

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE MANAGEMENT
OF TEACHER STRESS IN SELECTED SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN CHATSWORTH.**

by

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**MINI-DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL COMPLIANCE WITH
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE IN
TECHNOLOGY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AT
TECHNIKON NATAL**

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial compliance with the requirements for the Master's
Degree in Technology in the Department of Education at Technikon Natal.

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B.A. (UN); UED (UN).

I, Magesvari Govender, declare that

The role of the principal in the management of teacher stress in selected secondary schools in Chatsworth

is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted here have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

M.Govender

Durban

March 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following:

Mrs C. Turnbull-Jackson, my supervisor, for her guidance and assistance throughout this study.

The secondary school principals who participated in this study.

My family for their support, patience and much-appreciated assistance.

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ABSTRACT

South Africa has been undergoing political change and this has impacted on education. There have been major shifts in education policy, structures and curriculum. Stakeholders in education and teachers, in particular, have had to cope with this new reality. As a result of the changes in education, teachers have been confronted with a variety of problems such as fewer resources, an increase in working hours and having to perform numerous administrative and fund-raising tasks. New school management structures have been established, class sizes have been altered and Outcomes-based Education has been introduced. Poor working conditions, increased workload, role conflict and ambiguity, the threat of redundancy and re-deployment, time pressures and pupil problems are additional stressors that teachers find themselves exposed to at school. These are but some of the stressors that have contributed towards teachers experiencing stress at school and which have impacted negatively on their work performance. However, at both the Education Department level as well as at school level, very little appears to be done to address the problem of teacher stress despite the negative impact that teacher stress has on the work performance of teachers. In order for schools to function efficiently and effectively, school management authorities will have to devise appropriate strategies to manage teacher stress.

This study is confined to those aspects of teacher stress that impact negatively on teacher performance and that are within the scope of the principal's responsibilities at school. It investigates whether teacher stress is a management issue by examining its impact on the work performance of teachers at school, identifies school-based and school-related stressors and presents a set of recommendations that can be used by school principals to manage teacher stress in secondary schools. The findings of this study are also compared with the

findings of other researchers in the field of stress management and of teacher stress management, in particular.

The study incorporates qualitative research as well as a literature review. Structured interviews were conducted with six secondary school principals in the Chatsworth area. The literature review examines literature pertaining to the causes and symptoms of teacher stress, the impact of teacher stress on teachers in the performance of their duties and the management of teacher stress. Literature dealing with human resource management, personnel management, burnout and job stress is also reviewed.

This study reveals that teacher stress impacts negatively on the work performance of teachers and is therefore a management issue. Furthermore, since many of the school-based stressors fall within the scope of the principal, the management of teacher stress in the secondary school is a task for the school principal.

Whilst much has been written and said on the subject of teacher stress, there is a limited amount of research that has been done in the field of the management of teacher stress in the secondary school. The researcher is of the view that this research will help address this gap in the body of research and contribute in some way towards addressing one of the major problems currently confronting teachers and school managers in the performance of their duties.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

South African education is changing fundamentally in respect of policy, curriculum and the approach to education. Teachers are in the position where they have to adapt to the new reality of increased classroom sizes, new school management structures, the introduction of Outcomes-based Education and increased teacher workload. Teachers have to cope with fewer resources and work inordinately long hours. In addition to teaching, they have to perform administrative, financial and fund-raising tasks. Their tasks include pupil registration, the collection of school fees, the maintaining of financial records and the organising of fund-raising events. These are some of the factors that have served to create a great deal of stress for teachers and have impacted negatively on their performance at school (Association of Professional Educators of KwaZulu-Natal, 1998). Teacher stress, where it impacts on teachers' work performance, is therefore a management issue. If schools are to function effectively and efficiently, it is vital that school managers deal with the issue of managing teacher stress.

Research (Hock, 1988; Association of Professional Educators of KwaZulu-Natal, 1998; Beard, 1990) shows that teachers are exposed to a variety of stressors at work, for example, poor working conditions, role conflict and ambiguity, the threat of redundancy and re-deployment, time pressures and pupil problems. Stress is a source of great concern. At school level very little appears to be done by school management, headed by the principal, to address the problem of teacher stress and burnout. In fact, Circular No. DSR 8/2000 that was issued to all schools by the Kwazulu-Natal Education Department, states that sick leave will no longer

be granted to teachers suffering from stress. Only those applications supported by a full psychiatric report will be considered.

There appears to be a "head in the sand" attitude to the issue of teacher stress and its effect on the work performance of teachers. However, if schools are to function efficiently and effectively, school management authorities will have to devise appropriate strategies to manage this issue.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Whilst much has been written and said on the subject of teacher stress, there is a limited amount of research that has been done in the field of the management of teacher stress in secondary schools in Kwazulu-Natal. The researcher has selected the role of the principal in the management of teacher stress in secondary schools as her research topic as the principal is the most senior manager at the school and is therefore responsible for ensuring that teachers perform their work efficiently and effectively. The principal must also be able to manage issues, such as teacher stress, that impact negatively on the work performance of teachers. The researcher is of the view that research into the aforementioned topic will help address a gap in the study of the management of teacher stress and will in some way contribute to addressing one of the major problems currently confronting teachers and school managers in the performance of their duties, by making recommendations for the management of teacher stress.

This study will be confined to those aspects of teacher stress that impact negatively on teacher performance and that are within the scope of the principal's responsibilities at school. This investigation is confined to the role of the principal in the management of teacher stress at selected secondary schools in Chatsworth. It was decided to interview six secondary school principals in the Chatsworth area because the researcher had, until recently, been teaching in the Chatsworth area and was thus able to collect the relevant information fairly easily. The

schools that were selected are also representative of secondary schools in Chatsworth in terms of student and staff demographics. The reasons for selecting this particular sample are its representativity, accessibility and the fact that the researcher has a good working relationship with the subjects who have been interviewed.

The aim of this study is to identify aspects of stress that impact negatively on the work performance of teachers and which are management issues. The study will also present recommendations that can be implemented by school principals in their management of teacher stress. The study will focus on the following questions:

1. What is teacher stress?
2. What are the causes of teacher stress?
3. How does teacher stress impact on teachers in the performance of their duties at school?
4. What is the impact of teacher stress on the functioning and management of the school?
5. Is teacher stress a management issue?
6. What aspects of teacher stress can the school principal address as school management issues?
7. What strategies can the principal employ to manage teacher stress so that the school can function effectively?

The study will make close reference to the work of authorities on work stress such as Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) and Sutherland and Cooper (1990). These authorities argue that stress is directly related to the fit between an individual's ability to cope and the

conditions of the work environment in which he/she must function. These authorities employ the term, "work environment", to refer to relationships at work, organisational structure and ethos, the individual's role in the organisation and career development. Sutherland and Cooper (1990) also express the opinion that in order to be able to handle teacher stress levels, information must be obtained on the factors that give rise to these levels of stress. It is therefore clear that many of the elements of the work done by the aforementioned authorities will have relevance to this study. Reference will also be made to research on teacher stress, its causes, symptoms and management by *inter-alia* Gold and Roth (1993) and Claxton (1989), as well as to work done by Hock (1988), which refers to the negative impact of stress and burnout on the work performance of teachers.

Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) have developed a managerial-oriented model of stress. The organisational stress framework of the model pays specific attention to performance consequences and highlights stressors, coping mechanisms and individual differences as target areas for management interventions. This study will draw on the aspects of the model developed by Matteson and Ivancevich (1987), especially in relation to the organisational stress framework.

This study will be based on the concept of contingency theory that states that there is no universal "best" way of dealing with issues. Its approach to organisational behaviour entails developing a systematic understanding of the dynamics of organisational behaviour in order to be able to diagnose or analyse a specific situation. It is helpful in dealing with issues of relationships at work, organisational structure and ethos, intrinsic job factors, the individual's role in the organisation and career development.

Since schools tend to use human resources approaches in the management of the instructional behaviour of teachers, reference will be made to aspects of the Human Resources

Development Theory in this study and the work of authorities in this field such as McGregor and Argyris will be drawn upon.

1.3 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter One introduces the topic being researched, presents a background to and purpose of, the study and defines the key concepts, viz., "stress," "job stress" and "teacher stress," that are to be used in the study.

Chapter Two is a literature review that provides a brief overview of job stress, its causes and symptoms and a detailed overview of teacher stress and its sources, causes and symptoms. The management implications of teacher stress management will be examined and those aspects of teacher stress that impact negatively on their work performance and that are management issues will be identified.

Chapter Three presents research methodology, data collection procedures, analysis of the data and findings. The main concern in this section will be to analyse the data that has been collected and to present the findings that emerge.

Chapter Four will present recommendations for the school principal regarding the management of aspects of teacher stress that impact negatively on their work performance.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

Since the topic of the writer's study, the role of the principal in the management of teacher stress, falls within the broad areas of stress management and the management of job stress, the writer will briefly define the terms, "stress" and "job stress." An overview of teacher stress will then be presented.

1.4.1. STRESS.

Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) state that stress is a universal phenomenon and living entails experiencing stress. From a layperson's perspective, stress is described in various ways including feeling tense, anxious, worried or "having the blues." Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) state that scientifically, the aforementioned feelings are manifestations of the stress experience, an intriguingly complex programmed response to perceived threat that can have both positive and negative results.

In defining stress, Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) state that stress can be placed into two categories: it can be defined as either a stimulus or a response. In their work, stress can be viewed as an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences, that is a consequence of any action, situation, or event that places special demands upon a person. Such actions, events or situations are termed stressors. Special demands refer to behaviour that is unusual, out of the ordinary, physically or psychologically threatening or outside an individual's usual set of behaviours. Matteson and Ivancevich cite starting a new job assignment, making a mistake at work and changing bosses as being some of the actions, situations or events that may place special demands on individuals. These can be seen as potential stressors because not all stressors place the same demands on all people.

Stress usually comes from the "fight or flight" syndrome in which mental and physical demands come into conflict. The body undergoes changes as part of a general stress response known as the "general adaptation syndrome" (GAS). According to Selye (1956), the general adaptation syndrome begins with an alarm, continues with resistance and may terminate with exhaustion. Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) state that the activation of the GAS places unusual, sometimes extraordinary demands on the body. The more frequently an individual is in a fight or flight response mode, the more susceptible he/she is to fatigue, disease, disability, ageing and death. From an organisational perspective, this implies that the person is also more

susceptible to the performance decrements that are associated with these phenomena. The general adaptation syndrome focuses on the response of the immune system to stressors.

Lazarus (1976) states that stress refers to a broad class of problems differentiated from other problem areas because it deals with any demands which tax the system, whatever it is - a physiological system, a social system or a psychological system -and the response of that system. The reaction depends on how the person interprets or appraises (consciously or unconsciously) the significance of a harmful, threatening or challenging event. This notion implies a temporary state of unbalance or lack of equilibrium. The demands result from the interaction between external and internal factors that make up an individual or system. The individual experiences a sense or perception of threat that influences the resultant state of stress.

Claxton (1989) presents a similar definition in which the term, "stress", is used to refer to both the external pressures and demands that people are subjected to and the effect that such stressful circumstances have on their performance.

In addition, James and Arroba (1999) state that stress results from extended imbalance in the pressure people experience and their perception that they cannot deal effectively with this.

Rice (1999) refers to three distinct meanings of the term, "stress." Firstly, it may be external and refer to any event or environmental stimulus that causes a person to experience tension or arousal. Such external stimuli are termed stressors. Stressors are thus external forces, real or perceived, that bear down upon a person.

Secondly, stress may refer to a person's internal mental state of tension or arousal. It is the interpretive, defensive, emotive and coping processes occurring inside a person. These processes, while possibly producing growth and maturity, could also produce mental strain.

Lastly, stress could be the body's physical reaction to demand or damaging intrusions.

Gatto (1993) states that stress is an emotional and physiological response. It is a human function and is the body's way of dealing with difficult or unfamiliar situations. Stress is non-specific and is a matter of degree that varies with the person, situation and environment. Psychological events can produce the same stress response as physical stressors.

According to Gatto, stressors are major changes in a person's ongoing life pattern. A stressor is whatever produces non-specific effects, for example, family discord or public speaking. Some stressors produce good stress and others produce bad stress. Stressors may be internal and external. External stressors include policies and procedures, poor working relationships and repetitive or physically demanding jobs. Internal stressors include unrealistic expectations, personal needs not being met, lack of recognition and self-respect and indecisiveness.

Gatto states that stress is measured by identifying stressors and by measuring bodily changes. Furthermore, stress can be measured by physical symptoms or by the failure to realise one's potential because of the effects of stress.

Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) state that whilst it would be easy to conclude that stress is always bad, this is not the case. Stress is a neutral term. The fact that it is an adaptive response, placing special demands on individuals is neither good nor bad, harmful nor beneficial. It simply describes what takes place in terms of the individual's response. They state that what is bad is having no stress, since life is a series of adaptive responses to external situations. It is in this context that they make reference to the work of Hans Selye (1956) and the word, "eustress".

Hans Selye (1956) points out that stress affects all living creatures and is a normal part of everyday life. In order to correct the notion that stress is something bad, Selye differentiates between two types of stress - "eustress" and "distress." He states that pleasurable, satisfying

experiences come from "eustress". which is positive stress. "Eustress," is challenging and motivates people to perform well, solve problems, be creative and grow in confidence.

On the other hand, "distress" is damaging or unpleasant stress that results in performance deteriorating, adaptive bodily functioning becoming disrupted and responses becoming maladaptive. "Distress" is negative, painful and something to be avoided. Selye also points out that stress that occurs too often or is unusually prolonged, becomes dangerous.

The definition of stress that the writer will use in this study is based on a combination of the definitions that have been presented in this section. The writer accepts, and will employ, the definition by Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) that states that stress is an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences and which is a consequence of stressors. The definition of stress by Gatto (1993), which states that stress is an emotional, mental and physiological response, will also be applied in this study. Aspects of the definition of stress from Selye (1956) that the writer will employ, refer to positive ("eustress") and negative ("distress") stress. The writer's definition of stress is that stress is an adaptive response resulting from, or as a consequence of, special demands or stressors that are placed on the individual. Stress is an emotional, mental and physiological response that is moderated by individual differences. Stress can be both positive ("eustress") and negative ("distress").

In terms of the writer's definition of stress, it is evident that stress can impact negatively on the work performance of teachers. It is the role of the school principal to manage teacher stress at school level by creatively harnessing "eustress" and by addressing those stressors that place special demands on teachers and that impact negatively on their work performance.

1.4.2. JOB STRESS.

Job stress is stress that is experienced in the work environment (Arnold and Feldman, 1986). It can be either positive or negative. In some work situations people find themselves

challenged and stimulated, whilst in others they find themselves feeling threatened and anxious. Job stress is inevitable for most individuals as most people find themselves in job situations that produce stress. Sutherland and Cooper (2000) cite research evidence that indicates that a wide variety of workplace conditions cause stress, strain or pressure. They state further that due to the changing nature of society, the workplace is undergoing rapid, continuous change that requires employees to live in a state of transience and impermanence. This change acts as a powerful stressor. Individuals react in various ways to job stress. Some react emotionally - they display frustration, anxiety, happiness, excitement, depression or boredom. The way in which people perceive the world can also change under stress and they can experience mental blocks, be hypersensitive to criticism or have difficulty concentrating. Individuals who respond to stress behaviourally, may eat and drink more or become socially withdrawn and suffer from loss of appetite.

People also respond to stress physiologically and if the stress continues for a sufficiently long period, exhaustion results making the body more susceptible to diseases such as heart attacks. Rice (1999) states that work stress generally involves both the organisation and its employees. It produces negative effects for both. At the organisational level, the results include disorganisation, disruption in normal operations, lowered performance and productivity and lower profit margins. The employee experiences increased physical health problems, psychological "distress" and behavioural changes. Productivity within the company and the employee's lifestyle outside the workplace, are affected by the behavioural changes resulting from stress.

Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) state that central to understanding work stress is the identification of the factors that place sufficient demands on an employee that result in stress. They emphasize the role of importance, uncertainty and duration as factors that cause work stress.

The term, "importance," in this context, relates to how significant the event or situation is to the individual. If an individual is facing retrenchment, for example, the stress potential is greater or lesser, depending on the importance or significance that he/she attaches to it. Uncertainty refers to a lack of clarity about future events. To continue with the retrenchment example, it may be more stressful to some people to be faced with rumours of impending retrenchment rather than the certainty of knowing that they are to be retrenched. Frequently, people find that more demands are placed on them by, "not knowing," than by knowing, even if the known result is perceived as negative. Duration is an important factor because the longer demands are placed on an individual, the more stressful the situation becomes.

The definition of job stress from Arnold and Feldman (1986) will be used by the writer in this study. Arnold and Feldman (1986) define job stress as positive or negative stress that is experienced in the work environment. The writer will also refer to and use the findings of Sutherland and Cooper (2000) regarding the causes of stress in the workplace. These causes include workplace conditions, the changing nature of society and change in the workplace. In addition, reference will be made to causes of work stress that have been identified by Matteson and Ivancevich (1987). These include the role of the importance of events and situations to the individual, the individual's uncertainty about events and situations and the duration of events as factors causing work stress. The negative impact of work stress on the organisation and the individual shall be examined and the work of Rice (1999) shall be referred to in this regard.

1.4.3. TEACHER STRESS.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) define teacher stress as a response syndrome of negative affects such as anger, depression, tension, frustration and anxiety resulting from the teacher's job. The stress experienced arises from the teacher's perception of the threat to his or her mental or physical well-being and as a result of demands that he or she is unable to meet or has

difficulty meeting. The demands made upon the teacher could be either imposed by other people or could be self-imposed. The teacher activates coping mechanisms to reduce the perceived threat. If these coping actions are unsuccessful, the teacher experiences a number of psychological and emotional reactions. A central element of the model presented by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) is the teacher's perception of threat.

Claxton (1989) presents a similar definition. He states that the word, "stress," is used to refer to both the external pressures and demands that people are subjected to and the effect that such stressful circumstances have on their performance. Stress affects people physically, behaviourally, socially, emotionally and mentally.

Most models of teacher stress (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978; Tellenback *et al.*, 1983; Moracco and McFadden, 1998) contain all or some of the following components: potential stressors (societal, occupational and family), appraisal mechanisms, actual stressors (teacher perceived stressful situations), coping mechanisms, manifestations of stress (physical and/or psychological), burnout and chronic symptoms and teacher characteristics (age, past experiences, personality traits and belief systems).

Seyfarth (1991) refers to four types of stress at schools. He refers to time stress, which occurs when there is insufficient time allotted for completing a task or when inflexible deadlines are established for the completion of work assignments. The second type of stress is situational stress where the situation that the person is placed in exceeds the individual's ability to cope. Situational stress can occur when teachers have to deal with students whose emotional and physical needs exceed the families' and school's resources for assistance. Teachers become overwhelmed by the problems of these children. They also experience feelings of guilt and anger because they lack the power to address and correct the conditions that contribute to the children's difficulties. This impacts negatively on their work performance. Teachers experience encounter stress when they are forced to deal with other individuals who exhibit

unpleasant or unpredictable behaviour. Parents who are angry or abusive can create a situation where teachers experience encounter stress and this can impact negatively on the way in which teachers perform their duties at school. The last form of stress identified by Seyfarth is anticipatory stress. This type of stress arises when an individual experiences anxiety about an upcoming event. Teachers may experience anticipatory stress prior to a promotion interview or before a classroom observation visit.

The writer will use the definition of teacher stress as presented by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) in this study. The definition of teacher stress by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) states that teacher stress is a response syndrome of negative affects such as anger, depression, tension, frustration and anxiety resulting from the teacher's job. The writer also agrees with the view presented by these authorities that one of the key elements resulting in teacher stress is the teacher's perception of threat. This definition draws attention to the important role of the school principal in managing teacher stress. The principal has the power to minimise the negative affects of stress experienced by teachers at school level, which impact negatively on their work performance.

The writer will draw on the work of Seyfarth (1991) when discussing the different types of stress at school. The concepts of time stress and situational stress as defined by Seyfarth (1991), will be employed by the writer as they are relevant to this study, while encounter stress and anticipatory stress as defined by Seyfarth (1991) will be referred to in lesser detail.

1.5 SUMMARY

This study has the following objectives:

- a. to identify the aspects of teacher stress that impact negatively on their work performance;
- b. to identify aspects of teacher stress that are management issues;

- c. to investigate the role of the principal in the management of teacher stress at selected secondary schools in Chatsworth;
- d. to use the findings of this study to draw up recommendations that could be used by secondary school principals in the management of teacher stress at their schools.

Definitions of stress, job stress and teacher stress have also been presented. A literature review providing a brief overview of the causes and sources of job stress and a detailed overview of the sources and causes of teacher stress will be presented in Chapter Two. The management implications of teacher stress will be discussed and those aspects of teacher stress that impact negatively on the work performance of teachers and that are management issues, will be identified.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the sources and symptoms of job stress in general and teacher stress in particular, will be examined. The implications of job stress for management and the implications of teacher stress for school management will be examined. The impact of stress on teachers in the performance of their duties will be examined in detail. This will be done in order to establish how school management can intervene and manage this stress so that it does not affect the effective and efficient functioning of the school. The literature review will focus on studies that are pertinent to this investigation.

2.1 THE CAUSES AND SOURCES OF JOB STRESS

According to Rice (1999), job complexity, work overload and work underload, unsafe physical conditions and shift work are specific work conditions that contribute to stress. The factors contributing to job complexity may include the amount and sophistication of information required to function in the job, as well as the expansion or addition of methods for performing the job.

Work overload can be both quantitative and qualitative in kind. Quantitative overload occurs when the physical demands of the job exceed the worker's capacity. This can occur when the worker has too much to do in too short a time. Qualitative overload occurs when the work is too complex or difficult. This can occur when the job taxes either the technical or mental skills of the worker. Work underload occurs when the job is not challenging or fails to maintain the worker's interest or attention. The job may be boring, repetitive, lacking in social interaction and low in satisfaction.

Physical danger is a potential source of job stress. Successful coping is related to one critical factor whether the employees feel adequately trained to handle the emergencies. Stress results when demands exceed capacity.

Arnold and Feldman (1986) refer to job characteristics, interpersonal relationships and personal factors as major sources of job stress. In addition to role overload and role underload, they cite role ambiguity and role conflict as job characteristics that give rise to job stress. Role ambiguity occurs when a person does not know what management's expectations of him/her are. This results in low performance and low job satisfaction, high anxiety, motivation to leave the company and tension. Role conflict arises when the employee experiences stress from conditions such as overpromotion, underpromotion, lack of job security and thwarted ambition.

In identifying interpersonal relationships as a source of job stress, Arnold and Feldman (1986) state that personal relationships are very important to job satisfaction. Broad social networks, including support from workers and management, serve as a buffer against stress. Employees need to believe that managers care about their welfare. This concern is often related to leader characteristics and organisational structure. Management style and what the manager believes about employees are also critical. Sutherland and Cooper (2000) point out that a leadership style that is inappropriately authoritarian can be a potential source of stress. This type of leader is unlikely to adopt a participative style of leadership, or appreciate the benefits that feedback about performance and recognition and praise for effort, bring to the boss-subordinate relationship. He/she will probably not be aware of the effectiveness of such approaches in reducing levels of stress at work.

Another source of job stress is career concerns, including the lack of job security (Arnold and Feldman, 1986). Job stress mirrors the developmental peaks and valleys in the employee's career. For some employees promotion does not come or the job that they thought was secure,

may be eliminated. For many people, job loss is the ultimate in work stress. Four factors are closely related to stress in career development: underpromotion, overpromotion, lack of job security and frustrated job ambitions. Job insecurity increases stress and generally reduces productivity.

The structure of a business can often produce stress. Employees often complain about rigid structure, interoffice or intraoffice squabbles and inadequate supervision from management. Employees' lack of involvement in decision-making and restrictions on their behaviour, including lack of managerial support for individual initiative and creativity, are further sources of job stress.

Sutherland and Cooper (2000) refer to six different stressor categories. These include: stress in the job itself, role-based stress, stress due to the changing nature of relationships with other people at work, career stress, stress associated with organisational structure and climate and stressors associated with the home and work interface. This last category of stressors will not be addressed in this study as the study is confined to examining aspects of stress in the workplace that are management issues and that impact negatively on teachers in the performance of their duties.

Constant change has been the dominant theme of organisational life in the 1990s. This has resulted in change becoming a powerful stressor agent because it necessitates adaptation, whether it is perceived as a negative or positive experience (Sutherland and Cooper, 2000). Another impact of changes in the workplace is that the pressure for high levels of performance is continuous. Management in secondary schools places higher demands on staff to adapt and learn new skills. They often have to rely on team members with skills that are very different from their own and whose skills they are unable to assess. Stress results when people find themselves in situations for which they feel under-prepared and where they are unsure whether they have the skills to deal with unforeseen crises.

In organisations that are rapidly changing, there is less security of employment than was previously the case when the organisation was stable. Social patterns at work are frequently disrupted as the process of reorganisation occurs. There will thus be more pressure on working relationships. Whilst there will be a need to work co-operatively with others in order to accomplish the tasks set out, there will be at the same time, fewer social safety devices to manage and contain difficulties. The difficulties are inevitable and arise from working in groups and organisational systems and from trying to work co-operatively with people with whom one feels in competition for resources, position and recognition.

James and Arroba (1999) refer to the impact that changes in organisations and new ways of organising have on the stress levels of individuals. Some of the changes include technological innovation, social change and increased diversity in the workforce. When people have to adapt continuously, they begin feeling less able to cope with their jobs. They may also experience instability in work relationships that had previously been supportive.

2.2 SYMPTOMS OF JOB STRESS

Rice (1999) identifies the following behavioural symptoms of job stress:

1. Procrastination, work avoidance and absenteeism.
2. Lowered performance and productivity.
3. Increased alcohol use and drug abuse.
4. Outright sabotage on the job.
5. Aggression.
6. Deteriorating relationships with family and friends.
7. Suicide or attempted suicide.

Rice (1999) also highlights the following behavioural symptoms that can impact on an organisation: poor job performance, absenteeism, accident proneness, low job involvement and loss of sense of responsibility to the job and lack of concern for the organisation and for colleagues. The final outcome may be for employees to leave their jobs.

2.3 CAUSES AND SOURCES OF TEACHER STRESS

This study will focus on issues that relate to the school and its environment that affect teachers in the performance of their duties. The out of school sources of stress will not be addressed as they fall outside the scope of this study.

Authorities (Kyriacou, 1987; Farber, 1991; Everard and Morris, 1996) identify the main school-related causes of teacher stress as being pupil misbehaviour, educational changes, poor working conditions, time pressures, role conflict, confusion or overload and a school ethos that denies information and support. Additional sources of teacher stress include poor motivation of students and conflict with colleagues. However, Kyriacou (1987) points out that the main sources of stress for an individual teacher in a particular school may vary greatly.

Seyfarth (1991) also identifies four types of stress at schools. Firstly, he refers to time stress which occurs when there is insufficient time allotted for completing a task or when inflexible deadlines are established for the completion of work assignments. An example of this is the scheduling of standardised tests. Standardised tests result in reducing time available for instruction. Teachers work with "packaged curriculums" that often exceed their ability to cover all that is expected. When teachers have to focus on material that the standardised test covers, the result can be a reduction in the teacher's ability to adapt, create or diverge. This can thus be a special source of stress for some teachers.

In a similar vein, Claxton (1989) refers to the time pressures that teachers experience and which result in their experiencing stress. Teachers often complain that they do not have the

time to do the job that they feel they ought to do and want to do. They do not have the time to meet short-term demands for preparation, marking of pupils' books and report-writing. Neither is there time to meet long-term demands such as organising schemes of work or catching up on paperwork backlogs.

Situational stress is the second type of stress identified by Seyfarth (1991). Situational stress occurs when the situation that the person is placed in exceeds the individual's ability to cope. Situational stress can result when teachers have to deal with students whose emotional and physical needs exceed the family's and school's resources for assistance. Teachers become overwhelmed by the problems of these children. They also experience feelings of guilt and anger because they lack the power to address and correct the conditions that contribute to the children's difficulties.

Thirdly, teachers suffer encounter stress when they are forced to deal with other individuals who exhibit unpleasant or unpredictable behaviour. Parents who are angry or abusive can create a situation where teachers suffer encounter stress.

The last form of stress identified by Seyfarth is anticipatory stress. This type of stress arises when an individual experiences anxiety about an upcoming event. Teachers may experience anticipatory stress prior to a promotion interview or before a classroom observation visit. Anticipatory stress can often inspire the teacher to higher levels of work and in such cases can be considered to be positive. The stress is negative if the teacher starts reacting adversely and becomes anxiety and nerve-ridden. Probationers who are visited by their supervisors for assessment purposes often manifest this type of stress.

Phillips (1993) identifies a growing gap between a teacher's self-efficacy and outcome expectancy as a source of stress. Self-efficacy refers to the person's view that he/she is capable of performing a task and outcome expectancy refers to the idea that a certain action will lead to a desired outcome. Stress arises when a person may feel that a certain action will

produce the desired outcome yet not feel capable of performing that action. In such a case a teacher would have high outcome expectations for action but low self-efficacy about his or her ability to perform the action. A good example, and one of relevance to the South African education system, is that of Outcomes-based Education. Owing to insufficient and inadequate training, many teachers would experience a gap between self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. This would obviously become a source of stress for them. Kyriacou in Cole and Walker (1989) states that teachers are likely to experience stress if they perceive that they have little control over the demands made upon them and if they feel that they lack the ability to deal with these demands.

Another source of stress for teachers is the decline of a school. The decline of a school occurs when results at the school are poor and do not meet community expectations, when there is a breakdown in discipline and when culture of learning and teaching is absent. Whilst the community climate may be one of anger, denial and hostility, embarrassment, sadness and fear may be important school factors. The community usually blames the teachers if results are not as good as had been expected or if something goes wrong at school. The school staff has to learn how to deal with apportioning blame for the decline of the school and this creates an additional source of stress for the teacher.

Gender is a source of teacher stress. Women in the workplace experience phenomena such as sexual discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are especially stressful to them. At school level this is seen where male staff members may refuse to accept the authority of a female superordinate. Women are also excluded from areas of management that have traditionally been the domain of males, for example, timetabling.

Job characteristics are a major source of stress for teachers. Job characteristics include role ambiguity, role overload and underload and role conflict. Role ambiguity is when the individual has inadequate information about his/her work role. There is a lack of clarity about

work objectives, responsibilities and colleagues' expectations. The lack of feedback leads to confusion, frustration, helplessness and stress. Phillips (1993) presents a similar view and cites in addition, a loss of autonomy and sense of professionalism and problems associated with role ambiguity and role conflict as factors contributing to teacher stress.

Role conflict occurs when the individual in a particular work role is torn by conflicting demands, or by doing things that he/she does not want to do. There may be a difference of view with one's superordinate or the job may conflict with personal, social and family values.

Role overload is when the employee feels that he/she is being asked to do more than time or ability permits. This results in great stress and anxiety. An example of this is where teachers are expected to carry out numerous administrative tasks such as the collection of school fees and the keeping of discipline records. This, in addition to their tasks of maintaining their form classes, puts them under pressure. Teachers who have a greater level of responsibility at school have a greater chance of experiencing stress.

Role underload is when employees have too little to do or when there is too little variety in their work. This results in low self-esteem, increased frequency of nervous complaints and symptoms and increased health problems. One of the most disturbing outcomes is passivity. Workers feel both physically and psychologically weary. At school level, stress emanating from role underload is experienced by teachers who have been declared to be surplus staff, as well as by educators who have been teaching the same courses to the same grades over a prolonged period.

Good relationships are one of the central factors in individual and organisational health (Powell and Enright, 1990). Problems are exacerbated if there is conflict between members of the organisation and when the environment is not supportive. In a work environment where there are poor relations, teachers would feel inhibited about sharing their problems for fear of appearing weak and inadequate. The inability to speak about stress and to get support is in

itself stressful. Everard and Morris (1996) state, that society and culture are obstacles that hinder management from preventing stress. Stress is seen as a taboo subject and is generally not discussed as males, in particular, are conditioned not to expose their feelings or to display emotion.

Change in education is a major source of stress for teachers (Claxton, 1989). Change, in this context, refers to policy changes, changes in pupil-teacher ratios, changes in education legislation and curriculum change. At school level, the rate of change is rapid, with new skills and awarenesses of assessment, management, counselling, technology and pedagogy being rapidly defined and promulgated. Teachers are treated and are beginning to feel more like workers than like professionals. There is a feeling that their sense of power and freedom to evaluate amongst these opportunities is diminishing. The rapid rate of policy change, the relative decline in salaries, status, promotion prospects, and the insecurity of the redeployment threat are all factors that are likely to exacerbate teacher stress (Cole and Walker, 1989). Powell and Enright (1990) state that any changes, which alter psychological, physiological and behavioural routines, are stressful. Promotion, retirement and redundancy produce massive changes in routine and are thus sources of stress for teachers.

Industrial action as undertaken by teachers in the mid-80s is also a source of considerable stress among teachers as it challenges individuals' identities as vocational professionals and creates tensions within staff rooms (Cole and Walker, 1989). This view is echoed by Claxton (1989) who adds that the issue of covering lessons for absent colleagues is one that remains contentious in staff rooms.

Standardised testing is another source of teacher stress (Phillips, 1993). There are some teachers who feel embarrassed, ashamed and guilty when below grade-level test scores are attained by their pupils. For those teachers who believe that standardised tests are invalid, the

necessity to raise scores sets up feelings of dissonance and alienation that can be sources of stress.

Seyfarth (1991) states that some teachers experience stress as a result of their relationships with their superordinates. Teachers who do not receive performance feedback from principals and who feel that they are not able to influence administrators' decisions about their work are more likely to experience stress. Management style is often a source of stress to teachers. Paisey (1981) defines management style as the characteristic way in which a manager goes about his/her managerial tasks in a specific organisation assessed over the longer term by those who work with him/her. Some managers subscribe to McGregor's Theory X that essentially holds that the average person has little ambition, dislikes hard work and responsibility and primarily desires security. Those managers, who subscribe to McGregor's Theory X, expect little from people in terms of their creative capacity, ability to make intelligent decisions, reliability and hard work without the application of sanctions.

McGregor's Theory Y, on the other hand, holds a more positive view of human nature. Theory Y states that work is as natural as play or rest, that people will exercise direction in working towards goals to which they are committed and that commitment stems from the rewards that are associated with the attainment of those goals. Managers who favour the Theory Y position expect much from others, believe in their creative capacity, participative willingness and potential reliability and application to work, given the right contextual conditions in the organisation.

Relocation is an extra-organisational stressor that is closely linked to job and organisational factors (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1986). Relocation can occur as a result of employee promotion or transfer. In the case of South African teachers at present, it can also occur as a result of staff redeployment. In the case of female employees and where there are dual-career families, women may have to ask their spouses to change jobs or relocate. Marital conflict

develops when spouses resist the move. This can result in a highly stressed, unproductive employee.

2.4 SYMPTOMS OF TEACHER STRESS

According to Everard and Morris (1996) the main symptoms of teacher stress, as identified in surveys, are feelings of exhaustion, reduction of contacts outside school, frustration at lack of achievement, apathy, irritability, displaced aggression and a wish to leave teaching. In addition, Claxton (1989) identifies increasing punitiveness towards pupils, colleagues and family as one of the symptoms of teacher stress.

Seyfarth (1991) states that the experience of stress manifests itself in feelings of fear, anxiety, depression and anger. The individual who has been subjected to prolonged stress will experience fatigue and withdrawal, display a reluctance to go to work, be hypersensitive to criticism and exhibit hostility and aggression towards others.

Stress produces physiological effects that exact a cumulative toll on both mental and physical health and can also have an effect on cognitive functioning.

2.5 STRESS IS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE

James and Arroba (1999) state that whenever stress is present, performance will not be at its best and will in fact be below optimum. Seyfarth (1991) concurs by stating that whilst some stress is desirable in order to achieve optimal performance, performance can decrease markedly as a result of prolonged exposure to stress. The most basic reason therefore that organisations need to have an effective strategy for managing stress is simply to obtain top performance.

Stress in the workforce is costly. A stressed worker will have an increased rate of absenteeism from work, may become ill, or may leave the organisation. The latter will incur recruitment, selection and training costs. Effective stress management saves money.

Organisations need staff commitment. Commitment is more readily given when staff feels that they are receiving good, fair treatment. This is why stress management is important. It demonstrates to staff that their employer is good and caring and treats them well. Effective stress management must be viewed as part of good leadership. Preventing the experience of stress can be viewed as a step towards staff empowerment and the setting of a positive organisational culture. Both of these are elements of good leadership in an organisation.

Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) present the following reasons for managing stress. They state that dysfunctional stress, related to, *inter-alia*, absenteeism, turnover, increased health care costs and decrements in the quantity and quality of production, is expensive. They point out that stress has cost organisations in the United States billions of dollars.

There are also humanitarian reasons for managing stress. An organisation has a humanitarian responsibility to contribute to employee health, quality of life and longevity by lessening sources of stress and by providing support activities and training for its employees.

Another reason that is cited, as warranting managerial concern are the opportunities lost because of stress. Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) argue that a stressed employee cannot be as creative, interpersonally effective or as team-oriented as an employee who is not stressed. Furthermore, a number of problems result from excessive stress in terms of lost opportunities, poorer decision-making and improper management of people.

Lastly, unmanaged stress can result in the loss or waste of human resources. An organisation invests in people in order to build capacity in terms of skills, abilities, experience and knowledge. When people are forced to retire or leave the organisation due to stress, the organisational cost can be significant.

2.6 TEACHER STRESS IS A SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ISSUE

In this study, school management issues will be defined as issues that are school-related and school-based, that impact on the performance of duties by teachers at school and that fall within the scope, experience and ambit of the school principal.

Seyfarth (1991) states that excessive and prolonged stress can result in any teacher's energy being sapped and productivity being sharply reduced. Stress does not accumulate in people's bodies; it also accumulates in organisations. If it reaches high levels, it can destroy organisational climate, lower organisational performance and weaken organisational effectiveness.

Teacher stress is a management issue because of its effect on job performance. It can result in teacher absences where teachers absent themselves from duty to avoid stress or because of stress-precipitated ill health. Stress impacts both negatively and positively on teacher performance. It can lead to increased turnover and absenteeism.

The latter two courses of action permit employees to withdraw from unpleasant environments. A positive aspect of stress is that, people will sometimes push themselves to their performance limits under moderate amounts of stress. As individuals start feeling more stress at work, their performance will increase and they may be energised to take advantage of new opportunities or to deal with potential problems. Management has to come up with creative ways to manage stress so that its negative impact on teacher performance is minimised.

Teachers could experience a lowered level of job satisfaction and commitment and their relationship and rapport with pupils could be adversely affected (Kyriacou in Cole and Walker, 1989). Kalker (1984) states that teachers who are highly stressed are not in a position to dedicate themselves to doing full justice to their work. Students are thus the ultimate sufferers of the consequences of teacher stress.

As has already been mentioned, Seyfarth (1991) states that excessive and prolonged stress can result in any teacher's energy being sapped and productivity being sharply reduced. Administrators should be especially sensitive to conditions that cause stress. Fatigue, burnout and exhaustion will ensue if there is continued exposure to stressful situations without there being a corresponding increase in coping resources.

Phillips (1993) defines burnout as the ultimate effect of prolonged stress. Kyriacou in Cole and Walker (1989) states that teacher burnout refers to a state of mental, emotional and attitudinal exhaustion in teachers resulting from a prolonged experience of stress. Whilst the teachers are still able to function as teachers, they have lost a large measure of their enthusiasm and commitment for their work and this is reflected in aspects of their work performance.

Rice (1999) states further, that burnout is the result of unmanaged work stress. It includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment. According to Kyriacou in Riches and Morgan (1989) teacher stress and burnout may significantly impair the teacher's working relationship with his pupils. It may also adversely affect the quality of his/her teaching and the commitment that he/she displays.

One of the consequences of teacher stress which impacts on teachers' performance of their duties and one that is often discussed in literature on teacher stress, is teachers leaving the profession (Cole and Walker, 1989; Phillips, 1993). Teachers who have decided to leave the teaching profession display negative attitudes and diminished capacities. These teachers develop a sense of aggression, show a decreased ability to deal with classroom problems and display general irritability and hypersensitivity to criticism (Farber, 1991).

Teacher stress results in job dissatisfaction. The employee feels little motivation to go to work, to do a good job while at work or to stay on the job. Anxiety, tension, anger and resentment are among the more commonly reported symptoms. Some people find job pressure

so great that they increase their psychological distance and gradually become depressed. This can occur if the employee has tried but failed to correct the stress situation. When this occurs often the outcome could be learned helplessness. This will prevent the employee from making changes even when it is within his/her power to do so.

Everard and Morris (1996) state that some stress is a valuable element in a job as it provides challenge and motivation, helps to raise performance and is an ingredient of job satisfaction. They state further that the lack of stimulation such as provided by stress can lead to boredom which in itself can prove stressful.

Stress in teaching may have positive outcomes (Dunham, 1984). It may result in the teacher developing new coping skills. It could result in the teacher having an increased sense of self-concept deriving from having successfully solved problems and developed new skills that he/she could utilise in similar situations that may arise in the future. Teacher stress may also result in the development of a more effective teaching style and behaviour, the development of more positive relations with students and improved interpersonal relationships with other colleagues.

2.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the sources and symptoms of job stress in general and teacher stress in particular, were examined. The implications of job stress for management were briefly outlined and the implications of teacher stress for school management were examined in detail. The factors that impact negatively on the performance of duties by the teacher at school were examined in detail, as these are issues of concern in this study. The literature review that was presented focussed on studies that are pertinent to this investigation.

Chapter Three will present a discussion on the empirical research that the writer has conducted. The writer has interviewed six secondary school principals from the Chatsworth

area in order to establish their views on the impact of stress on teacher performance and the role of the principal in the management of teacher stress in secondary schools. The data collected in these interviews will be analysed and the findings drawn from them will be discussed. The data collection procedures that have been employed will also be discussed.

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CHAPTER THREE

DATA, DATA ANALYSIS AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

This chapter will present a discussion on the data collection procedures that have been employed. There will also be an analysis of the data that has been collected.

3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The writer has chosen to conduct qualitative research in order to obtain empirical data for this study. Qualitative research is inductive (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). Rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses or theories, qualitative researchers develop concepts, insights and understandings from patterns in the data. Qualitative researchers do operate within theoretical frameworks but the goal of qualitative research is to make sure the theory fits the data and not *vice versa*.

In qualitative methodology the researcher looks at people and settings holistically. People are studied in the context of their pasts and the situations in which they find themselves. It was decided to interview six secondary school principals because principals are the managers of schools where teachers are experiencing stress that impacts negatively on them in the performance of their duties. This study argues that the management of teacher stress at school level is the responsibility of the school principal particularly in view of the impact that stress has on teachers in the performance of their duties.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In addition to the literature review that was conducted in Chapter Two and given that teacher stress is a management issue, the researcher conducted interviews with the principals of six selected secondary schools in Chatsworth in order to obtain empirical evidence about their views on teacher stress and about their management of teacher stress in their schools. The

interviews had specific core questions about aspects of teacher stress that impact on the teacher's work performance as well as about what strategies, if any, were employed by the principal to manage the aspects of teacher stress that impacted negatively on their work performance (Refer to Appendix B). The questions were open-ended and the interviewer recorded the responses that were given on the interview schedule. Each respondent was asked the same questions in the same order and form in which they appeared on the interview schedule. There was no input from the interviewer apart from the reading out of the questions and the recording of responses.

3.3 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Hall and Hall (1996) point out that the social survey using questionnaires is widely recognised as a standard method of collecting information. Its purpose is to generate information in a systematic fashion by presenting all informants with questions in a similar manner and recording their responses in a methodical way. This method exemplifies the scientific approach to data collection. The issue of reliability of information is addressed by reducing and eliminating differences in the way in which questions are asked and the manner in which they are presented.

3.4 SAMPLE

It was decided to interview six secondary school principals in the Chatsworth area because the researcher teaches in this area and would thus be able to collect information fairly easily as the schools are in close proximity to one another. The schools that were selected are representative of secondary schools in Chatsworth in terms of student and staff demographics and issues of concern as outlined in (3.2) above. Chatsworth has eighteen secondary schools spread out over nine residential units with an average of two secondary schools per residential unit. The sample selected represents 33% of the number of schools in Chatsworth. In

summary, the reasons for selecting this particular sample are its representivity and the accessibility that the researcher has to the respondents.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The structured interview that was used to obtain the data for this study comprised of seven questions. Six principals of selected secondary schools in Chatsworth were interviewed. The researcher conducted the interviews and recorded the responses that were received. The responses that were obtained will be presented in this section. The data will be analysed question by question. Each question will be listed in the order that it appears in the interview schedule. This will be followed by a listing of the responses that each of the principals who was interviewed made to the question. The interviewees will be designated as A,B,C,D,E and F and their responses will be presented *verbatim* in this sequence. The data will be analysed after each question has been listed and the responses to it have been presented.

The first question that was posed to the interviewees dealt with the impact of teacher stress on teachers in the performance of their duties and reads as follows:

If we consider teacher stress to be an unpleasant emotional state which results from aspects of teachers' work and wherein teachers experience emotions such as anger, tension, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness, how does teacher stress affect teachers in the performance of their duties at your school?

The following responses are quoted *verbatim*:

A: It has a definite impact on productivity and effectiveness. Teachers do not always perform below the expected standard but would definitely perform better if it wasn't for stress. A more tangible expression of teacher stress is seen in the extra-curricular

programmes of the school. Teachers hesitate to go on duty and work only up to 2.30 p.m. In terms of stress, they just want to go home and recover. They do the absolute minimum and won't remain after school for professional development programmes.

- B: The stress that teachers undergo results in a drop in their interest level in their subject. Some of the stress is due to the new materials and change. Teacher loading was tight last year and resulted in absenteeism. At first I didn't recognise it (teacher loading) as a source of stress. Then I addressed, advised and counselled them (the teachers concerned). Most of the problems emanate from the new operational requirements.
- C: Leave-taking and absenteeism are clearly evident. People complain of overload more and more. Education has new rules, extra hours. They kind of reject/resist (them). Haven't come to terms with it. Some say this, others still do their work. Work is done under protest. This is not common to all teachers. Some respond more like this than others.
- D: It has a negative impact, for example, the teacher involved in the prom (a school dance which serves as a "coming out" into society for girls in their final year at school) dispute was stressed out and took three weeks off. Classes lose out. It is impossible to replace teachers in such circumstances when there is an element of uncertainty as to when the teacher will return. There is absenteeism. Teachers can't handle the pressure. Their output suffers. They can't deliver qualitative education.
- E: Seasoned teachers get stressed out due to lack of opportunities for promotion. Teachers want to leave the profession. It affects job satisfaction. They don't see opportunities. Frustration sets in when they see younger teachers getting promoted.

F: After a period of time certain educators get absent. There are occasional outbursts. They come to the office to make their complaints and get it off their chests. In certain cases, they take it out on the child. There is some physical violence.

DATA ANALYSIS

100% of the respondents expressed the view that teacher stress had a negative effect on the work performance of teachers. Productivity and effectiveness were adversely affected and teachers were unable to deliver quality education.

67% of the respondents cited increased absenteeism and leave-taking as examples of the negative consequences arising from teacher stress.

83% of the respondents referred to the adverse effect that stress had on teacher motivation and performance. The examples used to illustrate the decline in teacher motivation included the refusal by teachers to participate in extra-curricular activities and staff development programmes, teachers not being willing to work extra hours, teachers complaining and teachers not enjoying job satisfaction.

16,67% of the interviewees made reference to teachers experiencing stress and wanting to leave the teaching profession as a result of not being promoted to higher positions. It was pointed out that seasoned teachers in particular, were experiencing stress due to the lack of opportunities for promotion. Furthermore, these teachers were even more frustrated when they saw younger teachers getting promoted. This sense of frustration and the stress that it engendered had a negative impact on job satisfaction.

33,3% identified changes in education and new operational requirements as being sources of teacher stress.

16,67% of the sample stated that teachers who were experiencing stress also seemed to lose interest in their academic subject. This impacted negatively on their work performance and resulted in a decline in the quality and standard of the work that they were doing.

16,67% of the sample referred to teachers employing physical violence against learners as well as indulging in outbursts of anger and frustration as a consequence of experiencing stress.

Question Two of the structured interview was:

How does teacher stress affect the functioning of your school?

The *verbatim* responses received to this question are as follows:

- A: It affects the mechanical aspects, for example, leave-taking is increasing. This affects delivery and impacts negatively on staff relations and the achievement of group goals.
- B: Mine is not a stressed staff. This is due to the management style, which is participatory, and there is joint work. I highlight and use the strengths of the staff and develop departmental pride and respect. There is delegation of work. The DP (deputy principal) deals with the heads of department.
- C: There is a drop in standards. Certain core functions and duties are neglected. The human resources are not there (due to absenteeism and leave-taking). This impacts on the rest of the staff. People feel disadvantaged because of others. The (negative) behaviour and attitude of X, Y or Z (Examples of teachers who are experiencing stress) impacts on others.

- D: Absenteeism (teacher) - Classes are left unattended. It affects the school further – the school becomes like a war zone. Discipline suffers. It (teacher stress) impacts on everyone. It has a ripple effect. It aggravates the tone of the school. Teachers get angry because pupils are running around. It has a negative impact. Students are also affected. They can't concentrate on their work. Other pupils cause chaos in the corridors resulting in pupils who are in their classrooms wanting to get out. Teachers at school are under stress because they have to serve more relief as a result of absentee teachers. The results and performance of students also suffers as a result of teacher absenteeism. Quality time is lost trying to re-instil discipline rather than teaching.
- E: Morale is low. Teachers come to school each day, do their duties but do not perform at their optimum level. They are not working to their fullest potential. They are not motivated.
- F: Without stress it (the school) would function better. Teachers would tend not to refuse to do extra but would go that extra mile.

DATA ANALYSIS

50% of the respondents spoke of the negative effect that teacher absenteeism had on the tone of the school and school discipline. There was often a breakdown in pupil discipline due to the absence of teachers. The shortage of available staff resulted in classes sometimes being left unattended and this resulted in students becoming rowdy and disturbing other classes.

33,3% of those interviewed spoke of a decline in academic standards and poor pupil performance. Teacher absenteeism and leave-taking often resulted in a decline in academic standards since there was inadequate syllabus coverage. This gave rise to poor pupil performance and motivation.

33,3% of the principals interviewed spoke of the detrimental effects of teacher absenteeism and leave-taking on inter-staff relations. Teacher absenteeism adversely affected inter-staff relations as those teachers who were present at school had to serve as relief teachers in the absentee's classes. The relief teachers became frustrated because this entailed their losing the few non-teaching periods that they had. This also engendered resentment towards the absent teacher/s.

33,3% of the interviewees also referred to a drop in teacher morale and motivation as a result of teachers experiencing stress. This resulted in teachers not performing at their optimum and being unwilling to do more than the bare minimum.

16,67% (a minority view) stated that staff members were not experiencing stress and this was attributed to the adoption of a participatory management style and the delegation of tasks.

Question Three contained three sub-questions 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. If the answer to 3.1 was affirmative, then question 3.2 was posed. If there was a negative response to 3.1, question 3.2 was posed.

Question Three reads as follows:

3.1 *Do you consider managing teacher stress to be a task for the principal?*

3.2 *(If response to 3.1 is "yes.") Why?*

3.3 *(if response to 3.1 is "no.") Do you think that a member of your staff should
be trained to deal with teacher stress?*

The following responses, quoted *verbatim*, were received:

A: No. You need experts in the field. Stress management is a specialised field. The principal can only interact in a superficial way like being sympathetic as the head of the school. The principal can help by making allowances in terms of time and lessening the teaching load, yet his hands are tied by regulations. Teachers have to deliver in terms of the regulations. Unless you are given extra personnel...

(In response to 3.3) Yes, but someone from outside will be more relevant. Staff members do not always get on. Stress management by staff members may not always enjoy co-operation etc. Ideally, an N.G.O. or a department nominee should do it.

B: Yes

(In response to 3.2) You can't manage to ignore it (teacher stress). You must take the bull by the horns.

C: Yes. But not totally. Many things are out of the principal's hands. We are not professional counsellors. We can reduce stress but we don't have the ability or expertise to handle it. We need outside help but sadly this does not come readily. Also, the teacher can see this as a form of intimidation.

D: Yes, partly.

(In response to 3.2) You are on the spot so when stress-related problems arise at school you must know how to deal with it. We are all humans, it's our duty to help them out, talk gently to them, counsel them. You can't just send them off to doctors. You must pick the teacher up.

E: Yes.

(In response to 3.2) There are various factors causing stress amongst educators that the principal can address. You also need an outside expert.

F: Yes.

(In response to 3.2) He should be involved. He is the leader of the school. It is his team. It will affect the final output at school if there is too much of stress. There must be mutual support.

DATA ANALYSIS

83,3% of the respondents felt that managing teacher stress was a task for the principal.

66,6% of those interviewed felt that the principal should manage teacher stress because he/she was the school leader and had both the authority and obligation to do so.

33,3% of the affirmative responses were qualified and the respondents expressed the view that whilst teacher stress management was a task for the school principal, school principals were not trained to deal with it and that stress management training was essential.

16,67% of the sample interviewed expressed a negative response. The respondent elaborated on his response by expressing the view that experts were required to deal with teacher stress. He also stated that school principals had limited power to address the issue of teacher stress.

In response to Question 3.2, 83,3% of the respondents stated that the school principal as the school leader/manager /the person on the spot, was the person responsible for the effective functioning of the school and managing teacher stress was thus his/her responsibility. As has been previously stated, the respondents expressed reservations about their ability to manage teacher stress since they were not trained in this field.

33,3% of the interviewees strongly expressed the need for training in stress management.

33,3% of the sample stated that managing stress was a task for the school principal because certain stress-related factors such as workload and the scarce provision of resources, which contributed to teacher stress, fell within the scope of the principal's responsibilities. He/she could address them as part of his/her management of the school.

16,67% of the sample felt that while a staff member could be trained in stress management , someone from outside the school staff i.e. a non-staff member, would be more effective because staff members did not always get along with each other. An outside person would enjoy greater co-operation from the school staff and could thus be more effective in the management of teacher stress at school.

Question Four asked principals the following question:

What aspects of teacher stress do you think can be addressed by you as a school principal?

The following responses, quoted *verbatim*, were obtained from the interviewees:

A: Time. Aspects of stress generated by the school like the timetable and allocations. The principal can intervene if the teacher has too many academic subjects in his timetable. The principal can take into account the home situation and not burden the teacher unnecessarily. The principal can take into account the size and type of classes that the teacher has when marking is being allocated. The principal can also help or advise educators with family problems. The principal can also look at the issue of teachers wanting to go home early and schedule staff meetings and briefing sessions at more convenient times, like in the mornings.

- B: That which is within my control. I can deal with school-related issues and get them (teachers) to re-direct their frustrations.
- C: The teacher workload can be managed to a certain extent. I can look at the quantity, the number of periods, and the load given to the teacher. I can also look at what they like – it will help performance. I can look at a suitable load in terms of volume and the type of subjects. Also, teachers bring a lot of stress on themselves – they know the rules but don't want to accept them. They don't want to follow rules and regulations. They put themselves and others under pressure. Can look at the provision of resources e.g. a computer for teachers. At present there are no resources for teachers and this causes stress.
- D: Can counsel and advise teachers in spiritual matters. Can address emotional stress to some extent and tension. Administrative duties – can get help for the teacher for example in the typing of exam papers, can get the school secretary to run out exam papers. I can help the teacher by waiting after school to allow them to complete their work. I can accommodate teachers who come late to school. I can establish friendly terms but set parameters – be approachable. I can grant leave if the reasons for asking it are valid.
- E: I can counsel, give support but you do need an expert to handle this.
- F: Stress resulting from the principal's management – if you make undue demands. How do you handle demands made by the (education) department where they want something by a certain date and apply this to teachers? This causes them to experience stress. I could advise teachers who have home problems. In terms of difficult classes, I could intervene and speak to the classes etc. Can help resolve tensions - teacher-on teacher tensions, teacher-parent conflicts, teacher-pupil tensions, teacher-governing body tensions. The principal could try to mediate but may not always be successful.

DATA ANALYSIS

There were a variety of responses to this question.

83,3% of those interviewed identified school-related issues that fell within the control of the school principal. These included teacher workload, classroom sizes, the provision of resources, the allocation of duties, the setting of deadlines for the completion of tasks and flexibility in respect of matters such as late coming.

16,6% expressed the view that the principal should be a mediator in relationships between members of the school community, (like the school governing body) and the teachers, between teachers and teachers and between pupils and teachers.

Question Five dealt with the stress management strategies that principals used to manage teacher stress in their schools. The question that was posed was:

At present, what strategies, if any, do you employ to manage teacher stress at your school?

The responses were as follows, quoted *verbatim*:

A: One to one counselling in terms of time management. I ask teachers for their precast (work preparation and plan) to see if they have planned adequately. I monitor the planning of lessons with the sole intention of helping them to manage – particularly those who are stressed out. I have open channels of communication for those with problems outside school. I have counselled and helped educators with family problems. I try to establish briefing sessions in the mornings because teachers want to go home immediately after school. I do also have longer meetings but the briefing sessions help.

- B: Counselling. I have done counselling and have also made appointments (with professionals) for teachers. Empowerment workshops. I get teachers involved in more tasks – tell them they can't confine themselves to the classroom. For example, they should become involved in committees like the welfare committee. They must find sponsors to feed our kids and they will get satisfaction from this. They can get involved in the Sports Committee and develop new codes for example, basketball. They must do presentations and seminars. I send them to workshops. I have also invited the (Education) Department's Psychological Services to do de-stress.
- C: At all times I am approachable to the teacher. He/she can come and talk. I make myself available. I am possibly sometimes too lenient in acceding to requests (for leave etc.) – this can also be negative. Try to provide resources for teachers. Try to spend time with teachers. Try to encourage teachers to organise socials. Visit ill people at home.
- D: I talk/counsel/provide spiritual guidance. I accommodate late coming, if there is a valid reason. I try to grant leave if valid reasons are provided.
- E: I have written to School Psychological Services to come in to do something. We will be setting up a workshop. I did a needs survey for a staff development programme when I noticed that stress was getting out of hand. Yes, we are getting outside experts. I have called someone from Natal University. I am sympathetic to leave-taking as long as teachers don't abuse that right. I am sympathetic/empathetic in situations. I support teachers and provide them with assistance in terms of contact with the (Education) Department. I contact the department for them and set up interviews for them (teachers).
- F: Counselling. I address the question of teacher workload and look at an equitable workload. For example, I will look at the examination invigilation roster and try to

ensure equitable loading. There must also be equity in the timetabling. As far as sport is concerned, teachers go on duty on a rotational basis. I also look at work aspects and provide assistance to teachers for example, schedules etc. are done in the office and exam papers are run out in the office.

DATA ANALYSIS

66,6% of the respondents stated that they counselled teachers. The counselling covered aspects such as time management and personal concerns (if requested to do so).

33,3% of the respondents stated that they had either approached or arranged for outside experts/professionals to assist teachers who were experiencing stress.

33,3% of the interviewees had arranged for teachers to get professional assistance via the Education Department's Support Services and other agencies.

16,67% of the respondents spoke of supervising the work of teachers in order to assist them and thus avert a situation where the teacher begins experiencing stress at school.

100% (all) of the respondents stated that they tried to keep the channels of communication between themselves and teachers open. They ensured that they were approachable to their teaching staff and this served to make teachers feel comfortable and confident about discussing their problems and the stress that they might be experiencing.

66,6% of the respondents stated that they employed a considerate, sympathetic management style wherein their staff members were aware that their requests for leave, late coming and other similar matters were received sympathetically and decided upon fairly.

In a similar vein, 16,67% of those interviewed stated that they tried to avoid scheduling lengthy meetings after the close of school as this tended to create stress amongst teachers. It

was preferable to hold short briefing sessions at the commencement of the school day or during school intervals.

16,67% spoke of spending time with teachers and conducting home visits. This group also spoke of encouraging teachers to organise socials where presumably they would be afforded the opportunity of unwinding.

33,3% of the principals interviewed said that they tried to address aspects of teacher workload and other school -related issues that were a cause of teacher stress. Various strategies, including the equitable distribution of examination and non-examination subjects, the reduction, where possible, of classroom sizes, the supervision of work and the allocation of non-teaching periods were employed.

The scarcity of resources was seen as a source of teacher stress.

100% (all) of the principals interviewed stated that they tried to provide resources for their staff in order to lighten their workloads. These resources included the provision of computer, typing and printing facilities, the provision of textbooks and the use of the school's clerical and non-teaching staff to assist teachers with duties such as the typing and printing of examination papers.

16,67% of the respondents spoke of having held staff development and empowerment workshops in order to better equip teachers to meet the challenges facing them and thus reduce teacher stress.

16,67% also spoke of assigning non-academic duties and tasks to teachers in an attempt to alleviate stress. Teachers were also sent to workshops.

Question Six examined whether the respondents felt that school principals should be trained in the management of teacher stress. The question posed was:

Do you feel that principals should be trained to deal with/manage teacher stress?

The responses to this question were as follows, quoted *verbatim*:

- A: Yes, we do require skills in stress management.
- B: Yes, this would be additional to training us for education in the classroom.
- C: Yes, although the (Education) Department is moving in that direction and has held some workshops.
- D: Yes.
- E: If there are qualified people they could do it – but the principal is always there – he should be equipped to manage stress.
- F: Definitely.

DATA ANALYSIS

The interviewees were unanimous in agreeing that principals should be trained to deal with/manage teacher stress.

100% of the sample interviewed stated that principals should be trained to manage teacher stress.

16,67% of the sample expressed the view that if there were experts, they should deal with the management of teacher stress but since the principal was the person on the scene, he/she should be trained to manage teacher stress.

Question Seven attempted to elicit the respondents' views about the form that stress management training for school principals should take. The question posed to interviewees was:

What form should this training take?

The following responses were received, quoted *verbatim*:

- A: Formalised sessions with consultants. Should be one-off or two-day workshops. There should be a consistent programme. It should be offered by the Department as an in-service course.
- B: Group sessions taking examples, case studies, doing an exercise step by step. It (the training) should deal with practical situations – not too much of verbal information or something that is difficult to transfer in a staff situation. Those (trainers/facilitators) in the know often can't deal with the situation. You need teachers who are experienced in classroom dynamics, not someone who's never set foot in a classroom and only has theoretical knowledge and no practical hands-on experience.
- C: I don't like workshops in stress management - they are piecemeal. We need intensive training, not for one or two hours. We need quality training. The presenters must be competent. They must not waffle.
- D: Training in how to handle emotions, for example, a teacher crying because a student has insulted her. Training in dealing with emotional stress is most important. We can't ask teachers to take every problem to a psychiatrist. The principal must know how to handle people. He must know how to deal with the different emotions that people exhibit. We need the (Education) Department to provide training in stress management and conflict management.

- E: Basic identification of stress and its causes. Appraisal skills. Training in identifying where they (teachers) require emotional support, guidance and where the principal can assist.
- F: Workshops, but the (Education) Department has too many workshops that are done for the sake of doing them. The Department doesn't assess the success of its programmes and there is no follow-up. Any training should have a follow-up. There should be in-service programmes, group sessions and workshops incorporating the following aspects such as conflict management, interpersonal skills, how to identify stress, its symptoms and causes, staff support programmes, stress management techniques and strategies.

DATA ANALYSIS

100% (all) the respondents expressed the view that stress management training should occur on a continuous basis together with follow-up programmes. 50% of the interviewees felt that the training could take the form of workshops, 33,3% favoured group sessions and in-service training and 16,67% spoke of formalised sessions.

33,3% of the sample expressed the view that the people conducting stress management training should be competent persons with practical experience.

50% of the respondents felt that the training should cover aspects such as dealing with emotional stress and interpersonal skills.

66,6% of the respondents expressed the need for specific training in stress management. This should include the basic identification of stress and its causes, stress management techniques and strategies and staff support programmes.

33,3% of those interviewed identified conflict management as an area where training was required.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter the data collection procedures that were used in the study were presented. The data that had been collected from the structured interviews was then presented and analysed. The data analysis revealed the following:

3.6.1. Teacher stress impacted negatively on the work performance of teachers. It resulted in a lack of teacher motivation and in teachers experiencing little or no job satisfaction. In some instances, teachers experiencing work stress resorted to physical violence against learners.

3.6.2. Teacher absenteeism and leave-taking are commonplace amongst teachers suffering from stress. This had a negative impact on the functioning of the school since it engendered resentment amongst the staff members who had to fill in for the absentee/s.

3.6.3. Teacher absenteeism and leave-taking had an adverse effect on the general tone and discipline of the school. It also resulted in a decline in academic standards and in poor pupil performance and motivation.

3.6.4. The lack of promotion resulted in teachers experiencing stress and wanting to leave the teaching profession. Seasoned teachers, in particular, were even more frustrated when they saw younger teachers being promoted. This sense of frustration and the stress that it engendered had a negative impact on job satisfaction

3.6.5. Changes in education and new operational requirements were identified as being sources of teacher stress.

3.6.6. Teachers who were experiencing stress also seemed to lose interest in their academic subject. This impacted negatively on their work performance and resulted in a decline in the quality and standard of the work that they were doing.

3.6.7. As a consequence of experiencing stress, some teachers employed physical violence against learners and indulged in outbursts of anger and frustration.

3.6.8. It was also felt that the principal could serve as a mediator in relationships between members of the school community (such as the school governing body) and the teachers.

3.6.9. The majority of the respondents (83,3%) felt that managing teacher stress was a task for the principal because the school principal as the school manager, was the person responsible for the effective functioning of the school and managing teacher stress was thus his/her responsibility. In addition, various school-related factors that gave rise to teacher stress, such as teacher workload and the provision of resources, fell within the scope of the principal's responsibilities and he/she was best suited to address them.

3.6.10. The principal could address school-related and school-based issues that gave rise to teacher stress and over which he/she could exercise some control. These included teacher workload, classroom sizes, the provision of resources, the allocation of duties, the setting of deadlines for the completion of tasks and flexibility in respect of matters such as late coming.

3.6.11. The strategies that the principals interviewed employed, to manage teacher stress at their schools, included counselling and guidance of teachers, maintaining good communication channels with their staff, displaying a sympathetic management style, alleviating teacher workload, conducting workshops, providing resources and making home-visits.

3.6.12. The unanimous view of the principals interviewed was that principals should be trained to deal with/manage teacher stress. It was felt that the training should be on an

ongoing basis and should take the form of in-service programmes, group sessions and workshops. The training should encompass areas such as conflict management, interpersonal skills, how to identify stress, its symptoms and causes, staff support programmes and stress-management techniques and strategies.

The findings, based on the data analysis, will be discussed in the next chapter and a comparison will be made between the findings of this research and the findings of other researchers. Recommendations for the principal, regarding the management of teacher stress that impacts negatively on teachers' performance in the classroom, will also be presented.

3.7 REFERENCES

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CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings drawn from the data analysis will be presented in this chapter. Comparisons will be drawn between the findings of the empirical research done in this study and the findings of other researchers in the fields of stress management and teacher stress management. Reference will be made to work done by authorities such as Kyriacou (1987), Matteson and Ivancevich (1987), Claxton (1989), Seyfarth (1991), Everard and Morris (1996), James and Arroba (1999) and Sutherland and Cooper (2000). The findings of the research conducted in this study, as well as information drawn from the body of literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two, will then be used as the basis for drawing up a set of recommendations that can be used by school principals in the management of teacher stress.

4.1 FINDINGS

The main findings emanating from the data analysis are:

4.1.1. Teacher stress had a negative effect on the work performance of teachers. Teachers experiencing stress manifested a lack of, or a decline in, motivation and enjoyed little or no job satisfaction. This was evidenced by the refusal of teachers to participate in extra-curricular activities and staff development programmes, teachers not being willing to work extra hours, teachers complaining and teachers not enjoying job satisfaction and expressing a desire to leave the teaching profession as a result of not being promoted. Teachers experiencing stress also seemed to lose interest in their academic subjects and this impacted on their work performance. In a few instances, teachers resorted to physical violence against pupils and indulged in outbursts of frustration and anger.

The aforementioned findings are supported by the work of Arnold and Feldman (1986), Claxton (1989), Seyfarth (1991) and James and Arroba (1999). James and Arroba (1999) and Seyfarth (1991) concur with the finding that stress results in a decline in performance. Claxton (1989) refers to the increasing punitiveness that teachers who are experiencing stress display towards their pupils as well as the propensity towards outbursts of rage and frustration. Arnold and Feldman (1986) refer to career concerns, including the lack of promotion, that result in employees experiencing job stress and not performing optimally at work. Sutherland and Cooper (2000) also identify, what they term, "career stress", as being a stressor.

In a similar vein, Seyfarth (1991) refers to situational stress where the situation that the person is placed in, exceeds the individual's ability to cope. Situational stress can occur when teachers have to deal with students whose emotional and physical needs exceed the families' and school's resources for assistance. Teachers become overwhelmed by the problems of these children. They also experience feelings of guilt and anger because they lack the power to address and correct the conditions that contribute to the children's difficulties.

Everard and Morris (1996) also identify the main symptoms of teacher stress as being feelings of exhaustion, reduction of contacts outside school, frustration at lack of achievement, apathy, irritability, displaced aggression and a wish to leave teaching.

4.1.2. Absenteeism and leave-taking, which are behavioural symptoms amongst teachers experiencing stress, had an adverse effect on the functioning of the school. Frequent teacher absenteeism and leave-taking engendered resentment amongst the staff who had reported for duty and who had to serve as replacement or relief teachers for those teachers who had absented themselves, or who had taken leave from school. This resulted in strained interpersonal relationships and increased tensions among teachers. This point is also made by Powell and Enright (1990) who highlight the importance of good relationships in an

organisation. They state that good relationships are one of the central factors in individual and organisational health and further point out that problems are exacerbated if there is conflict among members of the organisation. In addition, Arnold and Feldman (1986) state that personal relationships are very important to job satisfaction.

It was also found that teacher absenteeism and leave-taking contributed towards lowering the general tone and discipline of the school. Academic standards declined, with pupils performing poorly and displaying little motivation. Rice (1999) also alludes to the negative impact that behavioural symptoms such as poor job performance and absenteeism have on an organisation.

4.1.3. It was found that poor relationships among teachers and other members of the school community, such as members of the school governing body, pupils, parents and colleagues, often resulted in teachers experiencing stress. This finding is also made by Seyfarth (1991). Seyfarth refers to teachers experiencing, what he terms, "encounter stress," when they are forced to deal with other individuals who exhibit unpleasant or unpredictable behaviour. Parents who are angry or abusive can create a situation where teachers experience encounter stress.

One of the findings that emerged from the data analysis and which relate to the issue of interpersonal relationships, was that the principal could play a supportive role and serve as a mediator in these relationships. This finding is borne out in the work of Arnold and Feldman (1986) in which they express the view that broad social networks, including support from management, serve as a buffer against stress.

4.1.4 It was found that change in education was one of the sources of stress for teachers who found it difficult to cope with the new demands that were placed on them. Change, in this context includes changes in policy and curriculum, changes in the provision of resources to teachers and the new skills demanded of teachers. This finding is borne out by Claxton (1989)

and Sutherland and Cooper (2000) who also refer to the higher demands placed on staff to adapt and learn new skills and to the stress that they experience as a result of this.

4.1.5. School-based and school-related issues that acted as stressors included teacher workload, classroom sizes, the provision of resources, the allocation of duties, the setting of deadlines for the completion of tasks, changes in education and inflexibility in respect of matters such as late-coming. This finding is supported by the research of Everard and Morris (1996) who identify the main school-related causes of teacher stress as being pupil misbehaviour, educational changes, poor working conditions, time pressures, role conflict, confusion or overload and a school ethos that denies information and support.

4.1.6. It was found that certain stressors such as teacher workload, timetabling, classroom sizes and the provision of resources fell within the scope of the principal's responsibilities and control. Thus the principal was considered to be in the best position to address them.

4.1.7. The management style that the principal adopted was very important. A sympathetic, caring, participative approach appeared to work well and contributed towards reducing the stress experienced by teachers. It was found that principals had to ensure that they were accessible to teachers and that the channels of communication between themselves and teachers were kept open. Paisey (1981) and Seyfarth (1991) also highlight the point that management style is often a source of stress to teachers.

4.1.8. School principals employed a variety of strategies to manage teacher stress at their schools. These included the counselling and guidance of teachers, maintaining good communication channels with their staff, displaying a sympathetic management style, alleviating teacher workload, conducting workshops, providing resources and visiting teachers at their homes.

4.1.9. Managing teacher stress was the school principal's task. The primary reason furnished, for stating that the management of teacher stress was a task for the school principal, was that the principal was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the school functions efficiently and effectively. Since teacher stress had a negative impact on the work performance of teachers and consequently on the functioning of the school, managing teacher stress was therefore a management function and a task for the principal, in particular.

Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) present a similar view and state that dysfunctional stress is costly to the organisation. Opportunities are lost because of stressed employees. A stressed employee cannot be as creative, interpersonally effective or as team-oriented as an employee who is not stressed. Unmanaged stress can also result in the loss or waste of human resources.

Seyfarth (1991) points out that stress accumulates in organisations. If it reaches high levels, it can destroy organisational climate, lower organisational performance and weaken organisational effectiveness.

In the light of the findings of this study and those of authorities such as Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) and Seyfarth (1991), it is evident that teacher stress has to be managed and the person whose task it is to manage it, is the school principal.

4.1.10. Principals should be trained to manage teacher stress. Such training should be ongoing and should take the form of in-service programmes, group sessions and workshops. Conflict management, interpersonal skills, how to identify stress, its symptoms and causes, staff support programmes and stress-management techniques and strategies were identified as areas in which training was required. This finding is not reflected in the literature that has been surveyed in this study. It is, however, a finding that emerges very strongly from the empirical data collected in this study wherein 100% of the sample interviewed, expressed the need for training in stress-management.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WITH REFERENCE TO THE MANAGEMENT OF TEACHER STRESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The findings of this study have shown that teacher stress impacts negatively on teachers in the performance of their duties. This, in turn, impacts negatively on the functioning of the school as a whole. In order to have an effective and efficiently functioning school, the principal has to devise strategies to manage teacher stress. The following are some recommendations for the school principal about the management of stress in secondary schools.

4.2.1. CREATE AN AWARENESS OF STRESS AMONGST STAFF.

James and Arroba (1999) suggest that the organisation should propagate stress awareness materials and guides for staff. The circulation of such material should be aimed at developing general knowledge about stress around the organisation. The materials and guides should provide staff with basic information on stress and where to go if further information and assistance is required.

4.2.2. CREATE AN ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE WHERE TEACHERS CAN TALK ABOUT STRESS.

The first step, in dealing with stress and its management, is to get people to talk about it (Claxton, 1989). Stress needs to be placed on both formal and informal agendas and teachers should be encouraged to freely express how they feel.

According to Everard and Morris (1996), society and culture prove to be obstacles that prevent the management and prevention of stress by making stress a taboo subject. Acknowledging that one is experiencing stress would be perceived as a confession of weakness or incompetence.

Principals should educate their staff about stress and the need to speak of it, should it exist on the staff. They should, in a manner of speaking, "bring stress out of the closet." If the

principal and members of the school management team set the example, they will contribute to creating a school culture where there is no shame attached to teachers speaking out about experiencing stress. This will obviously facilitate the management and prevention of teacher stress.

4.2.3. ESTABLISH SUPPORT MECHANISMS.

Teachers experiencing stress are often isolated because they do not, or cannot, communicate with others about what they are experiencing and whether they are coping. Claxton (1989) advocates the setting up of social conditions that strengthen or encourage teachers when they find themselves experiencing stress and demoralisation. This view is supported by Moracco and McFadden (1982) who suggest that increasing the social support available to teachers may be a useful strategy to prevent teacher stress. Moracco and McFadden (1982) advocate the establishment of support groups amongst teachers.

Claxton (1989) also recommends the establishment of teacher support groups and points out that teachers who are isolated might find it less threatening to join one of these groups. In a similar vein, James and Arroba (1999) state that setting up support groups within the organisation provides a good mechanism for embedding support in the system. Support groups help people to share experiences and reduce isolation. Support groups can also be forums where action planning takes place to deal with the pressures of being in the organisation. Support groups are particularly helpful for groups who are less used to being in the organisational limelight or who are experiencing a similar predicament, such as women, more junior staff, or minority ethnic groups.

Kyriacou in Riches and Morgan (1989) also highlights the importance of social support but points out that teachers are often unable to make use of such support due to the culture of the school and the reluctance of teachers to admit to experiencing difficulties. The principal has to

be sensitive to this and ensure that a climate of tolerance and understanding prevails in the school.

Supervisor support in alleviating or reducing job stress is very important. A study by Russell *et al.* (1987) revealed that teachers with supportive supervisors reported less emotional exhaustion, more positive attitudes towards students and greater personal accomplishments.

4.2.4. ENCOURAGE TEAMWORK AND CO-OPERATION.

This will help relieve the pressure on individual teachers as some of the work can be shared. This approach will also assist teachers who are experiencing problems with their work as they will be able to share these in a group.

4.2.5. EFFECTIVE COUNSELLING.

The principal and the rest of the school management team should learn to become good listeners. This could help teachers to express themselves and would serve to relieve some of the stress that teachers are experiencing. For teachers who feel more comfortable with one-on-one interaction, other forms of counselling could be organised or advised. The principal should ensure that this is effected in such a manner that unsympathetic colleagues or superordinates do not find out about the counselling, as there is often an attitude displayed which implies that there is something wrong with a person who seeks assistance in dealing with stress.

4.2.6. CRITICALLY EXAMINE AND MODIFY MANAGEMENT STYLES.

Sometimes the style of management that is adopted by the school principal is a source of stress for teachers. Principals need to examine their management styles and modify them if the circumstances warrant this.

Preventative measures can be quite effective as a means of dealing with stress (Everard and Morris, 1996). Heads can examine how their own management style and the ethos of the school lead to unnecessary stress among the staff. Modification can then be accommodated. Stressful situations often arise because of the management style and practice or the nature and culture of the organisation. In certain cases, the principal might adopt an authoritarian management style or the school might function in an extremely bureaucratic manner. The principal should ensure that the school's structure, function and culture, the nature of its line management and the effectiveness of its special management, are all carefully examined and the necessary changes effected. Role ambiguity can be reduced if teachers have a clear understanding of how their work will be evaluated, how to perform their job adequately and the means to job advancement.

The style that is adopted by the principal to influence others at school can also become a source of stress. The principal should develop an effective style of interpersonal influence by communicating ideas openly and by being open to the views expressed by staff members.

Management must involve and stress, consultation, teamwork and participation. In support of this view, Paisey (1981) points out that participative structures, while incurring larger organisation maintenance, do raise morale and effort. If principals want the support and participation of their staff members, they should listen to what their teachers have to say, create opportunities for their voices to be heard and should meet them on a human as well as on a managerial plane. Involving teachers in participatory decision-making may increase organisational competence and give teachers a greater sense of belonging and control.

The principal can introduce open forums where change can be debated and people are given the opportunity to reflect on changes proposed, modify them if necessary and generally assimilate and accustom themselves to them.

Teachers should feel able to formally place their issues and concerns before their colleagues. The principal should ensure that there is consultation about the agendas for formal meetings and that the agendas for these meetings are constructed democratically.

Sub-committees or working groups comprising both management staff as well as senior and junior teachers should be established to examine key school issues and policies.

Whilst normal working hours are used for reflective meetings, the principal can also arrange an annual, preferably overnight, retreat/meeting/workshop where staff can engage in discussing issues that are of concern. The agenda for such meetings would have to have been set by the staff as a whole. Claxton (1989) points out that such an event would generate immense goodwill and camaraderie amongst the staff and would help to defuse tensions that may exist at an inter-personal and inter-group level.

4.2.7. DEVELOP APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION STYLES.

Conflict in behavioural styles is often a source of stress (Gatto, 1993). The principal's communication style could sometimes result in miscommunication. Effective communication creates a mutual understanding between the presenter and the listener. The principal should be flexible and utilise different communication styles depending on the work situation. Effective communication would depend on using the communication style that is most appropriate for the situation, for example, teachers often feel that their issues and concerns are not addressed or heeded to by the principal. The principal should make time for informal conversations with teachers and give them a chance to talk about whatever they wish. This would assist in preventing the teacher from experiencing stress as a result of being unable to air his/her concerns to the head of the institution.

4.2.8. AVOID PUTTING STAFF UNDER EXCESSIVE STRESS.

If staff members are under too much stress, productivity and decision-making abilities decline. Increased absenteeism, high turnover and burnout could result. The school management should be mindful of this and should adopt a less demanding style.

4.2.9. REDUCE STRESSORS THAT FALL WITHIN THE PRINCIPAL'S CONTROL.

The principal should examine the number of stressors, their intensity and the extent to which they impact negatively on the work performance of teachers. He/she could then look at ways of reducing these and of facilitating more effective coping skills.

Kyriacou in Riches and Morgan (1989) suggests that schools can reduce staff stress by adopting practices that minimise those sources of stress that exist within the school. These should include management practices, organisational and administrative arrangements, staff relationships, working conditions and curriculum processes. The principal should use staff development activities and the general organisation and management of the school to prevent stress. Staff should have the necessary tools and resources at its disposal in order to implement new initiatives. They should also be consulted about changes that take place in the school.

Kyriacou in Riches and Morgan (1989) cites various authorities who advocate changes, such as reducing classroom sizes, allowing teachers more preparation time during the school day, better organisation and communication within the school, an improved climate of social support, more effective programmes of staff induction and professional development, more recognition of teacher's efforts and a clearer description of job tasks and expectations.

4.2.10. EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT.

The principal should ensure that time is managed effectively at school. There should be effective utilisation of time to complete daily tasks, as well as long-term projects, efficiently.

The principal should ensure that priorities for the school regarding immediate, intermediate and longer-term objectives are established and clear programmes, time frames and schedules are developed.

Seyfarth (1991) suggests that administrators can help reduce time pressures on teachers by alerting them, timeously, about upcoming deadlines and by providing direction and assistance to help teachers complete paperwork requirements.

4.2.11. CLARIFY ROLE EXPECTATIONS.

Teachers often experience stress because of the differing demands that are placed on them and the different roles that they are expected to play. The principal can help teachers reduce stress by issuing timely, clear instructions, conducting constructive performance reviews and by encouraging teachers to participate in decisions that affect their role and workloads.

As has been previously stated in Chapter Two of this study, role conflict and role ambiguity are stressors. Role conflict can be reduced by each teacher having a clear job description that is jointly developed by himself/herself and the principal and which is specific to his/her individual situation. Teachers must be involved in setting realistic short- and long-term goals. They must also be clear about the people to whom they are accountable and about the channels of communication that exist in the workplace.

4.2.12. IMPROVE TEACHER MORALE.

There are many teachers who work hard and despite their sterling efforts find that their students have not produced the desired results. The principal could assist these discouraged teachers to maintain perspective by reminding them of their past successes and by inviting former students, who have achieved success, back to the school to talk about their successes and the role that their teachers played in helping them attain such successes.

Social activities allow teachers to unwind, rid themselves of tension and improve their acquaintance with their colleagues. The principal could arrange for out of school outings or social activities to provide teachers with a break from the school routine, as well as provide them with the opportunity to relax and have a good time with their colleagues.

Crawford in Crawford *et al.* (1997) also suggests having a "review partner" with whom to talk things over. The manager should ensure that individuals make time for "emotional breathers" that allow staff to recharge their batteries. An example of this would be to ensure that breaks are taken as stressed people often overwork.

4.2.13. STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES.

There are various ways in which stress that impacts negatively on the work performance of teachers, can be managed. The principal can employ a strategy of avoidance, problem solving and/or prevention. Prevention and problem solving are clearly the most suitable options since avoidance does not address the key issues but merely "buries" them for a while. Stress management programmes should aim to prevent the occurrence of stressful situations at work, or to reduce the frequency with which they occur. The awareness of such problems will assist in the treatment and rehabilitation of individuals who are experiencing stress.

The principal can arrange for workshops and talks on stress management and stress reduction to be held at the school. Such programmes can help teachers to deal with their stress more effectively.

Stress reduction training, in the form of improved communication skills and relaxation training, can be offered.

4.2.14. SPECIAL SKILLS TRAINING.

Assertiveness training can also be used to promote stress reduction on both a personal and institutional level. This has been found to be particularly effective for women as it helps to

build up self-esteem. This form of training assumes basic rights that need to be respected and teaches the skills that are necessary to achieve this. The principal could arrange for his staff members to attend workshops that train people to become more assertive. He/she could also invite speakers to address staff members on this topic.

Teachers often experience stress as a result of rowdy or disruptive pupils in the classroom. Principals should assist teachers to deal with disruptive students by providing training that will help the teachers to deal with such students. They could arrange for experienced, skilled teachers in their schools to conduct workshops on classroom management and conflict resolution. Principals could also institute a system of mentorship whereby less experienced teachers were mentored by senior, more experienced teachers.

4.2.15. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH MANAGEMENT STRESS.

Very often members of the school management are themselves stressed out. This impacts negatively on their own work performance and on how they manage their subordinates. Managers therefore also need to devise stress-coping strategies for themselves. These could include increased delegation of responsibilities and tasks, improved time management and the use of relaxation techniques.

4.3 SUMMARY

The focus in this chapter was on presenting the findings of the empirical research that had been conducted, comparing these findings with those of other related research. A set of recommendations for the school principal on the management of teacher stress where it impacts negatively on the work performance of teachers in the secondary school, was also presented. These recommendations were based on the findings of this study as well as on information used in the literature review in Chapter Two.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the role of the principal in the management of teacher stress in the secondary school. The study has been confined to examining the management of teacher stress where it impacts negatively on teachers in the performance of their duties.

Chapter One, which was an introductory chapter, outlined the objectives of the study. Definitions of stress, job stress and teacher stress were also presented.

A literature review providing a brief overview of the causes and sources of job stress and a detailed overview of the sources and causes of teacher stress were presented in Chapter Two. The management implications of teacher stress were also examined. Those aspects of teacher stress that impacted negatively on the work performance of teachers and that were management issues were identified.

Chapter Three dealt with a discussion of the data collection procedures that were employed in this study, a presentation of the data that had been collected and an analysis of the aforementioned

The findings, based upon the data analysis conducted in Chapter Three, as well as on information drawn from the literature review were presented in Chapter Four. A set of recommendations for the school principal on the management of teacher stress in secondary schools was also presented.

The key findings of this study were:

1. Teacher stress impacted negatively on the work performance of teachers. Behavioural symptoms of teachers experiencing stress include teacher absenteeism and leave-taking, strained inter-personal relationships, a decline in job motivation, the loss of job satisfaction, a propensity to indulge in verbal outbursts and recourse to physical violence against learners.
2. Various school-related and school-based stressors, including job characteristics such as work overload, poor management style and communication, scarcity of resources, loss of motivation, poor job satisfaction and poor inter-personal relations, contributed towards teachers experiencing stress.
3. The management of teacher stress was a task for the school principal because he/she was ultimately responsible for the efficient and effective functioning of the school. The principal was also well positioned to address various school-based and school-related issues that gave rise to teacher stress and which had a negative effect on the work performance of teachers.
4. School principals needed ongoing training that covered all aspects pertaining to stress management and included training in areas such as conflict resolution and inter-personal skills.

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DUPLICATED MATERIALS

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Province of Kwazulu-Natal: Department of Education and Culture.

**APPENDIX A: PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL: DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE. CIRCULAR NO.
DSR 8/2000.**



DURBAN SOUTH REGION

ISIFUNDA SASENINGIZIMU NETHÉKU

DURBAN SUID STREEK

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Imibuzo : R N MNGADI
Navrae :

Reference :
Inkomba :
Verwysing :

Date :
Usuku : 2000-05-23
Datum :

CIRCULAR NO. DSR 8/2000

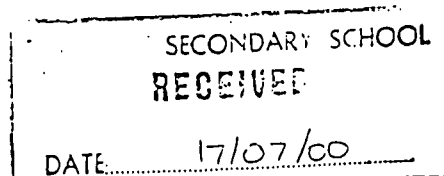
TO ALL : SECTION HEADS AND COMPONENT HEADS AT THE REGIONAL
OFFICE
RECTORS OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION
PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS
CHAIRPERSONS OF GOVERNING BODIES
DISTRICT MANAGERS AND CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
SUPERINTENDENTS OF EDUCATION (MANAGEMENT)

LEAVE NOT TO BE REGARDED AS SICK LEAVE

1. It has been observed that Heads of Institutions recommend and submit applications for sick leave where the nature of illness is diagnosed as depression, anxiety, stress, tension headaches and other similar indispositions.
2. Your attention is drawn to HRM Circular No. 40 of 1998 dated 9 October 1998, paragraph C(2)(c), where it is clearly stated that such leave applications will be granted as vacation leave instead of sick leave. The granting of sick leave will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where full details of events that led to the indisposition and a detailed specialist/psychiatrist report is furnished.
3. Considering the fact that replacements should not be appointed in the place of educators who have taken vacation leave, Heads of Institutions must always ensure that the application for sick leave that they recommend is justified in terms of requirements before a replacement is appointed.
4. It is a critical state of affair where the person who recommends unjustified sick leave and appoints a substitute educator may be made to pay the salary expenses of the substitute from his or her pocket.
5. Kindly bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all staff under your control.

/REGIONAL/CHIEF DIRECTOR
DURBAN SOUTH REGION

c/circ/djg



APPENDIX B: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: Schedule of Questions.

**TOPIC: The role of the principal in the management of teacher stress in
selected secondary schools in Chatsworth.**

Questions

1. If we consider teacher stress to be an unpleasant emotional state which results from aspects of teachers' work and wherein teachers experience emotions such as anger, tension, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness, how does teacher stress affect teachers in the performance of their duties at your school?

2. How does teacher stress affect the functioning of your school?

3.1 Do you consider managing teacher stress to be a task for the principal?

3.2 (*If response to 3.1 is "yes"*) Why?

3.3 (*If response to 3.1 is "no"*) Do you think that a member of your staff should be
trained to deal with teacher stress?

4. What aspects of teacher stress do you think can be addressed by you as a
school principal?

5. At present, what strategies, if any, do you employ to manage teacher stress at your school?

[illegible]

6. Do you feel that principals should be trained to deal with/manage teacher stress?

7. What form should this training take?

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____