTICIPANT	The building is safe, but I'm the first person to open the door to get into the building, to switch on lights. And that has been all my life, it's
90		always been like that. I'm an early riser, I'm an early starter of the day. I make sure that I get to bed at nine in the evening. I make sure that I
91		sleep at ten, or I try to. That was the normal routine. Because I must be awake at four again, and be fresh and alive, and brain must be, you
92		know, open. So when I come home, and then I still had the motherly duties to do, the housekeeping, the cooking, all of that. So the only thing
93		that I think was – what is the word – an asset, a positive, was that I could start the cooking earlier, you know. I could make a decent pot of food
94		that took time, because good food takes time. So I could do that, you know, where I could start early. I could do shopping at anytime and not
95		rush through that. So the one benefit for my son, me being home, was that I could take him to gym and fetch him. Because that his what his
96		life is about. And when I was busy in meetings or whatever, I bought a bicycle – a mountain bike – so he could take the moutain bike. But that
97		whole thing of what people were saying, "Spending extra time with the family," no, I wouldn't say that was a big thing for me. Because I was
98		always just home, you know, ja.
99	RESEARCHER	Okay, and then in terms of your work I know that most of us didn't get much work, specifically when this whole thing started. Like you said, you
100		found yourself with so much time on your hands. But whatever work that you had to do in terms of productivity, did you think that you spent
101		less time... Say for example, I'm not too sure if you do maybe, if you are involved with exams or marks or budget, whatever thing that you had
102		to do – do you find that you actually take more time doing it at home? Or are you quicker when you are doing it remotely rather than in the
103		office? Or does it take the same time?
104	PARTICIPANT	No, it took extra long. So I'm involved... I have five staff members that I manage, four staff members that I manage. I manage the department.
105		So I'm responsible for quite a bit of stuff that's happening within the department. I work very closely with my HOD and my Deputy. We have a
106		great relationship and we are a great team. So I'm doing budgets, and so having to... you know, I'm a pen pusher, I'm not an online person.
107		And I need to have books and pens in my hands, I need to see the things in front of me. That's how I work. I need to have files and I'm the kind
108		of person that refers back to things that how it was done last year and the year before. So that's how I operate, and it works for me. And it
109		goes quicker when I'm at the office. Even though I can do ten things at the same time – and I do that, I'm a multi-tasker – but when I got
110		home having to work with this laptop, only this laptop, I got extremely frustrated because it would take ten times longer to do one thing, or to
111		search for things in my emails. Now remember, I don't files or... I didn't even... So here's the thing, I didn't even download my work on an
112		external drive. So when I was told you can't return to work... that was all that months before June. I think June I got back to the office once or
113		so, I was allowed then. Then we had essential workers allowed back. And I went back only to get things that I think I would need at home. So
114		then I started downloading my documents, but it was still a battle, because now I have stuff that I saved on this laptop, and I have work on that
115		side, and in my mind it was like just a mess. So I feel I wasn't productive last year. I definitely got through all my work, but I'm quite hard on
116		myself. I didn't feel that I was productive enough for my clients, which is the staff and the students and my HOD. I would jump if he calls and I
117		would, you know, I have a very good memory, so I could recall things and I could help him with things that I remember and all of that. But I just
118		felt last year was a mess and I wasn't productive. So when we returned to work, which was... Sorry Nonnie, just give me one second, hey. One
119		second
120	RESEARCHER	That's fine.
121	PARTICIPANT	Nonnie, sorry, okay. You're going to hear noise in the background, but I hope that my voice... Can you hear me?
122	RESEARCHER	Yes, I can hear you.
123	PARTICIPANT	So, when we returned June, it was also not every day. It was also just once a week. There was no plan, there wasn't a structure. We were just
124		told, "Okay, you're allowed back." So it was almost like grab whatever you need. And I think in August things slowly started normalising. No,
125		normalising is not even the right word here, but we came to some agreement that more staff were allowed back on campus. So I worked out a
126		rotational, like a routine system for my staff. So that we are not all in the office at the same time, but we work around a schedule.
127	RESEARCHER	Yes.
128	PARTICIPANT	So, it then slowly got better, slowly slowly got better. But there was still a lot of loopholes, a lot of things... It's almost like you have to grab back
129		on the things months ago that wasn't done, you now had to fill in those holes, and the current things that you were supposed to focus on, fell
130		through the cracks. So there were things that fell through the cracks, we had deadlines with especially spending our budget and that, so we
131		had deadlines which I think there also in some instances I slipped up a bit. And I felt extremely bad, you know, coming into the new year, but I
132		just had to deal with that. With regards to the results and all that, I only manage the lady that deals with the results, and she was quite on top
133		of her game, because that's all she had to do, you understand? So there wasn't any other requirements for an undergrad administrator other
134		than in June/July uploading results, or ja. But she was very good
135	RESEARCHER	Yes, but with the team, the little work that they were doing, do you think that they needed your help more when you were working from home
136		than when you are in your office?
137	PARTICIPANT	No, I think what they needed was support, somebody who has their back. And that I did. I realised that our circumstances at home were not all
138		the same. And that I realised from a very early stage, you know. Some have big homes, others don't. Some have homes where they're far from
139		people, and they can work quietly on their own, others don't. Others have big kids, and some of them have small kids who still have to be
140		taken to school, or well not school, but who had to be attended to. So I realised that and I said, well it doesn't matter if people are shouting at
141		you, I'm having your back here. And let's say somebody in an email would complain about any of my staff members, I would come up for that,
142		you know.
143	RESEARCHER	Absolutely, that's what the manager does, ja.
144	PARTICIPANT	You know? I would come up for that person. And then on the other side, I would be there for her, I would say, "Look, okay so this complaint
145		came up. How can we deal with this? How can I help? Where is it that, what is it that you need? Is there something that I can do?" That was
146		the only way that I could manage. They know their work, that's one thing. I have a great team, they know their work, they managed in their own
147		way. But I think what they needed was understanding and support. And ja, that was very important for me, because last year I lost a lot of
148		people to Covid, family and friends, and that ja, was tough. And then one of my staff members, she's friends to the people that were shot last
149		year November, December in Gugulethu, that massacre that happened. I don't know if you know of that massacre that happened?
150	RESEARCHER	Yes, I know that one. One of my colleagues stays right next door to that house.
151	PARTICIPANT	So, she didn't go to the funeral, because they were all attending the funeral. And she didn't go to the funeral the Monday when they were all
152		killed. So ja, that was a shocker to me. So she needed... We all have stuff that we have to deal with. My thing is just, you know, don't push
153		people's buttons. Just be there for them. I think understanding and support is the big thing that we all need at all.
154	RESEARCHER	And tell me know in terms of... I know that your team are very good, or you said that they managed very well. But in terms of [[unclear]]
155		resources at home, some might have a desk, some might not have [[unclear]]. Did the department support you in terms of resources? Did they
156		give you [[unclear]]?
157	PARTICIPANT	Yes, oh absolutely. I have a departmental laptop now since 2017, okay. So that was sorted for me. Some of them had laptops or computers.
158		So those were things that my HOD said, "Look, let's determine," especially just for my staff, "let's determine what people have and what they
159		don't have." In areas where people didn't have – even academics, so my HOD went as far as academics – if you didn't have a desk, if you

122

160		didn't have space, or laptops, or... Because some... Ag, this noise. The wider university, some people said they took their whole computer
161		home. We weren't given that time to do that. So we bought laptops and in cases were people had laptops we bought data. So even now,
162		currently, three of my staff members... When we returned in January, I determined, well I went into this year saying I am not going to allow
163		2021 to trip me the way 2020 tripped me. Okay, so I came into the year knowing very well how I want to manage my day with my staff. So I
164		decided let's figure out where we are at, all of us, so we buy data for three of my staff members. Because I'm uncapped, I'm fine, and another
165		lady has uncapped. So three of my staff members I bought telkom pocket routers and I buy data. So every two months I buy data for them, or I
166		allow them to buy data from which the department allows that. And laptops were sorted for them. If they need stationery now, I made sure they
167		got stationery. The one lady didn't have a proper chair. So I said, "No, you go out and you go and test the chairs at Waltons and you buy." So,
168		in short, my HOD is 200% supportive of what we need at home and that we get it. So ja, like myself I bought – last year already – I didn't have
169		a desk, so I bought a little desk for myself and a decent typist chair. So ja.
170	RESEARCHER	That's good. Now, my last question is, do you know if UCT has a remote, specifically for administrative staff, if they have a remote working
171		policy? Or do you think such a policy is necessary or not?
172	PARTICIPANT	I am not 100% sure with regards to policy how... What would be in this policy? That's the other thing. Because I think we all at UCT have
173		different views regarding working from home. My view changed, that I can 100% say. I couldn't handle the fact that I was told, "Work from
174		home." That was a no-go, that didn't work in my books. Now I work three days a week at the office and I have my own time. So I start at
175		seven, I leave at one if there isn't too much. So we are not forced to sit there all day. So I don't know how a policy will work, and I don't know.
176		What I do think... I kind of wouldn't agree to a policy, like a set of rules working from home.
177	RESEARCHER	Maybe guidelines?
178	PARTICIPANT	Maybe guidelines, maybe help, right. But what I do know is that each department needs to determine their need and work around the need of
179		the department. Because each department differs. I'm in the Chemistry department, right. My guidelines or my needs are different to
180		somebody that's in Arts, you understand? Because there's different things we work with, different ways of doing things. So I just thing as long
181		as the department comes up with a set of guidelines I think that works for them... Like what I did with my office, and it is approved by the HOD,
182		and in conjuntion with the HOD this was all, you know, cleared, then I think then we're good to go. Because there are in the Science faculty,
183		our finance division, and even, I think, student division, they all work from home. They've never been on campus.
184	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
185	PARTICIPANT	And there are people my equivalent job, who's never been oncampus. Where I again, I'm at the office three days a week. So they think I'm
186		nuts to go into, you know. "What are you doing there?" But I need that, so my views of working from home has changed. It definitely changed,
187		you know. Going forward for the future, I would love this where I go to the office three days a week and I have the option to also work from
188		home two days a week. Can you hear me, Nonnie? I'm so sorry about the noise.
189	RESEARCHER	No, it's fine. I can hear you.
190	PARTICIPANT	So I have the option to work from home two days a week. Even with me working at the office, it's flexible. I can push myself til four if there is a
191		lot of deadlines perhaps that month. But I can leave at one, two o'clock, depending on the things that comes to my desk on that day. So I am
192		not rigid in saying, "No, I have to leave at one," or "I have to leave at two," you see. I'm flexible with regards to my time. And being the two
193		days at home, it also... I realised with losing people – staff members, as well, which just recently happened. I believe that she passed because
194		of work stress. And that, to me, is extremely sad. That is not something I deal with very well. So, and I know her since 2005.
195	RESEARCHER	It's a long time.
196	PARTICIPANT	It's a long time. So here I am thinking, you know, we end of giving our lives, our time, our lives, our everything, our... You know in Afrikaans
197		they say "my alles". So I have given my everything to my department, ever since I stepped in there since 2000. But I've always gone above
198		and beyond. I'm sorry that I have to say it about myself, but I know that is who I am, you know? I've always worked early hours. I've never
199		been compensated for my early hours and I've never asked. Because it's my choice. But you know what, the day when you tilt over and you
200		die, you're just a number.
201	RESEARCHER	That's the thing, you're just a number.
202	PARTICIPANT	And I have realised working from home the two days allow me to not stress that I have to sleep at ten because I have to be up at four or five. It
203		allows me in the morning to slowly get into my day. I still work, but I can slowly get there in my own time. I don't have to wake up at four. I can
204		wake up at seven, or eight, you know. So it allows me to rest and to breathe, which we don't do. Which I haven't done for many years, you
205		know. So ja, I don't know if it kind of makes sense, but I don't want to end up being a number. [[chuckles]]
206	RESEARCHER	Ja, that's true. We really have got to take care of ourselves, it's very, very important.
207	PARTICIPANT	It's improtant. And I'm not sure – I can't speak for others – but you know I'm a people's person. And I see emails coming through where people
208		push you to your limit. Not myself, but my staff members where I'm copied in. And so just last week I phone this one girl. She's not even my
209		staff member, and I said to her... You know, I'm not gona mention her name, because we're recording. But I phoned her and I said to her, I just
210		wanna thank her for the way that she's been dealing with my staff member. And she's also just doing her work. And I saw the emails that came
211		through nine o'clock at night. And I said to her, "You shouldn't be working nine o'clock at night, you shouldn't. You should try to do your work, if
212		you get up in the morning at eight, work from eight. But finish at five. But don't… you can't be working at nine o'clock!
213	RESEARCHER	No, no!
214	PARTICIPANT	And this girl that passed away, I believe their office started working from two in the morning. It's not fair, man.
215	RESEARCHER	It's just not right!
216	PARTICIPANT	No, it's not right
217	RESEARCHER	I think it's a problem if somebody, because there are people like that who cannot... Maybe me and you, we can speak up and we can say, "No,
218		we don't do this." But there are people who actually don't have, who are not able to say enough is enough.
219	PARTICIPANT	Exactly. Nonnie, that is why I said to her, I spoke to her and she said, "My gosh, D. You are medicine to me today." And you know, that is what
220		I do with my staff. And look yes, I have grown in this job. I'm not a job hopper, right. I've been in the same department for all these years. I
221		started in 2000 in the chemistry department, I've worked my ass off and the last four years I've been in this position. Where I have grown into
222		this, you know. I have worked hard for where I am. And so now I see... And I'm not also, like my boss doesn't blow in my neck all the time. He
223		doesn't breathe in my neck. And I'm also not, I don't like to manage like that. I allow you to do. And when you really need me, I'll come in, you
224		know. And it doesn't have to be like barking down my neck and all of that. But there are people who doesn't have that, who are being treated
225		indifferent. I wish we can just, I wish lockdown has really allowed people to, well, open their eyes. Because we've lost people to death.
226	RESEARCHER	A number of people.
227	PARTICIPANT	And I wish we can be more empathetic, or sympathetic, with our fellow members, fellow staff members. Because these are not just a number
228		for me, these are my people. And it's my family, so I wish we can all just be a little bit more patient with one another.
229	RESEARCHER	Absolutely, thank you so much, my dear.
230	PARTICIPANT	I can't hear.
231	RESEARCHER	I'm saying thank you very much for your time. I enjoyed our interview. So you see, we do things and we don't know where it's going to end. I'm
232		still doing my interviews, I hope I will be able to publish very soon and if I do, I will definitely send you a link so that you can just see what I
233		came up with. But our interview, everything that we discussed – as I said initially – it's confidential and no name is going to be in the thesis.
234		Yes, and I'm grateful for the time. Thank you so much. Whatever bad news you had today, my dear, be strong. It's life, it's not easy, but what
235		can we do.
236	PARTICIPANT	Thank you, I appreciate it.
237	RESEARCHER	All the best, D.
238	PARTICIPANT	All the best for you too with your thesis, hey.
239	RESEARCHER	Thank you, my dear.
240	PARTICIPANT	All right, bye. [[cuts off]]

9.13 Appendix M: Transcription for P8

RESEARCHER	It's not recording yet, there you go. Perfect. Okay, so before we start with the interview, I just want to check out a few things before we commence. Just to inform you, or just to assure you that whatever we discuss, the information that you will give me, is going to be treated with strict confidentiality. And if this is published, your name will not be — what's the word I'm looking for? — it will not be identifiable, if I may use the word, yes. And if for whatever reason you are uncomfortable with the interview, please let me know and then we will stop. And if there are any questions that you are uncomfortable with, you can omit those questions, you don't have to respond to them. So, just to ask you — how long have you been in this position?	
PARTICIPANT	Sjoe. 2017 I think?	
RESEARCHER	2017, so it's about four years.	
PARTICIPANT	Ja, has it been that long?	
RESEARCHER	Yes.	
PARTICIPANT	It doesn't feel so [[laughs]].	
RESEARCHER	Yes, and in terms of the size of your department, in terms of your students, your staff academics and admin, how big is it?	
PARTICIPANT	Well, for staff GOB [[sp?]] staff, we are about probably in total — this is now admin, technical and academic — we're about 50. That is excluding research units. So we have quite a few research units as well within our department. But that is now excluding that staff. For students, for undergrad and postgrad, we're probably just under 1000 students, maybe a bit more.	
RESEARCHER	A big department, ja?	
PARTICIPANT	Ja.	
RESEARCHER	Okay. And from your experiences, what challenges do you think are associated with remote working in your position as departmental manager? And from those challenges, what do you think are the most difficult ones when working remotely?	
PARTICIPANT	So for me, like as a departmental manager, when it first started... I mean everything was fine until the protocols had to be put in place for people wanting to go back. And then that was the challenging part, because we're not experts in the field, so having to write up... I was repsonsible for writing up the SOP for the offices space, I was responsible for the offices. So, it's having to ascertain, like okay, so I have to put myself back in the office, but with Covid in mind, so then having to decide... Well, not decide, but to put into place and say that if you're in the office, you can only be one person in the office and if there's another person in, both of you must have on your mask. So for me it was very difficult to come up with the SOP, so I researched to see what else was in place in other countries and in businesses and things. And obviously, also taking from UCT documents. So for me, it's like they decided... It was fine when it was decided that we should all be off campus. But then having to start the process to go back on campus, that was very difficult. So obviously in the period that we were in, like the numbers were high and like in our faculty I had to assist to set up the isolation room. So then it's like having to insure that you have everything. Like what is supposed to be in there? Like having to pre-pack the pack so if anything should happen. So for me, that was the difficult part. Like having to deal with issues related to preparing the office space, the lab spcaes, the working space for our people to come back.	
RESEARCHER	Yes, in terms of faculty, or university policy... Is there a policy, do you have a faculty policy, or UCT? Or are you aware of any policy? And if it's not there, do you think it's necessary for the university, or the faculty, to come up with a policy of remote working?	
PARTICIPANT	Remote working in terms of like, are you speaking of in general, like where you say like staff is allowed to work maybe two days a week at home?	
RESEARCHER	Yes, ja. Or permanently.	
PARTICIPANT	I don't think there's a policy. And I really like, during this time it actually showed our department that we can actually deal with our admin staff working remotely. Like if I think of our finance section, like things improved once people started working from home. Like dealing with central research finance, with debtors, with creditors. Where before it used to take a bit longer to process certain things. And even the same with getting signatures from certain people where sometimes with a hard copy document it would be on one person's desk like for x amount of days. But with the electronic things, it assisted in certain aspects. So for me, like it would be good. And I mean, now with remote, or PDL [[sp?]], our department decided that going forward we will investigate for ourself and for our staff, especially for admin and for finance, to see if we can make it a permanent thing where you can work two days in the office and three days from home. So ja.	
RESEARCHER	But now if that is approved, now in terms of your student engagement... how do you think... Or maybe I should ask how do you engage with your students currently when working remotely? And I mean, also looking at the future, if this is how things are going to be done, what is your experience then in terms of student engagment?	
PARTICIPANT	So we have a very acclive Vula site. So we are now excluding the individual course Vula sites. We have an undergrad Vula site, and for registration I create a separate one so that just registration queries could go via that Vula site. And I mean I managed that, but all the staff had access to it. And I mean our interaction with the students electronically I seemed as fine. The one thing I picked up that you wouldn't normally pick up during normal face to face, is that our students that is from the rural areas, and maybe disadvantaged communities, they would normally send you emails like from late at night. So that is probably when their data bundles would kick in, or when it's cheaper. And that was the one thing that I put to our HOD as well, that I kept on seeing that some of those student queries came from like nine o'clock onwards. So then I would like ensure that I'm available to respond, because some of them would say, "I only have access to emails between nine til ten."	
RESEARCHER	Yes.	
PARTICIPANT	So if you in face to face, the student would have access to you, so it's a good thing and a bad thing really. And the other thing I found is, even with the online registration, like these same students — because of the fact of their connectivity issuess and stuff like that, they couldn't read like the manuals and manuals. So then I would tell them, "Send me your cell number, let me phone you, let me take you through the process." So obviously face to face is good because you can communicate with the person with the person there, you can show them the manual, you can give them a copy of the manual. But with distance, not all of them have those opportunities where they can read 38 pages of instructions, or 58 pages of instructions of what to do. And I mean we assisted our students where students said that okay they now don't have data or they don't have a laptop. We could provide them with certain things to a certain extent.	
RESEARCHER	Yes. Okay, you spoke earlier about the PDF, or the online documents that you are now using. But are there other opportunities that you have seen with remote working? Are there any other opportunites that you have seen with this kind of work environment?	
PARTICIPANT	You know for me, I like to be with my staff. So everything that happened now, it was all new things that everybody had to learn on their own by reading these manuals. And sometimes instructions and interpretation get mixed up just by reading. So I would have preferred being in a lab, doing like online training in-person. Where if someone don't understand, they can ask you where... Like even with my data capturers, like when they have the training with SSS it was a MS Team thing. And that they didn't feel as open to ask questions in that forum. Where when I had my follow-up session with them, they had a lot more questions, because it was just the eight of us, not anybody else. So I feel that with this remote, it impacted a lot in a good way, but also in a bad way.	
RESEARCHER	Ja. And in terms of your productivity, how do you judge your productivity when working remotely versus when you are working in an offfice? Do you think you are more productive, and how so?	

89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103	PARTICIPANT	So for me, I find that in certain areas it's like you work a lot more than what you would have normally worked if you were at the office. So for me, the one thing that I – even now during remote – where I feel that I don't have a good sense, is with the senior secretary post. Because remember, the senior secretary is the reception person. So the main work is when there if face to face interaction with staff, with stakeholders coming to campus. So for me I felt that I didn't – even though there was general things that I knew what she was doing, there was other days when I wasn't sure like was it that you are doing, because your work is supposed to be at the office and you're now at home. But with the undergrads and the postgrads you know that they're working, because you can see. I check the dahsboard to see are they doing registrations, are they doing the marks. And those things. Like the same with finance – you can see the purchase orders is being made and it's being removed and it's being paid. And for me, it felt like with all of my staff, with the exception of the senior secretary, like in the evenings when I go on just to check a few things, or plan for the next day, you can see they're working, or their online. Or their sending emails. Where if you would have been working normally at work, you leave the office at half past four and you switch off. But now when you're working from home, you log on earlier, you log on later. You log on even during the weekends, just to see if there's an emergency or anything. So I feel with ERT, UCT gained a lot more working hours from their staff than if they would have worked from campus.
104 105 106	RESEARCHER	From campus, yes. And besides that, were there any suprises? Or did you have expectations of remote working prior to... Or maybe a week before we were told we can now work from home, did you have anything expectations? And were there any surprises instead?
107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114	PARTICIPANT	No. You know, last year when Covid started and in fact the week before UCT actually decided, I told my HOD, "Listen here, I've asked the ladies to prepare themselves so that when the decision comes, then they're ready to work from home." So I told, them, "copy your stuff over to externals, do it on your sharedrive, make sure you have all your passwords, if there's files that needs to go…" So when UCT made the decision, we were prepared aleady. In our faculty office, they weren't prepared. So when the decisions were made they were at home, but the work that they had to do was still at their office. So for me, it's the way the precision [[sp?]] was taking... it probably depends from how managers planned during that time. But I mean we were ready. And I think even, if I remember correctly, we stopped working two days before UCT decided that we should work from home.
115 116	RESEARCHER	Okay, but what resources did you give your team? Or what resources were given to you and your team by the department?
117 118 119 120 121	PARTICIPANT	So, I must say I'm very blessed in the department I'm at. I'm like School of Management Studies [[chuckles]]. Like anything that we needed, the HOD wrote to all the staff and said, "If there's anything that you need, let me or [[unclear]] know. So whether it was an extra laptop, or a camera for the meetings, or even the desk stands. Some of the staff even took their PCs and their chairs to their homes. So we were very good in resourcing our staff to work from home
122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136	RESEARCHER PARTICIPANT	Okay, it's good to hear. And where do you work from home? Do you have your own space, or is it a shared space? [[chuckles]] It's a shared space. You will see here, I'm working in my husband's studio, which like for me it's good and bad. It's good for the sense that if I'm in the space, it's only me in the space. But it's bad, because it's his creative spae. So all my work stuff is here, so I'm impeding on his creativity. So lunchtime then I must pack up everything so that he can have his space back. And then after lunchtime then I must set up again. So it's... Ja, I mean like if I look at... Like for me, yes, I have a space, right. My undergrad lady, she also has an office. My PG person, she also has an office to work from home. So Bev is my finance lady. She don't have an office space, because she has a two bedroom flat. So she shares her space with her son again. So then we're in meetings, and then she would message to say, "Okay, I'm going to put the camera off now, because he's coming from school and they want to make him lunch, or stuff like that. So it's been very interesting, and I mean for me personally when we started working remotely last year, Calean [[sp?]] was in grade one. And they had school, remote school. And I mean even there the department was very great in how they supported me, where I could write to my HOD and say, "Listen here, during the mornings I'm busy with Calean, but I will be available from that time, and I will obviously work in my hours." So I didn't feel that pressure to split my time between work and having to do stuff with him. Where I knew in the mornings I can focus on him, complete his lessons, have lunch and then focus on work.
137 138	RESEARCHER	Perfect, because I was going to ask you how is your routine thoroughout the day compared to when you were in your office, but I think you have more or less answered that question.
139 140 141 142 143	PARTICIPANT	No, but you know Nonnie how many routines I've had? So the first routine was obviously having to settle both myself and Calean working and studying from home. And then at the end of last year, their school for term four, they went back two days. So then again it was again a new routine. And then this year again, the beginning of the year it's where they went back to school, but I was still home. And now again, it's he's at school and I'm at home, and I have days where I have to go in. So now I'm in a new phase where I'm trying to find my rhythm again.
144 145	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. All the best with that one. And then my last question is your teams, do you think they need more support now that they are at home more than they were in their offfices?
146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154	PARTICIPANT	No, only because... Well, not no, not support in the sense of me helping them, because I mean they're very comptent staff. The only support that I feel that I should be giving is to my senior secretary. I think maybe because of the post type, maybe she's also not just having to find her feet, between like... You can't just do emails. And remember reception work is you're supposed to be working with people. So that was the one thing I told her. Or in fact this week my HOD when I met with them, is that I feel I still need to sit with Sammy just to make sure that she's okay. Because I mean we have our weekly check-in meetings and we speak about everything. But for me, like I dont know how to measure, like you say, productivity and work commitment and is she happy, and all those things. Because I mean, with her also she lost her grandpa now recently. So there's also been many changes in her personal life that is impacting her. So it's like having to consolidate all of that.
155 156	RESEARCHER	Yes, anyway is there anything you'd like to share with me that I did not ask that you think will help me understand your experiences of remote working?
157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164	PARTICIPANT	You know what I feel where the university failed in remote learning, or whatever, is with the assessments and the monitoring of plagiarism. Like when they decided last year that it's going to be remote and obviously the academics had to change some assessment criteria, and everything being online. I didn't think they spent that much time on looking at the risk of cheating and plagiarism. And it was one of the reasons that we decided to come back to campus for face to face interactions and assessments on campus. Because in some of the reports, I think it was the Teaching and Learning Report, where they said that plagiarism or cheating skyrocketed. Where like in a normal year... So for me that was the one thing, and it don't impact me personally, but I think it impact on the qualifications that we're giving.
165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173	RESEARCHER PARTICIPANT	Absolutely. The other thing is like the support in terms of... Now that we're going to PDL [[sp?]] and I know the VC sent out an email yesterday or today about support for students on campus now, is the spaces available to spaces. Like the library, or computer labs. Because we know that there's certain students that don't have access to it, even if they are on res. Like if students ask me what spaces are available, then I ask them like what is it that you need? And I don't know if student affairs is actively engaging with like the real needy students. I mean, our faculty, we have a distress fund. And if I really feel that a student really needs something, I will tell Mary, "Please make a plan, can't we get a laptop for the student?" And then she will try and assist, but I feel like with this remote there's going to be that good student. But the disadvantaged student is going to fall through the cracks.
174 175	RESEARCHER	Yes, but now if you're having your classes face to face, what about your international students? Or those students outside Cape Town that might not have accommodation to come back to. I mean how do you treat those?
176 177 178	PARTICIPANT	No, so all students were requested to come back. We gave them, like for each year... so for first years there was a date that they had to be back in Cape Town. Second year had a separate date to first years. So there was different dates, and where we couldn't accommodate the students, or where they couldn't come, we requested that they either

179 180		take leave of absence, there was a whole list of things that the faculty advised them to do. But most of our students came back.
181	RESEARCHER	Okay, interesting.
182 183 184	RESEARCHER	I mean, I don't know. I probably saw two cancellation forms. But that was because of funding, was the one, and the other guy decided to emigrate, or their parents are emigrating, so that's why they cancelled. Those are the only two cancellations that I am aware of. There could be more, I don't know.
185 186 187 188	RESEARCHER	Okay, Kim. If come to the end of the interview. Thank you very much for your time. Yes, as I said, it's for research purposes and there is a participant consent form, I think. I think it was sent to you. If you could just sign that one for me, I'll appreciate. But there's no rush with that one. But whenever you can, please send it to me. And thank you so much for your time.
189	PARTICIPANT	It's a pleasure, Nonnie. Good luck with the rest of your interviews!
190	RESEARCHER	Thank you, thanks my dear. All right, bye. Just close, just stop this so that I don't lose it. [[cuts off]]

Recording Name: Research Interview_Nonnie Falala_9
Recording Length: 39min41sec

PARTICIPANT	[[unclear]] be expected to remember what each and every participant responded to your questions and things like that, so I have no problem with it.
RESEARCHER	Perfect. So the recording has started now, so in case you need clarity in maybe some of the questions or some of the words that I'll be asking, please feel free to ask. And then I'll also be taking notes as we speak. Also just to help myself understand this whole interview. And also what I wanted to know as well is that whatever we discuss, the data that I will collect from you, I'm gonna treat that with full confidentiality. If it is published, it will not be published as XXX, you know. Your name is not going to be in there, so you are not going to be identifiable. So I just wanted to make that clear to you.
PARTICIPANT	Okay.
RESEARCHER	And also you are free to stop me and you are free to... if you feel uncomfortable, you can omit any question that I'll ask. But what I can assure you is that the questions that I'm going to be asking you, they are not going to cause... or I'm not going to pose any unrealistic questions, you know. So I can start with the interview now if you want, but it's just going to be... My first three questions are very much general questions before I get to the real questions. So what I wanted to know, XXX, so maybe if you can just give me in a few words how you describe yourself as a departmental manager?
PARTICIPANT	As a departmental manager, in terms of my portfolio...
RESEARCHER	So maybe just give you the whole question that I want to ask. So I want to ask how you'd describe yourself, and maybe also how long have you been doing the work that you are doing in Civil Engineering. And also, how big is Civil Engineering in terms of the administrative team, in terms of academics and also your students. So in that kind of thing.
PARTICIPANT	Okay, I'm just trying to count. [[llaughs]] So I've been basically a departmental manager since 2013 when we essentially moved over to our new building. In terms of EBE, we're probably in the middle size-wise. I think the undergrad body is just over 500, our postgrads are about 200 In terms academic staff, we are about 20, I would say. We were thankfully blessed with additional five posts last year. And technical staff we are about – let me just see – I would say just under 10 I think. Let me just double check [[unclear]]. Alvino, Charles, Chris, Len, sorry eight. [[unclear]] people. And our admin staff is Zodwa, Isabel, Rowen, Cheryl, Avril, me and Jill, seven in total. Eight, sorry. Staff changes man, you know. So including me there's eight people. So we're a fair-sized department, I think.
RESEARCHER	So now referring to… my topic is actually to do with remote work. What I'm looking at, my initial... so when I came up with this topic, it was just when we went into this emergency remote work at UCT. And I know that at this stage, it's no longer emergency. I mean, there are things that we have managed to plan. But what I wanted to tap into, I wanted to tap into the space where this was an emergency. My topic, Reza [[sp?]] I'm sure you saw the email that I sent, it's Emergency Remote Work during the Covid-19 pandemic, and I'm looking at the lived experiences of the employed in an institution. And I'm specifically looking at the DMs. So I need you to tap into that space when this was like, you know, it's happening now. So I'm looking at the challenges that are associated with remote work for senior administrative staff. And also, I need to understand which part do you find most difficult when working remotely? And also looking at the challenges associated with this remote working.
PARTICIPANT	In a nutshell, Nonnie, I think I'm going to use largely 2020 April til December. Because I think that's when it was really crunch and redacionary-type functioning. So, I mean, we basically had a meeting with our HOD and almost our whole department, whoever was here still, just towards the end of March, where he said, "Look, it's a little bit undecided in terms of how the faculty is going to respond. And we were waiting for more briefs from the – what do you call it – from management. Management being the office of [[unclear]] and them like that. And our HODs style is he would like to respond in line with what the higher levels are, whether it's the faculty or the university, in terms of before it filters down to a departmental policy. So obviously that's how we try and run as much as possible. But obviously with some kind of preparation for us. Sorry, Nonnie. Can I just take a pause quickly? [[unclear]]
RESEARCHER	All good my dear, no problem.
[[break in interview, some speech in background]]	
PARTICIPANT	Sorry, ICT had to come collect some stuff from our building, old phones.
RESEARCHER	[[unclear]] from the office?
PARTICIPANT	Yes, I'm back almost every day now.
RESEARCHER	I think I should.
PARTICIPANT	Come man, it's easier.
RESEARCHER	Is it safe in there?
PARTICIPANT	Ja now, it's just me and xxx, our receptionist. Izzy and Rowen and Avvy and Cheryl, they're basically working from home. Because at this stage they don't really need to see students face to face. But I'll touch on that. So essentially [[unclear]] style of leadership, to some degree, is if it comes to major decisions like this, let's see what central puts on the table, and then we react from there. I think because he doesn't want go against, obviously, greater university policy and things like that. So a large part of our, I think, operations are based on that. But also in terms of we've split our responsibilities somewhat into sections. Like undergrad, postgrad, research, social responsiveness, operations etcetera like that. And each person has kind of like a team that is attached to it. So going back to remote, I suppose, operations the thing for me as the departmental manager was the fact that it was so frantic that there wasn't really time to chat with staff about what is going to be expected and how we're gonna work around this. And unfortunately - I think in reflection now on the whole period of us really just trying to get through 2020 – the engagement with my team has been incredibly poor. I mean we did chat a bit on email, but very little. It was more because of the fact everything was just like, you know, like on top of each other. And there wasn't really a chance to pause and touch base and things like that. That was one of the things, and I think another things also was some of our staff had like connectivity issues and things like that. Even though the resources were available and were made available, it was still like a bit problematic. Like certain areas, depending on their KPI's – obviously, still they were still pushing, there was no difference. It was just, instead of being on your office, you were now sitting in your lounge our wherever. But ultimately the job still got done. And I mean, I must say my team just came through fantastically, you know. Like even though we didn't touch base must with each other we knew we had to pull, we knew we had to do this. Some people, they obviously didn't have much to do, like reception. And also there wasn't necessarily always work that we could delegate in lieu of the fact that their core was front-facing. So that was somewhat of a... Like, okay, at the end you've got to just say, "You know what, I can't deal with this, because there's much more important and much more urgent things"... And one of the big things, I think, that this whole process recognised, is that one each faculty does operate somewhat differently. Also, there's a lot of difference in terms of how invovled and how not involved academic staff are with regarding the administrative and operational functioning of the department. I mean, how we coped was some of our academics they really came through and they helped with... especially when it came to the delivery of course materials. Like we initiated within our faculty the whole cargo [[sp?]] system of sending the course resources to our students. That was two academics that ran with that. And then where they needed administrative support, we stepped up with that. But I think the challenge, going back to your main question of... I think it was just: "We need to do it, we need to do it". And the sacrifices that were made along the way, I mean we haven't even really had a chance to unpack what impact that had on us as a department, on us as a team in terms of administrative staff, as well as the impact it had on academics. But it certainly did have a very big impact on the department in terms of the whole operations. I mean we pulled through fantastically, we had people that gave up a lot. But ultimately, I think ja, it was one big challenge, Nonnie. It was really big.
RESEARCHER	Yes, but I'm taking from, maybe expanding, from what you've just said. What do you think are the necessary factors that would improve emergency remote? If this happens again in the next ten years, obviously UCT hopefully will be ready. But from what you have learnt, from what you've experienced, what do you think is necessary to improve remote work, specifically for departmental managers and their teams, you know? In terms of their [[unclear]].

80	PARTICIPANT	I think one of the things that definitely can help is having an open mind to the fact that it's a changing environment for both the manager as well
81		as the people that make up the rest of the team. Because it's not always a case of you have to be there from eight to four. That is my view,
82		okay. We had to deal with the outside obligations. And everyone's outside obligations are different, in the sense of small kids and all those
83		kinds of stuff. But I think there needs to be an understanding and an open dialogue in the sense that I can't work from eight to four, Monday to
84		Friday. But I will commit to meeting my KPI's and my responsibilities that are asked of me. That is the first thing, from both parties. Because
85		you've got a way out, the connectivity issues, the obligation issues, the quality, the relationship of the team, etcetera. And I think also
86		transparency ties in heavily with that.That's the first thing. The second thing I think is obviously making sure that people are adequately
87		resourced. And also, I think people need to understand that there are certain things that we can and cannot accommodate. But making sure
88		that staff at least have a... whether it's loaning a laptop, hiring a laptop, buying a laptop, etcetera, those kinds of things. And not just to be like,
89		"No, I don't want to," you know, from either end. The third thing is, I think it's a lot to do with people's attitudes in the sense that everybody has
90		a role to play in it, you know. And making sure that people understand that there genuinely is a want. And I suppose, you want to do it, man.
91		You want to help, you want to be part of it. And going in with that mindset. And not like go in with a, "Oh, that person doesn't want to, they
92		don't wanna work from home." Or that attitude of they're doing nothing, they're just sitting at home and playing with, whatever, you know. And
93		that's across the board. That's not just between the departmental managers thinking that of their people, or the people thinking that this other
94		person in the team is not doing anything, whatever. [[unclear]] as well. So I think that is like a whole kind of mindset thing. The nice thing, I
95		think, about it was it actually gave us a chance to reflect on how important our human engagement is with each other.
96	RESEARCHER	Yes, I was going to come to that one as well.
97	PARTICIPANT	Because when we actually did have a chance to have staff meetings... Because before what used to happen was I meet basically once every
98		two weeks with my team. And the academic staff meeting, where our academic administrators also sit in on, and all our I call them section
99		heads, like the technical person, the workshop person, like all those people that run with those spaces, we used to have those once a month
100		only. Throughout 2020 at one stage we were having them weekly. Then we shifted when it got a little bit more settled, we went to fortnightly.
101		And when we actually got to a space where we saw people – it was still virtual – people were so happy to see each other. And that really just
102		[[unclear]] a little bit of a cameraderie that we lost in that time. And I think as DMs, one of our responsibilties is to kind of keep everyone in the
103		department going. Because I see it as we are the mother of the house. And we've gotta make sure that everything runs, you know. It's like
104		[[unclear]]. From making sure there is food in the house, like if you were to compare it to your own house, making sure there's food in the
105		house, the kids are sorted, homework is done, whatever needs to be done is done. And just like that we've gotta apply it here. And I think it
106		was little bit difficult, but also if you have the right people working with you, or if you ask them, "I need your help". [[unclear]] was a problem. I
107		struggled with that personally. Delegation.
108	RESEARCHER	Ah, delegation, okay.
109	PARTICIPANT	Yes, I struggle with that a bit. Or maybe a little more than a bit.
110	RESEARCHER	But can I ask you something, do you start with it... Was it something that was a struggle prior to remote work, or is it someting that...?
111	PARTICIPANT	Generally I struggle with it. So in terms of 2020, it was probably even harder. Because for me like sometimes I'm thinking... Because for me
112		2020 was like cray, rush rush rush, I felt you know what, it's easier for me to just do it myself and take 20 minutes, half an hour, an hour, than
113		to epxlain if to somebody and hope and pray they're gonna do it right and then you still have to check it, or have some kind of touch base. And
114		I think for me, I overburdened myself at some points.
115	RESEARCHER	And then the other thing that I can ask you, the stuff that you gave your team, whatever you gave them, in terms of them fulfilling that task... is
116		it the same time, or is it longer or is it shorter than when they are in their office?
117	PARTICIPANT	So the way we do it in our department is we don't micro-manage. They each have their own portfolios and KPIs and the faculty includes them
118		as well directly, depending on what it is. But Giga [[sp?]] does still send some of the stuff through to us. [[unclear]] down. But I think in terms of
119		the timelines and stuff, they met the dates and deadlines and things. But like I said to you, that flexibility was there, you know. If you find it
120		easier to work from twelve o'clock til nine o'clock at night, that's fine. Because our correspondence was more via email than phoning or things
121		like that, stuff like that. So ja. I think there were obviously cases where we did need to ask for extensions, but that was more because of the
122		fact that we had extra work to deal with. Like the whole couriering of resources, checking with our students and the whole residence letters
123		and all that kind of stuff, things that we needed to oversee. What else what there? Gosh, Nonnie. Telling people that if I remember what
124		happened last week, congratulations. Because also what I noticed changed for me, is I kind of worked for the max a week at a time. I didn't
125		plan more than a week ahead, because you couldn't. Because one, it was so unpredictable and two, there just wasn't time. But I certainly, at
126		some point it got to, I only will look at tomorrow, you know. Today and tomorrow.
127	RESEARCHER	Yes, but in all this, XXX, are there any opportunities that you have seen with this emergenyc remote working that you'd like to... I know that
128		you have said that there is flexibility that is involved, but are there any specific opportunities that you have seen and also that you want to
129		adapt your operations outside? When you go back to campus, is there anything that you'd like to change?
130	PARTICIPANT	I think it forced us to look at our systems more in terms of our processes and things like that. UCT is still very burocratic and systems
131		dependent that is very long-winded some times. And I think that there's a lot that can be changed in terms of expediting things. There's a lot
132		that can be changed in terms of... Like this is one of the discussions we also have at our Ex-Co is that the tools are there, but they're not
133		necessarily being used in the best way possible.
134	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
135	PARTICIPANT	And that is also largely big systems, not necessarily what happens in house, but it's the impact that the big systems have on the in-house
136		operations. And that's things like... There's this one program that some of our academics developed that helps with graduate management in
137		terms of tracking the student's progress throughout the degree. It helps very heavily with curriculum advising and registration. But the problem
138		is, it's an in-house system that does make administration easier for us as well in terms of, you know, when you have to sit and you have to go
139		through those broadsheets, the crs's [[sp?]] and stuff like that, it's online. It tells you in a nice user-friendly way. But when we tried to build it up
140		and implement it in the faculty, there were obviously snags and stuff. But in-house for us, it works. But the reason why we push for things like
141		that to be developed, is because things like... Peoplesoft [[sp?]] has limitations, Nonnie, you know that. And you come from an equally big
142		department. You don't wanna be sitting through 1000 worth of undergraduate students and check to see if they meet all the requirements for
143		their degree.
144	RESEARCHER	Yes, absolutely.
145	PARTICIPANT	Now administrators have to sit with program convenors and sit with a highliter with that broadsheet. That's onerous, that's time-consuming,
146		that's unnecessary. Peoplesoft should be able to tell us that. I mean [[unclear]] been sitting there three days just with that and only doing that.
147		It's a way of time.
148	RESEARCHER	I can relate, ja.
149	PARTICIPANT	And things like that, and SAC [[sp?]] and the limitations that SAC has on us as administrators. And I don't know whether there is going to be a
150		forum to raise these type of changes that's needed so that the higher-level people can see that this is what the problems are on the ground in
151		terms of administration. Because [[unclear]] academics have frustrations with us as admin saying that, "Why is it taking so long?" But they
152		don't realise that we are system dependent.
153	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes, absolutely.
154	PARTICIPANT	System dependent in-house, it's system dependant faculty, registrar.
155	RESEARCHER	Yes, and thanks for that. Do you know if the faculty – because remember, I'm speaking to you as someone who's outside of UCT, so I don't
156		know about UCT's processes – so what I want to know, is do you know if there's a faculty or UCT emergency remote working policy in terms of
157		adminsitrative staff? Do you know if there's such a policy at UCT? And also, do you think it is necessary?
158	PARTICIPANT	We received memos, but I think the thing with UCT is a lot of our stuff are reactionary rather than progressive. Or maybe progressive is not the
159		right word, but they're not proactive, that's the word I was looking for, right. And I suppose yes, a lot of the things are because we learnt from
160		experience and things like that, but I think that they're way too long sometimes. In terms of the ERP working from home policy, we received
161		memos, we received Dean's desk alerts and we obviously discussed this within our faculty DM group with the faculty staff, like Gita and

162		Celeste and Ganeesa [[sp?]]. But a lot of the things we needed to discuss in-house, in terms of data for staff, IT needs, you know, do we have
163		budget for those kinds of stuff? So ja. And explainig to people, because sometimes I think some of the line managers – and I use this more for
164		the technical people – their line managers might not know, because ultimately yes, it is our resposibility as DMs to inform and advise. But even
165		if we circulate the policies to those heads, there still needed to be a little bit of explaining and things like that of what the implication of this is
166		and whatever. Ja, so as far as I know it was – I would say – more reactionary rather than proactive.
167	RESEARCHER	Okay, and in terms of the resources that your department provided you in order to work better, what equipement do you think you'll need to be
168		more effective and was that equipment provided? And also, ja. Let's just cover this one before I ask the next question, because it's quite
169		different. So did your department give you any resources, and what are those? And do you think that is what you need? Or you need
170		something?
171	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so I have a laptop that I bought a few years ago through work. Our undergrad and postgrad administrators also have laptops that's
172		specifically for them. Okay, pardon. My finance person also opted for a laptop from the normal GOB allowance. So they have their old
173		desktops which remained here at the office, and they used their laptops primarily. We provided data. As for the data allowance to all our staff,
174		we sent out a circular to everybody: "Do you need data? Because this is the options that is available." And then obviously I – what's the word –
175		I arranged for it to happen as per their request, as per their needs. I think it was sufficient. The only thing is, some people based on where
176		they're living, it tended to be an issue sometimes. The downside of it is not necesarily for my team, because the areas that they stay in is not
177		so much of an issue, but I think the technical guy, obviously, because they couldn't work. Because theirs were dependent on being in the lab,
178		being on-site. Where we did have touch base sessions like as a whole a department, it was a bit problematic, because they stay like
179		Eersterivier and things like that. So sometimes connectivity proved to be a problem. But other than that, I think it was sufficient. Because
180		obviously I would constantly check with people, "Do you need anything? Are you okay?" Whatever, ja.
181	[[phone rings]]	
182	PARTICIPANT	Sorry, Pam call.
183	RESEARCHER	[[chuckles]]
184	PARTICIPANT	Does that answer your question?
185	RESEARCHER	Yeah, it answers my question, yes. And working from home – I know you are in the office today – but what is your routine, where do you work?
186		Do you have a home office, or do you work from anywhere at home?
187	PARTICIPANT	From my kitchen, you mean? So my husband works from home and he has a office set up there. And he has a spare computer there that I just
188		basically started using. That I just needed to obviously set up with a VPN and all those kinds of stuff. And then at some point I would switch
189		between using my laptop – depending on the fact that obviously working with two big screens from his maching is much more convenient
190		compared to a smaller laptop screen – but then I would alternate depending on what would work on the laptop and what wouldn't with
191		[[unclear]] VPN stuff. Sorry, I just need to get my head around that you're asking me these questions as a non-UCT employee.
192	RESEARCHER	Ja.
193	PARTICIPANT	So it alternates, you know. The times that I would be on the phone with ICT to sort this stuff and things like that. But I think that the
194		infrastructure that was set up to allow staff to work from home was fine. I mean obviously, there were teething problems, but ja, it was fine.
195	RESEARCHER	But in terms of work, do you think that your team need more assistance`working remotely more than when they are in the office, or are they
196		running with it from home better than when they are in the office? And also, how has that affected your communication with your team?
197	PARTICIPANT	I think it varied depending on the individual's personal knolwedge of IT and you know, what setup they had. Like for example, one of my team
198		is not mobile. So there was no way, considering underlying health issues, that I was going to expect her to come in and fetch what she
199		needed, to the office, because I would rather have kept her away from that. So what we did was I collected what she needed, she told me, "I
200		need this, I need this, I need this." And then she came to my house, and then she asked somebody to bring her and then we basically just
201		loaded the printer and all that kind of hardware that she needed. Another one was fine, they just needed, "Please, I need my chair." Another
202		one just, she was also fine. It was more like just the data that needed to either had to be upped or changed over or stuff like that. That was
203		more like, ja.
204	RESEARCHER	Okay, yes. I know that your student engagment is not much working remotely, but I mean for you as DM it might be not as limited as it is with
205		everyone else. But what are your experience in terms of engagment with students in remote working?
206	PARTICIPANT	Limited. Except where maybe we need to do stuff relating to student queries and stuff like that. But I think a lot of the communication what we
207		needed to send out to our student body, was done through the Vula forums. So specifically for me, limited, intiailly. But where it did get higher
208		was this year only with registration. Because how we did the split was Izzy did the routing of the registration service request... Did you guys
209		also use service requests this year?
210	RESEARCHER	Yes, it was quite an experience.
211	PARTICIPANT	And I did all the queries. So we had ten capturers. I also helped with some of the capturing. But my biggest thing was the responding to
212		queries. And that was anything from "I don't know where to register?" you know, "How do I do the service request?" to "The system is giving
213		me problems," to ja. It was much more intense because of that specific functionality that we did this year.
214	RESEARCHER	Yes, but do you think it's something that UCT could consider for the future, this online registration? Because I mean, we haven't done full...
215	PARTICIPANT	I think it's a fantastic idea, but the biggest problem that I found, or problems, was one, our students don't read. And when they hit a problem,
216		they inundate the one person that they either get told, "This is who you must log your queries with," irrespective of whether those queries are
217		earmarked for a specific issue. They will keep on sending that one person that they know that does actually respond to them. And even if you
218		do say, "If this is your issue, this is where you must go to," "If this is your issue..." Hu-uh! No. They will send one person, irrespective of that
219		split. And I think the problem with that, is that I think UCT was not prepared for the actual storm, that storm of queries and problems like with
220		the servicing department largely. And that's where we got hit hard in the department, is the fact that ICTS and SSS, I don't think that they
221		actually were sufficiently resourced [[unclear]]. And I think that that's something UCT needs to look at. Because online registration is here to
222		stay. It actually should stay, because I don't see why we need to have those 10 000 pieces of paper. Because then it creates filing issues, and
223		archiving, and somebody wants to know what they did five years ago and nobody can find the piece of paper anymore... So if you have a
224		online repository, you can access all that information that you need. And anybody can have access to it. It's not confined to it's in somebody's
225		office and they don't have the key kind of situation.
226	RESEARCHER	Okay, XXX. I have come to the end of my questions, but is there anything that you would like to share that you think is important for me to
227		understand your experiences with emergency remote working?
228	PARTICIPANT	The fantastic thing that our faculty did – and I'm not sure if other faculties did this – but we have in EBE have an on-site time of councillors who
229		spend their time with students in terms of their academic issues. So I think that xxx has like three or four psychologists. And what they did was
230		they actually had check-in sessions – I think it was every two weeks – and anybody could join from academics to admin to technical, whatever.
231		And it was just an open space forum to say, "Are you coping, are you okay?" And it was fantastic, I mean no judgement, everything was
232		confidential. In the beginning I think it was like this and then it slowly dipped, then maybe things started going like, "Woah, I'm feeling a bit
233		overwhelmed!" And the good thing is that the people that were in the forum is people that you sometimes do you work with that's in your own
234		department. And you never see that vulnerable side of them. And because you got to see that, you actually think, you know what, the way I
235		speak to people, the way I engage with people, I actually maybe take a step back and look and think, because I don't know what that person
236		has got on their plate.
237	RESEARCHER	Yes, so you are saying that the councillors would have a forum, more than one person in a session, is that what you are saying?
238	PARTICIPANT.	Yes. So exactly like you and I are meeting now, there would be a collective invitation sent to the whole of the EBE faculty. And whoever
239		wanted to join, whoever felt like sharing, could share. In the sense that, "I'm really feeling overwhelmed". There was one person that actually
240		said, "You know what, I tested positive for Covid two weeks ago and I was basically dead that two weeks. I couldn't do anything, I just felt like
241		this, this, this." I actually almost put the other listeners in that mindset, like you know what, I really need to be careful. Because this is the face
242		of Covid. This is what is happening [[unclear]] sometimes that a lot of people needed that reassurance to know that it's normal what we're
243		going through. Whether it's health issues, whether it's physical health, mental health. And knowing that you're not the only person out there

244		that's either dealing with something similar or that's somebody's actually dealing with something worse. I think that gave us all a little bit of that
245		push to just keep on going and keep [[unclear]].
246	RESEARCHER	I think that was fantastic, actually. Tell me, were these councillors paid by you or the faculty? Or it was just a UCT...
247	PARTICIPANT	No, no. Nazeema is a member of staff of the EBE faculty, within the faculty. She's a clinical psychologist and ordinarily she, I think, has a team
248		of about four, five psychologists that work with her to see to the student needs. So the students make an appointment like any other
249		psychologist. So she would be the one that would chair the sessions – facilitate the sessions – and then I think sometimes somebody from HR
250		would also be there. I think I only went to one or two. Because when I was in a bad space, I just felt you know what, I need to just like offload
251		somewhere. And that was a good forum.
252	RESEARCHER	Okay, interesting.
253	PARTICIPANT	But [[unclear]] I can't say, but I do know that Nazeema is paid by the faculty.
254	RESEARCHER	Perfect, thank you so much for that point, very interesting. I was not aware... it's very good to know such things. Anything else that you'd like
255		me to...
256	PARTICIPANT	Not that I can think of... I mean if you find that with your other interviews somebody mentions something and then you want to maybe compare
257		if EBE or our department had something similar, you're welcome to get back to me also. And I can either find out, or I can respond if I know on
258		email if you want. Because everybody's experience was different. And everybody knows different things based on what they're asked about, or
259		you know, things like that. I don't know if the other DMs in EBE have responded to you, but like I said everybody operated differently.
260	RESEARCHER	Yes, I've got two already that I'm meeting on Thursday in EBE, ja.
261	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
262	RESEARCHER	Sorry.
263	PARTICIPANT	Now, I thought you were gonna say bye, so I said...
264	RESEARCHER	No, I was saying I'm just going to stop the recording now. [[cuts off]]

9.15   Appendix O: Transcription for P10

3	RESEARCHER	XXX, just to assure you that whatever we discuss in this meeting or this interview is confidential. You're not is not going to be identifiable if this is published. And also, you have the option to omit any questions that you are not comfortable with. And also if you would like to withdraw from this process...
6	PARTICIPANT	Can I...
7	RESEARCHER	Yes, I'm here.
8	PARTICIPANT	Ja, can I just maybe switch off the video, because it's interfering with the internet I think?
9	RESEARCHER	Perfect. Do you want to remove mine or are you okay?
10	PARTICIPANT	No, let me try mine first and see because sometimes my internet's connectivity, even if it's fibre, it's not very stable.
11	RESEARCHER	Okay, that's fine.
12	PARTICIPANT	Okay, this is not bad.
13	RESEARCHER	Okay, so before we commence with our business, is there anything that you'd like to ask maybe before we start?
14	PARTICIPANT	Look, I don't think I have anything that I would ask right now. Because I know that this is for your research paper, obviously. For your thesis and obviously you wil be doing some data analysis at the end and then, you know, your findings, and there you go. So I'm happy to support you, I want to support.
17	RESEARCHER	Thank you, thank you, XXX. Thank you so much for that. Now tell me, how long have you been in this particular position at UCT?
18	PARTICIPANT	Five years five months.
19	RESEARCHER	Perfect. And tell me, how big is your school in terms of your... I'm not so sure how much teaching you guys do... So how big are you in terms of your student numbers, and also in terms of your academic staff and your administrative staff? How big is your unit?
21	PARTICIPANT	Maybe let me start with the number of students, or maybe just the overaal academic programme. So with the academic programme we have a Professional Masters in Policy Development and Practice. We also have an M.Phil in Policy Development and Practice. Both the professional and the M.Phil, predominantly there have been part-time programs for quite a number of years from the time the school started in 2013 up until last year. Okay, we've just introduced a new fulltime Masters programme this year. So in terms of student numbers, rather before I even go to the student numbers, the other academic programme that runs is the postragduate programme. The postragduate diploma programme that we actually run, you know, almost at the same time with the Masters programme. Okay, overall it depends on a year-to-year basis, but we could get anything between 40 to 50 students, MPhil and Professional Masters combined, okay. With the coming in of the full Masters programme, I would add on about... Right now we only have nine students, but our target should actually be about 15. But because it's the first year, we only managed to get about nine students for that programme.
30	RESEARCHER	Okay.
31	PARTICIPANT	In terms of academic staff, we were just a skeleton up until last year as well. Now we have two professors, one associate professor, two senior lecturers as well as one lecturer, ja.
33	RESEARCHER	And your admin team?
34	PARTICIPANT	Our admin team, we are about... for part-staff [[unclear]] members, we are about 15.
35	RESEARCHER	Wow, that's a big number!
36	PARTICIPANT	Yes, because remember our school, inasmuch as we have the academic programmes as our flagship programmes, we run as an NGO, okay. So must of our activities are more programmatic activities that have to do with either the research programme... can you imagine we are only developing the research program now, because now we've got on more academic personnel, plus we are likely to get on more PhD students as well, okay. But predominantly, we've done more executive education courses, or other programmes that were leaderships programs like the Emerging Africa Leadership programs that we've run within the school, and the other Women in Ladership program that we run in school are all government workshop trainings that we normally do. So that's where our focus in the past has been most inasmuch as we have also been doing our academic activities, our academic activities haven't been that much. This is why you don't see here that the academic administration programs, because we have a dedicated person obviously we handles that, Elvina.
44	RESEARCHER	Yes, I know Elvina. Okay, I think I will talk to you outside this meeting regarding some of your programs that you have just spoken about. I've got some interest in those areas. Tell me something, your PGDiploma, what is it on?
46	PARTICIPANT	It's also in development policy and practice.
47	RESEARCHER	Ah, okay.
48	PARTICIPANT	So it's... if I want to do a fulltime Masters, right, I would be in the same class with somebody who's doing the postgraduate diploma, except for when it comes to doing the thesis. So I can opt, if I want, to just do the postgraduate diploma, and I'll be in class with everybody, I'll do the assignments and everything and the exam. But the only thing that I'm going to get is a postgraduae diploma. But if I want to do the Masters and I registered for a Masters, then at the end of the day I need to do a thesis. For a Profession Masters, your thesis very much links to what you do at work. [[unclear]] an MPhil, that is the straight academic route. It becomes even deeper, even the thesis is actually way much more.
54	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. Thanks for that clarity. Now tell me with this...maybe tapping into the time when this was an emergency arrangement, an emergency remote, so what did you find most difficult, or what might still find difficult working remotely? And also, what are the challenges, or what were the challenges associated to whatever it was, or whatever it is, that you find challenging with this arrangment?
57	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so when we went into lockdown, I think to start with we were very fortunate that we were given enough time to prepare ourselves to go into the lockdown mode. Because even before the president announced - I think by the 15th of March - most of us had already started working from home, okay. Almost like the whole department at that particular point had started working from home. So that made things a lot easier, because we were able to get all the files, we were able to arrange arrange their computers, their laptops, and everything, and printers. And everyone was out of the office. I think I was one of the last people to leave the office on the 15th. Me, and Wendy and I think Maria, we were the last people to acutally leave and just lock everything. So we were quick fortunate that we were able to get ourselves set up as quickly as possible. The challenges, however, were... for a position like mine, it was very difficult to deal with people who were coming... knowing that people were under so much pressure and fear, anxiety, depression, coming to you for so much help, that was quite overwhelming for my position as one of the things that were really challenging. How to navigate through the challenges that were being thrown to me, okay. Secondly was we had a teaching program that was supposed to be done on a face to face program with the Women in Leadership program, okay. And because of Covi-19, obviously we needed to change the whole setup. So just because it was not an academic programme, UCT [[unclear]] could not help us. And it doesn't go through the other short course, like Get Smarter courses, the way we do them. So we couldn't go that route either. And we neede to find a service provider and negotiate for us to bring on board a new online program to actually deal with the Women in Leadership program. Because it was quite a huge program, worth about 19 million. So losing that, or getting into a situation where we failed to deliver, was not an option. But it created a whole lot of a mess. So the other consequences as a result of going online, was also now getting new staff members on board to support the existing staff members. So that wa a challenge, because whoever we were bringing on board are people that we haven't met face to face and we are not able to see them, we didn't know them properly [[unclear]]. They neeed to go through just, you know, the online - either online interviews - or we needed to do some head-hunting to bring people on board as quickly as possible. So it was actually a challenge to get that together. And then the other challenge was just the issue of reorganisation and having so many meetings. That was overwhelming, because we were now constantly having so many meetings to meet on a frequent basis, and by the end of the year we were all like extremely tired and overwhelmed. A number of staff actually got burn... there was a lot of burnout for a lot of staff. So that we the other challenge. What other challenges? The other challenge was [[unclear]] the amount of losses that my colleagues were going through, that I also went through, those were actually massive

80		challenges, okay. And the last one is, we tended to overwork, or do more work than necessary, because we constantly wanted to
81		overcompensate, of course. Because you know, you don't wanna be seen like you are not working, so you've got to put in as much as
82		possible, which was actually detrimental. Because you didn't separate, you know, what time was work time and then what time do you need
83		to be with family, or do your own thing. So that was also another challenge at that particular time. That's about it, I think.
84	RESEARCHER	And tell me, you said earlier that you had many meetings... Were these meetings on one platform, or different platforms?
85	PARTICIPANT	Ah, the meetings were on different platforms, but mostly we used Microsoft Teams, because that was the platform that the university had
86		endorsed as our main platform to do meetings on or to do most of the activities on. Some of the other meetings were actually on zoom,
87		because we have an account for the school that we use for zoom that we subscribe. So we also did some of the activities using zoom as
88		well, ja.
89	RESEARCHER	Okay, and tell me with this challenges, I'm sure there were opportunities that you experienced. What are those opportunities that you
90		experienced with emergency remote, or with remote working?
91	PARTICIPANT	Okay, the opportunities were opportunities, first of all, opportunities to learn, to learn how to navigate through, even just MS Teams. Because
92		we were never using MS Teams at that point.
93	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
94	PARTICIPANT	So technological learning, online platform, learning how to manage that, I think this was a critical thing. And also how to self-manage, the
95		importance of wellness, okay. And boundaries. What I'm doing for me, I don't want to see your emails coming to me at nine and I'll be
96		responding, hu-uh! I want to work within... so there were quite [[laughs]] a few opportunities besides the challenges. And the opportunities
97		was for us to learn to be more resilient, okay. Regardless of... And also learning to know that, you know, when things have really gone bad,
98		it's not the end of the world. And there's nothing wrong with you being emotional, going through a breakdown, or asking people for help to
99		say, "Can I actually take a break?" I need a break as a human being that's actually going through what I'm going through. And to support one
100		another, ja, I think those were the opportunities. The other opportunity from a business perspective was just utilising the online platform to
101		still continue what we intended to do. Like we did a lot of workshops, alot of webinars instead of seminars that we could have done. So that
102		helped us to go on and, you know, learning a lot of things. I think there were a lot of learning opportunities. I think that's what I can say, ja.
103	RESEARCHER	Okay, and are there any factors that you think are necessary to improve remote working for administrative staff, or mabye for senior
104		adminstrative staff like you? Are there any factors that you think are important that UCT must [[unclear]]?
105	PARTICIPANT	I think there are factors that are important, and I do consider the amount of resources that we also have in any case. One of the factors that I
106		could look at is, for example, in 2019 we came up with a policy within our department where we could not buy a laptop above R15000, okay
107		but with the demand for laptops and the fact that normal laptops are going out of fashion, not only out of fashion, but the technology is
108		becoming obsolete, you are forced to get the SSD, solid state hard-drives, which cost way much more than the R15000. So I think adjusting
109		the policy would be one of those improvements, okay. Then the other thing was... Look, staff members have different environments in which
110		they stay.
111	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
112	PARTICIPANT	And normally they stay in those areas, or places, becaue I mean, that's what thye can afford, and that's what the university is actually paying.
113		So some staff members could have found themselves in a situation where there are som many people in the house and I'm supposed to be
114		coordinating an MPhil program, for example. And I'm saying why can't you find me just an external office in a safe space in a hotel - because
115		some hotels were offering those safe spaces - and they would take the responsibility of ensuring that the staff members were safe and all
116		that. But according to UCT, there was no flexibility whasoever. And some staff members would go ahead and pay for their own office space,
117		mainly because they've got so many children at home that they cannot be able to work. Because they come into these meetings, and the
118		child is crying in the background, okay. So I felt so sorry for the mothers and I think we could do better. We could find ways in which we could
119		help, especially staff members that are in situations like those, and we look at that critically. I know it's easier to say, you telling us that your
120		child is having... should not even be used as a reason want to go back to the office. But it can really derail somebody who is trying to, you
121		know, to help their kids to learn, to look after their kids. And at that moment not even the maids are coming, all are in a very horribly situation,
122		you see what I mean? So I think we could have done much better in that regard.
123	RESEARCHER	And tell me something, was everyone... in terms of resources, were you guys equiped? I mean like you were saying that we all have different
124		needs. Obviously some didn't even have a chair, some didn't have a desk. Were there any resources that were given by your school to your
125		staff members?
126	PARTICIPANT	Yes, we gave everyone who needed a laptop before the 15th. Anyone who needed a laptop, didn't have a laptop, they all [[unclear]] that.
127		Those who had their own laptop and felt they didn't need a school laptop, we made sure that they, you know, they were set up. It was there
128		to help us. Those that needed chairs, got chairs. As long that administration knew that a chair had been taken out of the office, that was
129		okay. So far, I think in the whole school, no-one got a chair, except for me, because the chair I was sitting on got broken. [[laughs]]
130	RESEARCHER	[[unclear]] Oh my goodness!
131	PARTICIPANT	Exactly! So before lockdown, I went, collecter the chair and I thought Faiza, I'm getting my chair and there's no way. And I was truying to buy
132		the chair and the chairs were super expensive at that time, because is working from home. And you know how these economic sustems can
133		work. Okay, but in terms of resources, we made sure that everyone had a resource, everyone had a laptop. Those that needed printers, we
134		bought printers for them, you know. Those that needed to print in bulk, we suggested where bulk-printing could be done and everything. So I
135		think that we were quite fortunate that we had enough time between the time we were locking down up to the time... I mean the time we
136		closed our office to the time we... even before we closed our office, we already anticipated that there could be a lockdown because of what
137		was happening.
138	RESEARCHER	Okay, okay. In terms of you specifically, do you have an allocated workspace, or you work in the kitchen like some of us? Ja.
139	PARTICIPANT	I am fortunatey that I have a spare bedroom that I've always used as a spare study room and a spare workplace. So even when I have
140		visitors, I lock myself in here and I can still work without any disturbances. But I'm calling myself fortunate. Not everyone is as fortunate as I
141		am. And remembers, working from home for me was not a new thing. And ofr most managers it was not a new thing, because if I have
142		reports, if I have budgets, big budgets, proposals that we're working on, normally I work from home, I would say I'm not going to be in the
143		office, I need to finish some documents or some big report that I'm working on.
144	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. And your routine, obviously it has changed. How is that? How are you managing? Are you maybe one of those people who
145		struggles to switch off with work? Or it's business as usual?
146	PARTICIPANT	Uhm, my routine has changed, Nonnie. My routine has changed very much. Because I'm no longer taking on more than I'm supposed to take
147		on. And I think could even be working against me sometimes. But I'm actually putting my foot down: "I will do this, I will not do this. And I'll do
148		this, and if you want me to do this, I need to do this within the normal working hours." Okay? I am finding myself investing more into my
149		health. Because I had a terrible burnout at the end of last year. I had three funerals within my family. One from Covid, one from suicide and
150		another from cancer. And then I lost five friends, close friends, due to Covid and cancer and different... I mean, Ruth was one of those
151		people, I couldn't just believe she was gone. And we were just joking, just before the lockdown, so going through all that and then working
152		like crazy to the point where you don't even have time to concentrate on your studies is not a healthy way of doing things. So all the time my
153		doctors told me, "You've got to stop, because your blood pressure is going up and you are not okay, and all that. And we don't want to put
154		you on blood pressure medication, or chronic medication, so you need to actually wake up. So at that moment I said, first of all, I said two
155		months' leave. I have more than enough days two take two months' leave. If I need to take unpaid leave, I will do it, but I think my health first.
156		So I took that two months' leave, which was veyr helpful, because it helped me to actually start taking care of myself. I started doing more
157		walks, at least going to thy gym every once in a while, three or four times in a week. And I think that has helped me to focus and to be much
158		better and to feel like, you know, I'm in control of [[unclear]]. I mean not completely in control, because we can't be in total control, but at
159		least, you know, I'm focusing on helping myself whilst I meet my [[iunclear]] at work, but I don't have to bend so much backwards. So the
160		other thing I'm doing is asking for more help, like just getting another assistant. We've just come up with a research program which we are

161		developing and if you want me to do operations, contracting, proposal development, financial reporting, a full it [[unclear]] really, I can't do all
162		those things. And then, at the same time be in management meetings, be in strategic planning meetings. And then I have to come and sit
163		and start doing analysis. And I can't lump everything on my current staff, because it will overwhelm them. I don't want them also to be
164		overwhelmed. So the only other thing is we're now getting more people to try and actually help.
165	RESEARCHER	Yes, that's pay class 12 positions that you told me about, my dear.
166	PARTICIPANT	What do you mean by pay class 12?
167	RESEARCHER	Sorry?
168	PARTICIPANT	What do you mean by the pay class 12?
169	RESEARCHER	No, I am saying the job you are explaining now, the strategy, the development of policies and whatever else, you know what I mean. That's a
170		pay class 12 job that one.
171	PARTICIPANT	Ja, but I haven't been on a pay class 12 for a long time. I'm on a pay class 11. And I've actually tried to fight for this for a long time and I've
172		just... anyway, let it be. It's fine.
173	RESEARCHER	Ja, no keep fighting my dear, we're all fighters. Anyway, let's not [[chuckles]] So tell me, do you know if UCT has got a specific policy for
174		emergency remote? Or is it something that you think UCT must have? And you being a champion in this policy development, do you think
175		there is a need for that policy?
176	PARTICIPANT	I think there is. I believe in being more procactive than reactive. Because we have seen what has happened. I know UCT has been quite
177		proactive, because suite [[sp?]] wa one of their proactiveness.
178	RESEARCHER	Absolutely.
179	PARTICIPANT	In telling us to go and work form home even before the 15th of March last year was one of their proactiveness. Becaues the moment they
180		just starting seeing people falling sick, a few people falling sick, they were like, "Oh, no, no, start working from home as quickly as possible. I
181		think love that, but it's too reactive an approach. I think we can do much more in terms of anticipating any other emergencies that may come
182		through, ja. It might not happen now. It might happen in more years to come, but I think it's important that you have some policy that actually
183		helps you in terms of what you need to do. Because there was a lot of stampering around at the start, because we didn't know what about
184		that, what about this, what about that. So we reacted more than we should have just had a policy. And we could have said, here's a policy
185		framework, and here is how you do this. I think moving forward, we need to think about having a proper policy.
186	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And in terms of your own productivity, do you think that you are more productive working remotely? Or do you still think that maybe
187		office... I mean I know that as a manager you have taken your work, like you've said, you have worked from home before, but now you are
188		full-time working remotely. Do you think you are more productive that way or? You still think the office is...
189	PARTICIPANT	I think I am more productive working from home that I am at the office. [[unclear]] and not because I don't like people. I know I am an introvert
190		[[laughs]] I am bubbly, but I'm still an introvert, okay. And the other thing is, I feel like when I'm at the office, I get so many people walking into
191		my office. And you get disupted, you are pulled into meetings left, right and centre. Now, being at work, I schedule what I'm supposed to do
192		and when people need to meet me, it needs to be scheduled properly. And I don't, I'm refusing to just getting into meeting for the sake of
193		getting into meetings. Because what I've discovered is stuff I could have done in an hour at the office, I do it in less than 30 minutes. So I feel
194		like I get stuff done quickly and I can rest, I feel at peace, that I've done what I need to do and I've got some flexibility whilst doing what I'm
195		supposed to be doing. So where I stand, I don't even feel like I should be going to the office, you know, when things get back to normal.
196	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. I hear you.
197	PARTICIPANT	So there are also cost savings, hey. I'm not travelling from the northern suburbs all the way to southern suburbs every day. So fewer costs,
198		car maintenence costs. I'm not spending that much.
199	RESEARCHER	And when this arrangement was first introduced, obviously you might have had some expectations. And your experiences, is it what you
200		expected? This...
201	PARTICIPANT	You know, my experience is what I expected, okay. I expected that, you know, at the start there would be a bit of confusion, people would b
202		unsettled. Because when sudden change happens, that is the norm. I would expect people to panic a little bit, people to be extremely
203		emotional. Because they don't know, sometimes they don't even know where to direct their emotions. But if you are in the center there, you
204		know that people are going to come... Even when you've bought them all ht elaptops, you've connected them, you've made sure that
205		everybody's comfortabe, they'll still come back with something, so... [[laughs]]
206	RESEARCHER	I can relate, okay yes.
207	PARTICIPANT	So, I expected that those things were going to happen, okay. I think the only thing that I didn't expect that was going to happen rapidly, was
208		the amount of loss of human lives. That is the only thing that just, sort of, threw me off balance. But in terms of the other things, I expected
209		things to go that way, really.
210	RESEARCHER	Okay, okay. We are almost at the end, but I'd like to know from you, you do have an adminstrative team that you work with, or that report to
211		you. You engagement, I know you don't meet for the sae of meeting but in terms of their productivity, or their performance, do you think they
212		are more productive when they are working remotely? Or maybe you must hold their hands more than you do when you are in your office?
213		How's that?
214	PARTICIPANT	It doesn't feel, there's no difference for me.
215	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
216	PARTICIPANT	When I'm in the office, I like to give space to people that I work with. And ja, for people who report to me, some people don't actually realise
217		that I actually watch what they are doing, and I know whether they are productive or not. [[chuckles]] But so far, I have a staff complement
218		who take responsibility for what they are doing. Nobuntu, operations and HR have to deal with financial adminstration, she does quite a good
219		job with that. Because you can see... I meet with her more frequently, because obviously we look at the cash flows, we look at the journals,
220		we do quite a lot of things together. Wendy deals with logistics, but because we are no longer doing a lot of events, she's doing the health
221		and safety. Because she's our health and safety officer. And she's been on board, she's been sitting on committees, she's been
222		communicating, she's been making sure that people who need to get access to the office, are able to do what they need to do, ja. So one of
223		the other key lessons was delegation is quite critical. Trusting people, because if you don't trust people, then everything will fall on you. But if
224		you let people to say, "This is your responsibility, and I'm counting on you, and I believ in you and I trut in you, they do actually wonders. And
225		then Maria, IT-related stuff. The website, technical ITs, ordering of laptops, stationery and whatever, she handles that also very well. So I
226		think I'm quite fortunate to have a team of people who are actually mature and they are able to do their work remotely, whether we're in the
227		office or we're out, I'm actually comfortable. And also we have monthly staff meetings. So, with those monthly staff meetings, you know, we
228		all do get to report and everybody knows what we are doing. I avoid having too many adminsitrative meetings with staff members and I'd
229		rather have individual administrative meetings when need be. Because I don't want to be pulling them from what they are doing frequently.
230		Like if I want to talk about health and safety, then I have to call and it's not going to make sense. So the fact that they are delegated properly
231		and everyone knows exactly what they are doing... If I approach Nobuntu, I know it's one the short-term appointment or whatever, or
232		financial-related stuff. It's so straight-forward. Wendy - health, safety, logistics, I know. Maria, IT, I know. So it's straight-forward.
233	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. Okay, and your students I know that you do have taught masters, am I right? Your MPhil is it taught masters? Yes.
234	PARTICIPANT	Yes, it's a taught masters
235	RESEARCHER	Is it a modular programme? How do they meet? What I want to find is your engagement with students. Has that changed from what it was?
236	PARTICIPANT	The engagement with stuents hasn't changed. The part-time masters, it's block release. So they come, they don't have to come to Cape
237		Town, that 's the good part. For students who are based in South Africa, they've been able to have access to free data connectivity. For
238		students who are outside Africa - because we normally have a lot of students from outside Africa - they still continued as the normal, except
239		for they're not travelling. So the money they could have used for travelling and acommodation, they can buy data. So I think that has sort of
240		worked out for us. The only thing is the fulltime masters, okay. For those as well, because remembers we don't have our own space within
241		our school. This is why we are building that building at the moment, the building we're trying to build, okay. So ja, for them, it's a fulltime

132

242		masters, that it's a taught masters of course, but it's done online at the moment until our students are able to start coming on campus. But for
243		now, it's done online.
244	RESEARCHER	Okay, so we've come to the end of our questions, or I've come to the end of my questions. Is there anything that you'd like to add or that
245		you'd like to share with me that you think is going to assist me to understand your experiences better?
246	PARTICIPANT	Look, overall I think going through what we went through is not entirely a bad thing. It's a wake-up call. That's just what I think. And there are
247		so many lesson that we can learn from what we went through. The only unfortunate part for me was the fact that we were also going through
248		a transition - Allan leaving and Faizl coming in.
249	RESEARCHER	Yes.
250	PARTICIPANT	Most of the meetings that I could have mentioned were as a result of Ross [[sp?]] coming up wth a new strategy for the school. So then we
251		were ahving so many meetings, strategic planning meetings, strategic documents that were being working on, strategic budgets. And so it's
252		been a lot of restructuring and getting to understand each other. Forming up a new mangement team within the school. So it's been quite an
253		interesting journey, actually , going thorugh this. But overall, I don't think Covid-19 just... The disruption was hectic, yes. I will not lie to you.
254		But it wasn't the end of the world. I don't think I felt like it was the end of the world at all. No, I didn't.
255	RESEARCHER	Okay, good. It's good to here. XXX, than you so mcuh, my friend. So as I said at the beginning of this interview, whatever we shared is
256		confidential and your name will not be - just in case there's something that you said that is going to, you know - but your name is not going to
257		be identifiable. So ja.
258	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so thank you so much and I'm happy to have assisted.
259	RESEARCHER	Thank you, thank you XXX. So I'll stop the recording.
260	PARTICIPANT	Okay
261	PARTICIPANT	Ja. Uhm, stop recording. [[cuts off]]

9.16 Appendix P: Transcription for P11

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2		
3	PARTICIPANT	Okay, no problem.
4	RESEARCHER	The recording has not started. There we go, yes. So like I said, so this is for my Masters in Social and Business Administration at CPUT. And
5		I came up with this topic just after we went on lockdown. So that's why the topic says "Emergency Remote". Whereas at this stage where we
6		are now, I think it's more or less remote working. But anyway, so but please be free. If you'd like to withdraw from this interview, just let me
7		know. And also if there's any question that you're not comfortable with, just let me know as well. But you're also free to omit any questions
8		that you don't want to answer. So I can start the interview now.
9	PARTICIPANT	Mm-hmm.
10	RESEARCHER	Unless you have got anything that you'd like to ask before we go ahead?
11	PARTICIPANT	No, go for it.
12	RESEARCHER	Okay, now tell me how long have you been in your current role?
13	PARTICIPANT	Since 2016, so five years, ja. Oh well, so when you say "current role", it's the same role, but it's been re-graded. So we're just assuming it's
14		the same role, right? Okay, so five years.
15	RESEARCHER	Okay but now, there's no teaching in your space, it's just research, am I right?
16	PARTICIPANT	So some of our academics do teach. Some of our researchers do some teaching. Probably about I would say 25% of their time they might
17		allocate to teaching and then some supervision as well.
18	RESEARCHER	Okay and when they do teaching they fall under school of economics, am I right?
19	PARTICIPANT	That's right.
20	RESEARCHER	Okay, and how big is your unit in terms of staffing, your PASS [[sp?]] and your academics?
21	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so that's an interesting question. I'm just busy with Space [[sp?]] at the moment, so I could probably give you that information if you
22		hang on for me for a second. I had to do a Space recon last month actually. And also now that we're applying to... some staff are wanting to
23		go back to the office so I've had to have a relook at that. Space recon, here we go. So we are 56 staff members.
24	RESEARCHER	Wow! It's a big unit. I didn't know that, it's massive.
25	PARTICIPANT	So, not everybody's permanent [[unclear]] of the time. Because of our research projects some people come and go. Depending on how much
26		kind of work we have at any given time it does fluctuate. At the moment we are 56. That consists of, like I say, academic research staff, our
27		other researchers, kind of like research analysts, that kind of things, which fall under PASS [[?]] staff. And then admin support and then we've
28		got some student researchers that work in the office as well. So that makes up the 50-odd.
29	RESEARCHER	It's quite a big unit.
30	PARTICIPANT	Mm.
31	RESEARCHER	Now tell me now in terms of your experience with remote working, what do you find most challenging? And what do you think those
32		challenges are associated with?
33	PARTICIPANT	So I think the biggest challenge is separating work and home. Because it's such a blur at the moment, you know. When you leave for the
34		office in the morning, you separate home. And you come back and you say, "Hello home," you know and then you kind of... There's a clear
35		separation. Right now there isn't a clear separation. So I'll drop the kids at school and I come back home. But I sit here, I have lunch in front
36		of my desk, right, everything happens in the same space. And then I will go fetch the kids later, but I come back to sitting at my desk. And
37		then suddenly somebody will say, "Mom, what are we having for supper?" And you realise, "Oh my God, it's six o'clock!" you know. So
38		there's no clear... I think has been the biggest challenge setting up that separation between work and home life.
39	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. And what do you miss most working in an office?
40	PARTICIPANT	I think the social aspect of it. Working at home has been a lot more productive for me, because it doesn't have the foot traffic. I think you as a
41		DM would identify with that. There's always people coming into your office, "Tania, can I quickly ask you this?" Or "Can I quickly?" And then
42		quickly turns into half an hour. I think that is fine, the productivity's been fine. It's just the social aspect where I can go down the passage and
43		say, "Oh Amy, how you doing?" Or go make a cup of coffee and have a chat to somebody for five minutes and then go back to work. That I
44		do miss. It's actually, I mean we have a whatsapp group or whatever, but it's not the same kind of engagement that we used to have, so ja.
45	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And are there any opportunities in this arrangement, in this remote working environment?
46	PARTICIPANT	When you say opportunities, opportunities for growth? Opportunites, what kind of? Opportunities to continue working from home? What do
47		you mean by opportunities?
48	RESEARCHER	Yes, like for example maybe opportunities to spend more time with family, opportunities to do other things besides...
49	PARTICIPANT	Yes, I do have a little bit more flexibility. Well, so my role... working in CELL [[sp?]] was very family-oriented, so they don't mind if you run
50		away quickly to go fetch your kids at school and then come back, because they understand that you're gonna get your work done. So I've
51		always had that flexibility, but actually that opportunity seems a bit more challenging now, because you get so engrossed in what you're
52		doing I sometimes go, "Oh my God! I must go and fetch the children!" And then you run off [[laughs]]. Ja, so I'm not sure if that's an additional
53		opportunity, because it was always there. I kind of start suppoer earlier, you know. I start the food and then come back and work a bit.
54		Instead of waiting til you get home from work and then you only need to start preparing meals. Ja, so my husband's also working from home
55		at the moment. Initially that was a bit of a challenge, because I never signed up to work with my husband [[laughs]]. And all of a sudden we're
56		like in the same space 24/7, but we found our groove. And now it's actually nice to be able to get up and go have a chat, so he's now kind of
57		becoming my social thing that I missed from work, you know. So sorry for him [[laughs]]. So that's been a nice opportunity, that I could
58		engage a little bit more with my partner.
59	RESEARCHER	And what do you think, are there any factors that you think are necessary to improve your remote working? Maybe in terms of skills maybe or
60		in terms of resources, or...
61	PARTICIPANT	I can definitely say resources. So they've at least [[unclear]] those things, but I think if they didn't it would have been a big problem. So I think
62		resources is a big thing. I'm at the office, I'm used to working with multiple screens and you know, having the necessary there to just do my
63		job. So that's a big thing, the resources must be there. You have to let your staff be comfortable, because I mean I find my admin team also...
64		Amy said to me one day, "Tania, can I go fetch my table or something," because the desk of course are at the office, "because my back is
65		getting sore." And I said, "Why is your back getting sore?" She said "No, because I'm working at the coffee table in my lounge." And I'm like,
66		"Oh God, why didn't you tell me?" you know. So [[unclear]] provide a desk and a chair so they can at least... Because nobody can expect you
67		to maintain the productivity that you had if you're not working with the right equipment.
68	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
69	PARTICIPANT	So I think definitely the resources is a thing. In terms of training and skills development, I'm not sure. Because we are generally office-based
70		and work in front of the computer, so the skills are there. It's just being able to access what you need to do those things. So the skills is fine,
71		but definitely the resources is a big thing. I mean providing data and routers for the staff so that, you know, they need to get onto SAT [[sp?]]
72		and Vula, PeopleSoft and all sorts of stuff. So you have to make sure that you can, your staff are equipped to be productive, if you want them
73		to be productive.

74 75	RESEARCHER	Yes, but in terms of the resources that your unit offered you, did they, were there laptops, I think you said? Is there anything specific that you think would have made life easier, or you think that yourself and your team were comfortable with whatever was offered?
76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86	PARTICIPANT	No, so definitely laptops were provided. I mean I always had a laptop, but for the admin team, they didn't... They had big desktops at the office, so we gave them laptops and screens, we bought additional screens. Because we all work with multiple screens. So they set up at home pretty much what they set up at the office, so we have two offices pretty much. So that is the way we thought about it, because we thought at some point, even if we do go back to the office, it's not gonna be a full-time thing. We realised that last year already, even though we thought it was gonna be two or three months down the line [[laughs]]. We realised that it might be, that we definitely not all gonna be just all back at the same time. So the laptops was a specific thing. Additional screens and of course mobile routers so that wherever they are, we can work. So I mean even if I need to fetch my kids at school and I need to log into a meeting, I can, you know. In fact, the last – don't tell Lily – but the last adfin [[sp?]] meeting I was standing outside my daughter's school [[laughs]]. Because I can login and get onto Teams on my phone, you know. So we expect them to work through lunchtimes, there's meetings that are arranged over lunch, so how are they going to do it? We need to provide those things. Other than that, what would've... like they wouldn't have been able to... Like I say, we're all pretty much office-based. So it's just having those very specific equipment – laptops, screens, routers, data.
87 88 89	RESEARCHER	And in terms of productivity, do you think yourself and your team as well, are you more productive at home, or are you more productive in the office? For example, maybe at home you've got more interactions, or mabye at work also students in and out, so where do you think you are more productive?
90 91 92 93 94 95	PARTICIPANT	So definitely at home [[chuckles]] I'm more productive. There's less disruptions at home. My team as well have also indicated that. They're more productive at home. What I did find interesting, though, is that hours have changed, like working hours. I mean I don't mind what your hours are as long as you get the job done. I know they have agreed upon turnaround times and if you stick to your turnaround times then I'm happy. So but sometimes I may start working later in the day, but then I'll finish later, you know. So if I know that I've got something I need to do in the morning, then I'll do it in the morning and maybe start working at ten, but then I'll finish at eight o'clock or whatever it is, you know. So yes, productivity is better, but also the working hours have adjusted to fit your, kind of, lifestyle now, you know, this new lifestyle.
96	RESEARCHER	Yes, absolutely. And your team now, do you find they need your help or your guidance more in the office or when they are working remotely?
97 98 99 100 101 102 103	PARTICIPANT	That is such an interesting one. When they were in the office I find they were asking me to kind of like affirm things all the time, you know, "Tania, is this the way I must do it, is this the way I must do it? Can you just check this quickly?" Because I'm right there. And of course, I mean, you don't mind, and I'd rather ask me than do something wrong, that's my motto. But I find they've become a lot more independent now. They actually, they will do things on their own. And there's the odd occasion where they will say, "I'm not sure about this, can you just quickly check it before I send it?" or whatever. But they've actually become a lot more independent, which I'm happy about. Which just shows that they knew they could do it all along, it's just they needed to just trust themselves to say, "Okay, I actually can do this." So just because I'm not as accessible as I was before, they've become more independent.
104 105 106	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And then your space, you said earlier one of your team members was, I think she didn't have a table or something. So in my case that's why I've got this background that you see, because I don't want you to see where I am. I'm in an open-plan space, I'm right in the middle of my kitchen.
107	PARTICIPANT	[[laughs]]
108	RESEARCHER	So do you have a specific area that you work in, or do you move around your house? Or do you have an office of some sort?
109 110 111 112 113 114 115	PARTICIPANT	So, as you can see, I have this lovely background here. This was – my daughter's nine now – this was originally before she wa born, it was the study. Then when she was born it became the nursery and we painted it this beautiful pink. And then it became her playroom when she got bigger, because she moved to the bigger room. And then of course Covid happened. So this room was actually filled with toys[[chuckles]] and then Covid happened and we were all sitting around the dining room table. So it was myself – so we've all got laptops, me myself, my son who's in high school and my daughter who's in primary school, they've all got laptops. We're sitting around the dining room table. And then the desk that used to be in our bedroom was in the corner in the lounge and my husband sat there. So we've got an open plan like lounge, dining room kind of thing. And we were all sitting there. It was insane [[laughs]].
116	RESEARCHER	Ja, I can imagine.
117 118	PARTICIPANT	Because then Denver has a meeting and then he must go find a spot in the house that's quiet, because a couple of years ago we renovated the house and made everything beautifully open-plan.
119	RESEARCHER	That's what I did as well.
120	PARTICIPANT	So now there's no walls [[laughs]].
121 122 123 124 125 126	RESEARCHER	He needs to go find a quiet space, and then he's like, "Ssht", and then I had to do the same. And then eventually he's like, "No, we can't do this anymore." We cleared out the playroom and he moved in here and then I was in the corner in the lounge and then the kids started going back to school and it was fine. But then I also started my Masters at the beginning of the year, so now we swopped. He's now in the lounge, and I'm in here. So yes, I do have a space now, but it wasn't always like this. So this I only got moved from the dining room table when we kind of realised that okay this lockdown was going to be longer than 21 days. We need to, kind of, make sure that people are kitted out properly.
127	RESEARCHER	Ja.
128 129	PARTICIPANT	So then I got the desk and the screens and whatever, so it's been a bit of a shuffle around the house. But eventually I found my space [[laughs]].
130	RESEARCHER	Anyway, and then your engagment with your – I don't want to say leadership – maybe your HOD or your head of...
131	PARTICIPANT	Our director.
132	RESEARCHER	So do you have a specific way of communicating? How is that going with remote working?
133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144	PARTICIPANT	So before lockdown we used to have weekly meetings, so catch-up meetings, so we'd go through whatever, with myself, the director and the deputy director. And then lockdown happened. But also because we, you know how it is, like you wanna quickly... I like I said foot traffic, I did the same thing to them. You know, I'd go knock on the door and say, "Can I quickly ask you this?" Whatever, whatever. And also, we generally have a very open door policy. So just, you know, come in whenever you need to. And then with lockdown you found that we were kind of scheduling a meeting every time we needed to ask a question [[chuckles]]. It was insane. At the beginning it was like we didn't know kind of how to engage, what was the best platform, it was a little bit of trial and error. So now at the moment we actually use a lot of whatsapp for like a quick question. If it's a quick question, I'll just quickly whatsapp and then... because then it's an immediate response. It would be almost equal to kind of popping into your office and saying, "Quickly, can I ask you this?" Whatever, and then it's like one-liner questions and one-liner answers. Other than that, we still have our weekly meetings via zoom, so ja. Our meetings are a bit longer now, because we try to squash everything in. If we feel it can hold off for a proper discussion rather than doing email up and downs. So our meetings are a bit longer. Where they used to be about an hour, they're now two hours. Just because we kind of save things to discuss at that time.
145	RESEARCHER	Okay. And do you have students that you communicate with? Or that's not your area?
146	PARTICIPANT	No, not really. The only students we have are students who work for us [[unclear]] purchases, that kind of thing.
147	RESEARCHER	So ja no, that's a different... ja. Okay my last question to you...
148	PARTICIPANT	[[unclear]], postdocs don't qualify, they're like researchers.

149	RESEARCHER	They're like researchers actually. And then do you think UCT, or your unit or your faculty, do you think that they have gt a remote work
150		policy? And if it's not there, do you think such a policy as necessary for staff? Maybe for specific staff like administrative staff?
151	PARTICIPANT	No, I think a remote working policy is very important. I think going forward a lot of staff will either choose to work at home most of the time, or
152		some of the time. But so it's important that all departments, including mine, has a policy in place. We don't have a formal polocy, we've got a
153		kind of an informal policy where... I mean, even if we talk about pre- or post-Covid, it's an informal policy where you just kind of say, or you
154		don't even have to... So with admin staff, you definitely need to request. With the academic staff, they would just kind of let you know, "I'm
155		working at home today, or the next couple of days," or whatever. But because the admin staff are generally office-based and are forward-
156		facing, front-facing, if you do need to work at home for a particular reason, you would need prior approval. So like I say, it's not formal policy,
157		but that policy has always been in place where some kind of communication needs to happen before you work at home. So but I think going
158		forward we will probably formalise it, because like I say, I think a lot of people will actually opt to work at home more often than not.
159	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. Anyway Tania, is there anything maybe I did not ask but that you'd like to share with me that you think is going to understand
160		your experiences?
161	PARTICIPANT	I think also just to say that some days are better than others, you know. I mean it's an emotional roller-coaster working from home. And some
162		days you like working from home, and other times you don't. It's a struggle. But you know, South Africans we are a resilient bunch. We can
163		adapt very quickly to different... Oh, there is one thing that I think is important for you to note, or that I did find was a challenge, was dealing
164		with staff's emotions. So I mean, I can deal with my own emotions, I know how to deal with that. But dealing with the way how my staff is
165		feeling about working from home, that was a challenge. And I felt that not enough was done on the university's side to actually equip line
166		managers to deal with the psychology that goes along with this remote working. So yes, the operation side was put in place, lovely, it was
167		wonderful. But there wasn't that... Because we suddenly became these therapists, if that's you wanna call it. Because people becase
168		depressed. People had in fact serious emotional issues dealing with this sudden separation from people and this anxiety that goes along with
169		Covid, it affects their work. And you just suddenly as a line manager need to deal with all of these things. I think that is probably one big
170		addition that you can note. That was a difficult thing to deal with at the time. I think everybody is kind of okay now, or adjusted, I wanna say.
171		Or even just come to terms with, "This is my locked-in life, I must ma just carry on" [[laughs]]. But I mean it was just something that we
172		suddenly had to deal with, you know, with staff. And sometimes unexpectedly with, you know, people you'd think would be more – I dont'
173		wanna say – are stronger, but you know. It just shows how things affect people in different ways.
174	RESEARCHER	Yes, absolutely, it has been hectic. Ja anyway, Tania, thank you very much for your time. I'm going to stop the recording at this stage. [[cuts
175		off]]

136

9.17 Appendix Q: Transcription for P12

1		
2		
3	PARTICIPANT	Okay, no problem.
4	RESEARCHER	The recording has not started. There we go, yes. So like I said, so this is for my Masters in Social and Business Administration at CPUT. An
5		I came up with this topic just after we went on lockdown. So that's why the topic says "Emergency Remote". Whereas at this stage where w
6		are now, I think it's more or less remote working. But anyway, so but please be free. If you'd like to withdraw from this interview, just let me
7		know. And also if there's any question that you're not comfortable with, just let me know as well. But you're also free to omit any questions
8		that you don't want to answer. So I can start the interview now.
9	PARTICIPANT	Mm-hmm.
10	RESEARCHER	Unless you have got anything that you'd like to ask before we go ahead?
11	PARTICIPANT	No, go for it.
12	RESEARCHER	Okay, now tell me how long have you been in your current role?
13	PARTICIPANT	Since 2016, so five years, ja. Oh well, so when you say "current role", it's the same role, but it's been re-graded. So we're just assuming it's
14		the same role, right? Okay, so five years.
15	RESEARCHER	Okay but now, there's no teaching in your space, it's just research, am I right?
16	PARTICIPANT	So some of our academics do teach. Some of our researchers do some teaching. Probably about I would say 25% of their time they might
17		allocate to teaching and then some supervision as well.
18	RESEARCHER	Okay and when they do teaching they fall under school of economics, am I right?
19	PARTICIPANT	That's right.
20	RESEARCHER	Okay, and how big is your unit in terms of staffing, your PASS [[sp?]] and your academics?
21	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so that's an interesting question. I'm just busy with Space [[sp?]] at the moment, so I could probably give you that information if you
22		hang on for me for a second. I had to do a Space recon last month actually. And also now that we're applying to... some staff are wanting to
23		go back to the office so I've had to have a relook at that. Space recon, here we go. So we are 56 staff members.
24	RESEARCHER	Wow! It's a big unit. I didn't know that, it's massive.
25	PARTICIPANT	So, not everybody's permanent [[unclear]] of the time. Because of our research projects some people come and go. Depending on how muc
26		kind of work we have at any given time it does fluctuate. At the moment we are 56. That consists of, like I say, academic research staff, our
27		other researchers, kind of like research analysts, that kind of things, which fall under PASS [[?]] staff. And then admin support and then we'
28		got some student researchers that work in the office as well. So that makes up the 50-odd.
29	RESEARCHER	It's quite a big unit.
30	PARTICIPANT	Mm.
31	RESEARCHER	Now tell me now in terms of your experience with remote working, what do you find most challenging? And what do you think those
32		challenges are associated with?
33	PARTICIPANT	So I think the biggest challenge is separating work and home. Because it's such a blur at the moment, you know. When you leave for the
34		office in the morning, you separate home. And you come back and you say, "Hello home," you know and then you kind of... There's a clear
35		separation. Right now there isn't a clear separation. So I'll drop the kids at school and I come back home. But I sit here, I have lunch in front
36		of my desk, right, everything happens in the same space. And then I will go fetch the kids later, but I come back to sitting at my desk. And
37		then suddenly somebody will say, "Mom, what are we having for supper?" And you realise, "Oh my God, it's six o'clock!" you know. So
38		there's no clear... I think has been the biggest challenge setting up that separation between work and home life.
39	RESEARCHER	Yes, okay. And what do you miss most working in an office?
40	PARTICIPANT	I think the social aspect of it. Working at home has been a lot more productive for me, because it doesn't have the foot traffic. I think you as
41		DM would identify with that. There's always people coming into your office, "Tania, can I quickly ask you this?" Or "Can I quickly?" And then
42		quickly turns into half an hour. I think that is fine, the productivity's been fine. It's just the social aspect where I can go down the passage an
43		say, "Oh Amy, how you doing?" Or go make a cup of coffee and have a chat to somebody for five minutes and then go back to work. That I
44		do miss. It's actually, I mean we have a whatsapp group or whatever, but it's not the same kind of engagement that we used to have, so ja.
45	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And are there any opportunities in this arrangement, in this remote working environment?
46	PARTICIPANT	When you say opportunities, opportunities for growth? Opportunites, what kind of? Opportunities to continue working from home? What do
47		you mean by opportunities?
48	RESEARCHER	Yes, like for example maybe opportunities to spend more time with family, opportunities to do other things besides...
49	PARTICIPANT	Yes, I do have a little bit more flexibility. Well, so my role... working in CELL [[sp?]] was very family-oriented, so they don't mind if you run
50		away quickly to go fetch your kids at school and then come back, because they understand that you're gonna get your work done. So I've
51		always had that flexibility, but actually that opportunity seems a bit more challenging now, because you get so engrossed in what you're
52		doing I sometimes go, "Oh my God! I must go and fetch the children!" And then you run off [[laughs]]. Ja, so I'm not sure if that's an addition
53		opportunity, because it was always there. I kind of start suppoer earlier, you know. I start the food and then come back and work a bit.
54		Instead of waiting til you get home from work and then you only need to start preparing meals. Ja, so my husband's also working from home
55		at the moment. Initially that was a bit of a challenge, because I never signed up to work with my husband [[laughs]]. And all of a sudden we'
56		like in the same space 24/7, but we found our groove. And now it's actually nice to be able to get up and go have a chat, so he's now kind o
57		becoming my social thing that I missed from work, you know. So sorry for him [[laughs]]. So that's been a nice opportunity, that I could
58		engage a little bit more with my partner.
59	RESEARCHER	And what do you think, are there any factors that you think are necessary to improve your remote working? Maybe in terms of resources, or...
60		in terms of resources, or...
61	PARTICIPANT	I can definitely say resources. So they've at least [[unclear]] those things, but I think if they didn't it would have been a big problem. So I thin
62		resources is a big thing. I'm at the office, I'm used to working with multiple screens and you know, having the necessary there to just do my
63		job. So that's a big thing, the resources must be there. You have to let your staff be comfortable, because I mean I find my admin team also
64		Amy said to me one day, "Tania, can I go fetch my table or something," because the desk of course are at the office, "because my back is
65		getting sore." And I said, "Why is your back getting sore?" She said "No, because I'm working at the coffee table in my lounge." And I'm like
66		"Oh God, why didn't you tell me?" you know. So [[unclear]] provide a desk and a chair so they can at least... Because nobody can expect yo
67		to maintain the productivity that you had if you're not working with the right equipment.
68	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
69	PARTICIPANT	So I think definitely the resources is a thing. In terms of training and skills development, I'm not sure. Because we are generally office-based
70		and work in front of the computer, so the skills are there. It's just being able to access what you need to do those things. So the skills is fine
71		but definitely the resources is a big thing. I mean providing data and routers for the staff so that, you know, they need to get onto SAT [[sp?]
72		and Vula, PeopleSoft and all sorts of stuff. So you have to make sure that you can, your staff are equipped to be productive, if you want the
73		to be productive.

74 75	RESEARCHER	Yes, but in terms of the resources that your unit offered you, did they, were there laptops, I think you said? Is there anything specific that you think would have made life easier, or you think that yourself and your team were comfortable with whatever was offered?
76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86	PARTICIPANT	No, so definitely laptops were provided. I mean I always had a laptop, but for the admin team, they didn't... They had big desktops at the office, so we gave them laptops and screens, we bought additional screens. Because we all work with multiple screens. So they set up at home pretty much what they set up at the office, so we have two offices pretty much. So that is the way we thought about it, because we thought at some point, even if we do go back to the office, it's not gonna be a full-time thing. We realised that last year already, even though we thought it was gonna be two or three months down the line [[laughs]]. We realised that it might be, that we definitely not all gonna be just all back at the same time. So the laptops was a specific thing. Additional screens and of course mobile routers so that wherever they are, we can work. So I mean even if I need to fetch my kids at school and I need to log into a meeting, I can, you know. In fact, the last – don't tell Lily – but the last adfin [[sp?]] meeting I was standing outside my daughter's school [[laughs]]. Because I can login and get onto Teams on my phone, you know. So we expect them to work through lunchtimes, there's meetings that are arranged over lunch, so how are they going to do it? We need to provide those things. Other than that, what would've... like they wouldn't have been able to... Like I say, we're all pretty much office-based. So it's just having those very specific equipment – laptops, screens, routers, data.
87 88 89	RESEARCHER	And in terms of productivity, do you think yourself and your team as well, are you more productive at home, or are you more productive in the office? For example, maybe at home you've got more interactions, or mabye at work also students in and out, so where do you think you are more productive?
90 91 92 93 94 95	PARTICIPANT	So definitely at home [[chuckles]] I'm more productive. There's less disruptions at home. My team as well have also indicated that. They're more productive at home. What I did find interesting, though, is that hours have changed, like working hours. I mean I don't mind what your hours are as long as you get the job done. I know they have agreed upon turnaround times and if you stick to your turnaround times then I'm happy. So but sometimes I may start working later in the day, but then I'll finish later, you know. So if I know that I've got something I need to do in the morning, then I'll do it in the morning and maybe start working at ten, but then I'll finish at eight o'clock or whatever it is, you know. So yes, productivity is better, but also the working hours have adjusted to fit your, kind of, lifestyle now, you know, this new lifestyle.
96	RESEARCHER	Yes, absolutely. And your team now, do you find they need your help or your guidance more in the office or when they are working remotely?
97 98 99 100 101 102 103	PARTICIPANT	That is such an interesting one. When they were in the office I find they were asking me to kind of like affirm things all the time, you know, "Tania, is this the way I must do it, is this the way I must do it? Can you just check this quickly?" Because I'm right there. And of course, I mean, you don't mind, and I'd rather ask me than do something wrong, that's my motto. But I find they've become a lot more independent now. They actually, they will do things on their own. And there's the odd occasion where they will say, "I'm not sure about this, can you just quickly check it before I send it?" or whatever. But they've actually become a lot more independent, which I'm happy about. Which just shows that they knew they could do it all along, it's just they needed to just trust themselves to say, "Okay, I actually can do this." So just because I'm not as accessible as I was before, they've become more independent.
104 105 106	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. And then your space, you said earlier one of your team members was, I think she didn't have a table or something. So in my case that's why I've got this background that you see, because I don't want you to see where I am. I'm in an open-plan space, I'm right in the middle of my kitchen.
107	PARTICIPANT	[[laughs]]
108	RESEARCHER	So do you have a specific area that you work in, or do you move around your house? Or do you have an office of some sort?
109 110 111 112 113 114 115	PARTICIPANT	So, as you can see, I have this lovely background here. This was – my daughter's nine now – this was originally before she wa born, it was the study. Then when she was born it became the nursery and we painted it this beautiful pink. And then it became her playroom when she got bigger, because she moved to the bigger room. And then of course Covid happened. So this room was actually filled with toys[[chuckles]] and then Covid happened and we were all sitting around the dining room table. So it was myself – so we've all got laptops, hey – myself, my son who's in high school and my daughter who's in primary school, they've all got laptops. We're sitting around the dining room table. And then the desk that used to be in our bedroom was in the corner in the lounge and my husband sat there. So we've got an open plan like lounge, dining room kind of thing. And we were all sitting there. It was insane [[laughs]].
116	RESEARCHER	Ja, I can imagine.
117 118	PARTICIPANT	Because then Denver has a meeting and then he must go find a spot in the house that's quiet, because a couple of years ago we renovated the house and made everything beautifully open-plan.
119	RESEARCHER	That's what I did as well.
120	PARTICIPANT	So now there's no walls [[laughs]].
121 122 123 124 125 126	RESEARCHER	He needs to go find a quiet space, and then he's like, "Ssht", and then I had to do the same. And then eventually he's like, "No, we can't do this anymore." We cleared out the playroom and he moved in here and then I was in the corner in the lounge and then the kids started going back to school and it was fine. But then I also started my Masters at the beginning of the year, so now we swopped. He's now in the lounge, and I'm in here. So yes, I do have a space now, but it wasn't always like this. So this I only got moved from the dining room table when we kind of realised that okay this lockdown was going to be longer than 21 days. We need to, kind of, make sure that people are kitted out properly.
127	RESEARCHER	Ja.
128 129	PARTICIPANT	So then I got the desk and the screens and whatever, so it's been a bit of a shuffle around the house. But eventually I found my space [[laughs]].
130	RESEARCHER	Anyway, and then your engagment with your – I don't want to say leadership – maybe your HOD or your head of...
131	PARTICIPANT	Our director.
132	RESEARCHER	So do you have a specific way of communicating? How is that going with remote working?
133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144	PARTICIPANT	So before lockdown we used to have weekly meetings, so catch-up meetings, so we'd go through whatever, with myself, the director and the deputy director. And then lockdown happened. But also because we, you know how it is, like you wanna quickly... I like I said foot traffic, I did the same thing to them. You know, I'd go knock on the door and say, "Can I quickly ask you this?" Whatever, whatever. And also, we generally have a very open door policy. So just, you know, come in whenever you need to. And then with lockdown you found that we were kind of scheduling a meeting every time we needed to ask a question [[chuckles]]. It was insane. At the beginning it was like we didn't know kind of how to engage, what was the best platform, it was a little bit of trial and error. So now at the moment we actually use a lot of whatsapp for like a quick question. If it's a quick question, I'll just quickly whatsapp and then... because then it's an immediate response. It would be almost equal to kind of popping into your office and saying, "Quickly, can I ask you this?" Whatever, and then it's like one-liner questions and one-liner answers. Other than that, we still have our weekly meetings via zoom, so ja. Our meetings are a bit longer now, because we try to squash everything in. If we feel it can hold off for a proper discussion rather than doing email up and downs. So our meetings are a bit longer. Where they used to be about an hour, they're now two hours. Just because we kind of save things to discuss at that time.
145	RESEARCHER	Okay. And do you have students that you communicate with? Or that's not your area?
146	PARTICIPANT	No, not really. The only students we have are students who work for us [[unclear]] purchases, that kind of thing.
147	RESEARCHER	So ja no, that's a different... ja. Okay my last question to you...
148	PARTICIPANT	[[unclear]], postdocs don't qualify, they're like researchers.

149	RESEARCHER	They're like researchers actually. And then do you think UCT, or your unit or your faculty, do you think that they have gt a remote work
150		policy? And if it's not there, do you think such a policy as necessary for staff? Maybe for specific staff like administrative staff?
151	PARTICIPANT	No, I think a remote working policy is very important. I think going forward a lot of staff will either choose to work at home most of the time, or
152		some of the time. But so it's important that all departments, including mine, has a policy in place. We don't have a formal polocy, we've got a
153		kind of an informal policy where... I mean, even if we talk about pre- or post-Covid, it's an informal policy where you just kind of say, or you
154		don't even have to... So with admin staff, you definitely need to request. With the academic staff, they would just kind of let you know, "I'm
155		working at home today, or the next couple of days," or whatever. But because the admin staff are generally office-based and are forward-
156		facing, front-facing, if you do need to work at home for a particular reason, you would need prior approval. So like I say, it's not formal policy,
157		but that policy has always been in place where some kind of communication needs to happen before you work at home. So but I think going
158		forward we will probably formalise it, because like I say, I think a lot of people will actually opt to work at home more often than not.
159	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. Anyway Tania, is there anything maybe I did not ask but that you'd like to share with me that you think is going to understand
160		your experiences?
161	PARTICIPANT	I think also just to say that some days are better than others, you know. I mean it's an emotional roller-coaster working from home. And some
162		days you like working from home, and other times you don't. It's a struggle. But you know, South Africans we are a resilient bunch. We can
163		adapt very quickly to different... Oh, there is one thing that I think is important for you to note, or that I did find was a challenge, was dealing
164		with staff's emotions. So I mean, I can deal with my own emotions, I know how to deal with that. But dealing with the way how my staff is
165		feeling about working from home, that was a challenge. And I felt that not enough was done on the university's side to actually equip line
166		managers to deal with the psychology that goes along with this remote working. So yes, the operation side was put in place, lovely, it was
167		wonderful. But there wasn't that... Because we suddenly became these therapists, if that's you wanna call it. Because people becase
168		depressed. People had in fact serious emotional issues dealing with this sudden separation from people and this anxiety that goes along with
169		Covid, it affects their work. And you just suddenly as a line manager need to deal with all of these things. I think that is probably one big
170		addition that you can note. That was a difficult thing to deal with at the time. I think everybody is kind of okay now, or adjusted, I wanna say.
171		Or even just come to terms with, "This is my locked-in life, I must ma just carry on" [[laughs]]. But I mean it was just something that we
172		suddenly had to deal with, you know, with staff. And sometimes unexpectedly with, you know, people you'd think would be more – I dont'
173		wanna say – are stronger, but you know. It just shows how things affect people in different ways.
174	RESEARCHER	Yes, absolutely, it has been hectic. Ja anyway, Tania, thank you very much for your time. I'm going to stop the recording at this stage. [[cuts
175		off]]

9.18 Appendix R: Transcription for P13

3	RESEARCHER	... if it's recording now, no it's not. I don't see it.
4	PARTICIPANT	It says on my side it's started recording.
5	RESEARCHER	There you go, ja. Just started. Anyway, so yes my research... Actually I came up with this topic just after lockdown so at the time it was still emergency. So I don't know if we can still call it that. I will discuss this with my supervisor, becuase I think we're more or less comfortable with remote working. I don't know if I must still call it "emergency", but what I will ask you to do is to tap into the space when this remote working was still an emergency, it was still something that was not planned at the time.
9	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
10	RESEARCHER	And also just to assure you that if my research is published, your name will not be identifiable and also if you are not comfortable with any question that I will ask if you could just say so. And also, if you would like to withdraw from the process you can let me know, then we'll do that.
12	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
13	RESEARCHER	Do you have any questions before we start with actual questions?
14	PARTICIPANT	No, we can go ahead.
15	RESEARCHER	Ok, thanks my dear. So I know that you're currently in an acting position, but just for formality, how long hoave you been in this position?
16	PARTICIPANT	So in the acting position since January this year.
17	RESEARCHER	Yes, then in your other position in the school, how long have you been there?
18	PARTICIPANT	So within the school today's my nine year anniversary in the school. I started nine years ago.
19	RESEARCHER	Okay, and I know your school is quite big, but do you have a rough idea how big it is in terms of your admin, your academics and also your students? How big is it? Just rough numbers.
21	PARTICIPANT	Ja, so in terms of administrators, or the administrative team, we are eight people.
22	RESEARCHER	Okay.
23	PARTICIPANT	Ja, that's postgrad, undergrad, reception, everyone. And then with the academics, I think there's about over 30, it's 35 I think, academics all together on all programs. And then number of students I can't remember, I can't remember.
25	RESEARCHER	No, that's fine.
26	PARTICIPANT	I think it was just over 2000.
27	RESEARCHER	Okay, there's a bit of noise. I'm in Milnerton, so I'm close to the airforce base. Sometimes the planes just run over my house. And I've got builders in the house, so it's a bit noisy where I am. Sorry about that. Tell me, which part do you find most difficult working remotely and what do you think are the challenges associated with these difficulties?
30	PARTICIPANT	So my main challenge since I stepped into the supervisory and now departmental management role is managing staff that are not performing well. So we have two sides of the coin there. With staff that are working pretty well I feel somedays we don't even have to check in. But the staff that has dropped performance over this period of time, it was very difficult to manage them. It was very difficult to keep them mortivated. And also with the limited resources, we couldn't really spend a lot of money on things that the staff were used to. Ja, so I think that was the biggest difficulty for me.
35	RESEARCHER	Okay, so it's managing staff that could be struggling, and also maybe because of the limited resources that you might have received. But what is it that you missed mostly about working in a traditional office than where you are now? What is it that you miss mostly?
37	PARTICIPANT	The biggest thing is obviously the human interaction.
38	RESEARCHER	Yes.
39	PARTICIPANT	I think as supervisor your biggest role is to maintain the team's morale, maintain the team's happiness, and to make sure that there's a balance in all of it. And without seeing everybody in the office or being in the same space, it's very, very difficult to manage that. So there would be times, possibly weeks, where you would go by and not even know when somebody else is going through a difficult time, because they're just not opening up. You are fully, fully reliant on people opening up. And that's not really what most people are used to doing.
43	RESEARCHER	Yes, that's true. But now how has that changed your role [[unclear]] staff members that you can't reach out or that might not be aware of [[unclear]] that affect your role or in performing your role working remotely?
45	PARTICIPANT	Ja, so I obviously had to change my mindset. In the beginning it was very frustrating, but ultimately the responsibility lies with me, so I had to change my interaction with staff a little bit. Instead of weekly meetings, I would do one-on-one's with staff. And because the staff we work with are so family... You know, you've got families, you've got responsibilities, and because I came from a lower position and stepped into this higher position with most of the staff still in the same position, I kind of had already a relationship with them, so moving over, I kind of knew them a little bit. And so that made it easier for me to step up and implement these new tactics in terms of engaging them and having that connection.
50	RESEARCHER	Yes, but now with all this challenges, hopefully there are opportunities as well, so are there any opportunities that you've realised working remotely? And how have you adapted with these new opportunities that have come up as well?
52	PARTICIPANT	Ja, there were so many things that has come up and brought to light. Especially in the sense where we're doing things the old way and finding new and innovative things to do. And one of the things was in terms of managing staff, one of the things was to be more aware of staff's mental wellness. In the office, you know, people try to be happy all the time, you know, you try to create a vibe. But in this position we find ourselves in we were forced to be faced or to deal or to speak about mental wellness. And I've actually had two of my staff members where I helped them get some counseling for certain situations that they were in. And I don't think that would have happened at the office, because if we were all together in the same space every day, you know, people still continue just to pretend that they're fine. And because we had that intimate one-on-one's, because I implemented that, you know, certain things came to light and we could find some help for two of my staff members. So that's definitely something that I feel should continue and we will continue going forward.
60	RESEARCHER	Okay, and then your job now, obviously your job extends to other administrative teams, sometimes also to the academics. Now during say some of the tasks you are now – I guess you are doing all of them at home anyway – but now does that take more time? Do you think that working in an office used to take more time doing a certain function than what it takes it home? Do you find working at home more productive than from the office?
64	PARTICIPANT	Yes, I feel being at the office can be very distracting sometimes, especially in the role that I find myself in now, the acting-DM role, because of the relationship that you build with people. And that takes away a bit of time... When I'm home, when I work from home there's a plan every day, there's a set of tasks every day, the HoD and I are thinking about, you know, economics 2030 and how it's gonna look and starting to be a lot more innovative. And I feel if I was in the office a lot more, then I wouldn't have had as much time. Yeah, I do feel that the special projects that we are taking in right now could only be birthed because we were home. And because of the more time and being more productive and especially with my home, like my kids are at school, I'm alone during the day, so it really works out well.
70	[[silence]]	
71	PARTICIPANT	Nonnie, I'm losing sound. I can't hear you.
72	RESEARCHER	Okay, no I forgot that I was muted, sorry. So I was saying that regarding your team, do you find that they need more of your help when they are at home? You did say that sometimes it's difficult for those that are struggling. But sometimes you find that the one's that are struggling now could have been struggling already in the office. But do you think that they need more, do you hold their hands more when you are working remotely than you were doing wen you were in the office?
76	PARTICIPANT	So for me personally, I started off like that. I started wanting to be inolved in everything, I started wanting to be a part of everything, wanting to check everything just to have the assurance that everything is running smoothly. But working remotely actually forced the team members to become a little bit more interdependent. They are forced to figure things out for themselves if I'm busy with something else, Because my time mos now obviously split. And I think that just made the team a bit stronger. I had this little proud mommy moment when one of the team members actually took initiative, booked themselves on a specific training, opened it up to the rest of the team, they booked... Because usually it would

163	RESEARCHER	Yes, I hope that question will be answered if we get that policy, hopefully. I think you are right, we need that policy. But ja, so Allison thank you
164		very much for your time. You have definitely assisted me in understanding your experiences. If there are any other things that I might need as I
165		continue with my journey, I will contact you. And also if I manage to finish off this thesis and publish it, I will definitely send you a copy. But thank
166		you.
167	PARTICIPANT	Ah, thank you so much. And I wish you all the best and please phone me or email me if you need any more help.
168	RESEARCHER	Thank you.
169	PARTICIPANT	I'm glad I could help.
170	RESEARCHER	Let me just stop the recording. Stop recording. [[cuts off]]

9.19 Appendix S: Transcription for P14

PARTICIPANT	That's fine. [[unclear]] of my camera, but if you want me to just leave it on, I can.
RESEARCHER	No, it's fine.
PARTICIPANT	[[unclear]] bandwidth here. I hope that is okay.
RESEARCHER	Perfect. I will leave my camera on.
PARTICIPANT	That's fine, Nonnie.
RESEARCHER	So XXX, thank you very uch for agreeing to do this interview with me. So what I'd like to say to you is whatever we discuss, the information that you give me, it's going to be treated with full confidentiality. And I would like you to know that if it s published, it will not be identifiable as XXX. And also you have the option to omit any questions that you're uncomfortable with. You just let me know, and also if you'd like to stop with the interview completely as well, just let me know.
PARTICIPANT	Okay, will do.
RESEARCHER	Okay. That was just my check-in. Now if you don't mind, if you could just tell me how long you have been a DM in Information Systems? Have long have you been in this role?
PARTICIPANT	Nonnie, I've been in this role for two years, I would say probably two years and four months, to be exact.
RESEARCHER	Okay, and also how big is your department in terms of staffing and also in terms of your students? Academics, PASS and students, how big is it?
PARTICIPANT	All right, in terms of admin staff reporting to me, there's four staff reporting - two AAs and two AOs. And then there's 21 academic staff members that's also in the department that I provide support to. In terms of students I think we have about , I did a report this morning, 657 IS registrations, but we have a total of 3748 students enrolled in IS courses.
RESEARCHER	Perfect, so this research it's actually regarding... So how I came up with this topic, it was just after lockdown. So my main focus is the emergency part of the remote working and this is what I would like you to tap into, the emergency remote working. I would like to understand the experiences of departmental managers, or the senior administrative staff in an academic department at UCT. So my first question to you is what in your case, as a DM in Information Systems, what are the challenges associated with remote working, specifically emergency remote working? Also, which part did you find – because I know at this tage it's no longer an emergency, we are more or less almost comfortable with remote working if I may say – but at the time when this hit us, what were the main challenges and also what is it that you struggled with most?
PARTICIPANT	Okay, the main challenge initially was connectivity, you know. I needed to ensure that, you know, I had a stable environment in terms of connectivity. And at that time, I mean we didn't have fiber, ja but we had the telkom data. And ja, it was both myself and my husband who worked from home. So we neeed to get more, you know, stable in terms of our connectivity. We then, you know, made enquiries and opted you know, to install fibre toallow both of us to work without interruptions or disruptions. So that is what I did from my home environment. But I know also, you know, admin staff we also struggled in terms of connectivity. We initially purchased data for all admin staff on a monthly basis. I think it was Vodacom data. This data proved to be, you know, quite costly, for the department on a monthly basis. I think we probably spent approximately R699 if I can remember correctly, per staff member. Ja, I then looked at other viable more cost-effective options. Yes, and UCT did bring out the data allowance policy at the time. My admin staff opted not to go for that. And I then looked at the options provided at UCT and I think we then, you know, opted to go with the MTN data contracts offered through UCT, which was way more cost-effective. I think we are olny currently paying R299 per staff member. It is a month on month contract and that proved to work quite well. So ja, it was a challenge, but it has been sorted now. So I think that was the major challenge in the beginning.
RESEARCHER	Yes, is there any specific thing that you missed? Yes, so what is it that you miss most when working remotely instead of in an office?
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so probably the face-to-face contact. You know, having to walk into or step into someone's office, you know, and just quickly check something with them. It's not as easy getting hold of someone, you know, as the case was previously in the office. And ja the other thing that I miss are the coffee chat with colleagues, you know. In the department, as well as with colleagues within other departments. Connecting, you know, with others. I think ja, I'm missing that probably quite a bit. And then the other probably parts would be, you know, the feature comforts at work such as having a printer and scanner when needed. I think what working remotely has done is getting used to a paperless environment. But I suppose those are probably the things that I miss. And ja, we used to have like monthly departmental celebrations within the department, you know. Where we get together on a more social environment. But ja, that's obviously not happening anymore, so yeah I miss that as well.
RESEARCHER	Interesting, definitely. We all missing those celebrations, getting together in a staffroom and stuff like that.
PARTICIPANT	Yes.
RESEARCHER	And obviously with all these challenges that you have just hilighted there would be some opportunities that you have observed or you have seen. So what are those opportunities that you have seen with emergency remote working? Or maybe with just remote working, let me rather put it that way. What opportunities have you realised?
PARTICIPANT	Definitely the fast-tracking of working in a more paperless environment, number one. And then, you know, the online processing being implemented such as the registration process, you know, the online filing of HR documents and other documents which improved and improves the tracking of those documents if you do get a need to get hold of those documents afterwards as well. The online filing, storing you know, and the accountability as well, I suppose. And then I think the other opportunity by the PG funding office, also again moving into an online environment. So I think fast-tracked all of those. I think it was all needed, Nonnie, but the opportunites that it brought along was that it fast-tracked the online working space, which I think was needed.
RESEARCHER	Yes, and how have you updated to these operational changes? I mean are you comfortable with those? And also how do you think this will change if we go back full-time to the offices, how do you think this will affect?
PARTICIPANT	Ja, in terms of the way I adapted ja, electronic, the online signing and other documents definitely improved the tracking, definitely the online filing and storing it definitely improved the accountability. Also you know, we had to adopt to online MS Teams weekly meetings with admin staff as well as the department staff. You know, we have a monthly meeting there. That is definitely something that all of us had to adapt. I, for one, never had MS Teams meetings prior to working remotely. So, you know, I have to adapt to that, but I mean it's something we very, very quickly adapted to. So and I think we will probably be able to continue, you know, these platforms once we are back at work again. In terms of how the situation changed the way of working after Covid, I think it will just allow for more flexibility, you know, with regards to office hours, or possibly even allow staff to work from home on certain days, possibly on a rotational basis. Ja, so it's going to bring about some flexibility in terms of that. And I think also working smartly in terms of a more online paperless environment, definitely.
RESEARCHER	Yes, yes and do you think are there any factors considered necessary to improve this? Or is there anything that you think could improve that environment for DMs and their teams?
PARTICIPANT	Ja, probably technology. And I think it is something that is currently being done. But I think definitely in terms of equipment, maybe better you know laptops, more stable internet connectivities. Because those are obviously, you know, things that we need to consider, you know, if we will continue working remotely as well. And I think there's obviously in terms of personal spaces we are doing what we can to try and improve that. But obviously some staff had been complaining, you know, their laptop isn't adequate. So we are looking into obviously better laptops to allow for more effective remote working.
RESEARCHER	Yes, okay, thank you. And then in terms of your productivity, do you think is there any change or is there any difference in terms of your productivity working remotely or in your office?
PARTICIPANT	For me, Nonnie, I think productivity improved or increased and there's less interruptions, and I think, you know, many would agree with mne as well. There's less interruptions, for me it's personally, I had quite a bit of interruptions with, you know, when I was busy with something I used to, you know, often get other staff or students walking into my office. I don't have that now. I still do have that interruptions, but via an email. An email I can control. If I'm not able to answer it now, I can answer it, you know, in an hour or later or even tomorrow morning type of thing. So

81		definitely in terms of that I think that improved productivity. And also the ability to work... I think sometimes working longer hours and the
82		flexibility, you know, of working remotely versus working at the office. Normally at the office I would be there at a certain time and I would leave
83		at a certain time. For example, I mean, start at eight leave generally at four. Now, I can check in on emails later than that. Or I can do
84		something quickly at home, but still be available online or still checking my emails. Or still, you know, if there's anything urgent I can still do it
85		after hours, after normal working hours. And I've seen the same trend with administrators as well. There isn't necessarily set working hours at
86		the moment. So and I think that definitely impro ved productivity as well.
87	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. And then when UCT asked... when the word came from management that we must work from home, did you have any
88		expectations? And were there any surpirses or whatever you expected was going to happen in terms of productivity or in terms of your
89		working... So ja was your experiences actually as what you had expected, or where there any surprises there?
90	PARTICIPANT	Let me just kill this call quickly [[unclear]] message. Sorry, Nonnie. Ja that, so in terms of my expectations, let me just see. Probably that it
91		would be difficult to get assistance from others if needed especially I thought it would be difficult to get assistance from others, especially
92		maybe IT assistance or getting hold of someone in my own department or another department or within the faculty. However, you know,
93		getting IT assistance... IT was phenomenal, I mean we all needed IT assistance because we all didn't know how to connect remotely or
94		something of the sort. We needed, ja... and IT was able to assist. They were available almost immediately and you know which was really
95		great. I think some times challenging, but most times getting hold of someone of staff. Not always immediately sometimes in some cases, and
96		then surprises was just the availablility of some staff I would say when needed, which I thought wasn't – like I mentioned now, you know,
97		specifically IT assistance. Another example that surpirsed me really was the new PG funding process, you know, how easy it was to get hold
98		of people in the PG funding or staff in the PG funding office and the assistance or support that they provided, which was great.
99	RESEARCHER	Okay, you said earlier that there is a policy regarding I think you said connectivity, but do you know if UCT has got a remote working policy,
100		and do you think such a policy is necessary?
101	PARTICIPANT	You know Nonnie, ja the remote working policy in terms of data that I'm aware of that I mentioned previously, but I'm not aware of another
102		remote working policy at UCT. But I definitely think it's necessary and I definitely think it's needed.
103	RESEARCHER	Thank you for that. And then in terms of your work space at home, what resources did you department provide in order for you to work better
104		at home, and whatever they provided is that sufficient for you to work comfortable or effectively?
105	PARTICIPANT	So the resources provided by the department was they provided data. Because I had my own, I obviously didn't fall into that category. But so
106		ja they provided us with the ability to collect anything in the office to make it more comfortable, such as our office chair, our files, whatever you
107		needed from the office to make it more comfortable and bearable for you to be able to work remotely. So ja, the support was there from the
108		department if needed. I know that others, you know, they provided the data. So that's basically recently, what I've done in terms of to improve
109		my ergonomics in my work space at home, I set up a desk in our spare room and when I was at work I hardly worked with my laptop all the
110		time. So obviously working from home I use my laptop. But I just find in terms of my posture, you know, it obviously affected my posture. And I
111		recently got me a gadget, you know the laptop to adjust my laptop. And I think that's a bit better, I've got it now for a couple of weeks. And that
112		has definitely seemed to have improved my posture a bit. But I'm not sure if, ja. But in terms of other things, UCT definitely assisted to make it
113		more comfortable at work.
114	RESEARCHER	Okay, and your routine throughout the day, how has those changed? How has your routine changed from when you are in an office?
115	PARTICIPANT	My routine has not changed much, or I tried for it not to change that much. I still log on, most times I log on at 8AM. But there's obviously, you
116		know, flexibility in terms of my routine. But at most, I try to UCT work from eight until four to the best of where I can. Because I have my
117		studies currently as well, I have to switch off sometimes, I'm forced to switch off sometimes at a certain time. However, there's still that
118		flexibility in terms of, you know, I can work a little bit later when I can. You know, I'll even sometimes work over weekends when I can. So there
119		has been, you know, gentle changes in my case in terms of my routine.
120	RESEARCHER	Okay, and in terms of your administrative team, do you think that they need more help remotely than when they were in an office?
121	PARTICIPANT	We mainly engage via MS Teams and emails, you know, and even telephonic skype discussions, so ja because obviously previously we used
122		to meet face to face. So the engagement is different with administrators. But generally I am able to get hold of them, and we have weekly team
123		meetings, so we keep in touch, you know, as much as we can. We had weekly meetings preivously, we had meetings every second week, or
124		once a month, but we had more meetings. Not necessarily weekly team meetings, but whenever we need to engage, I will set up individual
125		one-on-one meetings as well if necessary.
126	RESEARCHER	Perfect, and my last question, XXX, your experiences with student engagement in this remote work, I mean how do you feel about that, how is
127		it going? Are you happy, do you think you are engaging more students now that you are doing it remotely than when they used to walk into
128		your office?
129	PARTICIPANT	We had just before lockdown created an IS email address as well for student queries which students are using. We are engaging with
130		students, obviously, more on an email basis or telephonic contact. I think less telephonic contact, unless we make the contact, but more email
131		responses with students. So that is our engagement with students. Previously we would have walk-ins from students as well, but now all our
132		engagment is via email, you know, with students.
133	RESEARCHER	Okay, is there anything else that you would like to share with me, or that you would like to say that you think will help me understand your
134		experiences better?
135	PARTICIPANT	No, I think we covered quite a bit so no, not at this stage. If I can think of anything else, I'll let you know, Nonnie.
136	RESEARCHER	Thank you. xxx, it's been awesome. I really enjoyed our interview, and you've given me so much information that I will definitely used in my
137		research. As I said before, whatever we discussed is going to be treated with utmost confidentiality. It will not be identifiable, it really will help
138		me. Thank you so much, my dear.
139	PARTICIPANT	It's a pleasure. What I will do Nonnie, just before this morning I just quickly went through your questions as well, so I'm going to just email you
140		some of the, you know, responses I gave you now if you want. You may used it, you don't have to, it's up to you.
141	RESEARCHER	Yes, I'll appreciate that. That will help me, that will help assist me a lot.
142	PARTICIPANT	Okay, I will send it to you right now, okay?
143	RESEARCHER	Thank you XXX, thank you so much my dear.
144	PARTICIPANT	It's only a pleasure. And all the best with your studies!
145	RESEARCHER	Thank you.
146	PARTICIPANT	Bye friend, chat to you soon, Nonnie! Cheers, bye-bye. [[cuts off]]

Recording Name: Research interview_Nonnie Falala_15
Recording Length: 30min08sec

1		
2	RESEARCHER	There we go. Yes, thank you very much, xxx for agreeing to record this interview. Just to inform you that you will be
3		free to withdraw your participation at any time should you wish to do so. So I need you to be aware of that whatever
4		information that you share with me, it is going to be treated with full confidentiality. And if this research is published,
5		your name is not going to be identifiable.
6	PARTICIPANT	Thank you, Nonnie.
7	RESEARCHER	Yes, and then if you want to omit any questions that I ask, or if you feel uncomfortable with any questions that I ask,
8		please feel free to let me know and then we'll leave that question.
9	PARTICIPANT	Okay, this is noted, Nonnie.
10	RESEARCHER	Okay, and then do you have any questions before we start?
11	PARTICIPANT	No, no questions for now. I will stop and ask as we go long.
12	RESEARCHER	Okay, so my first question is I need you to describe your role as a senior administrative staff member at UCT, or
13		specifically as a departmental manager.
14	RESEARCHER	So I'm the departmental manager in the xxx.. I've been in this position since 2012. I enjoy my position. It's quite a
15		varied position. We touch on many aspects and everyday, I would say, is different. No one day is the same. And I find
16		that working from home has been a rollercoaster and you've got to be really strict with yourself. Because if you don't, I
17		find that I go after hours I'm still working. I love the flexibility, so I think there's positives and negatives. I love the
18		flexibility,but also, you've got to control yourself, you've got to be careful. Because it can so easily spill into your
19		personal time if you are not careful, you know. So I think that one's got to learn just to be strict and a little hard on
20		yourself. Otherwise, if you're just going to think – ag, I'm can do this quickly and then later, you know, I'll do some
21		work – I find that it goes over into one, two hours. And I'm busy at night, I'm busy over a weekend. Which actually is
22		not good, you know. So daily reminders, I think, you know, to try and stick within working hours, you know, for me that
23		is important. Otherwise then I just let myself go and I think after a while, a month or two or three, then I can actually
24		feel it. I can feel I am now tired, I'm exhausted, because I've extended my workings.
25	RESEARCHER	Could you just explain to me how big is your department in terms of adminstrative team, your academics and your
26		students? Just briefly, how big is it?
27	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so we have five adminstrative staff, that is including me, and 20 academics. As you know, we head the
28		undergrad xxx section in our department and the postgrad xxx but only postgrad xxx. The undergrad xxx section, the
29		xxx holds that space.
30	RESEARCHER	Okay, I'm looking at your five administrative staff against your many number of students and your 20 academics. Does
31		that balance though in terms of work for your tean? Is yomr team okay, I mean, is it balancing?
32	PARTICIPANT	So if I look at the postgrad xxx there's one lady who's the administrator in that. And we have cycles and she's
33		extremely busy. That, I would say, is a fulltime job. Sometimes it goes a little bit over the normal working hours. But
34		then again there's quieter periods, so I suppose it balances each other out. On the postgrad finance side, we have
35		one administrator as well. And I think she is a little bit overworked, but I think ther is time also where there's a slow
36		period, so ja. We were talking about spreading the load maybe, to the xxx AA, administrative assistant, if it spills from
37		the postgrad side, you know, and asking her to assist. We do ask that, but I suppose when they get busy, we'll go
38		more into discussion, because our administrative assistant is new, she's been with us since April last year only. So
39		she's still finding her feet in the department. So on the undergrad finance side, we have two ladies and we have an
40		administrative officer as well as the administrative assistant. And there, I think, it balances. The two of them seem to
41		be coping and ja, so to answer your question, yes.
42	RESEARCHER	So now if you could explain or tell me the challenges that are associated with remote work in your space
43	PARTICIPANT	So for me, I'll start of with meeting with my staff. We used to meet weekly and obviously face to face. Although that
44		still happens online, but it's not everybody that can have their camera on, you know, and it's not the same. So I think
45		that has been a bit of a challenge for us not seeing each other face-to-face, not being able to just go to each other's
46		desk or having a cup of tea, you know, randomly. I think that has been a challenge for the staff. We managed to sort
47		our all the data issues. So initially that was a problem, but that's all been sorted now. I know that the ladies have
48		indicated they have mixed feelings. One lady hs indicated that she actually prefers being at the office, you know. If
49		somebody were to ask her, she would say, "I want to come back to the office," The other ladies have indicated, "No, I
50		enjoy working at home. I don't need to be," you know, "at the office." So we await communication, you know, from the
51		higher authorities.
52	RESEARCHER	Okay, and besides having the flexibility, what other opportunities have you seen that come with remote working?
53	PARTICIPANT	Well, obviously the travelling. You know, one doesn't have to worry about the traffic. There's a saving on petrol costs,
54		parking fees. I like the flexibility when I am at home. If I need to do something, I just see that I have work in my hours.
55		And I can set up an appointment if I need to go somewhere and then just come back and continue working. I love that
56		flexibility. And for me and my staff output is important, you know. So if it means that they also need to be somewhere,
57		for example collecting children from school, they can work it within the day, you know. And they can fit it in, so that
58		kind of flexibility I love.
59	RESEARCHER	Yes, and on another note what are the factors that you think or that you consider necessary to improve remote
60		working specifically for departmental managers or their teams? What factors do you think are necessary to improve
61		what is happening at this stage?
62	PARTICIPANT	I think communication is key, we can improve on our communication. We work on trust, so my team will notify me, you
63		know. And I have to take their word for it, because I trust them, you know. So I think that is vital. And can we come
64		back to that later? I will give it some thought.
65	RESEARCHER	You actually answered it very well. I think I understand what exactly you mean in that. Also maybe in terms of your
66		own productivty, so how will you compare, or how will you judge, your own productivity when you working remotely
67		compared to when you are in the office?

68	PARTICIPANT	I find that I cannot switch off. If I have a project going I find it hard to switch off. If I were at the office, I would log off
69		and then I would be heading home and, you know, maybe pop in at the shops or somewhere, and that's it. And I'll pick
70		it up the next day. But I find now that I'm working at home my mind is sort of overworking, you know. I'm thinking of
71		things all the time, and actually I should be switching off. I get up and I go and make a note. So I work from... I have a
72		dedicated space, you know, that I work from and I find that I would go and jot things down. Whereas if I were at the
73		office, it was easier to switch off actually.
74	RESEARCHER	But in terms of fulfilling specific tasks, say marks processing for example, in terms of fulfilling those tasks does it take
75		the same time to fulfill those tasks doing it in the office or remotely? In terms of time, does it take the same time, or
76		what is different?
77	PARTICIPANT	I think because of new processes had to be developed, because we were online. So if I take for example the Get
78		Smarter Course right, I am responsible for processing those payment forms, for example, to the academic. It has,
79		because of online processes, it has taken so much of my time. Just to gather everything and put everything in one pdf.
80		That takes time, it takes hours, you know. I'm talking about like two to three hours for one payment form. You have to
81		source everything, you've got to be careful, you've got to check your work and everything. Whereas if I were at the
82		office I would just be photocopying, you know. So yes, it's more time. Definitely more time is being spent on that
83		aspect, you know.
84	RESEARCHER	And then this was an emergency setup that the unviersity came up with after lockdown. But when that happened you
85		might have had your own expectations. Were those expectations and how did they turn out to be
86	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so Nonnie, I don't know if you've heard of the term "building a plane on a runway"? The plane is taking off, but
87		we're still busy building the plane. So that's how I felt. There were things that had to be done. We had to make it work
88		and we had to find ways of making it work. So for me it was a matter of thinking and finding how am I going to be
89		making a success of this. And that I had to concentrate, I think that took up the focus, actually. There was no time of
90		thinking, "Oh okay, so maybe this, maybe that," you know. It was just, it had to be done, find a solution and that's it. I
91		don't know if that answers your question.
92	RESEARCHER	Yes, that anwers my question. And do you know if UCT or your faculty or your department has an emergency remote
93		working polcy? And do you think such a policy is necessary?
94	PARTICIPANT	I don't think our department has developed one. Yes, I think it is necessary, and I think there just hasn't been time to
95		be doing this, because you know last year we were so busy working all long hours. And I thought that we had put
96		many systems in place, but as you are aware, this year it was online registration, which was new. And that took up a
97		lot of time. So I don'tknow when we're going to be – we 're finding the time, you know, we put some things on hold –
98		but when are we going to find the time to be doing things, you know? So ja.
99	RESEARCHER	That's true. And at home where do you work from? And how have you improved your workspace at home?
100	PARTICIPANT	So I'm very fortunate, I have study at home. I've kicked my husband out of the study, because he works from home as
101		well. So he sits in the dining room. He uses the dining room table. So I'm in the study, so initially we started off with
102		my laptop and then, I mean the PASS staff, we have two monitors at the office. So we discovered that we actually
103		need a second monitor at home too. So I've purchased monitors for all the PASS staff members and that has, you
104		know, greatly assisted us in our working space.
105	RESEARCHER	Okay, that actually answers my other question that I was going to pose. I was going to ask you what the department
106		has provided, or what the unviersity has provided you in terms of your workspace. But I think that is covered already.
107		Unless if there is anything else that you wanted to add, but I think you are covered there.
108	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
109	RESEARCHER	And then your routines in terms of your routines throughout the day and how they've changed from when you worked
110		in an office?
111	PARTICIPANT	So basically, you know, we get up for our early morning prayers, right. And it changes as the seasons change. So
112		currently, our prayer time is about half past five. And we have to pray, our first prayer is before sunrise, right. So I find
113		that by six o'clock I am up already and then I have difficulty falling asleep, so then I log on, right. And I work my hours
114		accordingly, as you know we're flexible. And so if I'd been at the office, then I would be on my way to the office at
115		about half past six, because my hours were from seven until three. And then I'd take a lunch break and then I'm back
116		at the office – so from one to half past one – and then I'm back in the office again so until about three. But also
117		depending on if there is anything important. Then if there is, and then I just continue. And therein lies the danger, you
118		know. Nobody has responded, you know. The academics work in their own time. They start later, what then o'clock,
119		eleven o'clock, and they work til later in the afternoon. So nobody has responded by the time my day has finished, I
120		would log on again and see if there is a response from them.
121	RESEARCHER	That's true.
122	PARTICIPANT	And, you know, basically that's how my days has changed, you know. So ja, and then you know, there's certain
123		departments where you request certain information and then it only comes through later. And you have deadlines, and
124		you just have to continue checking, I mean, so...
125	RESEARCHER	I think that also covers my next question, because my next question was going to be how has emergency remote
126		working affected your communication with your stakeholders, specfically your senior stakeholders, your academics,
127		your HoD? I think that sort of covers up, but do you want to maybe explain further how has this remote working
128		experience affeced your communication or your engagement with your stakeholders?
129	PARTICIPANT	If I were to take the – can I mention the FO, the faculty office – I think that I remember clearly an incident regarding
130		the FEC process that we have our deadlines and they are always extremely tight. And there was no reply from a
131		colleague. And it was expected of us – and I'm talking about faculty managers – to be checking our emails at eight
132		o'clock at night, waiting on a response to be guided. And I was extremely upset about this. I mentioned it to my head
133		of department and I had even gone as far as to ask the question, "What is happening?" you know. Why are we
134		expected to be checking our emails? Because if we don't do it, we will not meet our deadline, you know. And yes, so
135		that immediately comes to mind. The expectation of certain departments that takes us for granted and you know,
136		holds us... you know like they hold a gun to your head, kind of. So if we had been at the office, that would not have
137		happened., I don't think so. I think that was taking advantage of the situation that we're working remotely.

138	RESEARCHER	Yes. My last but one question: do you think your team, or your administrative team yes, do you think that they need
139		more support while working remotely than working in an office? Are their difficulties similar, or do you feel that they
140		experience different problems?
141	PARTICIPANT	I think that they have similar diffiuclties. And I'm referring to the working over and above normal working hours. And I
142		think it's more difficult for them, because if they were in the office, they would be catching the academics in the
143		corridor, you know, to remind them. And now they can only do so, you know, via email. They could of course phone as
144		well, but the chances of an academic taking a phone call, you know, some of them, is slim. So you rely only on their
145		responses, you know, via email. So I think it;s more difficult for them. I work with a smaller team obviously, and in my
146		team, you know, I phone people and they do respond, you know, telephonically. So that is the one aspect, the PASS
147		staff, that they have difficulty with. I'm not sure if that example is sufficient for your answer.
148	RESEARCHER	Yes, no that's fine. My last question is on your experience of engaging with students remotely. How was that
149		experience? How has been your experience in that area with students?
150	PARTICIPANT	Our engagement with students is very, it's not, I would say, I don't engage as often as what I would have when I am in
151		the office. Because they would, you know, slip next door to me if they, you know, experience anything on the
152		reception side, you know. If they haven't been able to catch anybody, then they would just pop in next door. I do have
153		an email now and then from students, and they're few and far between. And I would then just if I do receive an email
154		and they require assistance from an adminstrator or from an academic, I would basically contact the academic or the
155		administrator and say, "Please, can you follow up on this", a reminder just. Because sometimes the academics and
156		the administrators were also very busy and they couldn't, you know, reply let's say within a day for example, then I
157		would just, you know, speed up the reply. So I would say that my role has been a few emails – more than normal than
158		if we were at the office. So my role has basically been just to speed up replies. Because obviously they couldn't see
159		them. If they were at the office, then they would have been popping in, you know, to see the academics.
160	RESEARCHER	Okay, xxx, we've come to the end of my questions. Is there anything that you'd like to share that I've not asked you
161		about that you think is important to help me to understand your experience with emergency remote working?
162	PARTICIPANT	Thank you, Nonnie. I think we've covered a wide range and I hope that I've been helpful, that you could use my
163		answers in your studies and I just wanted to wish you very well going forward with your studies. All the best.
164	RESEARCHER	Thank you, thank you very much for the time and for the information provided for the study. And as mentioned, I'm
165		going to treat our communication or our conversation with utmost confidentiality. It will not be shared with anyone
166		besides my supervisor and the names are not going to be included in whatever communication that happens.
167	PARTICIPANT	Okay, this is perfect, Nonnie. All the best, thank you. Have a lovely day further.
168	RESEARCHER	You too, you too.
169	PARTICIPANT	Okay.
170	RESEARCHER	Thank you.
171	PARTICIPANT	Bye.
172	RESEARCHER	Bye [[cuts off]]

9.21   Appendix U: Transcription for P16

RESEARCHER	Let me try again. It's going to start, because it's saying "start recording"	
PARTICIPANT	Oh there we go.	
RESEARCHER	Ja. Okay, so XXX [[sp?]]. I'm going to be taking notes as well and then before the interview, also I want you to know that whatever you share with me, it's going to be treated with full confidentiality. And if it is published, your name is not going to be identifiable.	
PARTICIPANT	[[unclear]]	
RESEARCHER	Ja, So I'll ensure...	
PARTICIPANT	No, I don't mind.	
RESEARCHER	Yes, and also I want you to know that you've got an option of pulling out of the interview. Or if you're not comfortable with any question that I might ask, you are free to let me know then we can ignore the question. But they type of questions that I'm going to be asking you, they are not going to cause any discomfort physicially or emotionally. Buit if anything like that happens, just let me know, and then I will stop the interview.	
PARTICIPANT	Sure.	
RESEARCHER	Okay, just to break the ice XXX, how long have you been in this role as a DM in engineering?	
PARTICIPANT	For ten years. 2011, ten years.	
[[silence]]		
PARTICIPANT	Nonnie? Oh gosh, is there something wrong with the internet?	
RESEARCHER	No, you didn't get that one?	
PARTICIPANT	Because I didn't see you. Okay, you just...	
RESEARCHER	Can you see me now?	
PARTICIPANT	Can you hear me?	
RESEARCHER	I can hear you and I can see you.	
PARTICIPANT	Okay, no you just went away for a second so I wasn't too sure if it was mine or yours.	
RESEARCHER	Yes, but I can see you. Can you see me now and hear me?	
PARTICIPANT	Yes.	
RESEARCHER	Perfect.	
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so since 2011 so that's ten years.	
RESEARCHER	Yes, but how big is the department? In terms of staffing, academics, admin and students?	
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so we've got 26 academics, we've got 750 undergrads, we've got 250 postgrads. We've got six technical staff and probably – how many – seven administrators, ja.	
RESEARCHER	Okay, thank you. And in terms of... so my research is... So I came up with this topic just after the emergency remote working scenario at UCT. So I know at this stage we are more or less – I don't want to say comfortable – but we are almost used to this remote working.	
PARTICIPANT	Exactly.	
RESEARCHER	But I wanted to tap into the space when this was an emergency remote working and the challenges that you think are associated with this emergency remote working, for specifically you as a DM, and obviously that will affect your team. What are those challenges?	
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so what those challenges were initially... Obviously setting everybody up, we obviously needed to find out exactly what it is what we were going to need. Because initially we thought okay, it was going to be a month or a few weeks. And then it ended up more than a year. So for the first period, you know, we just set people up with data, a modem and their laptop. So that was the first challenges that we needed to... The other challenge was obviously getting people into a working time, you know, a set time period of when we needed to be available. Because that was also a challenge. So I don't know if you want me to elaborate, or are these type of questions coming on later on, or should I just elaborate or talk about it as..?	
RESEARCHER	You can elaborate, but I think they are coming also later, for example which part did you find the most difficult when working remotely?	
PARTICIPANT	So this is for me myself? Or is it as my department or my team or?	
RESEARCHER	Ja, remember you are the DM and obviously what affects you, it filters down.	
PARTICIPANT	Yes.	
RESEARCHER	So what were the most difficult challenges that you think are associated with this?	
PARTICIPANT	I think not being done, you know, not going down the passage and meeting, you know, going to your HoD, just popping in and saying, "There are issues." So not being able to go down the passage, not being able to pick up the phone. Because some people weren't, you know, in tuned with all the software and systems that we needed to put in place. We needed to obviously get people on board with that. Okay, so I'm speaking about the first month when we started, hey? So let me just switch this off, sorry. So yes, so the challenges were getting people set up, initially getting people set up.	
RESEARCHER	Okay, and obviously with those challenges I'm sure there were also opportunities that were seen with this emergency remote. So what are those opportunities, and how have you adopted your operations in response to this emergency remote?	
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so there were lots of opportunities, because we obviously went paperless. We had to go paperless like at the drop of a hat. That was amazing, because now we needed to think and look at proper systems that we can put in place of, you know, people needed to be taught how to pdf documents, how to combine documents, how to use MS Teams, you know. We needed to find a way of how to communicate with each other, send documents, ja. I think that was...	
RESEARCHER	Yes, and how do you think the situation will change your way of working when we are now back on campus? How do you think your experiences, and I mean also looking at your challenges, and also looking at the opportunities, how do you think this will change the situation if we go back to campus?	
PARTICIPANT	Well I mean this thing changed us for the better. I mean registrations is now no longer having new students standing outside your offices doing manual paper registration. That was a big thing for us, you know, we went now online. I don't know how you guys managed your registration, but that was a big thing for us. So we used SEAT [[sp?]] and PeopleSoft. But I'm hoping now when we go back we will be able to still work remotely, because we work better, you know. I think the productivity is better working at home than in the office. Because I go into the office regularly now, and I don't do anything else but sort out everything down the passage that needs to get sorted out. I can't sit at my desk like this and have a meeting, because everybody's knocking at the door. I can't sit like this and work now, because everybody's in and out of my office. Looking for this, needing assistance with this, this one's stuck in the lift, where's the tea or the coffees, we don't know where to find this office and, you know, can you just find me this key and that key… So I am hoping that when we go back, I mean we are back, that the university will actually allow us to work on a rotational basis, you know. That at least there's an administrator in the office, but we all don't have to be there at the same time. Because we found that actually we don't have to be there. It's just nice for us to be there, you know, for the student to walk in, for the visitor to walk in and see somebody there. But we actually work, my team would like to work from home constantly.	
RESEARCHER	Yes, but saying that maybe it's actually best if you are more productive at home, because when you are in the office now there are these other distractions, but now how does that affect your students? Because as a DM I'm not so sure how you communicate with your students, or how you engage with your students. How do you think this affects the students?	
PARTICIPANT	So now we can actually... so what we've done is we've advertised on the Vula site how the students should communicate with the adminstrators and with the department. You know, there's chats, there's forums, there's MS Teams, there's telephone, there's email. So we've been very good at doing that. There's now, because EBE has come back onto campus and we're running our practicals and we have these home room sessions where the students are on campus, what has happened now is the odd student will walk up there. So it's not a lot of them, it's just one or two that are still finding their feet that we notice that come down looking for the administrator. And then there's a notice on the door that says, "I'm	

80		not in today, so contact me using these systems." But yes, no I mean they are, they phone us, they phone our office number, they phone us via
81		Teams, we have a Vula site where we chat to them. They can raise their questions there, which all the other students can see as well. So I think
82		all in all this was a blessing in disguise. I mean for me, I've been working here at home, I've never ever worked at home before, hey, I've never
83		been at home. So working with my kids, working at home and having my kids, or working at home and my kids come home from school, it's
84		such a blessing, Nonnie, I don't know. I can see how other moms would give up their work just to stay at home with their kids, hey. And I mean
85		I've never had that opportunity, but gosh, I just enjoyed it. Yes, it was a challenge in the beginning of, you know, how do I separate the work
86		from giving them time.
87	RESEARCHER	[[unclear]]
88	PARTICIPANT	Shame, so that was a challenge initially, But you know, once we had now got ourselves set up and they know, okay fine, there are boundaries.
89		When I'm hving my meeting, everybody needs to be quiet. But there are times during the day that I can attend to them, but still do my work.
90		Because now I don't have to travel, I don't have to sit in traffic and, you know, sort all those things out. I've got all that time to put in and
91		complete my tasks, you know. And obviously there are disadvantages, because now sometimes you're working until whenever, you know.
92		Sometimes you don't cut yourself off, but I can honestly say I'm happy that this has happened. And especially last year when Daniel had his
93		brain haemorrhage, you know. He needed to stay home for like a couple of months. And I wouldn't have been able to do that had this pandemic
94		not happened, I can honestly tell you, I would have had to ask for unpaid leave, because my child needed me, because he needed to recover.
95		But it was nice. That's why I'm saying, I'm hoping that... I mean the dean has now sent us an email to say, "Can everybody now start coming
96		back to campus between, you know, one, two, three times a week?" And obviously the administrators are like, "Huuuh! Why do they need to
97		come back yet?" But they have to come back. We don't have jobs where we get paid for working remotely, our jobs are on campus. And yes, we
98		don't have to be there every day, but we have to make an effort to come in. So you'll have those that, "No I'm not going to come in," and kicking
99		their heads against the bucket, and there are others that very much, you know, they are wanting to come back, because they're missing the
100		interaction with the staff. Which is nice, because when I do in, you know, you feel that buzz again, and the busyness and the lekker vibe that,
101		you know, that we all there. But now working from home, like today, the kids are all at school, so I'm at home so I can get stuff done. But ja
102		shame, I'm drifting, I'm going all over the place.
103	RESEARCHER	No, it's fine. Now in terms of your workspace at home, do you have a specific, or do you have a special place where you work?
104	PARTICIPANT	So what I did, was I needed to... Because I'm not the type of person that can just sit anywhere. I need to be in my own little space with my own,
105		you know, where I'm focused so that I don't get any distractions. Because, you know, the kids are inside. So at the moment I've put my desk in
106		my bedroom. So I've got a little spot in my bedroom. That's why I've got a background, so that, you know, you don't see all my things that's
107		hanging on the wall or whatever, or when the bed is not made up or whatever. So yes, I've made space in my room so that, you know, I've got
108		my own space. So this is like my office and then I've got my laptop, and we were allowed to bring our chairs home, because that was a big
109		thing. The chairs that I was sitting on, oh my gosh, my back would pain constantly.
110	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
111	PARTICIPANT	And then we said, "No, no, no. Let's make an arrangement for all of us to fetch our chairs," and we did that, and obviously the computer, and the
112		department gave us, I mean they sorted us out immediately, either you get a data allowance or we buy you a modem with a sim card with data
113		every month.
114	RESEARCHER	Yes.
115	PARTICIPANT	So that's the data option and then we give you a modem. And then staff were allowed to bring their printers home, or their monitors, if they
116		needed an extra monitor we arranged for the extra monitor. So we're kitted out, we've kitted out at home. So that's why I'm saying, for us we like
117		continuing offering the service as if we were in the office. The only thing is if somebody walks down the passage and they say someone's stuck
118		in the lift, that is now sometimes that we will have to do remotely, but ja.
119	RESEARCHER	Yes. And then obviously your routine throughout the day has changed. So how much of the change is there?
120	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so initially it was all over the place, because it was, you know, you were working as if you were working 24/7. Because there was no like,
121		"Okay, eight o'clock I'm starting, I'm gonna have a lunchtime and then I'm ending work at..." There was no time. People were working
122		throughout the night, early hours of the morning. So ja, things have changed since the initial emergency. So what we've done is, because you
123		know, the staff started to get burnout. And you know, they become despondent and depressed, because they're constantly working all the time.
124		So what we did was we said, "Okay, people must work during the working hours. From eight to four, half past eight to half past four, or from nine
125		to five, can we just agree that that is the time that people's going to be available?" Because otherwise we can't work efficiently and effectively if
126		people are not available druing the working hours.
127	RESEARCHER	Yes.
128	PARTICIPANT	Because we rely on certain people for our jobs. And finding that people are working in the early hours of the morning, and that's not suiting a lot
129		of us. So ja, so I've made changes to the times, which I think that was the biggest thing. I can't think of anything now, but okay.
130	RESEARCHER	Okay, but in terms of your team, do they need more support now from you as a DM while working remotely than when working in the office? Or
131		are their difficulties similar to when they were in the office?
132	PARTICIPANT	No, it's similar. Exactly the same. I mean, I've got a new staff member and I've had to walk the road with her. Unfortunately, you know, there's a
133		new one that came in, and she came in in April when we just went into lockdown. So that was a bit of a challenge, because you know, you can't
134		show her. I now needed to learn how to use Teams to share the files to go step by step as to what needed be done, which things to use. Okay,
135		so that was another challenge, I would say. Because setting a new person up remotely, and then still teaching the job, and still making sure that
136		the job gets done. So that was a big challenge as well, but we sorted it out. Shame, she visited the office now, only now this month.
137	RESEARCHER	Okay, XXX, I've come to the end of my questions. You've actually covered most of them. I think you've covered all of them actually. You were...
138	PARTICIPANT	I was all over the place, hey.
139	RESEARCHER	But you actually gave me... whatever I was looking for, I got. But is there anything else that you'd like to share that you think will help me
140		understand your experience with this emergency remote that I might not have asked?
141	PARTICIPANT	Ja, I think if anything of this ever happens again, I think as a university or as a faculty or as a department they need to put certain systems or
142		policies in place, man to say, okay fine, you know, we need to still offer a service to our students, to staff, to other external people, and you need
143		to be available during this period, or this time of the day. Because I find, like with registration for example, we relied on a service course to
144		increase their class capacity. It took three days to find that person. They weren't answering phones, they weren't answering emails, they weren't
145		answering anything. I had to go through the faculty to the head of the department, nobody was that could, you know... Because that was the
146		only person who could increase that class number. It prevented a lot of our students from registering. So if at the beginning, you know, people
147		are told okay fine, don't forget, these are the times. But please make sure that you do take a lunch break, beacuse to keep your morale and
148		your energy going, you need to take a break. And people need to respect that. There did come a time when people were emailing all after hours
149		– I'm now talking in the wider, as a faculty – and those things became a bit unpleasant. And then the dean sent out an email to say, "Can we
150		please only send out the emails," which you can do on Outlook, you can choose to send it later, you know, "Can we please do that?" because
151		some people are finding it very difficult to switch off. So when they see the emails coming in, they would want to respond when in actual fact
152		they should wait for the next day. But in order to help them cope with that, could you just please send it out later? So that was also a trick that
153		we needed to learn. And you know, having lots of monthly meetings with people just to check in, to see if they're okay. Because yes, you are... I
154		talk every day to my team. I communicate every day, I'm phoning them every day, I video, because we interact every day. So it's not like I need
155		to meet with them together all the time to say, "Okay fine, what are you doing? What are you…?" I don't have to do that, you know, because we
156		are busy all the time. And I need to make sure that we are offering the service, because if we are not offering the service I'm to blame for it. So
157		ja, I think if the university puts some, or whoever's going to use this emergency thing, people must be told that these are the times. If you need
158		to take leave, you must put in your annual leave. If you're going to be sick, you must put in your sick leave, so that people know. And you must
159		put a message on to say, I'm not available, because of whatever, I'm on leave, or you can contact me, I'm on training, or whatever. So that

160		people know, so that they're not looking for everybody. Because I mean, we're a big university, and at the moment everybody is working
161		different times. And in order for us to do our jobs, we need the different offices, you know what I mean?
162	RESEARCHER	Yes.
163	PARTICIPANT	So and if you don't do job, then it affects what we're doing in our office. So ja.
164	RESEARCHER	So a policy, yes.
165	PARTICIPANT	[[unclear[you know, I mean, I don't think any of us have. I mean, we were just thrown in there and everybody just needed to... I don't know how
166		your faculty and your department worked, but I mean we were just thrown in there and we needed to make decisions on the fly. So as things
167		were happening, we were doing… but ja. And how's your team doing?
168	RESEARCHER	This is about... So we can stop recording after this, after we're finished. If there's nothing else, XXX, thank you very much. I'm very grateful for
169		the information that you've given me. It will definitely help me with my research. So I will give you, hopefully once I'm done, if it's published I'll
170		give you a link then you can check it out.
171	PARTICIPANT	Okay, but you're more than welcome to contact me if maybe I missed out on anything. If I think of anything I will let you know.
172	RESEARCHER	Absolutely, yes. And there's that form that you need to complete – I must just check – that you need to sign. But it's fine, I can always get it
173		whenever.
174	PARTICIPANT	The ethics form?
175	RESEARCHER	Ja, not the ethics, the consent.
176	PARTICIPANT	Oh, okay.
177	RESEARCHER	Ja, but that's fine. I can get it from you at any other time. But XXX, thank you so much for the time. I know you are very busy, but I really
178		appreciate you agreeing to do this with me.
179	PARTICIPANT	You're welcome, Nonnie, thank you.
180	RESEARCHER	So I'm just going to stop the recording now.
181	PARTICIPANT	Ja. [[cuts off]]

9.22 Appendix V: Transcription for P17

RESEARCHER	So just to assure you that our conversation or whatever you share with me is going to be treated with utmost confidentiality. It will not be identifiable if it is published, so a bit of comfort there in case there is anything that you vent on.
PARTICIPANT	[[chuckles]]
RESEARCHER	And also, if there are any particular questions that you are not comfortable with or that you really don't want to respond to, just let me know and then we'll omit those. Or if you want to pull out of the interview completely, that's okay, then we can do that.
PARTICIPANT	Sho.
RESEARCHER	So this research, I'm a student at CPUT, I'm doing my MTech. So I finished my coursework, I'm now busy with my half-dissertation.
PARTICIPANT	All right.
RESEARCHER	So I came up with the topic just after we went on lockdown. So my topic at the time, yes, it is about emergency. So if you can tap into that space when it was still an emergency. I know that as it is now, we are more or less comfortable with what we are doing.
PARTICIPANT	Ja, sure. Awesome.
RESEARCHER	So that's more or less, yes. So tell me, I know that at the moment you are going into a DMs role, but you are a senior adminstrative staff in Humanities. So how long have you been doing your particular job?
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so I've been an SAO for about four years now, ja.
RESEARCHER	Okay, and by the way, uifyou want to switch on your - what is it called - your video, you can go ahead. Because sometimes it...
PARTICIPANT	Ja and the bandwidth, I'm thinking about my bandwidth.
RESEARCHER	Yes, no you can... I'll keep mine on, but you can...
PARTICIPANT	No worries.
RESEARCHER	Okay, thank you. And how biug is your department in terms of administrative staff, your academics and your students, how big is it?
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so we have a component of about16 staff members, that's permanent staff members, and we have about 40 contract staff - that's tutors and contract academics - ja, that's how big the department is.
RESEARCHER	Okay, and then tapping into the emergency remote space, what challenges did you experience relating to the emergency remote working?
PARTICIPANT	I think most... I mean looking back at it now, initially when it was initiated there was no form of direct guidance in terms of what is expected of us or what support systems were going to be offered to us. So it was very frustrating, and obviously from a point of being a senior administrator and having to guide the team on how we're gonna embark on this new journey, I found myself fumbling quite a lot, and picking up pieces as we went along, you know. And making up, you know, systems and processes so that it made sense for us to be able to deliver the work tat we were doing. So I...it was very frustrating and it took me totally out of my normal schedule of doing things. And it took a bit of time to settle in and to find my way around how we were going to move forward. So in terms of support form the university and in terms of, just, guidance, I was a little bit taken aback as to most of how we were gonna go forward was left to the lower levers, to the departments to find a way of how to figure things moving forward.
RESEARCHER	Yes, but were there any specific areas that you found very challenging?
PARTICIPANT	Okay, so we for me it was mostly having to now change to absolutely working at home, in silos, by myself, behind a computer. And having to manage a whole team from that space. And also the fact that - what was the other thing that absolutely frustrated me? - just the resources. I mean, to now I'm still using my own computer, I'm still using my own wifi, my own printing, you know. So from that point of view in terms of resources, I also felt a little bit straing in working from home.
RESEARCHER	So in terms of resources you are saying that you are using your own computer, you are using your own wifi. so has the department provided you with anything? I mean they didn't support you with those resources?
PARTICIPANT	So the Humanities faculty made it very clear in terms of computers. Only the administrators could reach out and get loan computers from the faculty. And in terms of data, they said the department, if departments had their own funds that they could tap into, then they would look at subsiding some data allowance, of which, if your department didn't have that then you were not gonna have that resource. So people needed to figure out how they were gonna actually connect. So in actual sense most of us sat down and said, "Listen, I'm not using money for petrol to go to the office, so maybe I can reroute that money to connectivity." That was the logic at the end of the day, across the board – administrators and staff.
RESEARCHER	And in terms of ergonomics or chairs and tables and stuff like that, was there any support from the faculty or from the department?
PARTICIPANT	No, absolutely not, not at all. I think also for me being where I am, it was always called upon me to be available at all the hours of the day. And I hadn't worked like that before. I had office hours. I would be in the office from half past eight to half past four, so that would be my work time and schedule. I would expand myself, be available to everyone within that time and that was the norm. Now working from home, I'd get a call at seven o'clock in the morning and I need to attend to it [[chuckles]]. And it's expected that you should be available at all times. So that kind of threw me off, totally. As a single parent, I mean I have my son to juggle at the same time as doing this online work. It was a real battle, you know. The long hours and trying to balance home, work, studies. It was a total nightmare. It took a lot of time to find a balance and be assertive and say, you know what, yes, I'm a hard working overachiever person, but I need to not wear myself out personally. That's myself as a person, you know. I found myself getting very exhausted.
RESEARCHER	Yes, so when all this was going on, what was it that you missed about your traditional office?
PARTICIPANT	I am definitely – and I always say this to people – I am not an email person. I struggle with that kind of stuff. I really prefer one on one interaction. I'm a person who likes face-to-face. I'm always in everyone's office trying to resolve something quicker, faster, one-on-one. So I missed that, I missed that. You will find that one issue that needs to be attended to took ten emails back and forth, you know. Whereas if you are one-on-one, where you could have just sat down, spoke about it for a good thirty minutes, even if it was an hour, and resolved it, and moved on. Now it's over a series of days you're talking about the same thing. It was really frustrating, so I missed that. I missed that human interaction and that ability to do some certain tasks quicker face to face.
RESEARCHER	Yes, and... Sorry to cut you off there, you wanted to say something?
PARTICIPANT	No, no. That's it.
RESEARCHER	Okay, no I was gonna ask so besides the emails obviously that take long to respond to, are there other communication channels that you and your team or your stakeholders, that you were using?
PARTICIPANT	So in terms of connectivity and interaction, just around technology, so it would be, obvsiouly my phone, which is whatsapp messages and phone calls. I spent a lot of time on the phone, a lot of time. I still do, you know. And then there's emails, then there's obviously your MS Teams and your zooms. We spent a lot of times in meetings all the time, all day, to a point where we had to say, "Listen, if it's not meeting-worth, can we just please pick up a phone and call me and sort it out," ja. So it was a lot of zoom and a lot of MS Teams. Others than that it was sharing of document. A lot of people, you know, I have older staff members on my team who didn't know what Gdrive is. They're very well schooled and they know very well know that, you know, there's an online cloud repository where we can share our documents when we're working systematically. So there are positives to it, there are positives to it.
RESEARCHER	Yes, now maybe talking about those positives, so what are those? What are the opportunities that you have seen with this remote working?
PARTICIPANT	Positives are that we went from – this is academics – from people who were not used to using online resources to people getting more open to the use of online resources for teaching, for just working. And I think for myself personally the positive has been the fact that I've seen an improvement in terms of my work. Because I get more quiet hour times to work on work. Unlike when I'm in the office, sometimes I get lot of disruptions. I get up, I go to someone else's office. Now when it comes to things like finance and HR paperwork, which needs me to be more settled and more focused, I can actually do those things thoroughly. Not half-hearted, because I'm in a quiet space. So in terms of those areas it's areas where I can say actually I see a difference, you know. I have improved, you know. So there's that improvement in terms of my work.

80		Obviously, the traveling time between home and office, I much appreciate not sitting in traffic between going to work and home. And I think the
81		benefit obviously is that they should have saved on the fact that we were not on campus and most of us were at home, you know, on
82		organisational resources, there should be a little bit of saving there. Because I mean, my own electricity, my own wifi, my own laptop. There
83		should be savings somewhere. So ja, and the fact that in my position as a manager I can actually work from home. And I can complete the
84		same work that I would have done in the office from home. So it was interesting, ja. So those are definitely opportunites.
85	RESEARCHER	And should we go back to campus tomorrow, how do you think the experience is going to change our working culture at UCT? Or for DMs, or
86		for senior administrative staff at UCT?
87	PARTICIPANT	I, for one, because obviously my job role doesn't require me to always have interaction with students. More with my academic team and my
88		HoDs. So I don't see the necessity of me being in the office for five days a week all day. If I have quiet time, I can sit at home and work on other
89		tasks that I can complete from home. So that's opened up my eyes. And obviously in terms of my line manager, he now knows that I'm capable
90		of doing the work whilst sitting at home and still be reachable and still... So there is the opportunity of having those conversations and saying,
91		"Listen, can I work from home sometimes and can I be in the office sometimes?" So hopefully there'll be that flexibility, but I mean that's open to
92		discussion [[chuckles]].
93	RESEARCHER	Absolutely. Are there any factors that you think are necessary for improved remote working?
94	PARTICIPANT	I definitely think now that, especially now that we've been in this ERT and ERW working mode, there should have been proper policies put into
95		place. Because I find that if you look across the university, everyone is still doing... faculties are still doing different ways of dealing with, you
96		know, ERT and I mean... So I feel there should be a uniform policy in terms of how funds should be spent, where resources should be allocated,
97		to support staff. Because I feel that people who took on most of the brunt and who were overworked, were the staff. And we were not being
98		called upon to say, "Listen, what do you need, how can we help you?" Every faculty went their own way and did their own way of handling the
99		situation. And I feel there were, I mean I listened to health sciences and how they were equipped and helped to work from home. And I look at
100		us and I feel, oh my goodness, you know. There's no equality here, something is missing. If there was a policy, by now at least, uniform, and
101		saying this is the policy, this is how we're going to work. These are the resources, these are the funds, okay, let's carry on working, then I'd
102		much appreciate it.
103	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes. But okay, in terms of productivity, do you think that you are more productive in the office than working remotely?
104	PARTICIPANT	I am more productive working from home. I appreciate the quiet time, especially in my job role. I spent a lot of time not sitting in my office and
105		working and then what would happen is that I would come home and do the quiet work when I'm home. So now that I've found a balance in
106		terms of managing my work while working at home, I much appreciate the level of productivity that I have when I'm home.
107	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
108	PARTICIPANT	So ja, I'm much more productive at home.
109	RESEARCHER	Okay, and so when we were told that we were going to be working remotely, obviously you might have had some expectations. So how did
110		these turn out to be? Are there any surprises, or were there any surprises?
111	PARTICIPANT	You know, I really did not have much expectation rather than how are we actually gonna do this. How is this gonna actually work, considering
112		the – how can I say – the students that we manage? Our students are very vocal, our students challengeg us quite a lot. And how we used to
113		work previously before lockdown is that none of our lectures were recorded. So it required all our students to be present at all lectures. Because
114		we refused to record, obviously. I mean we were in the media [[unclear]], I mean politics is a very interesting – what you call it – school of
115		thought. Because it challenges certain areas which are very uncomfortable for most people. So no, for me my panic was like, okay, now we're
116		going into this lockdown. How are the academic staff going to feel about having to do these lectures now recorded and putting them online and
117		having their students...? Are the students even gonna understand all this work that's gonna happen online? Our students are used to
118		interaction, one on one, debates, you know, these things. Know they were going to have to work at silos in home. So I panicked a bit that
119		students would need a lot of being held and helped to work through the work that they were doing. Most of them managed fairly okay. We had a
120		huge failure rate in first year. Yeah, we took a knock in first year. We have some of the biggest first year classes – I think our first year class is
121		about 500 students, just one of our first year classes. So you can imagine having a failure rate that high – these kids are fresh out of highs
122		school. and they don't know our way of working, and then you put them into ERT. It was risky, and we expected that. We got a backlash from
123		parents, students, everybody, and we said but this type of work can't be taught online, you know. So it was very challenging. It was quite
124		panicky and scary for most of us when we sat down and discussed it. But we had to carry on, because that was the mandate. We are going
125		online, and no-one asked us how we feel, whether we're on board or not. We did try push back, but if the whole university is going online, you
126		can't say, "No, we can't, we're not." So ja, it is interesting times. It's quite fascinating to sit now and see all of them on board an carrying along.
127		But what I did find is that we had to de-scale quite a lot, you know, "soft touch". There was this thing called "Soft touch" to your delivery of
128		academic work. It was very interesting, because we had to downscale most of our courses and course outlines.
129	RESEARCHER	But what does that do to your end product? Does it still...
130	PARTICIPANT	Exactly. End product, obviously we had to change – what do you call it...
131	RESEARCHER	Your credits.
132	PARTICIPANT	Our criteria in terms – what do you call it – output criteria. So in stead of weighting our outputs 50%-50%, let's say for 100%, we know had to
133		break it up into small pieces. So now we were having tests and quizzes, a mini assignment, so that you can make the 100% and a student had
134		the opportunity to pass more assessments than just maybe two or three.
135	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes, okay.
136	PARTICIPANT	So we were trying to accommodate them quite a lot, the student body. So that was the academic side of things. Administrative-wise I saw my
137		team taking a lot of strain in terms of we had lots of queries from students, lots. You'll find one student sending one email to four different
138		people. They don't cc all of us, they send it differently. We are all dealing with the same person who has the same crisis, you know, at the same
139		time. And I'm like this is a waste of our time, you know. I mean, they're kids, so I don't know. We spent many hours dealing with queries, query
140		after query. Because nobody had guidance in terms of what next. I mean the faculty even introduced something called EDU.... There was
141		something else, wait. It was called – where students had no access to online, right – so they were working offline. So the material was delivered
142		to them via post. So now there was a post tracking process which was a nightmare. It was being delivered to all these remote across the
143		country. And these people were saying, "We didn't get the material," or they got the material – it got to them two months later. When are they
144		gonna finish the semester? It was a huge nightmare of a program that was built into the ER, what do you call it, plans. So there was a lot of
145		things that were all over the place that, just administratively took a lot of time for us to be able to complete our work. We were still dealing with
146		least year's marks in March this year, which is not fair. But anyhow, that's how it goes.
147	RESEARCHER	But now, your administrative team, do you think that they need more help from you when they are working remotely, I mean, are they still
148		needing the same support? Or obviously the support has changed, but do you find that you must hold their hands more than you were doing
149		when they were...?
150	PARTICIPANT	I think that's... because I had one of them resign in March, that's in the middle of lockdown. So what I did, is I ended up being an administrator
151		myself. So I was very hands on, you know, so I took up the work of that post for about three months before we hired someone else. So I hold
152		them a lot, I give instructions, I'm present when they're doing their work. So I'm very hands-on when it comes to... And we're a very small team,
153		so I know what everyone is doing at all times, you know. So ja, I hold their hand a lot. And I'm very cautious of the fact that it is sometimes an
154		over-ask the way we're working, so ja. I'm very empathetic and understanding. They have families and they have other responsibilities and I do
155		sometimes ask a lot from them, so ja.
156	RESEARCHER	And your routines throughout the day, how have those changed?
157	PARTICIPANT	Is it, are you referring to at the beginning of ERT or currently?
158	RESEARCHER	Maybe at the beginning and maybe take me through – obviously if there's a change – and how has that change come about, ja.
159	PARTICIPANT	Okay, so initially when we got into lockdown, as I said, it was like nine, ten hours of work. Obviously, we were trying to put in systems and
160		processes into place, so we had to put in that amount of work. No one knew what they were doing, so they had to be guided. So I played a very

161		pivotal role with my HoD to provide that guidance. So the hours I spent were equivalent to just, you know, making room for that change. But now
162		that systems and processes are in place, and people are more comfortable with working, you know, online, I tend to have a much more
163		manageable schedule. I do try to do my eight hours of work where I sit and I'm in front of my computer for eight hours. But I tend to manage my
164		times much more better whereas in the mornings I'll have my meetings, in the afternoon I'll do my paperwork. Or if I don't want to do my
165		paperwork in the afternoon, I block off the afternoon. I do some home stuff and I block the evening to do my paperwork. I manage my time much
166		better so that I fit in the eight hours within the day. But not necesssarily as traditional as before where you halve to do your half past eight to half
167		past four. As long as I get in my eight hours, that's it, I'm fine with it.
168	RESEARCHER	Perfect. You said earlier you don't have much contact with students, but how's that engagement during, I mean, when you are working
169		remotely? What have your experiences been?
170	PARTICIPANT	My job spec doesn't really require me to have a lot of engagement with students. Remember, I have administrators who work directly with
171		students. But I tend to have students who will bypass all of them, because I know they know me personally. Because I'm all over the place, like
172		I'm always engaging with people. So they'll bypass all of them and they'll come to me. So most of the queries end up at my desk instead of
173		going to the relevant administrator. So what I do... you know over the years, I've learnt to be very assertive. I've learnt to be very assertive. If I
174		know it's a query or a question that I should be managing, I will answer it. But if I know that it is a query or a matter that one of my administrators
175		should be managing or answering, I will send it to them and say, "Please, can you assist this student?" One, it's to empower them and to be
176		able to respond to a question like that in future, and two I am freeing my space to do my work. So that's how I've thought about it over the time. I
177		mustn't take on more than what I should be actually taking on. Because in the past I used to do that, a lot of that. Especially in the beginning of
178		ERT. I used to take on a lot of work that I was not supposed to take on, meaning that my actual work was suffering.
179	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes.
180	PARTICIPANT	So ja.
181	RESEARCHER	That's a good one.
182	PARTICIPANT	So I tend to divert the studetns to the areas where they will be assisted.
183	RESEARCHER	Yes, yes, that's a good one. Anyway, we have come to the end of our questions, but is there anything that you'd like to share with me that you
184		think is important to help me understand your experiences in this remote working?
185	PARTICIPANT	You know, if someone had to ask me what UCT could have done differently in this whole process, I really think it would have been so nice to go
186		back to the staff and say, "Listen, you've experienced this experience... What were the challenges that you experience?" Because I know a lot
187		of us really went all out and we really overworked ourselves.
188	RESEARCHER	Yes.
189	PARTICIPANT	So I'm looking at the mental health impacts, you know, the social life impacts, all this change had to most of us. And I feel that that was really
190		just – not necessarily taken for granted – but not acknowledged, you know. People expected you to be on board, you're working, you're carrying
191		on, we're delivering a service, we're good to go. It was not that easy, you know. So I'm not sure what can be done about it now, because we're
192		swiftly moving along, you know. And many of us have adapted, you know, nicely by now. But ja, that worries me, it worried me a lot.
193	RESEARCHER	It worries all of us, yes. Anyway, if there's nothing else Lala, thank you very much for your time. I really appreciate you taking time outside your
194		busy schedule. I know it's hectic, I mean I'm not so sure if your department specific was affected with what happened with the fires? But it's
195		quite... Even if it was not, it's just something that was just terrible for all of us, so ja. Thank you very much...
196	PARTICIPANT	Ja, yoh.
197	RESEARCHER	...for taking this time out.
198	PARTICIPANT	Oh, it was my pleasure.
199	RESEARCHER	Ja, so let me just stop the recording. [[cuts off]]

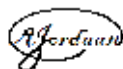## 9.23 Appendix W: Editing certificate

15 August 2022

NONGQABUTHO FALALA
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RE: EDITING CERTIFICATE OF MASTER'S THESIS

I, the undersigned, herewith certify that the editing of the Master's thesis of Nongqabutho Falala, *"EMERGENCY REMOTE WORK DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES AT A TERTIARY INSTITUTION, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA"*, has been conducted and concluded.

The finalised thesis was submitted to Nongqabutho Falala and cc'd to Prof Andre de la Harpe on 15 August 2022.

Sincerely

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South African Translators' Institute (SATI)