

# Understanding Student Wellness in Continuous Teacher Professional Development Programs in Zimbabwe: A Multi-Dimensional Approach



Phumuzani Mpofu <sup>1</sup>  & Florence Sebele <sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

<sup>2</sup> National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe.

## ABSTRACT

This study explores the wellness experiences of students enrolled in Continuous Teacher Professional Development Programs in Zimbabwe, using a multi-dimensional approach informed by Self-Determination Theory (SDT). As the demand for lifelong learning intensifies within the teaching profession, CPTDPs have emerged as critical pathways for professional growth. However, limited attention has been given to the wellness of students navigating these programs while balancing professional, academic, and familial responsibilities. Using a qualitative methodology, in-depth interviews were conducted with nine student teachers drawn from various institutions across Zimbabwe. The findings reveal that while students value the opportunity to advance professionally, they often face emotional, physical, and psychological strain. Key themes that emerged include role overload, time conflicts, inadequate institutional support, and constrained autonomy factors that impact motivation and overall well-being. Despite these challenges, students adopt coping strategies such as time management, peer support, and drawing strength from family and spirituality. The study underscores the need for CPTDPs to integrate wellness-sensitive designs that recognise the complexities of adult learners' lived experiences. Recommendations include redesigning program structures to be more flexible and supportive, ensuring institutional responsiveness to student wellness needs, and fostering environments that enhance autonomy, competence, and relatedness, core SDT components. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of adult student wellness in professional development settings and advocates for more inclusive, human-centered program implementation frameworks in Zimbabwe and similar contexts.

## Correspondence

Phumuzani Mpofu

Email:

mpofup89@gmail.com

## Publication History

Received: 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2025

Accepted: 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2025

Published online:

30<sup>th</sup> December, 2025

## To Cite this Article:

Mpofu, Phumuzani, and Florence Sebele.

"Understanding Student Wellness in Continuous Teacher Professional Development Programs in Zimbabwe: A Multi-Dimensional Approach," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 6, no. 15 (2025): 4414 - 4428, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202561517>.

*Keywords: Adult Learners, Continuous Teacher Professional Development, Multi-Dimensional Approach, Student Wellness, Work-Study-Life Balance.*

## INTRODUCTION

The widely held belief that one's qualifications ultimately determine professional advancement has increasingly motivated teachers in Zimbabwe to pursue Continuous Teacher Professional Development Programs (CTPDPs) as a means of enhancing their career prospects. These programs enable teachers to upgrade their qualifications on a part-time basis during school holidays, permitting them to remain at work while also handling family responsibilities. Despite the growing demand, CTPDP programs are not new to Zimbabwe's higher and tertiary education system. These programs were initiated in the 1990s through the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ), which accentuated school-based in-service training

and cluster support systems. Globally, teacher professional development has gained prominence as a critical component of educational quality improvement and lifelong learning. Zimbabwean experience thus mirrors a broader global phenomenon.

Over time, the demand for aligning with education reforms prompted a shift from informal professional development initiatives of BSPZ to more structured, institution-centered learning environments.<sup>1</sup> To promote such endeavors, UNESCO partnered with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, indicating a dire need for teachers to participate in these subsidised programs to adapt to evolving educational standards. Currently, nearly all universities in Zimbabwe offer CTPDPs. However, teachers who undertake these studies on a part-time basis encounter a myriad of challenges that necessitate that their wellness be explored and suggestions made to improve program design. Student wellness has become a global concern in higher education, with growing recognition that holistic well-being underpins academic success, resilience, and lifelong learning.

Student wellness is an all-inclusive paradigm that has an impact on academic performance, shows resistance and perseverance, and the zeal to embrace life-long learning.<sup>2</sup> When largely defined, students' wellness embraces intellectual capabilities, physical, social, emotional, spiritual and occupational needs. In the context of part-time education, wellness becomes even more entangled and intricate due to the interplay of manifold roles and responsibilities, such as the pressure to meet work deadlines, the demands of the program, and parenthood.<sup>3</sup> In spite of this intricacy, there is a notable gap in pragmatic research that broadly explores how students in part-time CTPDPs experience and negotiate their wellness across these dimensions in the Zimbabwean context.

The study was prompted by the recognition that, despite growing global awareness of student wellness, limited research explores how students in part-time CTPDPs experience and negotiate their well-being across multiple roles and responsibilities in the Zimbabwean context. It therefore contributes to both national policy and global debates on sustainable teacher development and student wellness in higher education. The study specifically seeks to identify the social, economic, academic, and psychological factors influencing wellness; examine how part-time students navigate the challenges of balancing academic, professional, and family responsibilities; and propose strategies to enhance institutional responsiveness and promote holistic wellness among students enrolled in CTPDPs. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of students enrolled in CTPDP?
1. Purpose: To identify and categorize the main social, economic, academic, and psychological factors affecting wellness.
2. How do students enrolled in CTPDP navigate the challenges of balancing academic work, professional duties, and family responsibilities throughout their studies?
3. Purpose: To inform the design of a supportive teacher development program
4. What strategies can be implemented to improve student wellness in Zimbabwe's universities and colleges?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Understanding continuous professional teacher development and student wellness

Continuous teacher development programs offered through block-release formats are educational approaches that allow teachers to attend lectures in person during school vacations for a maximum of four weeks, while continuing their learning online during the school term as they execute their duties. Several studies identify the fundamental motivation for engaging in continuing professional development (CPD) as the intrinsic drive to update one's competencies in light of evolving educational policies, curricula, and

<sup>1</sup> Scientific, and Cultural Organization United Nations Educational, “Reviews of National Policies for Education Education in Thailand An OECD-UNESCO Perspective” (OECD Publishing, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> C. Gwirayi, T. F. Mavezera, and D. B. Rushwaya, “Students' Perceptions of Psychosocial Support Services at a Selected University in Masvingo, Zimbabwe,” *International Journal of Studies in Psychology* 4, no. 2 (September 30, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijspys.v4i2.1158>.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. Amadi, M. du Plessis, and S. Solomon, “Will Working Students Flourish or Give up? Exploring the Influence of Academic Psychological Capital, Grit, and Time Management,” *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.20853/36-6-4486>.

pedagogical practices,<sup>4</sup> the desire to improve academic and professional qualifications,<sup>5</sup> and the abrupt shift in teaching and learning methods brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>6</sup> among other reasons.

The growth of these programs highlights a dire need to reflect and consider student wellness. Student wellness is often considered an evasive term in that it is multi-dimensional in nature. White et al. understand wellness as a phenomenon that integrates several dimensions that include action, sense of belonging, purpose, civic engagement and financial wellbeing. In this definition, student well-being is theorised as holistic and not limited to physical and mental magnitudes.<sup>7</sup> Studies done globally have also established that the concept of wellness extends beyond physical health, to embrace mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and financial well-being and view these dimensions as interconnected and collectively shaping a student's wellness and achievement.<sup>8</sup> This study delineates student wellness as the ability to navigate the program within a supportive environment that addresses physical, social, mental, emotional, spiritual, and financial needs. It also includes having adequate time and flexibility to balance academic responsibilities with professional duties without experiencing mental fatigue. The high percentage of students enrolling for CPTDPs is adults who are undoubtedly trying to balance study and other responsibilities, such as caring for a family or working professionals who are enrolling in part-time programmes only, while working full-time.<sup>9</sup> Balancing program demands with other life responsibilities is a dogged challenge for part-time adult learners as stress tends to elevate and fatigue intensifies, resulting in underperformance in academic achievement.

### Professional-life-academic integration

Research globally has explored how students thrive in these anxieties. Strategies that have been endorsed as reducing student anxiety in this context include, but are not limited to, peer mentorship and social support structures, wellness checks, flexible learning models, institutional wellness frameworks, financial literacy training and financial aid programs.<sup>10</sup> These approaches validate a holistic, student-focused approach that is crucial for endorsing wellness for improved learning outcomes in institutions of higher learning. A review of regional dynamics reveals that strategies such as social support, time management and institutional flexibility have demonstrated effectiveness.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, other studies in the same context accentuate the significance of social support networks and flexible learning environments, spiritual beliefs and communal care, and better institutional support as significant factors in enabling students to handle competing demands efficiently.<sup>12</sup> It could be seen that certain strategies that are

<sup>4</sup> Eko Purwanti and Salma Octavia, "Examining Teachers' Motivation in Conducting Teacher Professional Development: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective," *English Language Teaching Educational Journal* 5, no. 3 (June 3, 2023): 202–13, <https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v5i3.8141>.

<sup>5</sup> Samkeliso Chademana, "Perceptions of Block- Release Students on Causes and Effects of Stress at a State University in Zimbabwe," *East African Journal Of Education And Social Sciences* 1, no. 2 (September 7, 2020): 158–67, <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2020v01i02.0031>.

<sup>6</sup> Leonorah Nyaruwata, "Teacher Development During and Beyond COVID-19: Perspectives from Zimbabwe," *Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa (TETFLE)* 3, no. 1 (2022).

<sup>7</sup> Holly C White et al., "Cultivating Long-Term Well-Being through Transformative Undergraduate Education.," *PNAS Nexus* 3, no. 9 (September 2024): pgae372, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae372>.

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Bilal Majid, Khansa Masood, and Sabir Irfan, "Impact of Student Wellness on Academic Performance with Mediating Role of Learning Environment," *The Journal of Academic Social Sciences*, February 12, 2022, 419–35.

<sup>9</sup> Jamil Salmi, "COVID's Lessons for Global Higher Education: Coping with the Present While Building a More Equitable Future," *Lumina Foundation*, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Fungai Matumba, "Stress Levels, Sense of Coherence and Coping Strategies among Students at a South African University" (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South Africa), 2020); Melissa Malik et al., "Investigating the Relationship between Stress and Psychological Well-Being among Foundation Students of UiTM," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 10, no. 14 (2020): 93–101; World Health Organization, "Mental Health and COVID-19: Early Evidence of the Pandemic's Impact," WHO, 2021, [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci\\_Brief-Mental\\_health-2022.1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci_Brief-Mental_health-2022.1); Krystle E. Merry, Faneel Webster, and Suzanne Kucharczyk, "Investing in Students With Extensive Support Needs: Steps to Integrate Personal Financial Literacy in Inclusive Settings for Educators, Students, and Families," *Inclusive Practices* 1, no. 4 (November 21, 2022): 156–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/27324745221128931>; Ryan M. Travia et al., "Framing Well-Being in a College Campus Setting," *Journal of American College Health* 70, no. 3 (April 3, 2022): 758–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2020.1763369>.

<sup>11</sup> Florence Williams, "Flexible Learning Design: A Turning Point for Resilient Adult Education," *Journal of Adult Education in Tanzania* 23, no. 1 (2021).

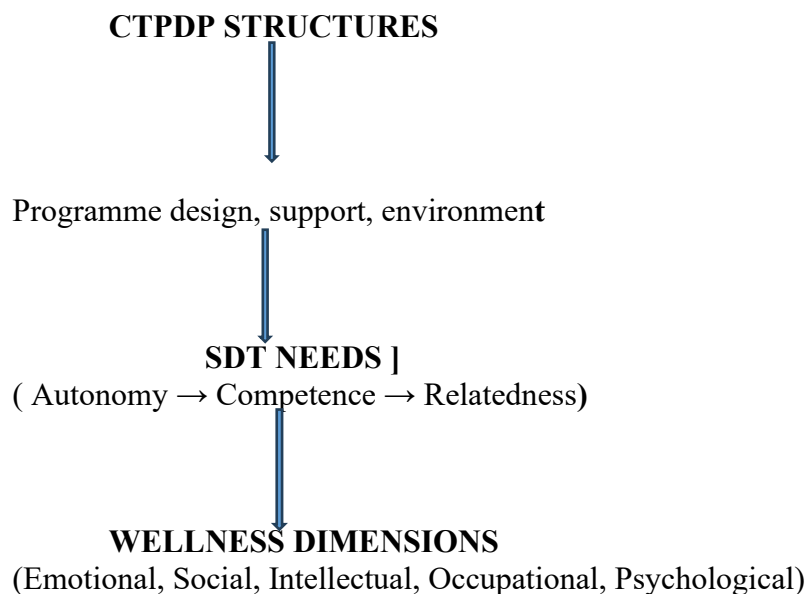
<sup>12</sup> Monica Njanjokuma Otu and Zamambo Mkhize, "Understanding Black African Student Attrition in the Context of Transformation in South African Higher Education Institutions," *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2018): 149–71; Clara S Boland, "Social Support and Spiritual Well-Being: Empowering Older Adults to Commit to Health-Promoting Behaviors," *Journal of Multicultural*

effective internationally, such as institutional support and flexible learning environments, have also yielded positive outcomes regionally. Understanding how students in the Zimbabwean context are often inhibited by low institutional prioritisation of mental health,<sup>13</sup> restricted digital infrastructure, unreliable internet access, and inconsistent electricity supply, navigating these pressures is critical.<sup>14</sup>

### Teacher development initiatives that promote student wellness

For CTPDPs to be considered effective, they should respond to student mental health challenges, providing inclusive and caring classroom spaces that support social-emotional learning,<sup>15</sup> consequently reducing stress and improving academic outcomes. Several approaches, such as incorporating active learning and student participation<sup>16</sup> and implementing teacher education programs that integrate life skills and wellness-related components, could significantly contribute to the foundation of a responsive teacher development program that considers student well-being.<sup>17</sup> Authorities such as Olsson et al., and Turner and Garvis perceive culturally responsive methodologies as crucial for addressing the manifold wellness needs of diverse student populations.<sup>18</sup> In the Zimbabwean higher education context, CTPDPs are emerging as a crucial tool not only for pedagogical improvement but also for enhancing student wellness.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



This study adopted Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan, which focuses on human motivation and well-being.<sup>19</sup> The theory emphasises the role of social and contextual factors in either supporting or hindering personal growth or psychological wellness. SDT was deemed particularly appropriate for this study, as block-release teacher development programs are intensive and demand a high level of autonomy and self-regulation from adult learners. The theory provides a valuable

*Nursing & Health* 6, no. 3 (2000): 12.;K. N. Otwombe et al., “Mental Health Challenges among University Students in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review,” *African Journal of Health Professions Education* 13, no. 2 (2021): 100–106.

<sup>13</sup> Nahal Salimi et al., “College Students Mental Health Challenges: Concerns and Considerations in the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy* 37, no. 1 (January 2, 2023): 39–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/87568225.2021.1890298>.

<sup>14</sup> Shafika Isaacs and Romeela Mohee, “Baseline Situational Analysis on Open Distance Learning (ODL) in Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States” (Southern African Development Community and UNESCO, 2020).

<sup>15</sup> Kristina Turner and Susanne Garvis, “Teacher Educator Wellbeing, Stress and Burnout: A Scoping Review,” *Education Sciences* 13, no. 4 (March 28, 2023): 351, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13040351>.

<sup>16</sup> Elsa Ribeiro-Silva et al., “Trends of Active Learning in Higher Education and Students’ Well-Being: A Literature Review,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (April 18, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.844236>.

<sup>17</sup> Salwa Ali et al., “Impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on Patient Outcomes: A Systematic Scoping Review,” *BMC Medical Education* 25, no. 1 (October 2, 2025): 1284, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-07883-4>.

<sup>18</sup> D. P. Olsson, G. Holm, and K. Björklund, “Pedagogical Practices and Student Mental Health: Insights from Higher Education,” *European Journal of Education* 59, no. 1 (2024): 22–38; Turner and Garvis, “Teacher Educator Wellbeing, Stress and Burnout: A Scoping Review.”

<sup>19</sup> Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior* (New York: Plenum, 1985).

framework for understanding how institutional structures and support systems impact student well-being by either fulfilling or frustrating three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Students in block-release programs are often required to make complex decisions about how they balance academic, personal, and professional responsibilities. As such, they benefit from flexibility in both their learning pathways and wellness strategies. SDT highlights the importance of enabling students to feel competent in managing their studies and personal lives. Moreover, the theory allows us to explore whether students have access to the emotional and academic support systems necessary for success. It also sheds light on the degree to which students experience a sense of connection and belonging with peers, lecturers, and the institution. Do they feel isolated, or do they experience a supportive and inclusive community?

### **Synthesis**

Despite growing recognition of the link between CTPTDPs and student wellness, several critical gaps remain in the literature. Firstly, there is limited empirical research specific to the Zimbabwean context, particularly on how in-service teachers manage wellness amid infrastructural and institutional constraints. While wellness is emphasised, CTPTDPs rarely integrate structured support systems such as counseling, stress management, or flexible delivery modes. Additionally, existing studies are largely theoretical or descriptive, lacking rigorous methodologies or longitudinal data to assess the effectiveness of wellness interventions on academic outcomes or teaching performance. Literature also overlooks the influence of gender, socioeconomic status, and rural-urban disparities on student wellness, despite these factors playing a significant role in access and success. Institutional roles are acknowledged but not critically examined, particularly regarding policy implementation and leadership in supporting student well-being. Moreover, student voices are notably absent, with few participatory studies capturing the lived experiences, preferences, and coping strategies of CPTD participants. These gaps highlight the need for more localized, data-driven, and inclusive research to inform the development of responsive CPTD frameworks that genuinely support student wellness.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

The study adopted a qualitative case study design grounded in a transformative paradigm, which emphasizes equity, empowerment, and social justice. This design was suitable for exploring the lived experiences of teachers enrolled in Continuous Teacher Professional Development Programs (CTPDPs) and for examining how institutional and social structures influence student wellness.

### **Study sample and population**

The target population comprised teachers and lecturers involved in block-release programs at one selected higher education institution in Zimbabwe. Using purposive sampling, 20 teachers and 5 lecturers were selected based on their experience and willingness to share their insights on wellness in CTPDPs. The sample ensured diversity in gender, teaching experience, and institutional background.

### **Data Collection**

Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Interviews and focus groups provided rich narratives of participants' lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and perceptions of wellness within block-release programs. All sessions were audio-recorded with participants' consent.

## Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework.<sup>20</sup> The analysis was iterative and reflexive, allowing for the identification and refinement of themes that captured participants' experiences and the influence of institutional and social factors on wellness.

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional authorities. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was secured, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Participants were assured that all data would be used solely for academic purposes.

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To contextualise participants' experiences within CPTDPs, this study collected basic demographic data to better understand the backgrounds and life circumstances shaping their engagement and wellness. The biodata section sought to gather information on participants' age, gender, marital and family status, programme enrolment history, and current employment. These variables were essential in capturing the complexity of adult learners' lives, particularly their navigation of multiple roles such as being full-time employees, students, parents, and caregivers. Understanding these characteristics provided insight into the structural and personal contexts in which professional development occurs, offering a foundation for interpreting their perspectives on wellness, motivation, and learning engagement.

**Table 1: Themes derived from participant biodata**

Theme	Interpretive Insight
Adult learners balancing multiple responsibilities	Participants are mature students managing employment, family, and study responsibilities, which influence their time, stress, and overall wellness.
Full-time employment and professional development motivation	All participants are employed, primarily as teachers, indicating a strong commitment to upskilling and relevance in the profession.
Gendered caregiving and family dynamics	Female participants, many of whom are married with children, face additional emotional and logistical demands, impacting wellness and participation.
Strong commitment to lifelong learning	Despite their personal and professional obligations, all participants enrolled voluntarily in CPTDPs, reflecting intrinsic motivation.
Diverse specialisations within Design and Technology education	The range of program enrolments suggests varied professional interests, calling for differentiated support tailored to specific academic tracks.

The thematic analysis of participants' biodata reveals key insights into the lived realities of adult learners enrolled in CPTDPs. Firstly, the participants' age range and family status point to the challenge of balancing work, study, and caregiving responsibilities. This is especially evident among female participants who face a disproportionate burden of domestic and emotional labour, adding to their stress and impacting their wellness. Furthermore, all participants are employed, primarily as teachers, underscoring their dedication to continuous professional development despite demanding schedules. The willingness of these adult learners to pursue part-time studies reflects a strong intrinsic motivation aligned with the principles of SDT, particularly the needs for autonomy and competence. The presence of diverse academic specialisations further highlights the importance of tailoring support systems within CPTDPs to

<sup>20</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Toward Good Practice in Thematic Analysis: Avoiding Common Problems and Be(Com)ing a Knowing Researcher," *International Journal of Transgender Health* 24, no. 1 (January 25, 2023): 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2129597>.

accommodate different learner needs and professional contexts. These themes offer a nuanced understanding of the wellness dynamics among adult learners and underscore the necessity of responsive program structures that align with their complex realities.

### Students' lived experiences

Understanding the lived experiences of students enrolled in CPTDPs is essential for designing responsive, student-centered programs that acknowledge the complex realities of adult learners. Using SDT as a lens, which emphasises autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985), this section explores themes emerging from qualitative interviews with participants.

#### Theme 1: The burden of multiple responsibilities

Participants consistently reported difficulties in balancing school, family, and professional obligations. Interviewee 1 shared, *"I'm actually facing some minor challenges of going to school at the same time looking after the family since I'm the father."* Similarly, Interviewee 2 noted, *"Being a mum and a student... most times I feel overwhelmed."*

These narratives reflect the tension between professional development and family roles, impacting students' autonomy and psychological well-being. SDT posits that the fulfillment of autonomy is critical for intrinsic motivation.<sup>21</sup> The constraints imposed by competing responsibilities limit students' capacity to make volitional choices about their learning, leading to stress and potential burnout.<sup>22</sup>

#### Theme 2: Financial strain and institutional inflexibility

Financial challenges were frequently cited. Interviewee 3 explained, *"My children needed fees... food for the family... then I was denied access to write the exam."* Others echoed the burden of having to pay fees for both themselves and their children. Interviewee 5 lamented, *"Being a student and a family person has been a huge challenge as I am also supposed to pay fees for my children."*

This economic pressure undermines competence, as students feel unable to fully engage in or succeed at their academic work due to external financial stressors. Additionally, institutional rigidity, such as requiring full fee payment before examinations, exacerbates this challenge, reducing students' sense of support and relatedness to the institution.<sup>23</sup>

#### Theme 3: Motivation rooted in self-improvement and recognition

Despite these challenges, many participants expressed intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Interviewee 5 said, *"I wanted to upgrade in order to get an opportunity to shift from just being a classroom practitioner."* Interviewee 2 highlighted gender dynamics, stating, *"I wanted to become relevant... rather than staying in the shadows of men."*

These statements show that motivation stems from both internal desires for self-actualisation and external validation. According to SDT, intrinsic motivation flourishes when learners feel competent and autonomous. However, social comparison and aspirations for recognition may also play a role in driving participation, especially in professional fields.<sup>24</sup>

#### Theme 4: Growth through peer support and personal development

Several participants reported that peer interactions and exposure to new knowledge were among the most rewarding experiences. Interviewee 3 reflected, *"Learning from lectures and group discussions... has helped me improve my English speaking skills and confidence."* Interviewee 6 added, *"I am able to manage and cope well with the challenges... like tolerance and conflict management."*

<sup>21</sup> Richard M Ryan and Edward L Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68.

<sup>22</sup> Leli Nirmalasari and Minai Minai, "Role Conflict and Performance of Part Time Students in Indonesia: The Effect of Burnout, Coping Behavior and Spiritual Intelligence," *Annals of Management and Organization Research* 4, no. 3 (August 24, 2023): 239–49, <https://doi.org/10.35912/amor.v4i3.1645>.

<sup>23</sup> Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being."

<sup>24</sup> Deci and Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*; Christopher P. Niemiec and Richard M. Ryan, "Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness in the Classroom," *Theory and Research in Education* 7, no. 2 (July 25, 2009): 133–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878509104318>.

These reflections point to the fulfillment of relatedness, as students felt connected and supported within their peer groups. The learning environment becomes a space not only for academic development but also for holistic personal growth.<sup>25</sup>

### Theme 5: Health and emotional strain

The strain of balancing study with other life domains sometimes manifests in illness or emotional distress. Interviewee 9 stated, “*I got sick... diagnosed with migraine, which disturbed my studies.*” Interviewee 2 reflected, “*I missed one of my lectures and... I couldn't get back up.*”

Such incidents suggest a vulnerability to burnout, especially when institutional structures fail to accommodate the psychosocial needs of adult learners. According to Self-Determination Theory, environments that thwart autonomy, competence, or relatedness can lead to controlled forms of motivation and psychological distress, undermining individuals' well-being and growth.<sup>26</sup>

These findings underscore that while CPTDPs offer opportunities for growth and transformation, they also impose significant personal and structural challenges. Students' motivation to enroll is often high, driven by personal aspirations and professional advancement. However, the failure to adequately support their psychological needs as outlined in SDT risks undermining their well-being and success.

Programs must therefore go beyond content delivery. A supportive CPTDP framework should promote **autonomy** through flexible models of learning, **bolster competence** via scaffolded academic support, and **nurture relatedness** through community-building and empathetic institutional policies—a design approach shown to enhance teacher motivation and engagement when aligned with SDT principles in recent educational research.<sup>27</sup>

### Navigating the triple demands

Students enrolled in CTPDPs in Zimbabwe are mostly working adults pursuing further education amidst competing demands. Balancing academic work, professional duties, and family life poses significant challenges to their wellness and performance. This section discusses how these students navigate these pressures, anchored in SDT, which emphasises the fulfillment of psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness for optimal motivation and wellbeing.

### Theme 1: Time Management and Role Conflict

Managing academic responsibilities alongside full-time professional work emerged as a significant challenge, echoing findings by Mafumbate and Simelane in their study on Zimbabwean part-time students who often juggle school and demanding jobs.<sup>28</sup> Interviewees reported long workdays followed by late-night studying, consistent with studies on adult learners globally.<sup>29</sup> For instance, Interviewee 3 said, “*I do my professional responsibilities during the day from 5 am up to 8 pm, then during evening time I deal with the academic workload.*” This confirms the presence of role conflict as described by Weer and Greenhaus, where competing demands from work and study reduce the quality of engagement and increase stress.<sup>30</sup>

Despite these challenges, students exercised significant autonomy by devising personal schedules and prioritizing tasks, illustrating the self-regulatory capacity highlighted in SDT literature.<sup>31</sup> Interviewee 2's proactive planning and goal-setting, such as “*planning ahead*” and setting “*clear targets*”, reflect

<sup>25</sup> Tiphaine Huyghebaert-Zouaghi et al., “Rethinking Students' Psychological Need States: The Unique Role of Need Unfulfilment to Understanding Ill-being in Academic Settings,” *Stress and Health* 40, no. 4 (August 6, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3379>.

<sup>26</sup> Edward L Deci, Anja H Olafsen, and Richard M Ryan, “Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science,” *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 4 (2017): 19–43.

<sup>27</sup> Ellen Abakah, Jacqueline Widin, and Edward Kwabena Ameyaw, “Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Practices Among Basic School Teachers in the Central Region of Ghana,” *Sage Open* 12, no. 2 (April 30, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221094597>.

<sup>28</sup> R. Mafumbate and S. Simelane, “Challenges Faced by Part Time Students in Zimbabwe: Balancing Work, Study, and Family,” *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 20, no. 1 (2022): 45–63.

<sup>29</sup> Ilseon Choi and Sung Ran Cho, “A Case Study of Active Aging through Lifelong Learning: Psychosocial Interpretation of Older Adult Participation in Evening Schools in Korea,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 17 (September 1, 2021): 9232, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18179232>.

<sup>30</sup> Christy Weer and Jeffrey H Greenhaus, “Family-to-Work Conflict,” in *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* (Springer, 2024), 2431–32.

<sup>31</sup> Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, “Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science.”

strategic self-regulation linked to improved academic persistence. Recent systematic reviews of goal-setting in higher education indicate that well-supported academic goal-setting interventions enhance self-regulated learning and academic performance.<sup>32</sup>

## Theme 2: Sacrificing family and social life

Family and social relationships were commonly compromised due to study demands, a pattern similarly reported in African adult education.<sup>33</sup> Participants such as Interviewees 5 and 7 described decreased family bonding time, with Interviewee 7 lamenting that “bonding time is no longer there.” The emotional strain this caused indicates frustration of SDT’s relatedness need, which is essential for well-being and motivation.<sup>34</sup>

Interestingly, some participants reported that program participation enhanced their social skills and intercultural appreciation, as Interviewee 2 described gaining openness to diverse perspectives. This highlights how structured educational environments can paradoxically foster interpersonal and relational competencies even as connections with family may be strained, especially when peer collaboration, communication training, and relationship-building skills are integral to the learning design.<sup>35</sup>

## Strategic Planning and Problem-Solving

Students demonstrated resourcefulness in managing competing demands, employing time management, delegation, and support-seeking strategies. The use of timetables, boundaries to prevent work spillover, and enlisting domestic support during peak academic periods (Interviewees 2, 7) illustrate effective self-regulatory strategies that enhance competence, a key psychological need in SDT (Panadero, 2017). Social support from peers and colleagues emerged as a vital coping mechanism, consistent with findings by Winkle-Wagner and Locks emphasizing the role of support networks in adult learner success in Zimbabwe.<sup>36</sup> Interviewee 5’s reliance on a college friend and Interviewee 6’s engagement with colleagues provided emotional validation, fulfilling relatedness needs crucial for sustaining motivation.<sup>37</sup>

## Theme 4: Emotional Exhaustion and Financial Stress

Despite their resilience, participants frequently described feeling overwhelmed by financial constraints, looming deadlines, and emotional exhaustion, experiences that align with recent findings showing an exceptionally high prevalence of academic burnout among higher education students, with stressors such as study load, financial concerns, and academic expectations significantly predicting burnout levels.<sup>38</sup> Interviewee 8 nearly quit due to workload intensity, while Interviewee 3 struggled with multiple loans to fund studies. These stressors represent external pressures that can diminish autonomy, resulting in controlled motivation that may compromise persistence.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, personal coping strategies such as cognitive reframing (e.g., “this too shall pass,” Interviewee 7) and peer-based emotional support (Interviewees 1 and 4) enabled participants to reassert a sense of control and intrinsic motivation. These findings reinforce the growing recognition of psychosocial support structures such as peer networks and resilience training as essential components of holistic learner wellness in higher education.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Gabrielle Martins van Jaarsveld et al., “Goal Setting in Higher Education: How, Why, and When Are Students Prompted to Set Goals? A Systematic Review,” *Frontiers in Education* 9 (January 8, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1511605>.

<sup>33</sup> David Kember, “Integrating Part-Time Study with Family, Work and Social Obligations,” *Studies in Higher Education* 24, no. 1 (January 5, 1999): 109–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079912331380178>.

<sup>34</sup> Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, “Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science.”

<sup>35</sup> Liedewij F.N. Borremans and Jantine L. Spilt, “Towards a Curriculum Targeting Teachers’ Relationship-Building Competence: Results of a Delphi Study,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 130 (August 2023): 104155, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104155>.

<sup>36</sup> Rachelle Winkle-Wagner and Angela M Locks, *Diversity and Inclusion on Campus: Supporting Students of Color in Higher Education* (Routledge, 2019).

<sup>37</sup> Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, “Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science.”

<sup>38</sup> Biyang Guo et al., “How Close Is Chatgpt to Human Experts? Comparison Corpus, Evaluation, and Detection,” *ArXiv Preprint ArXiv:2301.07597*, 2023.

<sup>39</sup> Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, “Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science.”

<sup>40</sup> J. Khubchandani, M. L. Morales, and S. Bowman, “Mental Health Support, Resilience, and Coping among College Students: A Need for Comprehensive Campus Wellness Programs,” *Journal of American College Health* 70, no. 1 (2022): 235–43.

The experiences of Zimbabwean students enrolled in CTPDPs illustrate the complex interplay of demands that challenge student wellness but also reveal remarkable adaptive capacities. Applying the lens of SDT reveals that students engage in autonomous regulation, build competence through strategic planning, and seek relatedness via social supports to sustain motivation amid adversity.

Educational institutions offering CTPDPs should therefore prioritise flexible learning options, financial assistance programs, and robust counseling services that address the unique needs of adult learners balancing multiple roles. Such supports align with SDT's framework, fostering environments where students can thrive intrinsically and complete their professional development successfully.

### **Redesigning continuous teacher development programs to enhance student wellness**

This study also explored participants' perspectives on how CTPDPs could be redesigned to more effectively support their emotional, social, and physical wellness. Findings revealed several key areas for improvement, interpreted through the lens of SDT, which highlights the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering motivation and wellbeing.

#### **Theme 1: Flexibility and reduced academic pressure**

Participants consistently emphasised that the compressed nature of their programs, coupled with heavy workloads, negatively impacted their wellness. Interviewee 1 remarked, "The program is compressed... courses have a lot of content to cover within a short period of time," while Interviewee 7 suggested that "reducing learning hours... knocking off at 1 pm and removing weekend lessons" would help balance academic, professional, and family commitments.

According to SDT, environments that support student autonomy, such as those offering flexibility in pacing and scheduling, promote intrinsic motivation and reduce stress.<sup>41</sup> These findings echo earlier research indicating that adult learners benefit from adaptable program structures that accommodate their multifaceted responsibilities.<sup>42</sup>

#### **Theme 2: Emotional and social support systems**

Emotional encouragement was the most common form of support students received, yet many participants expressed a desire for more comprehensive psychosocial care. Interviewee 3 highlighted the absence of a "listening ear" during stressful periods, and Interviewee 9 acknowledged the vital role of emotional support from a lecturer during illness. However, several respondents noted that wellness needs were only "partly" considered within program designs.

The need for relatedness, feeling understood and connected, is a core component of SDT critical to sustaining motivation and wellbeing.<sup>43</sup> Enhancing formal support services such as counseling, peer support networks, and empathetic communication could nurture this need and improve student resilience.<sup>44</sup>

#### **Theme 3: Integration of technology and online learning**

Participants advocated for expanded use of online platforms for content delivery and assignment submission to alleviate physical and logistical barriers. Interviewee 2 recommended sharing "tutorials or videos... on WhatsApp," and Interviewee 8 praised lecturers for allowing "submissions online" and sharing notes digitally.

Blended and online learning modalities have been shown to enhance learner autonomy and competence by providing flexible, self-directed opportunities for study, particularly valuable for adult

---

<sup>41</sup> Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, "Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science."

<sup>42</sup> Mafumbate and Simelane, "Challenges Faced by Part Time Students in Zimbabwe: Balancing Work, Study, and Family.;"Niemic and Ryan, "Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness in the Classroom."

<sup>43</sup> Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, "Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science."

<sup>44</sup> Paul P. Baard, Edward L. Deci, and Richard M. Ryan, "Intrinsic Need Satisfaction: A Motivational Basis of Performance and Well-Being in Two Work Settings<sup>1</sup>," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 34, no. 10 (October 31, 2004): 2045–68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb02690.x>.

learners managing work, academic, and family responsibilities.<sup>45</sup> Adoption of such technologies aligns with SDT principles by providing learners with the tools to manage their learning effectively.

#### **Theme 4: Financial assistance and institutional resources**

Financial constraints were frequently cited as major impediments to student wellness. Interviewee 3 described lacking essential resources like WiFi, medical care, and safe accommodation, which contributed to stress and compromised dignity. Interviewee 2 advocated for government grants and fee reductions to make further studies more accessible.

Such challenges hinder the competence needed central to SDT, as economic barriers reduce students' ability to focus and succeed.<sup>46</sup> Institutions could mitigate these issues through scholarships, affordable facilities, and enhanced campus services.<sup>47</sup>

#### **Theme 5: Specialised and practical curriculum design**

Some participants suggested program specialisation to foster engagement and reduce stress. Interviewee 6 stated, "Individuals specialising in their own areas of interest" would make learning "fun and enjoyable." The demand for more practical workshops and access to materials was also highlighted.

Tailored curricula that foster skill mastery contribute to a sense of competence, which, in turn, enhances intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement among adult learners.<sup>48</sup> Designing context-relevant, hands-on learning opportunities enables students to apply skills confidently, enhancing overall wellness and educational outcomes.

#### **Summary**

The study posits that while students in CTPDPs are highly motivated to enhance their professional practice, their wellness is undermined by structural, financial, emotional, and pedagogical challenges. Rigid schedules, financial strain, limited infrastructure, and curriculum misalignment restrict their autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as outlined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Emotional and peer support serve as protective factors, but these are often inconsistent. To promote holistic wellness and improve program outcomes, institutions must adopt learner-centred, SDT-informed reforms, including flexible scheduling, enhanced online and blended learning, increased financial and psychosocial support, and improved infrastructure. Such measures will foster resilient, well-prepared educators capable of meeting the demands of contemporary classrooms in Zimbabwe.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Drawing from participants' insights and the study's overall findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the design and delivery of CTPDPs in Zimbabwe.

##### **1. Universities and Colleges**

Institutions should review program timetables to reduce weekday contact hours and eliminate weekend sessions to ease time pressure on part-time students. Course outlines, reading materials, and assessment guidelines should be provided before the semester begins to support early preparation. Furthermore, universities should strengthen digital infrastructure by investing in reliable Wi-Fi, modern learning management systems, and virtual submission platforms to enhance flexibility and accessibility.

##### **2. Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education**

The Ministry should consider introducing targeted financial support mechanisms such as scholarships or subsidies for teachers enrolled in CTPDPs. Such support would reduce the economic strain that

---

<sup>45</sup> F Martin et al., "Examining Faculty Motivation to Adopt Digital Tools for Online Teaching," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 21, no. 1 (2020): 63–76.; Rasheed Abubakar Rasheed, Amirrudin Kamsin, and Nor Aniza Abdullah, "Challenges in the Online Component of Blended Learning: A Systematic Review," *Computers & Education* 144 (January 2020): 103701, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103701>.

<sup>46</sup> Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, "Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science."

<sup>47</sup> Salmi, "COVID's Lessons for Global Higher Education: Coping with the Present While Building a More Equitable Future."

<sup>48</sup> Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being."

undermines student wellness and academic performance. In addition, policy frameworks could encourage institutions to align CTPDPs with teachers' professional practice areas, thereby improving relevance and applicability.

### 3. Lecturers and Program Coordinators

Academic staff should adopt student-centered pedagogies that promote autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as outlined in Self-Determination Theory. Continuous mentoring, timely feedback, and flexible assessment options can foster student engagement and holistic well-being.

### 4. Students

Students should cultivate effective time-management and self-care practices to balance their academic, professional, and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Collectively, these recommendations emphasise a systemic approach involving institutional, policy, and individual reforms that can create a more supportive and wellness-oriented environment for teachers pursuing part-time studies.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers enrolled in CTPDPs in Zimbabwe, with a focus on how they navigate academic, professional, and family responsibilities while maintaining their wellness. Findings revealed that, although CTPDPs offer valuable opportunities for professional growth, participants face significant challenges, including financial pressures, heavy workloads, and limited institutional support. Despite these constraints, teachers employed resilience, peer collaboration, and personal coping strategies to manage their well-being.

The study underscores that student wellness is central to sustainable teacher development and should inform program design and policy. Institutions and program coordinators are encouraged to implement flexible, supportive learning structures that foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness, in line with Self-Determination Theory. By integrating wellness-oriented approaches, higher education institutions can enhance both academic success and holistic well-being, contributing to a more empowered and resilient teaching workforce. This research offers insights relevant not only to Zimbabwe but also to broader global discussions on teacher development and part-time professional education.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abakah, Ellen, Jacqueline Widin, and Edward Kwabena Ameyaw. "Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Practices Among Basic School Teachers in the Central Region of Ghana." *Sage Open* 12, no. 2 (April 30, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221094597>.
- Ali, Salwa, Ahsan Sethi, Abderrezzaq Soltani, and Zachariah Nazar. "Impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on Patient Outcomes: A Systematic Scoping Review." *BMC Medical Education* 25, no. 1 (October 2, 2025): 1284. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-07883-4>.
- Amadi, W. A., M. du Plessis, and S. Solomon. "Will Working Students Flourish or Give up? Exploring the Influence of Academic Psychological Capital, Grit, and Time Management." *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.20853/36-6-4486>.
- Baard, Paul P., Edward L. Deci, and Richard M. Ryan. "Intrinsic Need Satisfaction: A Motivational Basis of Performance and Well-Being in Two Work Settings <sup>1</sup>." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 34, no. 10 (October 31, 2004): 2045–68. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb02690.x>.
- Boland, Clara S. "Social Support and Spiritual Well-Being: Empowering Older Adults to Commit to Health-Promoting Behaviors." *Journal of Multicultural Nursing & Health* 6, no. 3 (2000): 12.
- Borremans, Liedewij F.N., and Jantine L. Spilt. "Towards a Curriculum Targeting Teachers' Relationship-Building Competence: Results of a Delphi Study." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 130 (August 2023): 104155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104155>.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. "Toward Good Practice in Thematic Analysis: Avoiding Common Problems and Be(Com)ing a Knowing Researcher." *International Journal of Transgender Health* 24, no. 1 (January 25, 2023): 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2129597>.

- Chadema, Samkeliso. "Perceptions of Block- Release Students on Causes and Effects of Stress at a State University in Zimbabwe." *EAST AFRICAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES* 1, no. 2 (September 7, 2020): 158–67. <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2020v01i02.0031>.
- Choi, Ilseon, and Sung Ran Cho. "A Case Study of Active Aging through Lifelong Learning: Psychosocial Interpretation of Older Adult Participation in Evening Schools in Korea." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 17 (September 1, 2021): 9232. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18179232>.
- Deci, Edward L., and Richard M. Ryan. *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Plenum, 1985.
- Deci, Edward L, Anja H Olafsen, and Richard M Ryan. "Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science." *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 4 (2017): 19–43.
- Guo, Biyang, Xin Zhang, Ziyuan Wang, Minqi Jiang, Jinran Nie, Yuxuan Ding, Jianwei Yue, and Yupeng Wu. "How Close Is Chatgpt to Human Experts? Comparison Corpus, Evaluation, and Detection." *ArXiv Preprint ArXiv:2301.07597*, 2023.
- Gwirayi, C., T. F. Mavezera, and D. B. Rushwaya. "Students' Perceptions of Psychosocial Support Services at a Selected University in Masvingo, Zimbabwe." *International Journal of Studies in Psychology* 4, no. 2 (September 30, 2024). <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijpsy.v4i2.1158>.
- Huyghebaert-Zouaghi, Tiphaine, Nikos Ntoumanis, Jérémy Thomas, Simon Badré, and Sophie Berjot. "Rethinking Students' Psychological Need States: The Unique Role of Need Unfulfilment to Understanding Ill-being in Academic Settings." *Stress and Health* 40, no. 4 (August 6, 2024). <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3379>.
- Isaacs, Shafika, and Romeela Mohee. "Baseline Situational Analysis on Open Distance Learning (ODL) in Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States." Southern African Development Community and UNESCO, 2020.
- Kember, David. "Integrating Part-Time Study with Family, Work and Social Obligations." *Studies in Higher Education* 24, no. 1 (January 5, 1999): 109–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079912331380178>.
- Khubchandani, J., M. L. Morales, and S. Bowman. "Mental Health Support, Resilience, and Coping among College Students: A Need for Comprehensive Campus Wellness Programs." *Journal of American College Health* 70, no. 1 (2022): 235–43.
- Mafumbate, R., and S. Simelane. "Challenges Faced by Part Time Students in Zimbabwe: Balancing Work, Study, and Family." *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 20, no. 1 (2022): 45–63.
- Majid, Muhammad Bilal, Khansa Masood, and Sabir Irfan. "Impact of Student Wellness on Academic Performance with Mediating Role of Learning Environment." *The Journal of Academic Social Sciences*, February 12, 2022, 419–35.
- Malik, Melissa, Norshiha Saidin, Roslinda Abd Wab, and Norshidah Nordin. "Investigating the Relationship between Stress and Psychological Well-Being among Foundation Students of UiTM." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 10, no. 14 (2020): 93–101.
- Martin, F, D Polly, A Jokiaho, B May, and A D Ritzhaupt. "Examining Faculty Motivation to Adopt Digital Tools for Online Teaching." *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 21, no. 1 (2020): 63–76.
- Martins van Jaarsveld, Gabrielle, Jacqueline Wong, Martine Baars, Marcus Specht, and Fred Paas. "Goal Setting in Higher Education: How, Why, and When Are Students Prompted to Set Goals? A Systematic Review." *Frontiers in Education* 9 (January 8, 2025). <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1511605>.
- Matumba, Fungai. "Stress Levels, Sense of Coherence and Coping Strategies among Students at a South African University." University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South Africa), 2020.
- Merry, Krystle E., Fane Webster, and Suzanne Kucharczyk. "Investing in Students With Extensive Support Needs: Steps to Integrate Personal Financial Literacy in Inclusive Settings for Educators, Students, and Families." *Inclusive Practices* 1, no. 4 (November 21, 2022): 156–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27324745221128931>.

- Niemiec, Christopher P., and Richard M. Ryan. "Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness in the Classroom." *Theory and Research in Education* 7, no. 2 (July 25, 2009): 133–44.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878509104318>.
- Nirmalasari, Leli, and Minai Minai. "Role Conflict and Performance of Part Time Students in Indonesia: The Effect of Burnout, Coping Behavior and Spiritual Intelligence." *Annals of Management and Organization Research* 4, no. 3 (August 24, 2023): 239–49.  
<https://doi.org/10.35912/amor.v4i3.1645>.
- Nyaruwata, Leonorah. "Teacher Development During and Beyond COVID-19: Perspectives from Zimbabwe." *Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa (TETFLE)* 3, no. 1 (2022).
- Olsson, D. P., G. Holm, and K. Björklund. "Pedagogical Practices and Student Mental Health: Insights from Higher Education." *European Journal of Education* 59, no. 1 (2024): 22–38.
- Otu, Monica Njanjokuma, and Zamambo Mkhize. "Understanding Black African Student Attrition in the Context of Transformation in South African Higher Education Institutions." *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2018): 149–71.
- Otwombe, K. N., K. J. Sikkema, M. H. Watt, and S. Manda. "Mental Health Challenges among University Students in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review." *African Journal of Health Professions Education* 13, no. 2 (2021): 100–106.
- Purwanti, Eko, and Salma Octavia. "Examining Teachers' Motivation in Conducting Teacher Professional Development: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective." *English Language Teaching Educational Journal* 5, no. 3 (June 3, 2023): 202–13.  
<https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v5i3.8141>.
- Rasheed, Rasheed Abubakar, Amirrudin Kamsin, and Nor Aniza Abdullah. "Challenges in the Online Component of Blended Learning: A Systematic Review." *Computers & Education* 144 (January 2020): 103701. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103701>.
- Ribeiro-Silva, Elsa, Catarina Amorim, José Luis Aparicio-Herguedas, and Paula Batista. "Trends of Active Learning in Higher Education and Students' Well-Being: A Literature Review." *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (April 18, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.844236>.
- Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L Deci. "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68.
- Salimi, Nahal, Bryan Gere, William Talley, and Bridget Iriogbe. "College Students Mental Health Challenges: Concerns and Considerations in the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy* 37, no. 1 (January 2, 2023): 39–51.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/87568225.2021.1890298>.
- Salmi, Jamil. "COVID's Lessons for Global Higher Education: Coping with the Present While Building a More Equitable Future." *Lumina Foundation*, 2020.
- Travia, Ryan M., James G. Larcus, Stacy Andes, and Paula G. Gomes. "Framing Well-Being in a College Campus Setting." *Journal of American College Health* 70, no. 3 (April 3, 2022): 758–72.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2020.1763369>.
- Turner, Kristina, and Susanne Garvis. "Teacher Educator Wellbeing, Stress and Burnout: A Scoping Review." *Education Sciences* 13, no. 4 (March 28, 2023): 351.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13040351>.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. "Reviews of National Policies for Education Education in Thailand An OECD-UNESCO Perspective." OECD Publishing, 2016.
- Weer, Christy, and Jeffrey H Greenhaus. "Family-to-Work Conflict." In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, 2431–32. Springer, 2024.
- White, Holly C, Debra M Allen, Keith Buffinton, Dana Humphrey, Marjorie Malpiede, Richard K Miller, and John C Volin. "Cultivating Long-Term Well-Being through Transformative Undergraduate Education." *PNAS Nexus* 3, no. 9 (September 2024): pgae372.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae372>.
- Williams, Florence. "Flexible Learning Design: A Turning Point for Resilient Adult Education." *Journal of Adult Education in Tanzania* 23, no. 1 (2021).
- Winkle-Wagner, Rachelle, and Angela M Locks. *Diversity and Inclusion on Campus: Supporting Students of Color in Higher Education*. Routledge, 2019.

World Health Organization. "Mental Health and COVID-19: Early Evidence of the Pandemic's Impact." WHO, 2021. [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci\\_Brief-Mental\\_health-2022.1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci_Brief-Mental_health-2022.1).

### **ABOUT AUTHORS**

Dr Phumuzani Mpofu is an Educational Psychologist registered with the Eswatini Medical and Dental Council and currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand. He holds a PhD in Educational Psychology from North-West University and has over 40 peer-reviewed journal publications and three book chapters. His research spans child development, parenting, gerontology, inclusive education, gender studies, sexual offences, psychological assessment, sustainable development, and corporal punishment. Dr Mpofu serves as Guest Editor for the *International Journal of Studies in Psychology* (2026 special issue), supervises postgraduate students at Unicaf University, and mentors PhD candidates and early-career researchers, particularly in Eswatini. With a professional background that began in school teaching and progressed to leadership roles in Zimbabwe and Eswatini, as well as research coordination in higher education, his long-term academic goal is to make a sustained scholarly contribution and attain full professorship.

Dr Florence Sebele is a Senior Lecturer at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in the Faculty of Science and Technology Education, Department of Art, Design and Technology Education. Her research focuses on teacher education and continuous professional development, with a strong emphasis on technical and vocational education, and she has published over ten peer-reviewed journal articles in this area. She has supervised and mentored more than seventy pre-service teachers and eight Master's students, guiding several design process projects that address gaps in existing products through innovative, practical solutions. Dr Sebele has also contributed to strengthening institutional policies that enhance student learning and teaching effectiveness and serves as an External Examiner for Design and Technology in the Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Zimbabwe, supporting the maintenance of high academic standards.