

CREATING A HOME AWAY FROM HOME:

**Examining the working conditions of housemothers employed in a public
all-girls boarding school in the Eastern Cape of South Africa.**

A thesis to be submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the working conditions of housemothers employed in a public all-girls boarding school in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Most literature dedicated to the schooling system tends to prioritize the role of the teacher, whilst often side-lining or overlooking the role of housemothers who play a crucial role in schools with boarding facilities such as hostels. In addition to a good academic programme and great extracurricular activities, parents often choose schools according to how well their boarding facilities and hostels are run. Housemothers play a critical role in this regard, as they are responsible for creating a 'home away from home' for the students through the provision of guidance, care, and support amongst many other roles. Although public boarding schools do not run for profit, their hostels follow a strict capitalist-like regime that utilizes various methods to create a 'home away from home' for students. This study adopted a Labour Process Theory (LPT) to analyse the work processes and working conditions of housemothers employed in a public all-girls school in the Eastern Cape. Although traditionally applied in 'for profit' organizations, the LPT is ideal for this study because hostels in boarding schools use capitalist mechanisms to provide quality services to attract parents to send their children to these schools. This research adopted a qualitative research approach, as it seeks to unearth the subjective experiences of housemothers employed in a public all-girls boarding school in the Eastern Cape. The findings in this study indicated that housemothers do indeed play a central role in the governance of the girls' hostels in the boarding school. The hostels are governed through diverse control mechanisms, which housemothers must adhere to. Housemothers are also divided into various categories to boost efficiency and save money. This is done through the division of labour amongst the housemothers who occupy three different roles, from matrons (at the top) to housemothers (regular), and student housemothers (who are not paid in monetary terms, but through accommodation and food). The findings also indicated that housemothers have limited agency in their work. The findings also showed that housemothers are required to display specific emotional characteristics to provide various forms of support to students at the expense of their own emotions. Lastly, housemothers are expected to dress in a certain way to present a sense of professionalism, as representatives of the school. Overall, this study showed that the capitalist-like methods applied by the school's management team in the hostel system affect the labour outcomes and experiences of housemothers.

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ACRONYMS

BED	Bachelor of Education
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
LPT	Labour Process Theory
SA	South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act
SES	Socio Economic Status
SGB	School Governing Body
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

CONTENTS

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Acronyms.....	4
List of Tables.....	6
Chapter One: The Beginning	7
1.1 Introduction.....	7
1.2 Background of the study.....	7
1.3 Theoretical Framework.....	10
1.4 Problem Statement.....	10
1.5 Goals of the Research.....	10
1.6 Outline of chapters in the study.....	11
Chapter Two: The Labour Process Analysis and The Service Sector.....	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Labour Process Analysis.....	12
2.2.1 Marxist Foundations.....	12
2.2.2 Braverman's contribution to the Labour Process Analysis.....	13
2.2.3 Burawoy's contribution to LPT discourse.....	15
2.2.4 Foucault's contribution to LPT discourse.....	16
2.3 Aesthetic Labour.....	17
2.4 Emotional Labour.....	17
2.5 Labour Process in Non-Profit making organisations.....	19
2.6 Conclusion.....	20
Chapter Three: Contextualising Housemothers in a Boarding School.....	22
3.1 Introduction.....	22
3.2 The perspective of a boarding school.....	22
3.3 Global experiences of an adolescent girl	24
3.4 Teenage experiences in South Africa.....	25
3.5 Context of the study	26
3.5.1 Understanding education systems.....	27
3.5.2 The South African education system	27
3.5.3 Ex- Model C schools	29

3.6 Roles of housemothers in a boarding school.....	30
3.7 Conclusion.....	32
Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology.....	33
4.1 Introduction.....	33
4.2 Methodological approach.....	33
4.3 Sampling of research participants and ethical consideration.....	34
4.4 Data collection methods.....	35
4.5 Data analysis methods.....	39
4.6 Limitations of the study.....	39
4.6 Conclusion.....	40
Chapter Five: Analysing the Working Conditions of Housemothers.....	41
5.1 Introduction.....	41
5.2 Socio-economic status.....	41
5.3 The housemothers' labour process.....	44
5.4 Scientifically managed work practices.....	47
5.4.1 Employer control mechanisms.....	49
5.4.2 Worker experiences under surveillance.....	53
5.4.3 Worker autonomy and discretion.....	54
5.4.4 Managing feelings in the workplace.....	56
5.4.5 Appearance management.....	59
5.5 Conclusion.....	62
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	63
6.1 Introduction.....	63
6.2 Addressing the subsidiary objectives.....	63
6.3 Addressing the main objective.....	64
6.4 Empirical findings and conclusions.....	65
References.....	66
Appendix A: Interview Schedule.....	75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: List of Participants and Basic Information.....	37
Table 2: Job description.....	45

Chapter One

The Beginning

1.1 Introduction

Boarding schools entrust housemothers with the crucial responsibility of monitoring the well-being of their pupils who are living in the hostel facilities they provide. The special working conditions and encounters of housemothers in boarding schools, however, have not received much attention in LPT discourse and literature about the education sector. This study aims to gain a thorough knowledge of the everyday lives of housemothers who are responsible for governing the pressure-filled environments of hostel facilities and are responsible for creating a ‘home away from home’ environment for their female students. This introductory chapter is divided into different sections. The first section provides brief background information of the study which establishes a research niche and provides a justification for the study. After providing background insights, a quick synopsis of the theoretical framework adopted for the study is given. The second section lays out the research problem and endeavours to answer the crucial research questions embedded in this thesis. The third section then outlines the underlying research question of this thesis. The final section provides a summary of the different chapters that constitute this thesis.

1.2 Background of the study

Educational establishments known as boarding schools allow their pupils to reside on campus full-time (Martin *et al.*, 2016). Boarding school residential environments offer a unique ecological setting for socializing, enabling students to participate in a distinct range of activities and interactions with staff and fellow learners (Bass, 2007). Consequently, boarding school environments offer distinct prospects for personal growth and development (Martin *et al.*, 2016). Different categories for boarding schools include coeducational and single-sex institutions (Recker *et al.*, 2002:139). All-girls boarding schools are those that admit female students only while all-boys boarding schools admit male students only. In contrast, day scholars are those students who do not reside in the school hostels but stay in their homes. On the other hand, children who reside in hostels of boarding schools return to their families on the weekends or during school vacations (Behaghel *et al.*, 2017).

In South Africa, because of its racialized history of inequality, boarding schools (and schools) in general are divided according to various quintiles (Maistry and Africa, 2020). Traditionally, there are low-cost private schools (which were mostly run by religious institutions for black children and other races at times); private schools (which traditionally were affiliated to religious institutions as well, catering to white students during the colonial and apartheid eras) (Hofmeyr and Lee, 2004:143). These schools were better resourced than the low-cost private schools in the villages and townships of urban areas (Motala and Dieltiens, 2008). High-cost public schools or Ex-Model C schools were also traditionally established for white students during the colonial and apartheid eras (Prins, 2019). Post-1994, the schools that were historically reserved for whites (pre-1994) have been opened to all racial groups, and entry into these schools is determined by financial resources (Maile, 2004).

This study focuses on the Ex-Model C schools which have transformed since the early 1990s, as the number of students and staff members from previously discriminated groups are increasing in these institutions (Athimoolam and Vermaak, 2012). Most Ex-Model C schools in South Africa are also boarding schools and accommodate students in hostels that have amenities such as dining rooms, bathrooms, study rooms, individual rooms or dormitories (that house several students depending on their grade); sports grounds and even chapels in some schools (Bass, 2007). These facilities are essentially designed to cater to all the needs of the students and are traditionally protected by private security as well (Maphoso and Mahlo, 2014). According to Basic Education (2012:9), a functional boarding school environment should prioritize the safety, privacy and overall health of the students.

In addition to offering a safe and healthy atmosphere, boarding schools offer high-quality instruction that promotes academic success and personal growth (Fischer *et al.*, 1986; Vigar-Ellis, 2013). In a boarding school context, management refers to the overall organisation, administration, and supervision of the school's operations, which are driven by School Governing Bodies (SGB) and school principals (Karacabey and Şık, 2023). In this research paper, the people instituting management control mechanisms in the hostels include the school principal, SGB and the matrons. This public all-girls boarding school located in the Eastern Cape is under a three-tiered management structure. Hostels are managed by a group of selected staff called housemothers who are responsible for coordinating and overseeing the smooth operation of the hostels. Hostels have rules and disciplinary mechanisms that are enforced by both staff and student leaders as well.

Housemothers also work with support staff consisting of kitchen staff, cleaning staff, grounds and garden staff, and security guards to ensure the smooth running of the school hostels (Recker *et al.*, 2002:139). All-boys boarding schools usually employ housemasters (often male teachers from the school) who manage the hostels together with housemothers (Watkins, 1987). Nevertheless, in an all-girls school, the housemothers play a central role in the governance of the hostels (Hodges *et al.*, 2013). Literature on schools tends to focus on the experience of teachers or scholars, and very little is written about the working experiences of housemothers who manage pressure-filled boarding facilities. Vigar-Ellis (2013) contends that good boarding facilities are as important as academic and extra-curricular activities in boarding schools, which places tremendous pressure on housemothers who manage the hostels in these schools.

If the environment is not conducive to their children's well-being, parents are unwilling to pay for the school's home-away-from-home service. The school covered in this study falls under quintile 4 and 5 categories which receive a small amount of funding from the government and are therefore allowed to charge school fees (Dieltiens and Motala, 2014). The purpose of this study is to examine the working conditions of housemothers in a public all-girls boarding school hostel in the Eastern Cape. In their management of hostels, housemothers take care of young girls who are going through a myriad of teenage-related psycho-social changes and challenges (Heyeres *et al.*, 2017). Although some boarding schools often provide various forms of in-house health services, housemothers still play the role of first responders who assess and determine whether the students in distress require in-house or external in-house or external assistance (Hodges *et al.*, 2013).

Housemothers also play a nurturing role post-treatment that a student may receive from medical professionals. In South Africa, adolescents enrolled in secondary schools encounter a range of issues and experiences that highlight the importance of appropriate parenting and nurturing (Lachman *et al.*, 2014). Housemothers are expected to be always available to students, thus making their work environment demanding and taxing. The experiences and working conditions of housemothers have received very little scholarly attention, even though there is a wealth of literature on the experiences of students attending boarding schools as well as teacher's experiences in schools (Davis, 2001; Barlow and Antoniou, 2007; Leithwood and McAdie, 2007). This study contributes to the broader discourse of the working conditions of employees (housemothers) working in a non-profit organisation in the service industry such as a public all-girls boarding school in South Africa.

This study determines whether the workers in non-profit organizations experience similar outcomes as workers who are employed in capitalist organizations. The LPT is ideal for this study because it is a credible theoretical framework for studying the impact of labour process dynamics on workers.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the LPT to examine the working conditions of housemothers employed in a public all-girls boarding school in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The LPT is a sociological approach that examines the organisational structures, work dynamics, and power relations tied to economic output (McKinlay and Smith, 2009). It is rooted in the Marxist tradition, which addresses conflictual relations between capital and labour and connects work transformations with broader structural contexts (Knights and Willmott, 1990). This framework examines a wide range of workplace issues such as scientific management, upskilling vs de-skilling, management control, labour agency, Foucault and the panopticon, the aesthetic and emotional aspects of labour (Ellis, 2007). Traditionally, the LPT is applied in capitalist organisations, however, it is applied in a non-profit context (in this study) such as a public all-girls boarding in the Eastern Cape to determine whether they apply capitalist mechanisms and their impact on the outcomes of housemothers.

1.4 Problem Statement

Research shows that there have been studies conducted on the work conditions of employees working in different service sectors such as hospitals and schools (Firestone and Pennell, 1993; Areekkuzhiyil, 2014). Studies in the education sector using LPT have tended to focus on the role of teachers (Tsang and Kwong, 2017). Other studies have used different theoretical frameworks to analyse the experiences of students within the schooling context (Davis, 2001; Miller *et al.*, 2018). Investigating the working conditions and experiences of housemothers at an all-girls public boarding school in the Eastern Cape adds a new dynamic to the studies focusing on the education sector using LPT.

1.5 Goals of the Research

The primary objective of the study is to analyse the working conditions of housemothers employed in an all-girls public boarding school in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The secondary objectives of this study are as follows:

- Examining the socio-economic backgrounds of the housemothers;
- Identifying how the housemothers secured their present jobs;
- Investigating the impact of LPT concepts on the working experiences of housemothers,
- Examining how housemothers react to these management-imposed measures to boost efficiency and provide quality service.

1.7 Outline of chapters in the study

Chapter two unpacks the Labour Process Theory with discussions from Marx, Braverman, Burawoy, Foucault and other key contributors of LPT discourse such as those adjacent who unpack emotional and aesthetic labour. These discussions are made in connection to the major concepts that are used by management in the designing of the work of housemothers. **Chapter three** discusses the context of the study and provides relevant literature for this research. This includes discussions on boarding schools, teenage experiences and the education systems. The **fourth chapter** unpacks the research design and qualitative research methodology applied in this study. This chapter also includes topics such as the qualitative methodological approach, sampling techniques, ethical considerations, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. The **fifth chapter** presents and analyses the empirical data collected during the process of this study. This chapter discusses four areas which include: the demographical information of the research participants; the socio-economic backgrounds of the participants; the work of housemothers in this boarding school and the primary themes that emerged from the data analysis. The **sixth and last chapter** of this research paper enumerates the key themes found in the earlier chapters, connects them to the data examined, and draws important conclusions about the subject question.

Chapter Two

The Labour Process Analysis and The Service Sector

2.1 Introduction

Capitalist organizations in the service industry tailor their processes to boost efficiency, reduce costs and meet their customers' needs at the quickest time possible to secure high-profit margins. Such organizations apply different management, technological and work organization methods to reach the ultimate objective of making a profit. This study determines whether the all-girls public boarding school (in question) applies the same mechanisms utilized by capitalist organizations to provide quality boarding facilities and its impact on housemothers. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section unpacks the Labour Process Theory (LPT) from its Marxist foundations to its current state, whilst linking key themes to the main objectives of this research. which focuses on Marxist foundations of the analysis and discusses contributions by writers such as Braverman, Burawoy, Foucault and many others. It also unpacks the concepts that come from these contributions in relation to the study. The second section discusses aesthetic labour and its contribution to the Labour Process Theory. The next section unpacks emotional labour and its contribution to the labour process analysis as well. The fourth section outlines the application of the Labour Process Theory in organisations that do not run for profit, such as the school in question.

2.2 Labour Process Analysis

2.2.1 Marxist Foundations

The foundations of the labour process analysis began in the work of Marx (1976). According to Marx (1976:290), "the labour process is a product of a hostile relationship between the owner of the means of production (capitalist), and the owners of labour (the workers)". Marx (1976) described the process as a purposeful activity aimed at the production of use-value. The use-value (the reason they engage in this labour process) is the final output produced by the workers during the labour process. In this study, the provision of quality boarding facilities or a 'home away from home' experience for students is the use-value produced by the school in question. Knights and Willmott (1990) consider this theory as an analysis of the relationship between the creative power of human labour and the capitalist mode of production.

Marx (1976) argues that human labour was the source of economic value. The capitalist pays his workers less than the value their labour has added to the goods, usually only enough to maintain the worker at a subsistence level. Of the total worth of the worker's labour, however, this compensation, in Marxian theory, accounts for only a mere portion, equivalent to the worker's means of subsistence. The remainder is "surplus labour," and the value it produces is "surplus value". To make a profit, Marx (1976) argued that the capitalist appropriates this surplus value, thereby exploiting the labourer. Firms can increase the surplus value appropriated from workers through several means such as increasing relative surplus value extraction; increasing absolute surplus value; immiseration and super-exploitation. Increasing Relative Surplus Value extraction entails the intensification of the working day through technological and managerial innovations and/or through reducing the costs of labour power (Selwyn, 2016:9). Increasing Absolute Surplus Value entails lengthening the working day without increasing wages proportionately (Selwyn, 2016:9).

Immiseration can briefly be described as pushing down real wages. Super-exploitation entails paying workers less than the costs of reproducing their labour power (Selwyn, 2016:9). Furthermore, employees work under the direct control of the capitalist to whom their labour power belongs during working hours. Employees' experiences are shaped by working under the directive of their employers, as they are left in a position where they must adhere to certain rules and policies within an organisation. The subordination of workers by their employers influences how work is organized and managed. This study aims to explore the impact of capitalist-like measures (used to boost efficiency and provide quality services) on the working conditions of housemothers in a public all-girls school in the Eastern Cape. This includes the extent to which management exercises control over the labour process of housemothers to produce quality service in the boarding school hostels. Braverman's (1974) seminal work made an incredible contribution to LPT discourse and this aspect of control, as such, the section below unpacks these contributions.

2.2.2 Braverman's contribution to Labour Process Analysis

Inspired by Marx's conceptualization of the capitalist labour process, Braverman (1974) showed how capitalists adopted various forms of technological advancements to appropriate as much surplus value as possible. This quest to appropriate maximum surplus value through technological advancements has varied impacts on the outcomes of workers in the capitalist production process (Braverman, 1974).

One of the major impacts of the introduction of advanced technologies in the capitalist labour process is the de-skilling of workers which is accompanied by the degradation of their work. Braverman's (1974) core argument was that a great number of workers have become appendages of the production process rather than the core, as technology has become central to the execution of production activities. Technology and new work organization methods reduce the value of the worker or make them replaceable, a phenomenon that is accompanied by less reliance on labour and a reduction of labour costs as well (Efthymiou, 2009:21). Employees are deskilled as they are left with no choice but to carry out duties and adhere to management directives. Consequently, employees operating under a capitalist labour process perform simple, repetitive jobs which impact their employment conditions (Wilson, 1988).

Braverman (1974) contends that technological advancements inside a capitalist organisation are more about achieving efficiency than improving the abilities of workers (Braverman, 1974). Furthermore, Braverman focused more on the idea of how newly emerging technologies are degrading professional employment and deskilling workers (Hyman, 2006). Efthymiou (2009:22), defines deskilling as, "the process of reducing the cost of labour by breaking down complex work processes into simple, unskilled tasks". In a capitalist context, the worker has little bargaining power due to the introduction of new technologies that make the worker's skill just about redundant (Thompson, 1983; Reid, 2003:561). Workers are deskilled through the introduction of new technologies as management takes away their specific knowledge and discretion by segmenting occupations into limited, repetitive duties and responsibilities.

The monopolization of specialized knowledge by management also reduces the bargaining strength of workers. Some scholars, however, disagree with Braverman's thesis on work degradation and de-skilling of workers, because they see the introduction of technology into the capitalist production process as a means of upskilling workers (Lewis, 2007; Heisig, 2009; Strangleman, 2016). Through an analysis of housemothers' working experiences, this thesis investigates the dispute between upskilling and deskilling. Specifically, it asks if technology advancements increase or decrease worker autonomy, skills, and knowledge in the pursuit of efficiency and production. Key scholars of LPT (Braverman, 1974; Burawoy, 1979; Knights and Willmott; 1990) have always perceived control as central to the capitalist production process to ensure that workers perform their tasks effectively (Cohen, 1987). This research aims to analyse the techniques used by management to exert control over housemothers employed in a hostel of a public all-girls boarding school in the Eastern Cape.

Reid (2003) notes that capitalists do not trust workers to independently act in the best interest of the company, hence they feel compelled to control the entire capitalist labour process to ensure organizational goals are met. This study also seeks to understand how technologies and various management systems are used to control the work of housemothers in the hostel in question. Another area of examination is determining whether any of the innovations introduced by management enhance their efficiency and productivity. Thompson and Ackroyd (2003:23) contend that Braverman focused on the characteristics of control rather than employee initiatives. His concern is the logic which constructs capitalist tendencies of control and deskilling (Cohen 1987:36). Braverman (1974) explains that capitalists use Frederick Taylor's scientific management methods to control workers and boost productivity. Distinguishing between conception and execution, or designing tasks and carrying them out, is the fundamental idea of scientific management where each task is broken down into its lowest component pieces due to the division and subordination of labour which is quantifiable and timed (Reid, 1997).

It is an approach that is used by management and aims at improving labour productivity and efficiency (Efthymiou, 2009; Huang *et al.*, 2013). As scientific management emphasizes productivity and efficiency in many elements of work environments, it is a highly significant concept for examining the working conditions of housemothers. One of the main contributions of Frederick Taylor's scientific management was the separation between the conceptualisation and execution of strategically simplified tasks in the capitalist labour process to boost efficiency (Clarke, 1992; Blake and Moseley, 2011; Evangelopoulos, 2011; Huang *et al.*, 2013:80). This study examines the various themes and facets of the workplace outlined by both Marx and Braverman in the hostel environment and its impact on the employment conditions of housemothers in this study. Applying these concepts is significant to this study because it analyses the techniques used to maximize efficiency and output in the hostels. Such techniques will also determine the deskilling and upskilling debate of housemothers' jobs and if standardized procedures deprive their autonomy and judgment in how they carry out their duties.

2.2.3 Burawoy's contribution to LPT discourse

Burawoy (1979) is one of the scholars who incorporated the notion of subjectivity into LPT discourse and had concerns about capital-labour conflict over control of the labour process. Burawoy's study on *Manufacturing Consent* concentrated on worker agency, worker's consent and social identity (how workers categorize themselves within the workplace).

Burawoy (1979) aimed to challenge Marx and Braverman's limitations and focused more on consent in place of coercive means of control. Workers employed in capitalist organizations sometimes voluntarily subject themselves to the often rigid control mechanisms used by their employers to boost production. This means that the workers are not necessarily coerced, and sometimes they express their agency in a myriad of ways that are unique to their workplaces. Burawoy (1985) showed how workers in the manufacturing industry made a game out of their production targets, where game rules could be negotiated to make work more bearable. In the LPT studies, this contribution highlights how workers show agency even in unfavourable working conditions (Burawoy, 1979; Ackroyd and Thompson, 2016). This study also examines if housemothers can fulfil their potential using their power and resources. Burawoy (1979) aimed to challenge Marx and Braverman's limitations and focused more on consent in place of coercive means of control. Edwards (1979:17) defines control as the "ability of capitalist/managers to obtain desired work behaviour from workers". The goal of the study is to demonstrate how capitalists use a variety of control mechanisms (beyond coercive tactics) to obtain workers' permission and cooperation. This study also determines whether housemothers consent or have room to express their agency in the context of the work requirements designed by the school management for its hostels. This study also examines the level of autonomy that housemothers have over their activities, schedules, rules, and regulations.

2.2.4 Foucault's contribution to LPT discourse

Foucault's contribution to LPT discourse encompasses control and consent in the capitalist production process (Foucault, 1982). Foucault uses the example of the panopticon in the prison system to describe a method of how workers in capitalist organizations are also monitored. The panopticon consists of a circular prison design whereby the cells face a central (circular) monitoring structure where the prison officials are stationed. The notion of the panopticon alters an individual's behaviour and actions due to the awareness of being watched. This system of the panopticon has been used in different institutions such as hospitals, schools and other modern organisations (Efthymiou, 2009:28) to monitor the performance and behaviour of employees. This study, however, explores other panoptic implementations that exist in the hostel and forms of surveillance present in the housemother's workplace. This study investigates how the surveillance system affects the performance of housemothers in the hostel setting. Also, this study identifies how these power structures govern and develop identities of the housemothers employed in the hostel in question.

2.3 Aesthetic Labour

Face-to-face interactions in service work are an important tool in the labour process. Employee appearance has a critical role in an organisation's competitive advantage. These appearances may include smiling, dressing and body language. Karlsson (2012:52), notes that in addition to being controlled by the workplace culture, clients, and other external factors, aesthetics are also actively negotiated among employees. Organisational aesthetics has theories that deal with people's aesthetic knowledge of artefacts, behaviours in organisations and an expression of aesthetic perspective on organisations (Karlsson, 2012:52). A significant body of research has examined efforts made by organisations to instil the "right" mindset in their front-line staff and highlights the growing significance of having staff members that not only have the "right" mindset but also have aesthetic abilities. (Nickson *et al.*, 2005). This study sought to extend this analysis by looking into aesthetic demands made by management to housemothers working in the hostel in an all-girls public boarding school, for instance, appearance, dressing and hygiene practices around the hostel. This is important to determine whether the housemothers have different aesthetic demands placed upon them by school management. Aesthetics are important because they are immediately recognized by customers when they walk into an organisation, which means that they are key to selling an organization's image.

2.4 Emotional Labour

The pioneering contribution to emotional labour is in Hochschild's (1983) book *The Managed Heart*. This book explores the concept of emotional labour and its contribution to the labour process theory. Emotional labour is a proportion that attempts to strengthen, manage and control workers' emotions and feelings to achieve organisational goals. Hochschild (1983) notes that workers in capitalist service organizations are expected to adopt and sell specific emotional traits that are in line with the service being offered by those organizations. Hochschild (1983) locates emotional labour within Marx's concept of wage labour as it incorporates the aspect of labour power, as well as physical and mental labour. LPT identifies emotional labour as a key aspect of an employee's labour power because it is essential to providing quality service which yields profit to the organization (Colley, 2015:221). Emotional labour articulates the commodification of emotional work within the service industries, as the emotions of the workers are also sold to the customers to create a certain experience (Hochschild 1979 and 1983; Brotheridge and Lee, 2003; Gelderen *et al.*, 2014).

Hochschild (1983) highlights the negative impacts of emotional labour on workers who can become estranged from core aspects of themselves as they have to repeatedly embody specific emotions to attract customers. According to Hochschild (1983), there are two types of emotional labour that workers can display to meet emotions desired by the organisation and these include surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting entails faking, that is showing emotions without feeling them, and deep acting is about transforming the workers' inner feelings to match the organisation's emotional expectations (Hochschild, 2003). Surface acting demands a source of inauthenticity while employees willingly regulate their emotional experience to create an internal state of arousal, deep acting. Grandey (2003:93) argues that deep acting has the power to convince an audience. Surface acting entails workers' true feelings not changing but inconsistent with the feelings displayed to meet the capitalist's expectations. Displaying emotions has an economic value. Emotional labour requires workers to step 'out of their role' to communicate the nature and depth of one's actual personal convictions. Management in the service industry, such as a boarding school, may require housemothers to display certain emotions deemed appropriate by the school while conducting their work which is interrogated in this study.

This study also examines how employees display emotions to determine whether they practice any form of surface or deep acting while doing their jobs as a requirement by management, for instance wearing a plastic smile. There is an unequal relationship between workers and their clients are more unrestrained in their interactions. Employers seek to achieve this subordination to the client as a requirement to achieve their service. Hochschild (1983), identifies this as workers' compliance with management's feeling rules exercised through surface acting. According to Hochschild (1983/2003:198), "frontline workers smile, mood, feeling or relationship comes to belong more to the organisation and less to the self". Brook (2009) argues that emotional labour leads to alienation. Managerial demands for emotional performance tend to provoke resistance amongst employees, thereby making emotional labour a 'double-edged sword' (Taylor 1998:99). Within the analysis of emotional labour, the study also focused on the display rules that housemothers employ at work, how they regulate their emotions, whether they engage in surface-level or deep-level acting, and the results of this kind of labour. Additionally, this study also examines how housemothers manage their jobs and the effects of emotional labour on them. This study also examines the ways in which housemothers distress from their pressure-filled jobs and whether the boarding school management offers any form of emotional support.

2.5 Labour Process in non-profit making organisations

Numerous studies (such as Hochschild, 1983; Cohen, 2019) have examined: the nature of employment in the service industry, the status of white-collar workers, the division of labour between intellectual and physical labour, the consumer economy, the growth of commodification, and new methods and forms of power and control (Thompson 1989). This research examines the employment of housemothers in an all-girls public boarding school hostel that is not profit-driven. Studies by Reid (2003) and White (1993) have used the LPT in public institutions such as schools and hospitals, respectively. Reid (2003), study highlights how the labour process theory is a useful tool for understanding how teachers' jobs are changing. Teachers indirectly contribute to the creation of surplus value as part of the overall production process by helping to skill up future labourers.

Even though teachers are not directly exploited by capital, the demands of capitalism accumulation and their integration into a capitalist economy are major causes of issues like wage pressures, unemployment, and deskilling. Furthermore, the study by White (1993), indicates the organisation of nurse's work which results in resistance because of the changes occurring in their labour process. The nurses have the desire to shape their own labour process and do not want to adhere to management policies that govern their work, which has resulted in nurses striking, which is a form of worker resistance. This study aims to analyse how management at the boarding school shapes the labour process of housemothers and how they consent to the capitalist logic. Businesses that are not profit-driven do not put as much focus on capital as they do on their owners or shareholders.

This presents a problem in addressing criticisms that the traditional labour process traditionally evaluates management in terms of its place in a dynamic system of relations, rather than perpetuating it as an agent of capital (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001). However, when wage relations between employers and employees are implemented in these organisations, they are subject to the same labour laws, employ comparable employment contracts, and social relations in the workplace are deeply rooted in broader societal norms (Akyüz, 2010:212). Even if work relations in non-profit organisations are not capitalist, management practices and employee reactions are informed by these social relations of the capitalist labour process and may also be located in the realm of ideology or superstructure (Akyüz, 2010:212).

According to Akyüz, (2010:207), the agreement between the capital as the owner of the means of production and the worker as labour power to extract surplus value is what defines a capitalist labour process. Managers, functioning as representatives of capital owners, organise, supervise, and oversee work tasks and operations to optimize this surplus value (Akyüz, 2010:207). Parents and students now have a choice in the school they wish to attend thanks to the South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996) and because of this student competitiveness, schools now need to apply management ideas and strategies effectively (Vigar-Ellis, 2013:1). Because the LPT unpacks most of the strategies that management uses on their employees in the workplace this framework is ideal for examining the working conditions of housemothers working in this all-girls public institution. Reid (2003) indicates the outcomes of the LPT in a schooling system. It shows the implementation of control mechanisms used by management at the school to ensure that teachers are truly doing their jobs, including showing up for work, finishing assignments, and attending scheduled classes (Reid, 2003:567).

Moreover, the results of the studies by Tsang and Kwong (2017), suggest that the labour process theory partially explains why managerial educational reforms have an emotional impact on teachers and that teachers were obliged to perform a lot of tasks that they felt were administrative or non-instructional since they had no control over the labour process involved in teaching. The application of the LPT in these institutions highlighted those managerial techniques used in the workplace to control how employees execute their duties, how they are required to regulate their emotions and how they have limited autonomy over their work. This research contributes to the labour process discourse by examining the emotional labour involved in housemothers' jobs while creating a 'home away from home' experience for the students in the boarding school hostels. It also contributes to the discourse by indicating the extent of control that management exerts over their roles and duties at work and all techniques used by management to control the work of housemothers.

2.6 Conclusion

Discussion within the LPT has drawn on concepts such as exploitation, control, resistance, subjectivity, worker resistance, emotional labour and aesthetic labour. These concepts are integral in exploring the working conditions in a workplace such as a boarding school. The key themes that are meant to be explored in this research are scientific management, deskilling and upskilling debate, control, worker agency, surveillance, emotional and aesthetic labour.

The major argument drawn by the labour process is that capitalism made it necessary for people to work to sustain their livelihood and survival. In the discussion, the role of the capitalist is to control and organise work in such a way that benefits them at the expense of the employee's exploitation within the labour process. Thereafter, the discussion goes on with contributions made by other writers on how work is differently organised in the labour process. These contributions are interlinked as one scholar complements the other which provides a powerful argument of how work is organised for the housemothers that are operating in a boarding school. The concepts drawn from the framework are useful for the examination of employees' working conditions. Also, the analysis embodied the theories of aesthetic and emotional labour that have parallel properties to the LPT. The argument brings out that management in different workplaces has different demands when it comes to how workers present themselves, which is a tool that is useful when selling a product or service. Again, management has rules that govern employees' feelings at work, which results in housemothers having to act in a way that suits what the organisation wants even if it means them letting go of what they are genuinely feeling. Housemothers find themselves working in an environment that has children (especially young teenage girls) which most likely leads to management having expectations and certain demands of how they should perform their work duties.

Chapter Three

Contextualising Housemothers in a Boarding School

3.1 Introduction

A boarding school is a school where students receive a primary or secondary education while living on the school's grounds. Boarding schools have taken many different forms over the years around the world, from elite private schools and state-run facilities. This study focuses on an elite public (former model C) all-girls boarding school based in the Eastern Cape. Hostels are an integral part of a boarding school, as they provide 'a home away from home' for students. Many parents send their children to boarding schools because they believe that their children will not only receive quality education but will be safe as well. Boarding schools provide children with an opportunity to be independent and grow to be well-adjusted adults in the future. This chapter provides a contextual framework of the educational sector of South Africa, with a specific focus on boarding schools. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section unpacks the notion of the boarding school. The second section discusses some of the challenges confronting teenage girls, both globally and nationally. The third section provides a contextual discussion of the education system of South Africa with a focus on former model C schools. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the role of housemothers in boarding schools.

3.2 The perspective of a boarding school

The notion of a boarding school has been a feature of education systems for centuries (Martin *et al.*, 2016:1007). The historical and social background of boarding schools, which was popular in the United Kingdom in the early to mid-20th century, is discussed by Duffell (2000, 2012), with special attention to the practice of sending young children away to boarding schools. Duffell (2000:10) argues that "sending children away to a boarding school is particularly a British habit" and further suggests that a boarding school brings about exceptional behaviour in children, as their ability to be independent is nurtured. Boarding schools represent a reasonably well-established sector within most schooling systems (Martin *et al.*, 2016:1008). The exact schedules, customs, and cultures of individual boarding schools differ despite their general similarity, owing to the administration style and school mission (Bass, 2007:16).

In African nations, the boarding school model was not a novel idea. Many nations have long adopted the boarding school model as a result of British colonial influence, especially at the secondary school level (Frank, 2019:36). According to Bass (2007:16), boarding schools are controlled residential learning environments where students are enrolled in academic, social, and physical programs from dawn until dusk. Students enrolled at boarding schools are provided with an education, extracurricular activities, meals and accommodation. This gives boarding students access to a distinct range of activities and interactions with staff and peers, offering them distinct chances for personal growth and development (Bronfenbrenner,1970; Holden *et al.*, 2010). Students in boarding schools spend the entire day together, they must engage in constant interaction by design (Bass, 2007:38).

Boarding schools have strict scheduling that governs every aspect of boarding school life for students (Bass, 2007). This includes: when they must wake up or go to sleep, eat, and engage in recreational activities; how, when, and where they must finish their homework; expectations for maintaining their living space clean and orderly; and access to phones and computers, just to mention a few (Martin *et al.*, 2016:1010). Bista and Cosstick (2005:2) note that boarding schools "may yield benefits for students, parents, and educators when managed and operated properly". Historically, affluent parents used boarding schools to differentiate their children from the rest since they were designed to generate pupils who were more equipped for their future academic aspirations or vocations (Bass, 2007:23). The boarding school has not been any more successful than society at large at maintaining individualism and cultural diversity while maintaining a cohesive culture.

In addition to creating a community culture, the boarding school seeks to foster students' identities, yet it encounters the same challenges as society at large. This challenge is especially pressing and unsettling in boarding schools because it challenges the normative goals of traditional education and cuts to the core of the "family" ideal (Hicks, 1996:531). Compared to their own house or neighbourhood, the boarding environment might offer a more stable atmosphere with safety, security, and less "toxic" (Martin *et al.*, 2016,1010). According to research by Elias *et al.* (2012), some former boarders may have done well to transition out of boarding school, while others may have experienced complex trauma and poor mental health (Martin *et al.*, 2016:1009). This indicates that the boarding experience for students may both be negative and positive. To avoid traumas and poor mental health in children enrolled in boarding school staff are expected to provide a positive experience for these students.

Indeed, there is a body of work describing the negative experiences (bullying, family problems, discrimination) of youth in residential education settings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Armitage, 1995; Hicks, 1996; Cardinal, 1999; Barton et al., 2005; Auditor-General, 2011; Glenn, 2011). Hirshberg (2008) notes that many former boarders have mixed feelings about their time living on campus, citing both advantages and disadvantages. Parents are most inclined to advocate for increased accountability, high academic standards, and better discipline in general, though not always concerning their children. Staff employed at boarding school hostels are expected to support students going through a transition that involves being separated from their families, meeting high academic standards, and adjusting to the rules of hostel life (Heyeres *et al.*, 2017:80). Boarding schools provide an environment that can fill in many of the gaps present in the lives of students (Bass, 2007; Hirshberg, 2008). Boarding schools equip learners with lifetime abilities that prepare them for higher education and the labour market (Bennett, 2020:3). Housemothers play an important role in a boarding school context, as they are expected to adopt multiple roles to develop and prepare teenagers for life after school. This expectation is filled with pressure, hence this study seeks to examine how the systems imposed by the school's management in hostels influence the employment outcomes and well-being of housemothers at a public all-girls school in the Eastern Cape.

3.3 Global experiences of an adolescent girl

Children struggle to discover who they are and what their identity is during their adolescence. Adolescence is marked by many physical, social, and emotional changes from childhood (Bennett, 2020:4). Adolescents are defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as those who are between the ages of 10 and 19, a period marked by distinct developments in the areas of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and sexual development (Skelton, 2004; Martin *et al.*, 2014; Maliye and Garg, 2017). The adolescent experiences of males and females are not the same, as such, housemothers in an all-girls boarding school must be sensitive to the challenges and transformations that the students (who are under their care) are experiencing (Hagquist, 2010; Petersenetal, 2010; Einberg *et al.*, 2015). Being cognizant of the myriad of changes and challenges experienced by teenage girls in addition to meeting the job requirements assigned by the school's management induces workplace pressure for housemothers employed in an all-girls school. This study seeks to unearth the experiences of housemothers who are responsible for looking after teenage girls in a hostel context which places emotional, psychological and other forms of demands on them.

Einberg *et al.* (2015) found that girls report stress linked to worries about their academic performance and are impacted by high levels of demands at school. Additionally, Yoo (2016) notes that adolescent girls who undergo early puberty are also more likely to experience externalising symptoms such as substance abuse, smoking, bullying, and truancy. Some of the internalising issues experienced by adolescent girls include bulimia, depression, anxiety, and excessive psychosomatic symptoms (Duby *et al.*, 2021). Also, teenage substance abuse is a severe problem because they are unaware of its repercussions (Maliye and Garg, 2017:80). Teenage substance abuse is the use of alcohol and other drugs which have detrimental short-term and long-term consequences (Mafa and Makubhele, 2020). Teenage pregnancy is also another widespread social issue that impacts both industrialised and developing nations (Ramulumo and Pitsoe, 2013:755). Lastly, among girls aged 10 to 24, suicide is the second most common cause of death worldwide. More than 75% of suicide deaths worldwide occur in low- and middle-income nations (Duby *et al.*, 2021:345). When adolescents are supported and encouraged by caring adults, they grow to become responsible and well-adjusted adults (Maliye and Garg, 2017:78). It is, therefore, important for caregivers such as housemothers employed at all-girls schools to be aware of the issues facing teenage girls to assist them in their journey into adulthood (Crosnoe, 2011:11).

3.4 Teenage girls' experiences in South Africa

According to Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013:755), South Africa has a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy which often results in many young girls either dropping out of school or prolonging their number of years at school. Academic credentials are highly valued by many girls who become mothers before finishing their education, but if they do not receive the support, they need to finish their education, they might not be able to succeed academically (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon and Kadzamira, 1998; Mokgalabone, 1999; Chigona and Chetty, 2008). Housemothers employed in girls' hostels are expected to provide adequate support to the young girls to help them complete their schooling. Research in South Africa has shown that by the age of 18, more than 30% of teenage girls have given birth at least once, even though the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 outlawed pregnancy discrimination in schools, more than ten years ago (Mahy and Gupta, 2002). Though it is clearly stated in the law that these students cannot be excluded from school, it is unclear how schools should handle pregnant students and learner-parents (Ramulumo and Pitsoe, 2013:755).

In addition, transitioning from township and rural to former Model C schools often causes students to feel a little unclear about who they are in the classroom (Kanyopa, and Hlalele, 2021:98). In the new educational system, teenage girls see this more as an identity crisis. Numerous incidents of disagreements about the language of instruction, staff appointments, and overt bullying of pupils at Ex Model C schools are documented in court records (Christie and McKinney, 2017:2). The 2016 protests were the culmination of years of resistance to discrimination in EX Model C schools across the country, where rules dictated things like clothing, hair, head scarves, and religious practices (Lemon, 2004; Christie and McKinney, 2017:2). The country's racialized history has left covert and overt forms of discrimination in the former Model C schools in South Africa. Housemothers are also expected to navigate the demographic, cultural and other social changes in the student body in these schools in addition to ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds can co-exist peacefully and respectfully (Lemon, 2004:288).

Furthermore, stress and mental health issues, such as depression, significantly increase South Africa's disease burden (Duby *et al.*, 2021:344). Roughly 75% of mental health conditions that impact adults throughout their lives are thought to have developed during their adolescent years. Teenagers raised in communities with low socio-economic status suffer a variety of additional psychosocial and health concerns that could cause stress and have a detrimental impact on their mental health (Duby *et al.*, 2021:345). Discussions from the global experience of teenagers showed that adolescent wellbeing is greatly influenced by supportive environments, which are linked to several advantageous outcomes like higher academic achievement, a healthy sense of self-worth, and a decrease in behavioural and psychological issues. Supportive environments in South Africa such as in boarding schools where students are residing, should be characterised with staff that creates an environment caring enough to curb most of the issues faced by teenagers of today.

3.5 Context of the study

The school in question is part of a group of schools that were not accessible to black, coloured and Indian students before pre-1994 (Maile, 2004; Prins, 2019). Post-1994, these schools have been legally opened to all races, as such, they are very diverse institutions. In comparison to township schools, Ex-Model C schools have more resources because they can charge high school fees to supplement their funding. This study seeks to uncover the employment experiences of housemothers in such schools because very little has been written about them.

3.5.1 Understanding education systems

Education is a service that includes both essential and supporting services (Vigar-Ellis, 2013:6). The care and accommodation provided for students outside of class are a component of that educational service. Education means more than pursuing a specific course of study, it has everything to do with the whole being and the whole period of existence that helps develop the physical, mental and spiritual power of a human being (White, 1952:13). Ball (2021:3), shows that in the context of ‘the knowledge economy’, policymakers should consider education to be a key component of guaranteeing economic productivity and global competitiveness (Goldin, 1999). Education also focuses on nation-building, social policy, and social discipline (Ball, 2021:7). Given all its benefits, education becomes a significant part of a person's upbringing. Government involvement in education must be dynamic, addressing issues in the field and changing educational frameworks (Ball, 2021:6). According to Crosnoe (2011:10), promoting social stability and creating an informed, healthy citizenry has long been the goal of education.

A learner's education and socialization are greatly influenced by their school; hence educational institutions must provide a secure setting for real learning and growth (Mouton *et al.*, 2013:33). This demonstrates that, in general, one of the highest priorities is education. A learner's educational experience is shaped by the social relationships they encounter in society; in this case, those relationships are expressed through their school (Rossouw, 2003:419). Schools serve as institutions for advancing social objectives and fostering virtues that support civic engagement and a democratic, peaceful society (Keep, 2011). Moreover, the everyday pressures that teenagers face while navigating the social environments of high school, as well as the organisational pressures on the education system, are significant (Crosnoe, 2011:4). In the context of this research, the school is also selling a ‘home away from home’ experience for the girls who are under the care of the housemothers.

3.5.2 The South African education system

One of the main goals of an education system is to train young people for higher education and the labour market (Frempong *et al.*, 2011:820). In South Africa, the educational system was racially divided before 1994 and black people had limited access to quality education (Lemon, 2004:270). The South African Constitution recognizes education as fundamental human right that is important for personal and social development as well as for economic growth.

Stuurman (2018:189) notes that “the main objective of the South African Schools Act (SASA) was to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools, where the previously black schools would get funding assistance by the government”. South Africa's educational revolution, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2008) has been characterised by ideals of social justice and equity, non-racism and non-sexism, Ubuntu, and reconciliation. The South African education system is divided into three levels which include primary, secondary and tertiary education (Motala, 2009; Ramdass, 2009). At the primary and secondary level, schools are divided into five categories known as the quintiles (Dieltiens and Motala, 2014:70). This system was introduced to differentiate funding by the state, where quintiles 1 to 3 schools are classified as no-fee schools and are by law not permitted to charge school fees.

This was one of the policies put in place to try and remove barriers to education (Frempong *et al.*, 2011:824). Quintiles 4 and 5 schools, however, have the freedom to determine fees and to undertake initiatives to raise their own financial resources in order to maintain quality and standards of educational provisioning (Maistry and Africa, 2020:2). Christie and McKinney (2017:9), explain that a school is fully private under Model A, remain a state school under Model B, and become state-aided (or semi-private) under Model C. In a Model C school, the management council would be in charge of hiring staff, setting fees, managing the school, and maintaining its facilities. Around the world, "private" schools are being replaced with "independent" ones whereas in South Africa the South African Schools Act (SASA) also prefers to refer to non-public schools as "independent" rather than "private" (Hofmeyr and Lee, 2004:144).

Private schools according to Ramulongo (2016:7), are owned and managed by private service providers. Numerous traditional independent schools in South Africa were modelled after the British public school system (Randall, 1982). Their history tends to exhibit replicate a conservative, elite, white, capitalist system (Hofmeyr and Lee, 2004:146). The state no longer provides subsidies to these schools, and the tuition levels only admit the wealthiest students. Consequently, all these schools have a predominately white student body (Lemon, 2004). In South Africa, a school that is owned, managed, and financially supported by the state is referred to as a "public school" (Pretorius, 2019). The state finances public schools with cash from public sources to ensure that pupils' rights to an education are adequately exercised and that past discrepancies in educational opportunities are remedied (Mestry and Ndlovhu, 2014).

Public schools in townships in South Africa are characterised by (among other things) low pass rates, low teacher and student morale, a resurgence of student violence, incompetent leadership, and inadequate governance on the part of school governing boards (Mestry, 2014). The term "township" describes the urban neighbourhoods that were designated for black and coloured people, pre-1994. These neighbourhoods were typically constructed on the outskirts of towns and cities, where a township school is a school situated in such areas (Mampane, 2010:9). Most public schools in South Africa are characterised by overcrowded, underfunded classrooms with overworked, frequently underqualified instructors (Mahlangu *et al.*, 2021:2). Due to the poor educational opportunities provided in some public schools, especially in the townships, parents are increasingly choosing to send their children to private or former Model C schools in the suburbs and inner cities (Kanyopa, and Hlalele, 2021; Mestry, 2014:861).

This transfer is mostly caused by elements like school quality, the presence of certified teachers, safety, and well-stocked classrooms that were thought to provide a higher quality education (Kanyopa, and Hlalele, 2021:97). The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 mandates the implementation of school-based management in South African public schools. Labour process theory suggests that, in fact, school-based management may still be applied in ways that largely favour management objectives in controlling the labour process. To produce the desired result, management will continue to devise ways to impose control over employees. For instance, policies and procedures governing housemothers' work. Furthermore, the management council oversees the raising of remaining funds, whilst the state provides a subsidy to Model C schools to cover the salaries of staff appointed in accordance with state-mandated norms (Christie and McKinney, 2017). The school covered in this thesis is a former Model C all-girls school in the Eastern Cape.

3.5.3 Ex-Model C schools

Former Model C schools, according to Prins (2019:131), "were previously predominantly schools for white learners and the school enforced white culture". Discrimination based on race was no longer acceptable following the 1994 transition of the white, former Model C schools to learning environments for all (Athimoolam and Vermaak, 2012:39). Staff employed at Ex-Model C schools are required to take care of students from diverse backgrounds (Athimoolam and Vermaak, 2012:39). Research shows that students going through this transition have a variety of difficulties while attempting to adjust to the new learning environment (Coetzee, 2013; Banks, 2014; Machard, 2015).

Christie and McKinney (2017) contend that racial relations do not appear to have improved in some former Model C schools. Rather than being integrated into the school environment, most students making the transfer are converted and asked to be assimilated into Eurocentric culture. Because of this, students of different races always feel inferior and excluded from their white counterparts due to the Eurocentric culture that dominates former Model C schools. Previously excluded racial groups often struggle to integrate into the former Model C schools, as their cultural identities are marginalized in these schools (Kanyopa, and Hlalele, 2021:98). The case of the highly publicized protest at Pretoria Girls High School in 2016 triggered by discriminatory hair policies at the school is an example of the marginalization of non-Eurocentric identities (Christie and McKinney 2017:2). This means that in former Model C schools, housemothers also must deal with cultural diversity and ensure that students from different races can co-exist peacefully. One of the aims of this study is to investigate the ways in which housemothers deal with learners who experience the issues that arise in these schools given the nature of their work. A learner's education and socialization are greatly influenced by their school; hence it is crucial that educational institutions provide a secure setting for real learning and growth (Mouton *et al.*, 2013:33).

3.6 Roles of housemothers in a boarding school

Tsang (2011:1312) defines academic staff as, “service workers who have to respond to the demands and needs of the ‘educational consumers’, including students and parents”. Housemothers are responsible for the wellbeing of learners, meaning that they are a part and parcel of the experiences of the children in boarding schools. They are expected to create ‘a home away from home’ in the hostel where, some of their duties include providing care for the students and to ensure the smooth running of the hostels (Handler-Schuster *et al.*, 2013:615). Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006:122) define care as "relational," which emphasizes an ethic of care that comprises receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness. This suggests that caring is a significant component of education. Furthermore, caring for children involves much more than ensuring that children's rights are upheld, and that no discrimination occurs (Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006:122). For students to grow academically, it is relatively important that their social needs are nurtured and protected. Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006:120), are concerned about the student as a whole person, and they emphasize that educators need to have a compassionate stance both intellectually and professionally. Housemothers play a major role in a boarding school hostel as they are the people responsible for the well-being of students.

Their role entails acting in place of the parent when the students are residing within the school's premises during an academic period. Hodges *et al.*, (2013:42) identifies boarding staff as not just facilitators and guarantors of security but as *loco parentis* models of young people. Acting in *loco parentis*, or in the place of a parent, refers to the legal responsibility of a boarding school to undertake the responsibilities of a parent. The *loco parentis* role brings about challenges as housemothers must create 'a home away from home' for the young people in their care (Hodges *et al.*, 2013:32). Housemothers are expected have compassion, understanding, decency, emotional control, dialogue, emergency response, crisis intervention, and legal knowledge (Hawkes, 2001; Anderson, 2005; Bass, 2007; Holgate, 2007). Understanding the value of high school social life and how it affects academic performance is a concern for both individual teenagers and the adults in their lives (Crosnoe, 2011:10).

The bond between teenage girls and their mothers is very important, as it contributes to developing young girls into well-adjusted women. Mothers face emotional challenges in trying to meet their own needs, support and guide their daughters through pubertal changes, and manage emotions that the adolescent's growth may bring up (Trad, 2007). Housemothers are under severe pressure as they deal with housemothers in large numbers. Heyeres *et al.*, (2017:80) gave an example of staff at four boys' boarding schools in Western Australia who reported that although boarding schools provide academic and social opportunities for students, students also face obstacles like homesickness, culture shock, problems with reading and numeracy, prejudice, and racism. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, students in both male and female boarding schools experience similar challenges as noted in the previous sentence.

Students and staff at boarding schools treat each other like family, which enriches and deepens their social capital (Bass, 2007:38). In addition to offering these girls and their families the requisite sanitized, nourishing, and educational environments, single-sex boarding schools have also demonstrated higher academic achievement for their students when compared to coeducational settings (Frank, 2019:38). This study investigates the working conditions of housemothers who are employed in a public all-girls school in the Eastern Cape. Based on the material that has been provided, especially considering the perception that the success of pupils in school is contingent upon the presence of positive interactions among staff, parents, and students (Heyeres *et al.*, 2017:80). Having considered the educational landscape of South Africa and the various dynamics that shape life in former Model C schools. This study is important, as it uncovers the role of housemothers in a pressure-filled environment like an 'all-girls' hostel.

3.7 Conclusion

To conclude, boarding schools have a lengthy history. They were first introduced to the UK, where young children were taken to boarding schools where they get chances to foster connections and individual development with other peers. Students' experiences may either be negative or positive which is why support staff such as housemothers are crucial in these boarding schools. For girls living in an all-female boarding institution, the stages of adolescence are important as they involve social, physical and emotional changes. The girls therefore need supportive environments and adults that help them navigate their lives through these changes. Although former Model C schools have become more integrated and diverse, research shows that students in these schools still experience various forms of marginalization based on their cultural identities among other factors. Housemothers have a responsibility of facilitating peaceful integration among students from diverse backgrounds. This includes dealing with issues that are arising in all-girls public schools that include identity, substance abuse, teenage pregnancies and mental health issues (among other factors). Since housemothers serve as substitute mothers at the boarding school hostels they are viewed as crucial to the academic performance and social development of students. This chapter has shown the context in which housemothers are expected to operate in. This environment has a myriad of challenges, which means that boarding schools that want to attract students must provide a quality 'home away from home' environment. This places housemothers in a pressure-filled environment where they must act as 'acting parents' to young teenage girls. The concepts and themes highlighted in this chapter and those of the LPT are utilized to analyse the employment conditions of housemothers in a public 'all-girls' school in the Eastern Cape.

Chapter Four

Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research methodology utilized in this study. The chapter begins with a brief outline of the methodological approach chosen for this research which is a qualitative research approach. Secondly, the chapter focuses on sampling techniques and the rationale for their application is provided. In this same sub-topic, the analysis also engages ethical considerations, which is done by applying appropriate moral principles, values and norms that protect human subjects (Arifin, 2018:31). Thereafter, the data collection methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews are discussed. The chapter goes on to discuss the method of data analysis which is a deductive thematic analysis. It is deductive in the sense that it uses the pre-existing concepts to test their validity in the context of the research. Lastly, the limitations of this study are outlined.

4.2 Methodological approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach founded on the principles of understanding the ideas, feelings, and meaning behind an individual's actions and intentions (Sutton, 2015:226). Polkinghorne (2005:1) states, "Qualitative research refers to the inquiry aimed at describing and clarifying human experience as it appears in people's lives." This approach is appropriate because it attempts to access the thoughts and feelings of the potential participants in this study. Roberts *et al.* (2003:3) notes that "qualitative research usually involves the collection and analysis of in-depth information on a smaller group of respondents". The explanation of organisational procedures and the discovery of both individual and collective work experiences are much better served through qualitative research methods (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Qualitative research allows the researcher to distinguish between what respondents 'say' and what they 'do' as sometimes what is said does not match the actions being shown (Roberts *et al.*, 2003:3). The key concern of a qualitative approach is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspective, for example, the meaning for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like and what experiences they have (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016:16).

Qualitative research methods also help build theories from observations and understandings that are gathered during data collection process enabling the researcher to analyse data that is informed by a specific theoretical framework (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016:17). This type of research is usually conducted in natural settings, where data is collected by the researcher in places more convenient and comfortable for the participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018:258). The qualitative research approach gives room for subjectivity as it allows the researcher to better understand the participants' experiences within their working conditions and to obtain a comprehensive insider's understanding of certain phenomena. The qualitative research approach is ideal for this study because it seeks to examine the subjective experiences of housemothers who are employed in the hostels of a public 'all-girls' school in the Eastern Cape.

4.3 Sampling of research participants and ethical considerations

The sampling techniques most appropriate for this study were purposive and convenience sampling, both non-probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling entails selecting research participants according to specific subjective characteristics that align with the research question (Kothari, 2005:715; Bryman *et al.*, 2014:57). Using purposive sampling, the researcher used their judgment to choose participants who can best provide information based on the study's goals and objectives. People are approached based on the researcher's assessment of who is most likely to be willing to share and give them the information they need (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the researcher selected research participants who were female housemothers from different racial groups (or nationalities) who are employed in a specific public 'all-girls' school in the Eastern Cape. This study also used convenience sampling, which can be described a non-probability sample technique, is frequently employed in qualitative research to select participants who are readily available to the researcher in the surrounding area (Stratton, 2021:373). Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where research participants are selected on the basis that they are easy for the researcher to access (Farrokhi 2012). This can be due to geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate in the research (Farrokhi 2012). Because the researcher works at a hostel as a student supervisor (student housemother) in the boarding school in question, this sample strategy was utilized to select participants because it was convenient. The sample consisted of nine participants, including the researcher, employed as housemothers in the hostels of an all-girls public boarding school in the Eastern Cape.

Regarding ethics, approval was sought from the university's ethics committee, and consent was secured before the interviews from the respondents who signed consent forms. Before consent was secured, the researcher briefly explained the objective of the study, the role of the research participants and the ethical considerations in the consent form. This study concealed the identity of the research participants with pseudonyms and the name of the school in question is also not mentioned in this thesis.

4.4 Data collection methods

There are different forms of data collection in qualitative research (Carter and Henderson, 2005:215). Some of these include focus groups, one on one interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. The qualitative research techniques adopted in this study included in-depth interviews and participant observation given that the researcher works at this institution. The interviews were semi-structured, mainly containing open-ended questions, because they provide a thorough examination of the individual experiences and viewpoints of housemothers. The open-ended questions were structured around topics, where research respondents were allowed to express their opinions freely. Interviewing allows the researcher to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding the respondent's action (Siedman, 2006:10). Mears (2012:170) notes that "in-depth interviews allow purposeful interactions where the researcher attempts to learn about a topic, discover and record what the participant has experienced, what they think or feel and also what significance it might have".

The researcher and participant can have one-on-one discussions, enabling a flexible information exchange. In-depth interviews allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions within the dialogue (Kendall, 2008). Creswell (2013) notes that one-on-one interviews offer the chance to ask open-ended questions and probe with follow-up questions to elicit more information. Researchers can also see non-verbal clues from participants during the 'in-person interviews' that offer more context. In the context of in-depth interviews, a set of open-ended questions are aligned with each objective, as each objective will serve as a theme in the interview schedule. This enhances the provision of rich insights which are detailed into participants' experiences, perspectives, and narratives. Respondents can be flexible in their answers, allowing them to explore the questions in a way that fits their understanding and experience. This research focused on comparing the opinions and perceptions of the respondents about their working conditions and experiences within girls' hostel in question.

Open-ended questions avoid the bias that may result from suggesting responses to the participants (Reja *et al.*, 2003). The interviews were conducted in comfortable spaces for the participants such as private lounges and semi-private benches. During the interviews, the researcher used an audio recorder with the permission of the research participants. Audio recordings also keep the data as raw as possible and cannot be manipulated. Note-taking involves writing down interpretive ideas that would have been observed during or even after an interview (O'Leary, 2017:453). During the interviews, the risk of negative emotions was evoked in some of the participants, however, the researcher managed to mitigate this by validating their emotions and avoiding judgements. Participant observation is usually used in combination with other research methods such as interviews in this study.

Participant observation is a method that comprises of several methods used by the researcher to take part in the interactions, daily activities, and events of a group of people to learn the precise and implicit aspects of their life (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2010:1). The idea behind participant observation, which involves spending months there, is that researchers can learn "more" this way than by depending just on people's descriptions of their activities (MacDonald, 2001: 86). Furthermore, a researcher could either use covert or overt methods of participant observation. Covert participant observation techniques allow the researcher to hide their identity from the participants, potentially reducing their influence as a researcher. The advantage of this method is that participants' behaviour may not be as affected by the researcher's presence, allowing for the observation of more "normal" behaviour with little outside interference (Strudwick, 2019:186).

On the contrary, when a researcher uses overt participant observation, they are disclosing their identity as both an observer and a researcher (McKenzie, 2009:2). The researcher used the covert ethnography of participant observation because, although employed at this all-girls boarding school, the researcher made discrete observations. Being part of the hostel staff helped the researcher observe certain procedures and activities that might not have been found easily had the researcher not been working and living in the research site. Working in this boarding school and experiencing the control mechanisms which covered in later chapters led to the use of participant observation by the researcher. The capacity of the researcher to respond to the control mechanisms and how they generally affected the researcher's working conditions made participant observation an excellent technique which provided a good insider's perspective for the analysis.

The interviews conducted with the house mothers allowed her to gain an understanding of how her colleagues experienced their working conditions in the girls' hostels in the school in question. The research methods adopted in this study were ideal for this research, considering that the name of the school is not to be mentioned, and the identities of the research participants were concealed through pseudonyms to protect. These methods helped the researcher answer the research question and provide information and insights into the working conditions of housemothers in the girls' hostels in the school in question. The researcher's data collection proved valuable in addressing the research question because despite the school's non-profit status, it operates on a fee-paying model. As a result, the institution employs certain capitalistic methods to ensure that housemothers' work aligns with standards typically found in profit-driven organisations. This approach allows the school to maintain efficiency and performance levels comparable to those in the for-profit service sector.

Table 1: List of Participants and Basic Information

Name	Age	Job Position	Sex	Education Backgrounds
Erica	57	Hostel matron	Female	Attended coeducational public schools and the highest qualification is matric.
Grace	49	Hostel matron	Female	Attended coeducational public schools and attained 2 Diplomas.
Ayanda	31	Housemother	Female	Attended public schools, including an Ex-Model C school for secondary education. The highest qualification is matric and now pursuing further studies.
Unathi	32	Housemother	Female	Attended rural public schools and the highest level of qualification is matric.
Amanda	24	Student supervisor	Female	Attended private schools and is pursuing an honours degree at a tertiary institution.
Kamo	22	Student supervisor	Female	Attended both private and public schools and attained an honours degree.
Tumi	25	Student supervisor	Female	Attended public township schools and attained a master's degree.
Zama	22	Student supervisor	Female	Attended both public and private schools and attained an honours degree.
Tashinga	28	Student supervisor	Female	Attended public schools and attained an honours degree.

The table above shows provides a basic demographical information of the research participants. The senior housemothers are known as the hostel matrons. The sample of these hostel matrons consisted of two South African participants between the ages of 49-57. The second level of housemothers at this school are referred to as 'housemothers. The sample of the housemothers consisted of two South African participants between the ages of 31-32. The last set of housemothers are employed at a junior level, and they are commonly known as student supervisors. Amongst the sample of these university student supervisors, three are South African participants and two international university students from other African countries. The student supervisors' ages range from 22-28. The racial composition of the housemothers includes seven black, one coloured and one white housemothers.

The current marital status of the two hostel matrons is, one is married, and the other is widowed. These hostel matrons live with their families on the school premises. The rest of the seven of the housemothers indicated that they were single. The hostel matrons both attended coeducational public schools, with one's highest level of education being two diplomas, and the other house mother only has a grade 12 certificate. One of the housemothers attended public schools, including an ex-model C school. Her highest level of education is matric although she is currently pursuing further studies. The second housemother went to rural public schools and the highest qualification she attained is matric. Two out of the five student supervisors attended both public and private schools, also they both have honours degrees. One student supervisor attended private schools and is currently pursuing an honours degree.

The fourth student supervisor went to public rural schools and has a master's degree, whilst the last one attended public schools and has an honours degree. An overview of the respondents' profiles covered the following areas age, gender, population group, nationality, marital status, and level of education attained by the respondents. At the all-girls boarding school hostel in question, there are three types of housemothers who occupy in different capacities as housemothers. The presence of different levels of housemothers indicates the need for the school's management to hire employees that make it possible to divide roles into different tasks. Such an analysis can be used to raise the argument brought by Braverman on the degradation of work (Braverman ,1974), and all the themes (control, agency, emotional labour and aesthetic labour) that are derived from the LPT discussions. By creating 'a home away from home' experience for learners, the boarding school management seeks to achieve customer (parents) satisfaction through the application of capitalist mechanisms attract more parents to the school.

4.5 Data analysis methods

Data was analysed in this study through deductive thematic analysis. Alhojailan (2012:40) defines thematic analysis as “a type of qualitative analysis used to analyse classifications and present themes/patterns that relate to the data”. Thematic analyses involve thorough searches for recurring themes in the responses of research participants (Braun and Clarke, 2006:79). They can be conducted theoretically, where analysis is motivated by more precise objectives, or inductively, where analysis is conducted without reference to pre-existing coding frames. Thematic analysis is the most used approach to qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2012:578). It is applied to a set of texts, such as interviews or transcripts, where the researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes such as topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly (Caufield, 2022:1). A deductive thematic analysis was appropriate for this research because it was useful where there was a predetermined framework and theory which allowed the initial development of codes and identification of common responses based on the established themes (Sinclair-Maragh and Simpson, 2021:70). This research, however, adopted a deductive thematic analysis because of its use of concepts derived from the labour process theory. A theme is said to be categories that the researcher identifies through analysing their data, relating to the research focus that builds on codes identified in transcripts and providing the researcher with the basis for understanding their data which can make theoretical contributions to literature linked to the research focus (Bryman, 2012:580). In addition, interview questions also provide some basic themes which were used to analyse the data and to find trends in the participants' responses. The researcher utilized deductive thematic analysis to analyse the data collected in this study.

4.6 Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered some problems during this study, some of these include language. Although, the research was conducted in an English-speaking school some expressions were made in Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. This was challenging for the researcher, because she understands and speaks English and Shona, however, this obstacle was mitigated by using translating applications. The second limitation encountered in this study, was that some participants did not feel comfortable answering some questions as they were sensitive topics for them to discuss. The researcher immediately put the research participants at ease by skipping the questions which the researchers found to be uncomfortable.

Lastly, conclusions drawn from this research cause misconceptions, since nine people were used to make broader assessments of the working conditions of housemothers employed in an all-girls public boarding school. To mitigate this limitation, the study stresses that it does not claim to represent perspectives of housemothers working in boarding schools all over the country and the world at large, but it instead aims to analyse their working conditions of housemothers in this selected sample of this study.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the qualitative research methodology used in this study. Starting off with the identification and recurring of the research participants, the researcher used purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling is based on identifying research participants that have specific characteristics that align with the research question, in this case these traits included housemothers employed in the public ‘all-girls’ school hostel in question. Convenience sampling was used in this study because the researcher had easier access to the research participants because she also worked as a housemother (student supervisor) in the same school. Data was collected through in-depth one on one interviews and through participant observation, because the researcher worked as a housemother (student supervisor) at the school in question. These methods proved to be effective, as the researcher was able to gauge the subjective accounts and experiences of their colleagues in the hostels of the school in question. Data was analysed through deductive thematic analyses, because the study was analysing the experiences of the housemothers against the key pre-existing themes and concepts extracted from the theoretical framework and literature review in this thesis.

Chapter Five

Analysing the Working Conditions of Housemothers

5.1 Introduction

Using the core concepts extracted from the Labour Process Theory (LPT) and the literature review, this chapter provides an analysis of the working conditions of housemothers at an ‘all-girls’ public boarding school hostel located in a small town in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The first section provides an overview of the fundamental demographic data, personal histories and socio-economic backgrounds of the research participants. This is to provide background information on the study's sample population. The findings are analysed in relation to the main research question and theoretical framework. Secondly, the chapter applied LPT concepts in analysing the working conditions of housemothers. These concepts and themes include scientific management, deskilling and upskilling debate, control, worker agency, surveillance, emotional labour and aesthetic labour will be discussed.

5.2 Socio-economic status

The socio-economic status of the participants examines areas such as family income, parental education, and occupational status measurements. Understanding the socioeconomic backgrounds of housemothers is crucial to establishing a workplace that values diversity, inclusivity, and sensitivity to the needs of its workers. The housemothers who participated in this study were raised in diverse environments, each with their own unique characteristics. Some of housemothers, including matrons and student supervisors come from places such as Molteno, Bizana, eShowe, and Uyaya Village which is where they spent their formative years. One of the common characteristics is that some of them grew up in very small rural agriculturally centred towns that did not have big shops, which meant that residents had to travel to the nearest urban centres for shopping. Also, these towns were characterised by limited public services, such as: one public hospital, one doctor, one street and one public school. In these towns, most people are employed in informalized or non-standard work. Also, the respondents explained that one would never find people coming to these towns in search of employment given the nature of jobs available in these areas. The crime rate, on the other hand, was very little and less prevalent than in the big cities. The research participants indicated that they moved from their rural backgrounds to urban areas for better employment opportunities.

Also, some of the housemothers grew up in the townships that were characterised by high crime rates. Unathi, one of the housemothers indicated the following:

I grew up in a place that kind of has a rural setting. The service delivery was very poor, there isn't a good labour market which is why most people relocate to bigger cities to look for better employment opportunities. Most people are unemployed, even up to date and they live off social grants. Just like most places in South Africa, the crime rate is high and given that most people are unemployed and going through tough times its pretty high. (Unathi, 24/10/23).

On the contrary, one housemother who is an international university student grew up in a more affluent area (than the rural areas) with low levels of unemployment, low crime rate, good public services and better employment opportunities because of stronger economies than the rural areas. The job of being a housemother is ideal for university students who wish to save costs in areas such as accommodation and food. In relation to parents' highest qualifications, two out of the nine housemothers did not remember what qualifications their parents attained. Four out of the nine, including a housemother and three student supervisor's parents had university degrees, with some having master's degrees and most of them having attained Bachelor of Education degrees. Considering that some housemothers are pursuing further studies in educational related studies could mean that working at an educational institution is continuing with the family tradition. Three out of the nine guardians of the housemothers had matric as their highest level of education.

The main reason why their parents or guardians had to stop at this level was mainly because of finances. There were not enough finances to further their studies, as some had siblings who had to be taken care of and had to help their families financially through securing employment. Management at this boarding school could be employing housemothers from less privileged backgrounds to serve the school's economic interests and maintain dedicated employees that have limited career options. This may mean keeping labour costs low for the school and having the opportunity to maintain a dedicated workforce that appears to be desperate for the job, for example student supervisors. Also, some of the respondents' guardians were employed in educational institutions, for instance some have been teachers, cleaners and interestingly there has been one who worked as a hostel matron. Given that parents have a significant impact on their kids' attitudes and viewpoints, it is likely that a child's desire to work in education is shaped by their parents' experiences working in a schooling system.

The decision find employment in an educational institution for some housemothers could have been influenced by their parents. One of the housemothers Ayanda stated the following:

I have not stopped. I am still pursuing further studies, but my highest level of education is my matric. And I have ventured into different qualifications that I found out I was not comfortable in. I've done public administration and psychology, now I am pursuing my BED because I believe that's my calling considering both my parents were teachers. (Ayanda, 08/09/23).

From the findings, there are two major challenges there were experienced by these housemothers during their childhood. These challenges include financial and emotional challenges. The major reasons for these financial challenges were the need to make ends meet and put all children through school and providing the necessities, hence why some of the guardians had multiple jobs to meet the demands of their families. The research participants indicated that experienced emotional challenges growing up because their parents were busy trying to provide for them and often neglected their emotional nurturing. Some of housemothers mentioned that they never had an emotional relationship with their parents because they were always unavailable. Conversely, others indicated that they did not have or were not exposed to any challenges because their parents always provided for their families. For example, one respondent was raised by a single mother after the passing of her father, but their mother still ensured that their emotional and other needs were met. Ayanda a housemother expressed:

I did not see or know any challenges because my mother was always on the forefront for everything. So, she did not allow us to see if she was struggling, although I could understand that she was struggling after my father's passing. Also, I have a very supportive family and some of the males in my family tried to fill the gap left by my father and became our father figures at home. There was always love and care. We were not allowed to see if there were any challenges and struggles. However, I do understand that there could have been challenges but we were never exposed to them. (Ayanda, 08/09/23).

The common type of school that was attended by these housemothers was public schools although some attended both private and public schools. Since the school falls under a public school and most of the respondents attended public schools, they are mostly aware of public-school operations.

All the student supervisors were pursuing their studies at a local university near the school in question. Given the respondents' past experiences and socio-economic backgrounds, it's possible that these individuals may submit to capitalist organisations. Consequently, housemothers' vulnerable backgrounds make them prone to consent to the capitalist-like structures of hostel work.

5.3 The housemothers labour process

The school in question is a public 'all-girls' high school (grade 8-12) located in the Eastern Cape. There is a principal who oversees the operations of the school. There are different staff members that are employed at this school, these include academic staff, boarding staff, kitchen staff and support staff. The academic staff (teachers and sport coaches) is responsible for learning and sport, the boarding staff are responsible for services offered at the boarding facilities of the school. The kitchen staff is responsible for the meals consumed by staff and children. The support staff deals with all the cleaning and maintenance services of the school and hostels. This research is concerned with housemothers who are employed in the boarding facilities; therefore, a discussion of the housemother's labour process is provided. This boarding school comprises of three hostels (boarding facilities). There is a weekly boarder's hostel that accommodates boarders (grade 8-12) from Monday to Friday only. This hostel accommodates a limited number of weekly boarder students and is managed by one hostel matron and one student supervisor. Grade 8-10 pupils are accommodated in the junior hostel that is spacious and accommodates up to 65 students. This hostel is managed by a senior matron, a housemother and six student supervisors. The third hostel accommodates grade 11-12 pupils who are the senior students at the school. It is also a larger hostel and accommodates up to 40 students. This hostel is managed by a senior matron, a housemother and four student supervisors. The key roles and responsibilities of the housemothers is to ensure the well-being and development of the girls in these hostels. At the beginning of each academic year, housemother's welcome new students and integrate new students into the school and hostel system by outlining expectations, procedures, and guidelines. The housemothers oversee the day-to-day operations and activities around the hostel, from when the students wake up in the morning to when they go to sleep at night. Housemothers ensure that students wake up, get ready for school, have their breakfast, attend school, have their lunch, attend extra-curricular activities, eat their supper, do their homework, and prepare for bedtime. Housemothers are responsible for the overall well-being of the students residing in the hostels, this includes emotional and healthcare support.

Housemothers also ensure safety of the pupils through working closely with a private security company that provide protective services in the school facilities. Housemothers keep records of the student's over-all well-being, which they use to update parents about their children's overall well-being and progress at the school and hostel. At the end of each term, housemothers have to ensure that everything has been packed and every child has left with their belongings. All these roles are summarised in literature where it mentions that housemothers are tasked with making the hostel a home away from home. Some of the other responsibilities are tending to the "sick" and "needy," managing the household, setting up the residential areas of the house, and creating a nurturing environment (Handler-Schuster *et al.*, 2013:615). Table 2 below outlines the job titles, job description and employment status of the housemothers. The responsibilities listed in the table below are taken straight from the viewpoint of the participants.

Table 2: Job description

Job title	Duties	Employment status
Hostel matron	Ensuring student safety Providing physical, emotional, healthcare, and mental well-being of students Ensuring the hostel is maintained and cleaned. Providing laundry services to the boarders. Overseeing other hostel staff. Advising and supporting student supervisors.	Permanent
Housemother	Taking care of the students Creating a peaceful environment where diversity is respected Helping students with homework. Ensuring that students meet all their academic responsibility Play the role of matrons when the matrons are on leave or not available	Permanent
Student supervisor	Maintaining order within the hostel. Ensuring that boarders follow rules. Assisting the hostel matron when needed. Ensuring discipline and creating an academically conducive environment Making sure the girls are awake and are put to bed daily. Reporting to the hostel matron when a boarder is not in good health. Assisting students their schoolwork (play the role of academic tutors) Providing emotional and other forms of informal psycho-social support Overseeing mealtimes.	Contract

The hostel matron is the one responsible for a learner's overall safety, wellbeing and maintenance of the hostel facilities. They are also responsible for overseeing other staff members within the hostel. Being both line managers and employees place additional pressure on the house matrons. Hostel matrons are employed on a permanent basis. The housemothers' responsibilities are to provide care, foster relationships and create a home environment for the children. Housemothers also assist the matron when needed and act in their absence. They are also permanently employed. Student supervisors also act as disciplinary officers in the hostels, as they are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that students adhere to hostel rules. They assist and report issues to the matron. Student supervisors also monitor the girls' day-to-day activities and help them with homework when needed. Student supervisors are employed on a contract basis. Although employed on different employment contracts, the house matrons, housemothers and student supervisors (also housemothers) work in tandem to ensure the smooth running of the hostels. The working schedules of the housemothers vary according to job title, time, and day of the week. Hostel matrons are required to work Monday to Friday, however, one participant indicated that they often work overtime and seven days a week. Grace, a hostel matron mentioned the following:

Technically according to the contract I'm supposed to work 5 days a week but in practical I work every day. My working hours according to the contract are 6.15am to 4pm but in the evenings I'm on call for emergencies and on weekends. In the perfect world that's it but in our world it's a bit crazy. (Grace, 27/09/23).

This indicates that the nature of jobs for housemothers is demanding because they often work overtime because of the demands of their work. The research participants indicated that they do not get paid for working overtime, as per the labour legislation of South Africa, because the school does not consider addressing emergencies outside working hours as overtime. This is because any student in the hostel may have issues after hours which require the matron's attention, for example taking a child to the hospital. For this reason, the student supervisors are accessible, and they report such emergencies to the hostel matron. The working schedule of the hostel matron is similar to that of the housemother, but the only difference is that the housemother's call begins at 16:00 pm while that of the matron starts at 6:15am. The schedule for the student supervisors was made in order to relieve the matron as their duties start at 15:50 pm and end at 6:15 am the following morning.

Student supervisors are also responsible for overnight duties where they have to be available to the girls in case of emergencies overnight. Their overnight duty starts at 23:00 pm which makes their duty 12 hours long. In terms of the breaks, hostel matrons get a combined break that is an hour 45 minutes long from 10:30 am to 11:50 am, this is a combination of their tea and lunch break per day. They explained that this is because their duties always fall at a difficult time, and they are expected to be always present at the front desk when on duty. The matrons are required to be available to the learners and monitor them at all times. Housemothers get breaks depending on how the day is going for the learners, so if there are no pressing duties for them, they can take breaks. Student supervisors only get two-hour breaks per person per day on weekends and they do not get breaks when they are on duty during the.

5.4 Scientifically managed work practices

The data in this study uncovers the labour process dynamics in the hostels of a public 'all-girls' high school in the Eastern Cape. Braverman (1974) argues that one of the most significant changes in the capitalist labour process has been the separation of conception and execution. The conception has been centralized within management and the execution of simplified tasks have been performed by workers on the factory floor. The simplification of production tasks helps workers to become extremely proficient at a single task as organisations are aiming for efficiency. The theme to be discussed in this section is scientific management or Taylorism. By the definition of Braverman (1974), Taylorism is a type of control that makes the previously unconscious tendency of capitalist production conscious and organised (Knights and Willmott, 1990). The concept of control on its own will be discussed as a theme in the subsection that follows. By incorporating scientific ideas into management techniques, it seeks to increase effectiveness and productivity at work. This section, however, analyses the scientific ways used by the school's management to boost the productivity and performance of housemothers employed in the hostels. The three different levels of housemothers that exist in the boarding school are a sign of the boarding school's management using scientific management since it shows that they had to figure out how to assign the housemothers' responsibilities in the most effective way possible. The data collected from the respondents indicated that the house mothering job has many duties and responsibilities aligned to it, therefore, it cannot be handled by a single person. Therefore, that is why they have alternating duties and different working shifts. The idea behind this concept is to give the hostel matron, who is the senior housemother access to student supervisors and housemothers who can help and assist them.

Although the findings show that the hostel matrons have different working hours (per day) and days (per week), it is also evident that their job requires them to be available 24 hours a day. This proves that this job cannot be handled by one person hence there are three distinct types of housemothers, which the subject of study by Braverman involved the idea of occupational shifts within the capitalist society (Braverman, 1974). The housemothers in this 'all-girls' boarding school hostel have different occupational shifts in which management considered the nature of this job and came up with an efficient and productive way for them to perform their tasks in different shifts. Amanda, a student supervisor stated the following:

We have alternating shifts, and it depends on the week. In one week, I work two days and the following one I work five days. (Amanda, 25/11/23).

Because the housemothers at this boarding school perform labour that requires some level of specialization due to job assignments, this brings the idea of deskilling within the context of Taylorism. The housemother's work also encompasses Taylorism because of how management has designed their work. It is standardized, which deprives the housemothers of their autonomy and judgment in how they carry out their duties because management has designed procedures in which their work is done. Their work is divided amongst them according to their job categories which include the matrons (senior housemothers), regular housemothers (middle housemothers) and student supervisors (junior housemothers). As Braverman (1974) mentioned, coordinated control over the labour process resulted from the managerial staff's 'deskilling' of work responsibilities, division of labour, and monopolisation of knowledge. Findings from the data indicated that there is division of labour amongst the housemothers and their duties vary according to the level of the housemother. Each housemother is assigned a specific set of tasks that they repeatedly perform and requires less skill. For example, student supervisors are responsible for putting the girls to sleep and waking them up. The housemothers play the role of matrons when the matrons are unavailable, and the matrons are responsible for ensuring the day to day running of the hostel. An observation by the researcher noted that in this regard, when a hostel matron of a particular house is not present, the housemother steps in, but the hostel operations are left in the hands of another matron from a different house. According to Reid (2003:561), the reason why jobs are deskilled is to facilitate the employment of cheaper labour and, to do away with the restrictive measures that employees had been using because of their monopoly of knowledge.

Findings from the respondents show that this is a scientific technique used by management at this boarding school because employing student supervisors is a way of employing cheap labour as student supervisors do not get paid in cash. Their form of payment is the benefits they get in the form of free accommodation, meals, and amenities that come with the accommodation and Wi-Fi. Rather than providing financial compensation to student supervisors, the management provides them with daily necessities that they would have to pay for if they weren't working at this boarding school hostel. Instead of employing labour that requires payment, management offers students an alluring package, and students who work without receiving payment are hired. Zama, a student supervisor explained:

We do not get salary in a monetary currency, our salary is accommodation, food, Wi-Fi. We are told we get what is in the contract, that is accommodation, Wi-Fi and food. (Zama, 01/12/23).

Because student supervisors are students that are currently enrolled at a local university, the school management identified them to be the right individuals for this job as hiring them is employing a cheaper form of labour. The data highlights that student supervisors are employed on a contract basis. The boarding school employs cheap labour (in the form of university students) knowing that they will provide them with what seems to be a less expensive than university accommodation or paying rent in town. Nonetheless, student supervisors consider this job beneficial to them even though they do not get paid in cash. The employment of university students as junior housemothers is beneficial to the school as well, as they have access to low-cost staff to work in their hostels, thus saving money for other school operations.

5.4.1 Employer control mechanisms

LPT looks at particular management strategies for allocating work and increasing control over the labour process where these strategies have varied historically and throughout various workplaces and industries, and they may or may not be effective from management's perspective. The aspect of control was significant in analysing the mechanisms that are put in place by management to ensure that the housemothers are delivering their service and performing their duties with the outmost efficiency. This concept of control explains the relationship that exists between the owner of the means of production and the owners of the labour within the process to aid the delivery of the final output that the workers produce (Marx, 1976:290). Capitalists have considerable power over the production or labour process.

An analysis of various control techniques applied to housemothers work by the management of this boarding school hostel is discussed in this section. There are several ways in which management exercises control on how housemothers undertake their duties, and the most common mechanism is writing reports. The housemothers (in this study) explained that there are all sorts of report writing that they do and send to management almost on a weekly basis. In these reports, they detail everything that has happened in the hostels during that week, and they outline some of the areas that may need further attention. Student supervisors were each assigned a group of students known as the 'stooge group', whom the student supervisors monitor and write continual reports on their progress and general well-being. The student supervisors also write reports on the outcomes of the activities that they formulated for the girls under their care. The writing and submission of reports by student supervisors to their seniors was a method of control and monitoring by the school and hostel management to ensure that they were executing their tasks. The student housemothers do not report directly to the principal or the head of hostels, they report everything to the matron and the matron reports to the principal. This channel of reporting shows clear hierarchical levels of control. One student supervisor, Zama stated the following:

In our hostel we have extremely open communication, so everything is communicated. We have weekly reports which detail everything that has happened in the week. There is transparency. That is how management controls what I must do because I would have to report if something has happened. (Zama,01/12/23).

The second mechanism used by management to control how the housemothers at this school do their work is the use of a communication book. This communication book ensures that everyone who is on duty is aware of what needs to be done during that day and what is expected from each housemother. In addition to this book, the housemothers also use a WhatsApp group that the hostel matron regularly checks if the duties that need to be done have been done. This group is another platform used by housemothers to report and communicate to their senior whilst they are on duty. Because work is communicated to the housemothers it gives them a guideline of what is expected of them, thereby getting duties done efficiently. In addition, the hostel matrons (senior housemothers) play the role of supervisors, this is because of their contribution to the monitoring process for ensuring the smooth running of the hostel. Management also uses a closed-circuit television (CCTV) system, to check on the housemothers while they are undertaking their duties.

A CCTV is a human-machine system made up of cameras, transmission, displays, and picture presentation, as well as an observed reality, workspace or workspaces, and operator activities such cognitive information processing. The participants stated that, although the CCTV system is there to ensure security around the hostel, it is also there to monitor activities that are going on in the hostel including checking if staff are doing their duties and responsibilities. A research participant gave an example and illustrated that when girls misbehave in the hostel, they are subject to disciplinary action. They are required to sit in a camera-monitored area, and staff members must physically verify that the girls are adhering to the rules. If the girls are found to be breaking the rules, management holds housemothers on duty accountable if they discover that the staff member was not monitoring the disciplined girls. Some of the housemothers explained that if they make mistakes on the job, they are sometimes corrected nicely or scolded by management. On the other hand, this system of control did not seem comfortable for other housemothers. Erica a hostel matron added:

Obviously, they can check on surveillance camera which is not ideal as it is invasion of privacy especially considering that we live here. But yes, they use the cameras to monitor everything in the hostels. (Erica, 11/10/23).

Whilst CCTVs are also used for security purposes as well, their primary aim is to ensure that hostels are running smoothly and an easy way for management to monitor both students and staff. Staff members are compelled to execute their tasks meticulously because they are aware that they are being monitored by management. Employer's monitor, manage, and control employees using a variety of techniques to guarantee the highest levels of production and efficiency from their workforce. The respondents highlighted that the presence of these CCTV cameras enables them to act in a well-disciplined manner and do all the duties they are supposed to. Tumi who is one of the student supervisors (in this study) explained:

A lot of things go on in the hostel, so even if you are alone, you cannot even fall asleep at the front desk because if an emergency occurs and they see that you were sleeping at the desk it would not look nice. There was a time that I was seen wearing earphones while seated at the desk and I was called in, was given several warnings and again was reminded of what the contract says regarding me being there for the learners. (Tumi, 28/11/23).

One housemother, Amanda summarised the control mechanisms that are in place for them:

We do write reports most times, and we have security cameras. We do give feedback on everything that happens in hostel, anything relevant. They basically check if we do our jobs or our tasks in our WhatsApp group and through reports. (Amanda, 25/11/23).

However, other participants claim that the management is not hard on housemothers when it comes to the CCTV method of control. Even though some research participants claim that management is not strict with employees when implementing the CCTV method of control, research indicates that this is precisely the strategy they employ to control housemothers at work. Also, Foucault's panopticon system creates the appearance that workers are being observed, which modifies their behaviour and increases output at work. Even in the absence of direct coercion or force, employees instinctively alter their actions as they believe they must always be extremely productive in order to escape criticism. Because of this system housemothers are motivated to continually put in a lot of effort since they are unsure of when they are truly being observed. The housemothers have written contracts that stipulate their duties and what they are supposed to do, therefore management uses this as a mechanism to control what they do and how they do it when doing their job.

There are certain procedures and policies that are put in place for the housemothers to follow as they do their duties, and these serve as a guide. This is backed up by literature which states that when an employee is directly under the authority of the capitalist to whom their labour belongs, it is referred to as private command since they are obliged to adhere to particular standards and procedures inside an organisation by virtue of working under their employers' orders (Marx, 1976:291). Although matrons are senior housemothers in the hostel, they also provide feedback on the developments in the hostels to the principal of the school, which means that they are also under a specific form of surveillance or control by school management. Studies (Cohen, 1987) aimed at ways in which management exerts control over various mechanisms and it is clear from the analysis that there are several ways that management controls housemothers in duties at the hostels. According to Reid (2003:560), the concept of control to the circumstances of capitalism in the 20th century, arguing that control was required for capital to attain the full potential of the labour it employs since workers could not be trusted to act in the best interests of capital. Hence, the presence of these mechanisms to ensure the housemothers work according to management's interests. Which makes such measures significant for management to implement in a boarding school setting to ensure housemothers deliver their care giving services efficiently.

Because housemothers need their jobs to survive, they willingly cooperate with various forms of control implemented by management. Some LPT scholar note that workers are not entirely helpless in the labour process, as some voluntarily subject themselves to the control measures of management to survive (Knights and Willmott, 1990). Some control measures include the implementation of efficient work practices and the awareness of being watched, which alters their behaviour in the workplace. Conversely, such control mechanisms may result in different pressures around the work of housemothers, for example alienation, burnout and stress (Hochschild, 1983; Brook, 2009). This comes from excessive control by management of housemothers' work to produce the desired outcome. Some of these effects will be discussed in one of the subsections to follow which unpacks the concept of emotional labour.

5.4.2 Worker experiences under surveillance

Monitoring employee behaviour, performance, and actions in the workplace is known as workplace surveillance. Foucault (1982) discusses the concept of resistance in relation to surveillance systems that exist in the workplaces. However, this section is focuses more on the concept of surveillance and less on the ways employees exercise resistance in the workplace. Foucault (1982) talked about the system of the panopticon which was a structure that was utilized in relation to prisoner cells, where a centralized system of observation and inspection sits in the heart of circular or semi-circular jails, monitoring the prisoners in their cells. In the context of this research this boarding school/hostel uses specific forms of monitoring. This section examines the surveillance techniques that the housemothers at this 'all-girls' boarding school utilize in their daily jobs. A technique used by management in this boarding school in relation to workplace surveillance, according to the findings, was a technique that was common to the student supervisors. They indicated that when they are on duty, they always work with a senior housemother which is the matron or housemother hence the reason they alternate the times when they are on call. This indicates that there is someone superior who is always there to supervise and monitor the student housemothers when they are doing their job, and they also have someone to report to. This system of surveillance enables the student supervisors to do their job efficiently and correctly because of the presence of the senior housemothers monitoring. Management implemented a technique that closely supervises and monitors the work done by these student housemothers. Managers use close monitoring as a tool to maintain control over the labour process. Zama, a student supervisor added:

Also, there are ways of doing things the matron and the housemother are always there, so there is always like someone superior that is always on duty with you. (Zama,01/12/23).

The researcher observed a few forms of passive resistance to the methods of control used by management in these boarding school hostels. The housemothers tend to be ignorant and forgetful of some rules, for example ignoring messages that would have been communicated to them. Also, some take time to do the tasks that would be assigned to them, for instance having meetings on a Sunday evening that were to be done on Friday. This highlights Foucault's (1982) concept of resistance from his contribution to the LPT discourse. However, the surveillance system restricts employees' freedom of choice since administrative supervision closely controls their behaviour. Less flexibility and discretion are available to workers when working at their own speed. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted the aspect of internet and computer monitoring that is done under the information technology department to ensure that the employees do not misuse the resources of the school. Overspending on non-work-related websites and applications during working hours can have a detrimental effect on productivity and employee effectiveness. Some websites are restricted for housemothers to access because they use the school's internet connection services, these include TikTok, Instagram applications, and movie websites. Hence time spent on other social platforms is limited while at work and productivity is enhanced.

5.4.3 Worker autonomy and discretion

The ability of employees to make decisions and act on their own initiative at work is referred to as employee agency. Fostering a healthy work environment and encouraging both individual and group contributions require employee agency. When Burawoy (1981:92) incorporated subjectivity into the workplace, he illustrated that employees voluntarily engage in control systems. This subsection tries to identify whether housemothers have agency within their working environment and if they exercised their agency within the labour process. The data from the respondents indicates that the housemothers have limited autonomy when it comes to them making decisions in relation to their duties and responsibilities. Although school management has prescribed rules and regulations for how hostel ought to be run, the housemothers have some agency. This is evidenced by the drafting of various activities that housemothers use to encourage students to participate in hostel life outside their academic commitments. Also, housemothers have some freedom to execute their duties in unique ways.

Research participants indicated that at the beginning of every year and term, the housemothers have in-house meetings in which they discuss how they are going to operate as a hostel/house. For example, they get to pick groups in which they want to work as well as come up with a rooster/schedule for their working shifts that is more flexible to them. To add, housemothers are allowed to propose new ideas, solutions and processes that can improve conditions in the hostels. The findings state that the housemothers are fully responsible for choosing what activities the girls can do while they reside in the hostels. This gives them a sense of ownership and control of their duties which results in job satisfaction and motivation to do work. Ayanda, a housemother stated the following:

I get very excited when there are activities that the girls can do. You can just see how excited they are and what you have organised as staff which just makes them forget about everything else. (Ayanda, 08/09/23).

These findings highlighted an interesting aspect of subjectivity in the workplace for these housemothers where hostel matrons are the only individuals that can reclaim their subjectivity through trade unions. Hostel matrons have an avenue where they can raise their workplace grievances meaning they have some agency. One of the hostel matrons, Grace indicates:

There are unions present at school which I can belong to, and they have been effective as I've seen with our staff meetings they come in and discuss. In the teachers' groups we are given a platform and a voice and a space at the school (Grace, 27/09/23).

Nonetheless, structural factors and managerial authority limit worker agency. The chain of command in a workplace can constrain the ability of workers to make autonomous decisions, also certain job descriptions can limit employee's discretion over their tasks. Despite their willingness to compromise, managers eventually want to reduce agency. This is the case for housemothers and student supervisors. One student supervisor stated the following:

No, we have no trade unions or any representation to express our workplace grievances. There is the principal who doesn't really care and there's the other woman who is sometimes called when we express grievances, but nothing really changes. The one person who listens to our grievances is the matron. She at least tries to make all of us feel like we are part of a team and that our opinions matter. With her, it seems like we have a voice, and she tries her best to sort out our grievances at the hostel level. But she can only do so much, because she is also an employee here. (Tumi, 28/11/23).

Unathi, a housemother also indicated:

I am not sure about trade unions, and I don't even know where I would go with my issues, but I think there are things that have been raised in meetings, but they have been ignored. There is also nothing set for student supervisors for a place where they can go and raise issues that they are not happy with. There is no system in place, I would consider it a downfall (Unathi, 24/10/23).

For housemothers and student supervisors, they cannot demonstrate maximum agency in their workplace because they do not have any trade unions in place or any avenue for representations of their workplace grievances therefore limiting their agency. Studies emphasize how workers maintain and demonstrate agency in the face of adverse working conditions (Burawoy, 1979; Ackroyd and Thompson, 2016). In the case of housemothers and student supervisors, minimal agency is given to them in terms of trade unions and representatives where they have no voice when exposed to unfavourable working conditions in the hostel. As a result, these housemothers are placed in a position where they are susceptible to managerial control mechanisms, which breed employee resistance. Student supervisors apply for this type of work, because it takes care of the accommodation related expenses which are high for university students. The desperation to cut costs for student supervisors compels them to voluntarily consent to various forms of monitoring at the hostels where they are employed in the school in question. According to the findings in this study, housemothers are closely monitored through different methods and their space for agency is limited to a certain extent.

5.4.4 Managing feelings in the workplace

This section discusses the emotional aspects of work that is undertaken by housemothers who are employed in this all-girls public boarding school. The term emotional labour according to Hochschild (1983) refers to the portion of work that aims to enhance, regulate, and control employees' emotions and feelings in order to accomplish organisational objectives. This type of labour entails inducing or suppressing feelings in order to maintain an exterior countenance that fosters the appropriate mental state in others. The service provided by housemothers involves face-to-face interactions with customers (parents, students) which requires the housemothers to improve, manage, and exert control over their feelings and emotions in the workplace. The research participants indicated that a large part of their job is to create a 'home away from home', which requires them to provide emotional support to students in their care.

The organisation controls how people feel and behave, and part of their job is to follow certain guidelines regarding how they must feel and behave to get paid (Hochschild, 1979 and 1983; Brotheridge and Lee, 2003; Gelderen *et al.*, 2014). Findings from this study indicated that the duties of housemothers require them to provide the emotional support needed by teenage girls. According to Hochschild (1983), employees might engage in surface acting or deep acting, two forms of emotional labour, to generate the emotions that the organisation wants. Deep acting is about changing the workers' inner feelings to match the organisations' emotional expectations, whereas surface acting is faking, or expressing emotions without truly feeling them. The findings in this study show that the common type of acting displayed by the housemothers in this boarding school is deep acting because the school expects them to be caring and nurturing towards all the students in the hostels. The emotional expectations of the school include playing the role of a mother to the teenage girls in their care. Erica, a hostel matron explained:

I always have to be professional and courteous with kids, always caring to them. For me, it comes naturally because that is who I am, I need to be caring, friendly as I have to create a home away from home. And that is the aim of all of this, and it is a nurturing and learning environment that we need to create. Given the nature of jobs I have worked before, I feel like I had to conduct myself in such a manner hence it doesn't affect me. (Erica, 01/10/23).

Moreover, from the findings none of the participants highlighted the issue of surface acting, as they have a way of acting that is in-line with the schools' objectives. Hochschild (1983) highlighted that emotional labour can have possible effects of harm to workers as they undertake their job, for example becoming estranged from an aspect of self. From the literature provided, there are several issues being faced by teenage girls in South Africa, which these issues are no different from those also faced by young girls residing at the school's boarding facility (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon and Kadzamura, 1998; Mokgalabone, 1999; Chigona and Chetty, 2008; Mafa and Makubhele, 2020). The data indicated that, housemothers at this school, work with teenage girls with different personalities and psycho-social issues which require them to engage with the girls emotionally. This requires a certain level of emotional intelligence and maturity on the side of the housemothers, as they must be cognizant of the varying types of emotional demands of the students in their care. A housemother, Unathi stated that:

Being emotionally available for the learners is the most challenging aspect of this job because there are some learners who come with emotional issues, home issues in which you might not be so exposed to them, and you don't really know how to deal with them because you have never experienced them. But you need to be mature and professional enough to deal with them and come up with ways to deal with such which is very emotionally taxing. (Unathi, 24/10/23).

Since housemothers are expected to play a motherly role in this school, there is a certain level of emotional maturity and intelligence that is expected of the housemothers by the school. Additionally, the environment in which they operate demands that they be mindful of their actions. The student assistants raised some intriguing issues around emotional labour in the research findings. The findings in this study showed how student supervisors find it difficult balancing their academic commitments at the university and the emotionally taxing work of being a housemother. Student supervisors also indicated that challenge of offering emotional support to many teenage girls, whilst not receiving any emotional support from the school as employees. Another housemother, Kamo, indicated:

I think the school does not consider the well-being of student supervisors as much as they consider the children's. And it's understandable because we are adults, but at the same time every company or institution needs to look after its employees and that's not given here. The training when you get into the job is short considering the many things you are required to learn about the job. I have never been in an institution with so many rules. As a housemother, you need to learn all the hostel rules quickly before the girls pick up that you don't know all the rules and take advantage of you. (Kamo, 23/11/23).

Again, Tumi a student supervisor highlighted the following:

It is hard balancing schoolwork and this job, because sometimes you have to put some personal things aside in order to deal with the student needs. Sometimes you have submissions, you are stressed, you have your own personal things going on and you must put that aside and focus on the people that you are actually hired to look after. I would say when you are here your first priority is them, it is the hardest part of the job, like everything just doesn't matter it's just them. (Tumi, 28/11/23).

Lastly, the outcomes of emotional labour around the service work of housemothers has proved to be both positive and negative, but mostly negative.

This is because the housemothers, especially the student supervisors, indicated how emotionally demanding and taxing their job is because they always expected to be emotionally available to the students in their care regardless of what pressures they are under in their own personal lives. Because of this, the housemothers indicated the need to distress and disconnect from the emotional labour they perform daily. Zama explained:

Before I go to duty I feel like screaming because, I'm like I have to start. How I disconnect is if it were up to me when I'm off duty I wouldn't even be here and get my food delivered elsewhere, where I am far and don't get to see anyone's face. So, when I'm off I try staying in my room as a way to disconnect. There are occasions where it is so overwhelming and what I would do is go to church, go to weekly fellowship at church and speaking to other student supervisors and hearing that I am not the only one struggling and I'm not alone. I am so grateful for the student supervisors in this place because I wouldn't have managed without them at all because it has been so wild and so rough. (Zama,01/12/23).

Grace, a hostel matron also indicated that:

Yes, I am learning on how to disconnect as I have problems with switching off completely because of the phone and parents. I am now trying not to answer the phone when I'm off. Instead, I read, go away, spend time with family and watch movies. (Grace, 27/09/23).

The findings in this study indicated that the housemothers have the need to distress and disconnect from their stressful working conditions. However, the school does not provide any emotional support for the housemothers to cope with the stressful nature of their emotional labour.

5.4.5 Appearance management

Because the service work provided by housemothers include direct face-to-face interactions with customers (parents and students) the concept of aesthetic labour is to be explored. These interactions are deemed to be an important tool in the labour process. Numerous studies have concentrated on organisations' efforts to instil the "right" mindset in their front-line staff (Nickson *et al.*, 2005). This section explores the notion of aesthetics that housemothers must adhere to according to the requirements of the school.

According to the data, seven of the respondents mentioned that management is not that strict when it comes to how they should dress and appear when they are on duty. But they also did point out that since their work involves interactions with different people such as colleagues, parents and students they are expected to dress professionally, always look presentable and clean. This aesthetic aspects of the work of housemothers is deemed necessary as it portrays a certain image of the school and the hostels where the housemothers are employed. Having a good image enables the school to sell their service of education and caregiving successfully, especially considering that parents can exercise school choice. This is supported by literature that indicates school choice, allowed children to attend any school of their choice, was one of the biggest reforms to education brought about by the 1994 political upheaval in South Africa (Kanyopa, and Hlalele, 2021:97). Aesthetics in an organisation is regarded as the centre of the economic calculations of the practice as aesthetics aid in being competitive which therefore means that good aesthetic displays give the school a competitive advantage when it comes to parents' choice of boarding schools. Based on the data obtained, given how they dress and appear at work the housemothers do keep in mind that their line of work requires them to look a certain way due to the interactions they have with the customers while working. It is evident that management does expect housemothers to look presentable, however, they are not too strict. one of the housemothers, Ayanda, noted that:

It is not that strict at all; however, you do need to look presentable should you have a meeting with a parent. You need to be presentable enough when you are at the front desk as well. For example, you can wear a doek or bonnet when you are working at the front desk. You need to be dressed respectfully, but there is freedom because we do not have a uniform so we can wear our casual clothes. We need to keep in mind that we are dressing with little girls watching and with other staff members there. As long as you are comfortable and it's in a respectable fashion. (Ayanda, 08/09/23).

Most of the housemothers stressed the point of them having to dress appropriately in front of the teenage girls they work with. This is an important aspect of their job because they are role models to the teenage girls in their care. Some housemothers expressed that the boarders have a dress code so staff automatically have one too. Findings from the respondents also highlighted the issue of dressing appropriately at work as they work with other male staff, for example kitchen and maintenance staff as well as when called out for meetings.

This indicates that aesthetic labour is a part of how work is organised for housemothers at this boarding school. Apart from personal aesthetics, from the data obtained the hostel is to be kept neat and clean too. The hostel matrons are in charge of overseeing that the hostel, including the girl's rooms, are kept clean. Hostel matrons oversee the cleaning and maintenance staff. If something needs to be fixed or maintained, it has to be done so as to maintain the smooth running of the hostel. As housemothers and student supervisors share a building with the hostel matron, they are also accountable for managing maintenance and all maintenance issues must be directed through the hostel matron, who has the senior position. This is what research Karlsson (2012) identifies as part of organisational aesthetics which include the physical working environment, which in this case is the boarding facility/hostel. The layout and design of physical areas in the workplace are aspects of organisational aesthetics. To create an aesthetically pleasant and motivating atmosphere, this involves taking into account factors such as architecture, interior design, colour schemes, lighting, and general aesthetics. A hostel matron Grace added:

The hostel itself also has to look presentable or else we could lose children and shutdown. For example, one parent threatened to take her child out of the hostel because her child had a broken light above her bed, and she feared that it would fall and injure her child if it was not fixed. Nonetheless, the light was fixed after several complaints were launched. (Grace, 27/09/23).

These findings are consistent with the aesthetic requirements which state that employers make aesthetic commands on the labour power they hire which a few of these include looking good and sounding right (Karlsson, 2012:53). The data findings confirm that although there might not be a strict dress code, the housemothers are somehow aware that there is a certain way they should dress and act in front of their customers which includes the students, parents and their colleagues. This agrees with what Karlsson (2012) contends that aesthetics is negotiated in practice among workers and can also be restrained or stimulated by the work organisation, customers and other forces. Student supervisors, who are also university students, understand that they must dress professionally while on duty. Lastly, in the boarding school hostel, the housemothers are selling a 'home away from home' experience in this service industry which automatically requires them to have to look a certain way which aligns with the goals of the management of these hostels.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a deductive thematic analysis of the data that was collected through interviews and participant observation. The findings in study showed a clear connection to the themes outlined in the literature and the theoretical framework (the Labour Process Theory). The housemothers who participated in this study were employed in girls' hostels which housed teenage girls from grade 8 – 12. This chapter showed how the management and work organization in these hostels mirrored those of a capitalist organization. LPT discourse is founded on Marxist principles which perceives the capitalist labour process as a site of surplus value extraction at the expense of the worker. Although the school in question is not a profit-driven organization, it is a fee-paying school which applies capitalist production methods to ensure the provision of quality service for the parents and their children who reside in the hostels. The capitalist methods utilized by school management include control, monitoring and surveillance to ensure that the housemothers provide a 'home away from home' environment in their hostels. The various methods noted above were very effective, as they compelled the housemothers to provide an excellent service in managing the hostels and taking care of the teenage girls.

This study has also shown that the housemothers had some room for agency and flexibility. This room for flexibility, however, was allowed if it aligned with the objectives of the school and hostel. Additionally, housemothers also voluntarily subjected themselves to the control mechanisms applied by the schools' management because they needed the job to survive. The work of housemothers is physically and emotionally demanding, this study has shown that housemothers sometimes put aside their own personal issues to provide the emotional support required by the teenage girls in their care. Housemothers were also expected to look a certain way as a way of selling an image of a professional workplace. The division of labour in these hostels was three-tiered, meaning that it included senior matrons (housemothers), middle housemothers and junior housemothers who were university students. The latter group were not paid in cash, but rather through non-cash payments such as accommodation, food and internet connectivity, thus saving costs for the school. Overall, this chapter answered the research question, because it showed that a non-profit organization such as the school in question applied capitalist mechanisms to provide a quality service to attract more parents to send their children to the school and into the boarding facilities. The employment experiences of the house mothers mirrored those of workers employed in capitalist organizations.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter of the thesis seeks to show how the empirical case study in chapter 5 addresses the main and subsidiary goals of this research. The next section addresses the four subsidiary goals and how they relate to the main objective of the study. Thereafter, the main objective is addressed. The last section provides the empirical findings and conclusions.

6.2 Addressing subsidiary objectives

This research comprised of four subsidiary objectives. These objectives were used in answering the main objective of the research. In the discussion the subsidiary goals are listed as a reminder to the reader. (a) Examine the socio-economic backgrounds of the housemothers. This objective was achieved through discussions about housemothers historical and socio-economic backgrounds which helped in shedding light to the reasons why housemother consent to the capitalist-like logic of their job. It was apparent that most housemothers come from desperate and vulnerable backgrounds which makes the house mothering job ideal. Also, given some backgrounds where parents have worked in educational institutions have helped housemothers in shaping their decisions in their career. (b) Identify how the housemothers secured their present jobs. From the discussions, housemothers highlighted their backgrounds including the labour market.

In their backgrounds they indicated financial constraints where the senior housemothers had to end their studies after attaining their matric. Junior housemothers on the other hand are currently pursuing further studies and securing this job is beneficial to them as they have less expenses. The housemothers managed to secure their present jobs because it is not a job that requires high skilled labour. The school employs cheap labour at this boarding school and housemothers are deskilled because of their standardized repetitive tasks. (c) Investigate the impact of LPT concepts on the working experiences of housemothers, such as: control, agency, scientific management, upskilling vs de-skilling, surveillance aesthetic and emotional labour aspects. From the literature and findings, it is apparent that these themes have an impact on how housemothers' experiences in the workplace.

This is because these themes are used in shaping their labour process. The housemothers are aware of these implementations as they are a driving mechanism to achieving management goals in their work which includes efficient delivery of nurturing and care services. The findings suggest that in the capitalist labour process the work belongs to the capitalist and less to self as the housemothers had to do their work in a way that best suits the employer. This supports the claim that, in part, workers have little influence over the capitalist labour process which again shows that workers have limited agency in the workplace. The absence of trade unions for other housemothers indicates that they have less control over their labour process, making them voiceless. Because this boarding school does not seek to make profit, the main goal of organising the working conditions of housemothers in such a way is to achieve efficient delivery the service being offered by the housemothers employed in this all-girls boarding school. (d) Examine how housemothers react to these management-imposed measures to boost efficiency and provide quality service. This objective was achieved as housemothers indicated forms of resistance they exercise in the workplace, for example ignoring messages. Also, these measures lead to different pressures and stresses within the housemothers. Although they do not get emotional support from the school, housemothers find their own ways to destress from these pressures.

6.3 Addressing the main objective

The subsidiary objectives helped in achieving the main objective of the study. In analysing the working conditions of housemothers employed at an all-girls public school. Housemothers at this boarding school are required to carry out their responsibilities in a way that satisfies the demands of their employer. This involved managing their emotions, maintaining a professional appearance, being closely watched, monitored and controlled. In essence, management uses a variety of techniques to regulate productivity, efficiency, and organisation of work. However, housemothers are obedient to the demands of their jobs because they need their job for survival. For this reason, housemothers subject themselves to the demands of the capitalist (management) which for productive and efficient delivery of a 'home away from home experience' in the boarding school. This again gives reason to why housemothers work is shaped this way.

6.4 Empirical Findings and Conclusions

This study used LPT's foundations, which helped to clarify the methods and procedures employed by housemothers' management in arranging their work in the workplace. Most work studies concentrate on the theoretical features of capitalist service labour, which aims to be efficient and earn a profit. This study, therefore, fits into the ongoing research that aims to comprehend those aspects of a non-profit service linked to capitalist forms, to maximize efficiency and productivity. Under the conditions of work that housemothers working with teenage girls in boarding school hostels face, these structures are led by LPT features that focus on factors of control, scientific management (Taylorism and Fordism), aesthetics, agency, surveillance, and emotional labour. This research paper has attempted to contextualize some of the significant concerns regarding the organisation of employment in the service sectors, specifically housemothers employed in all-girl public boarding school hostels. This analysis was done with the aim to investigate how housemothers in a non-profit public Model C school cope with the production structures similar run along a capitalist-like logic. The purpose of these management-implemented techniques is to regulate standards in order to facilitate administrator goals and hostel operations. An enhanced comprehension of the methods employed by the management to mould the housemother's labour process was made possible by the correlation between the theoretical framework and the data findings.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

HOUSE MOTHERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

Respondent Details

First name	
Surname	
Position / Job title	

Contact details

Home address	
Work telephone number	
Household telephone number	
Cell phone number	

Interview Details

Place of Interview	
Date of interview	___ / ___ /201__
Interview start time	___ : ___
Interview finish time	___ : ___

SECTION B: BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What population group do you belong to?
4. What is your nationality?
5. What is your current marital status?

SECTION C: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

6. Place of origin?
7. Places of origin in the Eastern Cape? Describe the area where you spent your formative years. (i.e. the economy; the labour market; the quality of public services; crime; unemployment etc)
8. What is your guardian/s' highest level of education? (why did they stop at this level?)
9. What was your guardian/s employment?
10. What are some of the main challenges that you and your family experienced when you were growing up? (Financial, emotional, health, etc.)
11. Describe the type of schools that you mostly attended.
12. What is your highest level of education? (Why did you stop at this level?)

SECTION D: EMPLOYMENT

Employment history

13. At what age did you start working and why?
14. Employment history before the current job?
15. When did you start working for your current employer, and what factors influenced this decision? (How were you able to secure your current job?)

Current Employment

16. What is your current job position?
17. What is your employment status? [permanent, contract, or casual]
18. How did you secure this job?
19. What are the core job responsibilities?
20. How many days do you work per week?
21. How many hours do you work per day?
22. How many breaks do you get per day? (how long are they?)
23. What is the most challenging aspect of this job?
24. What are the most exciting aspects of this job?
25. How does management ensure that you do your job correctly? – control mechanisms – surveillance, reports, feedback, etc.
26. Is there a certain way that you have to dress and appear?

- 27. Do you have to speak and act a certain way? How do you manage to do this, and its impact on you?**
- 28. Are there trade unions or any other avenue of representation for you to raise your workplace grievances? Are these effective?**
- 29. Are you satisfied with your salary? Does your salary match your work effort? Explain?**
- 30. Do you get any other benefits from this job? Discuss.**
- 31. Would you consider your job safe? Are there safety measures in place?**
- 32. Do you get leave from this job? Describe.**
- 33. Are you satisfied with your job? Discuss.**
- 34. Do you feel the need to disconnect and distress from this job, if so how do you do it?**