

**AN ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS, RITUALS AND MANAGEMENT OF
STRESS AMONG PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS:**

The Case Study of Westlands Division, Nairobi West District.

BY

**OMWENGA HELLEN
C50/P/9163/04**

**A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Award of Master of Arts Degree in Sociology (Counseling) of the**

University of Nairobi

October 2010



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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This Project is my Original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Sign: .....

Date: .....

ORIOKI-HELLEN OMWENGA

DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISOR

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor

Sign: .....

Date: .....

MR BENEAH MUTSOTSO

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WORK

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my loving husband Dr. Elijah I. Omwenga. You inspired me and made me believe that I could make it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following for the support they advanced towards the achievement of the objectives of this study: The Almighty God for giving me the ability and strength to complete my studies. I specially thank all the heads of the various schools which I visited for their cooperation and great support.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor Mr. Beneah Mutsotso for the academic guidance and support offered throughout the research process.

The whole exercise would not have been possible without the cooperation and helpful comments and input of Dr. Robinson Ocharo and other academic members of staff in the Department of Sociology.

I lack words to express my appreciation and gratitude to my beloved husband Dr. Elijah Omwenga for constant support- both moral and financial; his encouragement to believe in me. I am also grateful to my friends Naomi and Gladys who helped me in different ways during this study. To my first born son Patroba Michieka for his constant inspiration and encouragement; his siblings Ted Nyakundi and Ruth Moraa for their patience. My sister Grace Kerubo, I say thank you for the inspiration and prayers throughout my studies.

It is not possible to mention all the people who were involved in making this project a success. However, I would like to say that your effort, contributions and commitment to this project are sincerely appreciated.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

WHP	:	Workplace Health Promotion
FPE	:	Free Primary Education
UPE	:	Universal Primary Education
RET	:	Rational Emotive Therapy
MOEST	:	Ministry Of Education Science and Technology

ABSTRACT

Stress is quickly becoming the single greatest cause of diseases (Leigh and Schnall 2000) and can have far reaching consequences for both the worker and the work place. Occupational stress occurs when external demands and conditions do not match a person's needs, expectations or ideals or exceeds their physical capacity, skills, or knowledge for comfortably handling a situation (French et al., 1982).

The general objective for the study was to find the perceptions, rituals and mechanisms of stress management among public primary school teachers. The study questions were: what are the perceived sources of occupational stress among public primary school teachers, what is the impact of stress on teachers and what management practices are put in place to mitigate the impact of stress on teachers.

Using a sample of 60 respondents, the study adopted both non- probability and probability sampling. The study found that low salaries and big and unmanageable classes were the major sources of stress. To determine the impact of stress among public primary school teachers, the study found out that absenteeism was high and teachers suffer from low self esteem due to stress.

In order to establish approaches employed to mitigate the impact of stress on teachers, the study found out that no practices/mechanisms were in place to manage stress among teachers.

The study recommended an upward review on salaries and hiring of more teachers.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Stress is the physiological response of the body to physical and psychological demands. Such demands are known as stressors (Hans Selye, 1907 – 1982).

Given the conflict between our needs, desires, relationships and the realities of our environment, stress is inevitable in human life. As Selye (1980) puts it, though stress has been implicated as a factor in illness, some degree of stress is normal, necessary and unavoidable because it acts as a motivator to make us adjust our behaviour to meet changing demands. Extreme stress often leads to serious health problems. It lowers one's immune system, leads to low job performance, alcoholism/drug abuse, etc. Thus scientists have long sought to understand what factors are involved in causing stress, in managing it effectively, and in maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Santrock, 2003).

According to the American academy of family physicians, two thirds of office visits to family doctors are stress-related symptoms. Stress is believed to be a major contributor to coronary heart disease, cancer, lung problems, accidental injuries, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide - six of the leading causes of death in the United States. Anti-anxiety drugs and ulcers medications are among the highest selling prescription drugs in the United States today (Ibid 2003).

According to Canadian Endocrinologist Hans Selye, there are three categories of psychological stressors. One category comprises of stressors that cause frustration where by an individual experiences frustration when he is blocked from reaching a goal. Minor frustrations include poor performance in an exam and major frustrations include losing one's job. A second category of stress comprise of those stressors that cause pressure whereby one experiences pressure when they must fulfill responsibilities that tax their abilities e.g. writing and completing a research paper. A third of the stressors comprise those that cause conflict e.g. one experiences a conflict when they are torn between two or more potential courses of action. This type of stress is faced by many adults who are pursuing both a career and parenthood (Lewis and Cooper, 1983).

Stress is a sign of the times. Everywhere you look people are trying to reduce the effects of excessive tension by jogging, going to health clubs and following special diets. Even corporations have developed elaborate stress management programmes. No one really knows whether we experience more stress than our parents or grandparents did, but it seems as if we do (Ibid 2003). Daily activities and responsibilities can result in a stress reaction called overload. Sometimes stimuli become so intense that we can no longer cope with them. For example persistent high levels of noise overload can inhibit our adaptability to other stimuli (Ibid 2003).

Overload can lead to a state of physical and emotional exhaustion that includes a hopeless feeling, chronic fatigue and low energy (Leifer and Maslach, 2001). Burnout often occurs not because of one or two traumatic events but because of a gradual accumulation of everyday stress (Demerouti et al, 2001). Burnout is especially common among service

providers. These include teachers (Lowen and Stein, 1991) and nurses (Klonoff and Ewers, 1990). A study of public school teachers found that the greater the number of stressful events they experienced, the more likely they were to suffer burnout. However, teachers who felt they were receiving social support and recognition of their contribution from supervisors were less vulnerable to burn out (Russell, and Velzen, 1987).

Kenyan schools face an acute shortage of teachers following the introduction of Free Primary Education and the waiving of tuition fees for all pupils in primary schools seven years ago. But since the freeze on employment of teachers 11 years ago, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has only been allowed to hire new teachers to replace those who leave the service. The country's recommended ratio of teachers to students is 1 to 45 but many teachers are handling classes of up to 60 students. This means less individual attention to students and lack of motivation for teachers who are overworked and underpaid (Inter Press Service News Agency).

All the above factors may contribute to stress among teachers. It is against this background, that the study seeks to understand the perceptions, rituals and management practices of stress among primary school teachers.

1.2 Problem Statement

Stress is an uncomfortable physical and psychological strain caused by a person's inability to cope with a given situation. The transactional model defines stress as occurring when there is a persistent imbalance between demands and resources or potential of the individual concerned. The enormous human and economic costs associated with occupational stress suggest that initiatives designed to prevent and/or reduce employee stress should be high on the agenda of workplace health promotion (WHP) Daykin (1998).

Occupational stress is quickly becoming the single greatest cause of occupational disease (Leigh and Schnall 2000) and can have far reaching consequences for both the worker and the work place. Occupational stress occurs when external demands and conditions do not match a person's needs, expectations or ideals or exceeds their physical capacity, skills or knowledge for comfortably handling a situation (French *et al.*, 1982).

For employees, chronic exposure to stressful situations such as work overload, poor supervisory support and low in-put into decision making have been cross-sectionally and prospectively linked to a range of debilitating health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, immune deficiency disorders and cardiovascular disease (Michie and Williams, 2003). Stressful working conditions can also have an indirect impact on employee wellbeing by limiting an individual's ability to make positive changes to lifestyle behavior (e.g. smoking, sedentary behavior) or by directly contributing to negative health behaviors (Landsbergis *et al.*.,1998).

Chronic job stress is also considered to be a major barrier to effective organizational functioning. Occupational stress contributes to a number of outcomes that are critical to organizational success, including absenteeism, labor turnover and job performance (Dollard *et al* 2000).

Workplace stress has major economic implications. One report has suggested that it costs the UK 3 billion pounds per year (The Mental Health Foundation, 2000). Stressed workers smoke more, eat less well, have more problems with alcohol and drugs, have more family problems, are less motivated on the job, have more trouble with co-workers, and have more physical illnesses (adapted from UAW Region EAP program).

The increment of 1.5 million pupils at the primary school level due to Free Primary Education (FPE) has increased the teachers' workload. This threatens the provision of quality education while enhancing stress on the teachers. This study seeks to unearth the perceived stress causing circumstances, the impact of stress on teachers and the mechanisms or approaches used to mitigate it.

In Kenya, teachers viewed the ban of extra tuition payment under FPE as detrimental to their motivation. It has previously served as an incentive for them and allowed teachers to have additional time to finish teaching the syllabus and help special needs children. This extra tuition for additional classes supplemented their income (UNESCO 2008).

According to a study done in 2005 by UNESCO in nine districts in Kenya, a sample of 162 schools was utilized. It was found that teaching conditions have remained poor, teachers' salaries are low and payment unreliable, underfunded and poorly maintained. Universal

Primary Education (UPE) program has resulted in low teacher morale. Despite a drastic increase in the number of pupils, teachers must teach and thus a changing work environment.

In Kenya, the inadequate number of teachers available in schools is a key factor contributing to unfulfilled learning needs for children and serious workload for teachers. Teachers are faced with many challenges including poor remuneration, inequitable distribution of teachers with very low pupil teacher ratio in rural and other areas with low population density, high pupil teacher ratio in urban areas and informal settlements and equipping teachers with skills on how to teach but not on how to give instructions. These teachers are therefore prone to stress hence the study sets out to find out the instigators, consequences and moderators of stress among primary school teachers. It will also explore interventions for management of the stress.

If workplace stress would reduce, the country will experience economic gain and the money would be invested elsewhere to reduce poverty levels. The straining of health care services would reduce too. There is also loss of working age people who are likely heads of households and responsible for several family members.

The study is important because it will help suggest ways of solving the stress among primary school teachers in Kenya. This will in turn help reduce the loss of the working age people therefore reducing poverty levels. The high level stress has disastrous consequences for the Kenyan economy. There is need therefore to find ways of managing it in order not to continue losing socially and economically due to poor performance, strikes among others.

1.3. Study Objectives

The main objective of this study was to find causes, consequences and management of occupational stress among public primary school teachers in Westlands division, Nairobi West District.

The specific objectives were as outlined below:

- 1) To determine the perceived sources of occupational stress among public primary school teachers in Westlands division.
- 2) To find out the impact of stress among public primary school teachers.
- 3) To establish mechanisms employed to mitigate/manage the impact of stress on teachers.

1.4. Study Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What are the perceived sources of occupational stress among public primary school teachers?
- 2) What is the impact of stress on teachers?
- 3) Are there mechanisms put in place to mitigate the impact of stress on teachers?

1.5. Justification of Study

Existing studies in Kenya have not focused on this topic of stress in primary schools; therefore this study will help in filling this gap.

The traditional cure to any form of illness has been largely through administration of medical drugs. The new approach is social in nature which seeks to understand the socio-economic and environmental factors in order to apply therapy. This study seeks to find out the extent of use of the social approach to illness.

The study will help in policy making and policy reforms in the employment sector. Study findings will help in putting weight to the issue and therefore enable proper setting of priorities.

1.6 Scope & Limitations

The study confines itself to what the respondents felt were the main sources of stress like low salaries, large classes, working environment, pupils' indiscipline and lack of recognition. It focused on stress responses/rituals specifically alcoholism, absenteeism, prayer, drinking, watching TV, excessive sleeping, smoking and playing. The study limits itself to the school environment.

Limitations to the study were time and the fact that data had to be collected during school sessions only. That is when teachers are available. Being a self-sponsored student, funds were also limited.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

We review relevant literature in the area of occupational stress with a view to getting a deeper appreciation of the subject area in two main sectors in which this chapter is divided into. These are the contemporary perspective and Theoretical Framework that guide this study. We deal with each of these aspects in detail.

2.1. Occupational Stress

The term 'stress' could be described as one of the most inaccurate words in scientific literature. The root of the confusion is that the word has been used to describe both the sources and outcomes of the stress process (Grimshaw 1999). Stress has been defined in a number of ways and the range of stress management techniques is even wider still. Essentially what most people understand by 'stress' is a physiological or psychological response to external stressors that goes beyond what is accepted as normal. Perhaps 'strain' would have been a better word and an analogy with a rubber band appropriate. Limited external stresses produce a response, a 'strain', which beyond a certain point becomes disproportionate and beyond the capability of the elastic properties of the subject (Barratt 2008).

2.1.1 Workplace Stress

Work related problems are not the only sources of stress in peoples' lives. Many other life events exert pressure and produce strain in individuals. Obvious candidates include bereavements, marriage, divorce, financial problems, difficulties with children and serious injury. Many attempts have been made to identify and determine the relative importance of such stressful life events (Grimshaw, 1999). One such attempt is represented by the PERI Life Events Scale. To construct scale, Dohrenwend *et al* (1982) constructed a list of 102 objectively verifiable life events. The highest ranked event overall was 'child died' with a rating of 1036 and the lowest 'acquired pet' at 163. The highest ranked work related stress factor was 'suffered business loss' or 'failure' at 510. Demoted and promoted at work ranked 379 and 374 respectively. These findings suggest that work related stressors are not trivial and are among those which have the greatest perceived impact. There is strong evidence that work stress can 'spill over' into home and social life, and vice versa (Grimshaw, 1999).

Some typical symptoms to be aware of include frequent headaches, anxiety or panic attacks, lack of self-esteem or confidence, mood swings and fatigue. Also, not being able to maintain a decent sleeping pattern can also indicate that you may have too much to cope with. Be aware of any general trends that are emerging on a daily, weekly or monthly basis and try to understand what has been causing these problems (Barratt, 2008).

2.2 Current Perspective

2.2.1 Workplace stress: Environmental and Individual factors

More workers are making psychological stress-related compensation claims than ever before, with the national cost of such claims estimated to be \$105.5 million in 2000-2001. Employers and the government are grappling with how to address the problem. Adelaide-based organisational psychologist Associate Professor Maureen Dollard has been researching and consulting on occupational stress for over a decade. "I have never seen such a national reaction to it as now", she says. Psychosocial risk factors in work environments are firmly on the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission agenda and the State-based workers' compensation bodies are running programs for stress prevention, intervention and management (Claufield *et al* (2004).

Part of this recent action comes from the growing recognition of the human cost of stress, but it is the financial expense that has forced a response. Recent figures show how the nature of stress claims makes them particularly costly. Although the number of such claims account for a minority of claims overall, stressed workers tend to stop working for longer periods, resulting in a higher relative cost to employers. Between 2001-2002 stress accounted for over half of all long term (12 or more weeks) compensation claims that did not involve an injury. Stress is considered to include work pressure, harassment at work, exposure to traumatic events, lack of autonomy and support, and exposure to workplace and occupational violence (Brough (2004).

There are a myriad of reasons for the escalation of occupational stress. Maureen, who is also the Director of the Work and Stress Research Group at the University of South Australia, says that workers are facing more demands from various sources. For example, changing government policies, such as outsourcing, downsizing, casualising and de-institutionalisation without appropriate resources, have boosted the workload on the human services industry and government agencies, including community services, corrections and police. This, in turn, creates an environment ripe for interpersonal conflict. "Workers are having to work harder and faster, and meet new management objectives and performance criteria", Maureen says. "So there is a lot of distress from emotional demands and the intensification of work" Claufield et al (2004).

2.2.2 Type of job and stressors

Research on work stress has focussed on occupations that implicitly involve high levels of stress, such as emergency service work. Dr Paula Brough (2004), a lecturer in organisational psychology at Griffith University in Brisbane, recently studied occupational stress in fire, police and ambulance services. Her aim was to differentiate the impact of trauma, which is unique to this work, from the daily hassles encountered by all workers. Paula found that daily hassles contribute more to job satisfaction levels, while trauma contributes more to psychological health, especially in the long term. But the picture is complex, with daily hassles exerting a greater effect in the short term, she explains. "Not all trauma affects officers in a negative way all the time because they have training and counselling to deal with it", Paula says. "But, the daily hassles are often not addressed (and) they build up over time" Workplace Relations (2003).

Policing has been heavily researched given the comparatively high levels of divorce, suicide and alcoholism associated with the occupation. Factors that contribute to the pressure of policing include the occupation's negative public image, the frustration of dealing with the legal system, and exposure to violence. However, some of these stressors are being addressed by the increasing diversity of the police workforce, particularly the presence of more female officers. Paula says that typically females deal with public incidences differently to males. "They tend to talk with people and calm them down, compared to men who are more likely to use aggression." These benefits have led to fire services investigating how to recruit and retain more women. (Brough, 2004).

Despite these gains, female police officers continue to face difficulties working in a male-dominated policing culture. However, the incidence of sexual harassment, for example, is declining. Some police services have set up mentoring schemes for female officers to encourage them to stay in the service, and to show them how to achieve promotion. Paula says there is evidence that this improves retention rates, opportunities for promotion, and overall acceptance of these officers (Brough,2004).

As well as the stress associated with particular jobs, there are occupational stressors that are unique to job locations. Maureen at the University of South Australia has been researching strains faced by rural workers. She has found that isolation presents particular difficulties for professionals in rural areas, including a lack of access to professional training, development and support. Further, these workers regularly encounter dual relationship problems, in which their role as a professional conflicts with that of being a community member in small towns. Farmers also face unique work pressures. Uncontrollable variables, such as the weather,

market prices, and globalisation can make farming anxiety-provoking work; little research has been conducted on the strains experienced in owner-operated type businesses such as farming (Brough, 2004).

2.2.3 Individual Factors in Occupational Stress

Individual differences also affect the way people cope with work stress. Two people doing the same job can react in opposite ways to a shared occupational stressor. Dr Peter Cotton, a specialist in workplace mental health with Comcare, the Commonwealth workers' compensation authority says, individual personality factors impact on psychological injuries (a preferred term for stress claims). He says that psychologists working in the area are increasingly assessing the role of personality, an issue that has been neglected in the past. Of the five recognised personality factors - openness, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism (or emotionality) - the latter two play a significant role in compensation claims. (Caulfield et al (2004).

Peter says that people who are high on conscientiousness are over represented in musculoskeletal and occupational injuries. They are inclined to exhibit somatic symptoms and, because they experience increased peripheral muscle tension, they are prone to more wear and tear from repetitive movements, Peter says. "That's often why, for example, you can have ten people doing the same job, but only one will get the overuse syndrome." These individuals are likely to submit claims when the damage is done, so interventions include trying to identify them before reaching this point, and increasing their awareness of potential risks (Ibid 2004).

Emotionality is the other personality factor that is over represented in individuals seeking psychological injury compensation, especially for long-term claims. Individuals with high levels of trait emotionality tend to experience negative emotions in response to life events, and think more negatively about themselves and the world, Peter says. "In response to the same sort of stressors, people with higher trait emotionality are likely to become more distressed, more anxious or more depressed". Individuals with this trait are also more likely to carry personal stressors into the workplace and vice versa (Ibid 2004).

Peter says, occupational psychologists are also increasingly focusing on individual levels of morale, a term used for resilience in the workplace. "What we are finding is that people with low trait morale tend to be most vulnerable to developing distress responses that may eventually lead to a psychological injury." He says there is growing evidence that a supportive leadership style, and a positive and engaging work team climate, are key to boosting morale and reducing claims. "People will submit a claim stating they had a traumatic event, but often when you scratch the surface it isn't so much the incident, it's more the feeling that their leader didn't support them. Perceptions of support are a critical driver in the workplace." Prevention work is about trying to build supportive leadership and improve the quality of the work team climate as a way of boosting morale, Peter says. "When people have higher morale they cope much more effectively... and there is less negative impact on them"(Ibid 2004).

2.3 A History of Primary Education in Kenya

According to e-government, primary education is in essence the first phase of our formal education system. It usually starts at six years of age and runs for eight years. The main purpose of primary education is to prepare children to participate fully in the social, political and economic well being of the pupils. The new primary school curriculum has therefore been designed to provide a more functional and practical education to cater for the needs of children who finish their education at the primary school level and also for those who wish to continue with secondary education.

Prior to independence, primary education was almost exclusively the responsibility of the communities concerned or non governmental agencies such as local church groups. Since independence the government has gradually taken over the administration of primary education from local authorities and assumed a greater share of the financial cost in line with the political commitment to provide equal educational opportunities to all through the provision of free primary education.

Almost all primary schools in the country are now in the public sector and depend on the Government for their operational expenses. The Government provides teachers and meets their salaries. Government expenditure on school supplies and equipment are minimal as these are financed by fees levied on parents by Parent Teacher Associations. In addition responsibility for the construction and maintenance of schools and staff housing is shouldered by the parents. Indeed almost all primary schools built and equipped after independence have initially been the result of harambee or self-help efforts.

2.3.1 Enrolment Before and After Free Primary Education

There has been a remarkable expansion in primary education, both in terms of the number of schools established and in the number of children enrolled, over the past three decades. At independence, there were 6,056 primary schools with a total enrolment of 891,600 children. At the same time, trained teachers numbered 92,000. In 1990 there were over 14,690 primary schools, with an enrolment of slightly over 5,000,000 children and with nearly 200,000 trained teachers respectively.

In addition to the expansion in the number of primary students enrolled, there has been a significant improvement in the participation of girls in education. At independence, only about a third of the enrolment in primary schools were girls. By 1990 the proportion of girls had risen to nearly 50 per cent. Educating women contributes significantly to many other desirable objectives, such as reducing the rate of population growth (e-government 2008). Access to quality primary education is a fundamental human right and one of the Millennium Development Goals. To meet this right and goal, Free Primary Education was implemented in Kenya in 2003. (APHRC, 2008)

Trends in primary school enrollment in Nairobi province in both public and private schools between 2003 and 2005 total enrollment increased sharply, then steadily thereafter. The introduction of Free Primary Education in Kenya in 2003 has now reached 7.8 million (Ministry of Education 2008).

The inadequate number of teachers available in schools is a key factor contributing to unfulfilled learning needs of children. Teachers are faced with many challenges including

poor remuneration, inequitable distribution of teachers with very low pupil teacher ratio in rural and other areas with low population density: high pupil teacher ratios in urban areas and informal settlements; and equipping teachers with skills on how to teach but not on how to give instructions. The increment of 1.5 million pupils at the primary school level due to Free Primary Education (FPE) has increased the teacher's workload. This threatens the provision of quality education while enhancing stress on the teachers. This study seeks to unearth the stress causing circumstances the impact on teachers and the approaches teachers use to mitigate it.

2.4 Interventions for Occupational Stress

Interventions for work stress range from organisational to individual-based approaches. We discuss these two aspects below.

2.4.1 Organisational Level

At the organisational level, there is a trend towards risk management aimed at preventing stress. In its simplest form, this involves identifying potential hazards in the workplace, and the harms associated with them. Efforts are made to control the hazards, and these initiatives are then evaluated. Maureen says effective risk management takes a bottom-up approach, involving active participation from workers and supervisors, who try to develop new ideas for interventions. In the middle are interventions that combine individual and organisational approaches. For example, employee assistance programs, provided by employers, offer staff a limited number of confidential counselling sessions by independent consultants. Issues can also be raised at a higher level in the organisation, such as at an occupational health and

safety committee meeting. Ideally, it should involve top management support, participation at all levels, and the development of communication strategies so people can identify problems and be involved in solving them (Brough 2004).

2.4.2 Individual level

At the other end of the scale, individual-focused approaches include distressed workers visiting professionals to seek medication or therapy. Staff receive individual help for problems and counsellors can provide feedback on work-related issues to the organisation to improve its work environment (Brough 2004).

In the emergency services, interventions have developed from the growing recognition of the impact of traumatic experiences on individuals. Some efforts have been made to improve training, such as police recruits shadowing seasoned officers to learn how to handle stressful events. But the focus has been on debriefing and counselling programs, which have been increased significantly in recent years. Paula Brough of Griffith University says this has involved the establishment of peer debriefing systems and access to psychological support (Caulfield *et al* 2004).

It is difficult to evaluate work stress interventions because there are so many other processes going on that threaten the validity of the results. Maureen says obtaining workers' feedback on strategies that have been implemented is one way to continually improve processes. Support has been found for job enrichment programs, which aim to increase both workers' involvement in decision making processes and their variety of job tasks, so jobs are more

diverse and stimulating. These programs have been shown to increase workers' autonomy, such that they report more positive attitudes to the work environment and more positive mental health. "A lot of research suggests it's not so much the demands you are faced with, but your level of autonomy and support to actually manage them that is the key issue," she says (Brough, 2004).

2.4.3 Individually Oriented Stress Management Programmes

Worker-directed WHP strategies typically focus on the health-related attitudes and behaviours of individual employees and aim to provide them with information and guidance on how to adapt to, or manage the pressures and demands faced in everyday work life. Stress management interventions that target the individual include one-to-one counselling, relaxation training, lifestyle education and other behaviour change strategies (Giga *et al.*, 2003).

The approach to combating the ill-effects of job stress is reflective of the traditional model of WHP that has focused almost exclusively on individual lifestyle behaviours, such as smoking, diet and exercise, with little or no consideration of the contribution that job conditions make to such behaviours or the direct contributions that adverse working conditions can make to 'lifestyle-related' diseases such as heart disease and cancer (LaMontagne, 2004).

This individual-orientated approach to job stress has been strongly criticized by organizational health practitioners, employee representatives and occupational stress

researchers.

2.4.4. Comprehensive Approach to Stress Prevention

Despite the criticisms directed at stress prevention programmes that focus exclusively on the health-related attitudes and actions of individual employees, worker-directed initiatives can still make valuable contributions to combating stress at work. Comprehensive stress prevention programmes, which address both the organisational origins of stress at work as well as the symptoms of distress exhibited by individual employees, are much more likely to lead to favourable, long-term outcomes than programmes that focus solely on the individual (Kompier *et al.*, 2000 Michie and Williams, 2003).

Comprehensive programmes provide a balance between organizational and individual-directed interventions that ensure that ‘... preventative benefits of the former can have a widespread impact across an organisation, whilst the curative strengths of the latter can target those (fewer) people who have already succumbed to occupational ill-health’ (Bond, 2004).

The benefits of comprehensive stress prevention programmes include outcomes that are relevant to the individual (e.g. enhanced psychological health, improved job satisfaction, reduction in ambulatory blood pressure) as well as the organisation (e.g. reduced sickness, absence from duty, increased organisational commitment, improved job performance). When compared with traditional lifestyle education/counselling programmes, comprehensive WHP initiatives are also much more likely to capture the involvement of low-paid blue-collar

workers - a group that traditional lifestyle risk programmes had previously found difficult to reach and to result in successful behaviour change (Sorensen *et al.*,2002).

In health promotion terms, comprehensive stress prevention/reduction initiatives reflect the settings approach to promoting health at work (Chu *et al.*,2000; Noblet,2000). A hallmark of the settings approach is the attention given to monitoring and addressing the impact that the setting itself has on the health of employees. In the case of job stress, this includes a close examination of the social and organisational conditions that contribute to job stress (Polanyi *et al.*,2000).

2.4.5. Managing Stress with Humor, Laughter & Play

Humor, laughter and play strengthens the human immune system. This helps people to recover from illnesses as well as bring joy into their lives. This priceless medicine can be achieved by laughing oftenly by spending time with people who have successfully incorporated humor into their lives. Laughter lowers blood pressure, decreases stress hormones and increases infection fighting antibodies. Having a break from the routine activities to play football, hockey or any other type of sport helps refresh one's mind and control fatigue. Counting one's blessing by literary making a list by simply considering the good things in one's life will distance him/her from negative thoughts that are a barrier to humor and laughter. One should lighten up by viewing their lives in context – one thing at a time, one step at a time. One should always carry only their own weight, not others' weight. Sharing one's embarrassing moments can bring relief as other people listen and share theirs too (Holland N. (1982).

2.4.6. Managing Stress with Counselling

Stress is a term used to describe a pattern of physiological responses which are directed to specific events in our lives. It is also a term that has fallen into fashion in recent years, particularly when referring stress to the context of work, productivity and health (Grimshaw1999).

Counsellors are constantly dealing with stress from both personal and professional perspectives. The manner in which counsellors deal with stress commonly defines how they'll approach a client's stress-related situation. When considering stress and its effects, it is important that we think in terms of 'association or relationship' between the cause[s] and the effect[s] of the stress. To think of either of these two in isolation will not give appropriate answers, as it is the overall picture - the relationship between the cause and the effect that we are interested in. This relationship between the cause and the effect is known as the stimulus and response association (Ibid 1999).

Stress with its associated physiological, mental and emotional states and changes, is an interesting and complex issue. There are times when stress makes us feel bad and we perform unsatisfactorily, and there are times when the right degree of stress can be good for us as it sharpens our focus (Ibid 1999).

Given the relationship between stress and emotional performance, it is noted that constant boredom and being unable to find outlets for our mental and creative energy can also be another common cause of stress. The effects of boredom leave us feeling similar to the way

we do when experiencing other forms of chronic stress. Boredom also adversely affects performance and general wellbeing (Gondim, 2003).

Prolonged or intense stress levels can impact on our relationships, work performance and lead to panic attacks and/or depression. Stress can also contribute to physical symptoms such as skin disorders, headaches and other bodily aches and pains. Counselling and psychotherapy can be instrumental in tackling the root cause of stress and working on ways of managing it.

Prolonged and recurring stress can cause damage to brain cells and increase blood pressure and heart rate. Chronic Heart Disease was recently found to be one of the common causes of deaths related to stress. Counselling for stress aims to change the perception of stress allowing you to cope with situations that were previously triggering your problem. Stress counselling helps you to evaluate threats and then provides you with resources to deal with them. Being able to control the environment around you is a major part in developing self-confidence which enables you to face the challenges ahead. Counselling can help you manage stress so you can get on with your life (Alexander 2008).

Counsellors have to deal with stress on a personal and professional level. How a counsellor deals with stress will often define how they will approach a stressed client's problem. When discussing stress and how it affects people, a counsellor will talk about the relationship between the causes of the stress in question and its effects. This gives an overall picture of the stress-related problem. The causes of stress are known as 'stimulus' and the effects of stress are the 'response'. Identifying the cause and effect of stress is key to stress-management (Ibid 2008).

Stress affects performance and has associated physical, mental and emotional states. Stress can make you feel alert, sharp and focussed on a task but it can also drain energy and make you perform badly. So, there is a relationship between the cause of stress and its effects. The right level of stress (from work, social situations, relationships) can release energy that motivates and focuses the mind and body. Too much stress, both chronic and short-term, can overburden the body's systems leading to a drain on energy or an uncontrolled level of activity that causes emotional and psychological damage (Ibid 2008).

A trained counsellor is trained and qualified to support you in understanding your stress and can help you to find ways of managing it so as to improve your life. Stress can make you feel isolated and alone but counselling can offer you sympathetic support system in a confidential environment while you overcome your stress-related problem.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

A theory is a set of explanations or statements that specify how and why several concepts are related in the explanation of social realities and phenomena (Giddens, 1997).

2.5.1 The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

Stressors are demands made by the internal or external environment that upset balance, thus affecting physical and psychological well-being and requiring action to restore balance (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977). Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, stress was considered to be a transactional phenomenon dependant on the meaning of the stimulus to the perceiver (Lazarus, 1966; Antonovsky, 1979).

Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman suggested in 1984 that stress can be thought of as resulting from an “imbalance between demands and resources” or as occurring when “pressure exceeds one's perceived ability to cope.” Stress management was developed and premised on the idea that stress is not a direct response to a stressor but rather one's resources and ability to cope mediate the stress response and are amenable to change, thus allowing stress to be controllable.

In order to develop an effective stress management programme it is first necessary to identify the factors that are central to a person controlling his/her stress, and to identify the intervention methods which effectively target these factors. Lazarus and Folkman's interpretation of stress focuses on the transaction between people and their external environment (known as the Transactional Model). The model conceptualizes stress as a result of how a stressor is appraised and how a person appraises his/her resources to cope with the stressor. The model breaks the stressor-stress link by proposing that if stressors are perceived as positive or challenging rather than a threat, and if the stressed person is confident that he/she possesses adequate rather than deficient coping strategies, stress may not necessarily follow the presence of a potential stressor. The model proposes that stress can be reduced by helping stressed people change their perceptions of stressors, providing them with strategies to help them cope and improving their confidence in their ability to do so.

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping is a framework for evaluating the processes of coping with stressful events. Stressful experiences are construed as person-environment transactions. These transactions depend on the impact of the external stressor. This is mediated by firstly the person's appraisal of the stressor and secondly on the social and

cultural resources at his or her disposal (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977; Antonovsky & Kats, 1967; Cohen 1984).

When faced with a stressor, a person evaluates the potential threat (primary appraisal). *Primary appraisal* is a person's judgment about the significance of an event as stressful, positive, controllable, challenging or irrelevant. Facing a stressor, the *second appraisal* follows, which is an assessment of people's coping resources and options (Cohen, 1984). Secondary appraisals address what one can do about the situation. Actual *coping efforts* aimed at regulation of the problem give rise to *outcomes* of the coping process.

2.5.2 Rational Emotive Therapy

Rational Emotive Therapy (RET), previously called rational therapy, is a type of cognitive therapy that treats psychological disorders by forcing the client to give up irrational beliefs. It is a comprehensive, active-directive, philosophically and empirically based psychotherapy which focuses on resolving emotional and behavioral problems and disturbances and enabling people to lead happier and more fulfilling lives. RET was created and developed by the American psychotherapist and psychologist Albert Ellis.

Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) is both a psychotherapeutic system of theory and practices and a school of thought established by Albert Ellis. Originally called rational therapy, its appellation was revised to Rational Emotive Therapy in 1959, then to its current appellation in 1992. RET was one of the first of the cognitive behavior therapies, as it was predicated in articles Ellis first published in 1956.

One of the fundamental premises of RET is that humans, in most cases, do not merely get upset by unfortunate adversities, but also by how they construct their views of reality through their language, evaluative beliefs, meanings and philosophies about the world, themselves and others. In RET, clients usually learn and begin to apply this premise by learning the *A-B-C*-model of psychological disturbance and change. The *A-B-C* model states that it normally is not merely an *A*, *adversity* (or *activating event*) that contributes to disturbed and dysfunctional emotional and behavioral *Cs*, *consequences*, but also what people *B*, *believe* about the *A*, *adversity*. *A*, *adversity* can be either an external situation or a thought or other kind of internal event, and it can refer to an event in the past, present, or future.

The *Bs*, beliefs that are most important in the *A-B-C* model are explicit and implicit philosophical meanings and assumptions about events, personal desires, and preferences. The *Bs*, beliefs that are most significant are highly evaluative and consists of interrelated and integrated cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects and dimensions. According to RET, if a person's evaluative *B*, *belief* about the *A*, *activating event* is rigid, absolutistic and dysfunctional, the *C*, the emotional and behavioral consequence, is likely to be self-defeating and destructive. Alternatively, if a person's evaluative *B*, *belief* is preferential, flexible and constructive, the *C*, the emotional and behavioral consequence is likely to be self-helping and constructive.

Through RET, by understanding the role of their mediating, evaluative and philosophically based illogical, unrealistic and self-defeating meanings, interpretations and assumptions in upset, people often can learn to identify them, begin to *D*, *dispute*, refute, challenge and

question them, distinguish them from healthy constructs, and subscribe to more constructive and self-helping constructs.

The RET framework assumes that humans have both innate rational (meaning self- and social-helping and constructive) and irrational (meaning self- and social-defeating and unhelpful) tendencies and leanings. RET claims that people to a large degree consciously and unconsciously construct emotional difficulties such as self-blame, self-pity, clinical anger, hurt, guilt, shame, depression and anxiety, and behaviors and behavior tendencies like procrastination, over-compulsiveness, avoidance, addiction and withdrawal by the means of their irrational and self-defeating thinking, emoting and behaving. RET is then applied as an educational process in which the therapist often active-directively teaches the client how to identify irrational and self-defeating beliefs and philosophies which in nature are rigid, extreme, unrealistic, illogical and absolutist, and then to forcefully and actively question and dispute them and replace them with more rational and self-helping ones. By using different cognitive, emotive and behavioral methods and activities, the client, together with help from the therapist and in homework exercises, can gain a more rational, self-helping and constructive rational way of thinking, emoting and behaving. One of the main objectives in RET is to show the client that whenever unpleasant and unfortunate activating events occur in people's lives, they have a choice of making themselves feel healthy and self-helpingly sorry, disappointed, frustrated and annoyed, or making themselves feel unhealthy and self-defeatingly horrified, terrified, panicked, depressed, self-hating, and self-pitying. By attaining and ingraining a more rational and self-constructive philosophy of themselves others and the world, people often are more likely to behave and emote in more life-serving and adaptive ways.

As explained, RET is a therapeutic system of both theory and practices; generally one of the goals of RET is to help clients see the ways in which they have learned how they often needlessly upset themselves, teach them how to un-upset themselves and then how to empower themselves to lead happier and more fulfilling lives. The emphasis in therapy is generally to establish a successful collaborative therapeutic working alliance based on the RET educational model. Although RET teaches that the therapist or counselor had better demonstrate unconditional other-acceptance or unconditional positive regard, the therapist is not necessarily always encouraged to build a warm and caring relationship with the client. The tasks of the therapist or counselor include understanding the client's concerns from his point of reference and work as a facilitator, teacher and encourager.

2.5.3 Physiological and Psychological Models

Stress has both physiological and psychological components. We respond to external events or even imagined events with a generalized set of responses called General Adaptation Syndrome or the stress response, but our responses are to some degree tailored to the nature of the event. Stress theory comprises of two models, the physiological model and the psychological model. In this study we utilized both models in informing the research.

Physiological models

Walter Cannon coined the term the "Fight or flight" response that is commonly used to describe the way in which our body reacts to stress.

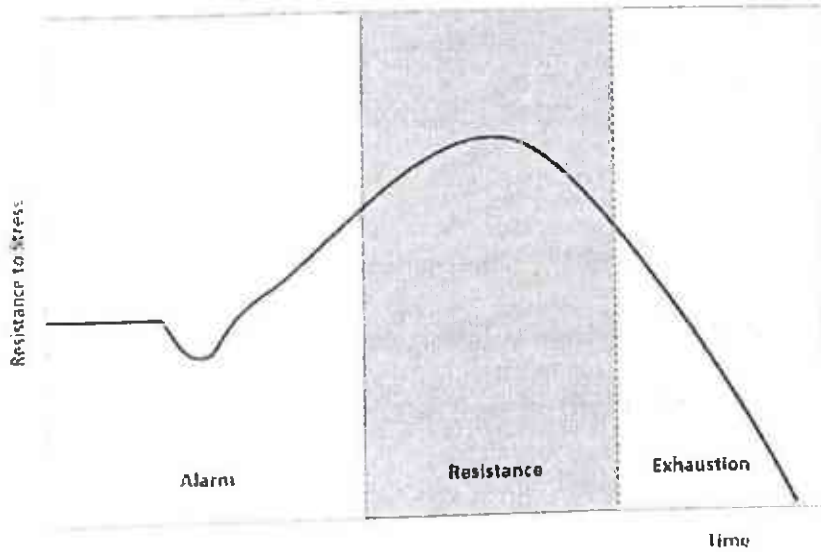
Cannon originally found this response in animals, but it was later found to also present in humans. The fight or flight response describes the way mammals respond to a threat. When our ancestors were walking through the jungle, and they came across a threat they needed to decide very quickly if they should fight or run away. The fight or flight response prepares the body almost instantly for these actions.

The first stage of the fight or flight response is activation of the sympathetic nervous system. This causes a system-wide response. Adrenaline and noradrenaline are released leading to increased alertness. Blood is diverted from the internal organs and the skin to skeletal muscles. The heart-rate, force of heart contractions, and respiratory rate are increased. The body begins to convert stored glycogen into glucose. All of these changes allow the body to exert a large amount of energy over a short period of time so that the individual may either fight effectively, or run away effectively.

One well-known phenomena which has its roots in the fight or flight response is the reporting of people lifting cars off their loved ones after a car accident. The amount of energy that such a task demands seems inconceivable to most people, and indeed it would be without the fight or flight response.

The fight or flight response is designed for response to acute (or short-term) stressors, however many of the stressors that affect modern man may be chronic in nature. Hans Selye developed the General Adaptation Syndrome model to describe the effect of chronic stressors on the body.

Figure 1: General Adaptation Syndrome Model



Source: Selye H. 1974

The first stage of the model is the alarm phase. This is where the fight or flight response is activated causing the organism's ability to resist the stressor to increase. In the resistance phase, the body starts to adapt to the existence of a chronic stressor. In the exhaustion phase the body's resources become depleted, and body systems start to deteriorate.

The diagram shows what would happen if an individual was presented with a single stressor while all other stressors in their life remained unchanging. At first their ability to deal with the stressor would increase. After a period of time, their ability to resist would stop increasing and would eventually begin to decrease as the individual become worn down by the stressor. Eventually the individual would become unable to resist the effects of the stress, and would become ill.

Selye was an endocrinologist who spent much of his life studying the stress response. He noticed that both good news and bad news stimulated this general response calling negative stress distress and positive stress eustress. Selye saw stress as a generic response which occurred in reaction to any stressor (Selye, 1974).

In 1976 a medical researcher called Herbert Benson in his studies of transcendental meditation practitioners discovered what he called the relaxation response (Payne, 2005). This is the direct opposite of the fight or flight response.

The relaxation response is mediated by the parasympathetic nervous system, which is also called the resting and digesting system. It works in opposition to the fight or flight response by decreasing heart rate, force of contraction, rate of respiration, and diverting blood away from skeletal muscles to the internal organs, therefore stimulating digestion.

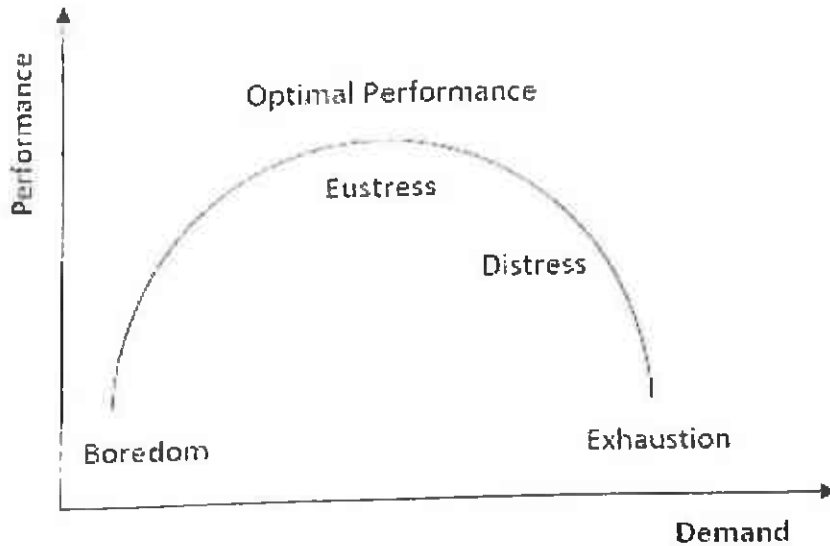
Both the fight or flight response and the relaxation response are mediated by the autonomic nervous system which is composed of the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system. These branches of the nervous system are like the yin and the yang of our being. Their relative levels of stimulation dictate whether we are alert or lethargic, and an appropriate balance between the two systems is essential for our good health and functioning.

Psychological Model

The Psychological Model of Stress theory argues that Stress is “a perceptual phenomenon arising from a comparison between the demand on the person and his ability to cope. An

imbalance...gives rise to the experience of stress and to the stress response” (Cox & MacKay, 1976)

Figure 2: Psychological Model



Source: Cox & MacKay, 1976

According to this model, demands placed on an individual result in an increase in performance. There is a point however where optimal performance is reached, and further demands will act to decrease an individual's performance. This relationship is sometimes illustrated by the human performance curve (shown to the right).

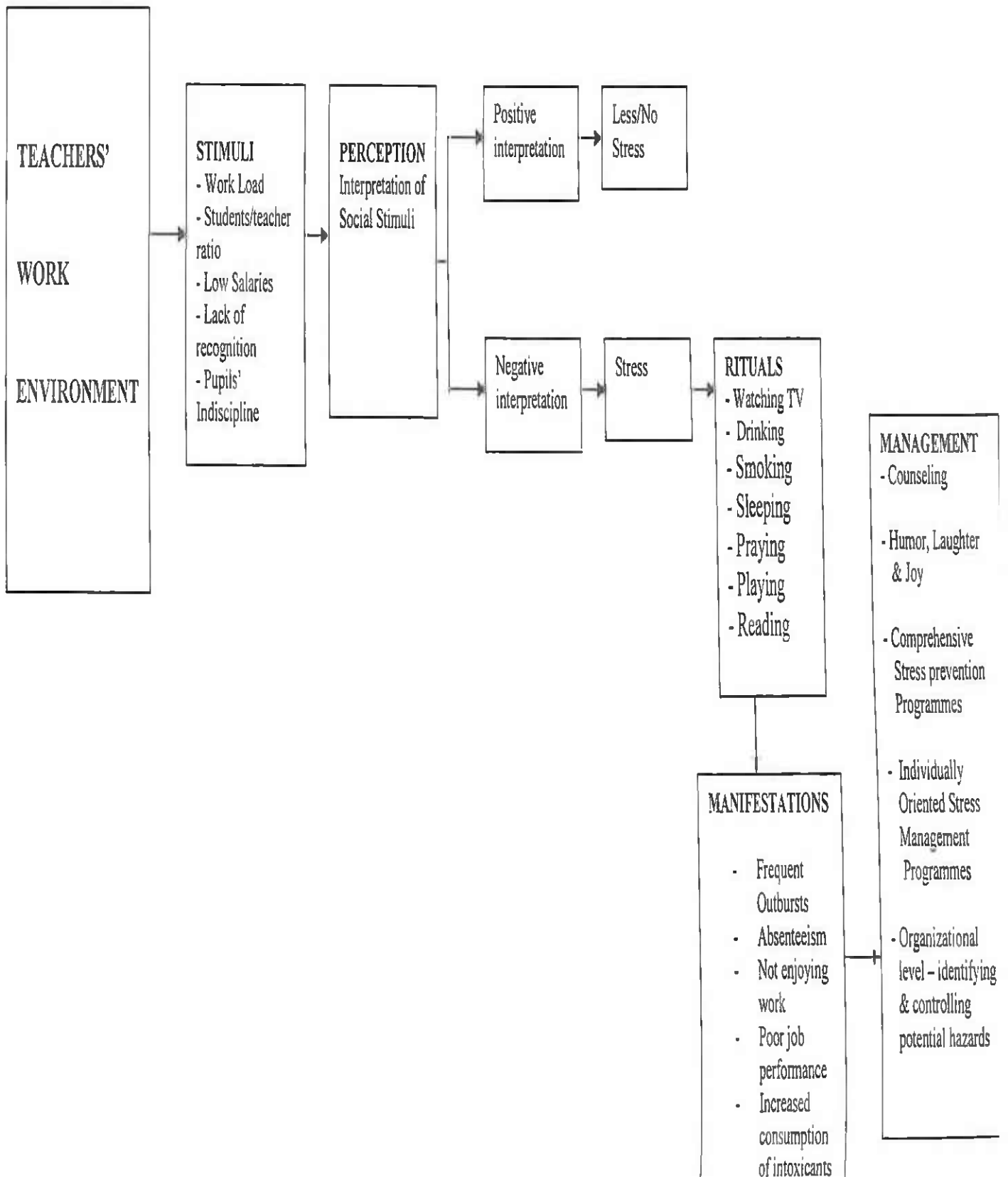
The most interesting implication of this model is that it is not so much the actual demands that are significant, it is how we perceive these demands and our ability to cope with them. A person who perceives their ability to cope as weak will experience more stress & vice-versa. Another interesting implication is that mental wellbeing comes from having an ideal level of stimulation. When we say we are stressed, we really mean that we are under more stress than

we can handle. The only time that we are completely free from stress is at death (Payne, 2005).

Psychological stressors are the most common stressors in modern life. Stress caused by worrying about things that may never happen such as losing our job, or our loved ones being hurt is much more common than actually being in a situation where we are physically threatened.

2.6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework on Perceptions, Rituals and Management of Stress



2.6.1. Definition of Key Terms

Stress

Stress is the physiological response of the body to physical and psychological demands. Such demands are known as stressors (Hans Selye, 1907 – 1982).

Stimuli

In this study stimuli are those social indicators like workload, low salaries, unfavourable working conditions, students' indiscipline, working hours etc.

Perception

Perception is the recognition and mental interpretation of one's feeling and predisposition towards a certain behaviour or the immediate environment, which cannot be observed directly but has to be inferred from observed consistency in behaviour (Aizen & Fishbein 1975). In this study perception is used to refer to the assumption that public primary school teachers have stress and develop strategies for managing stress.

Rituals

These are things we do to reduce or manage stress. For example watching TV, sleeping, praying, playing, reading, etc.

Stress Management

Stress management encompasses techniques intended to equip a person with effective coping mechanisms for dealing with psychological stress. Coping is a process involving cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage the demands on one's resources.

Stressors

Stressors are situations, circumstances or any stimuli that are perceived to be a threat (affecting the equilibrium of an organism) and which places a person in a stressful state.

(Mazure: Seaward; 1999 Selye 1977; Turner & Helms: 1995).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Singleton; *Straits and Straits*, (1993:66) defines research as “the planning, execution and interpretation of scientific observation. In this section the study’s research design will be discussed. Kerlinger (1964) defines research design as the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. This chapter looks at the study site and units of analysis, sampling procedures, sources of data, methods of data collection and data analysis techniques among others.

3.2 Site Selection

The study was carried out in Nairobi. Nairobi is one of the eight provinces of Kenya. It is also the capital city of Kenya. Nairobi has an area of 693 sq km and lies approximately 490 km by road from Mombasa. The city lies on the edge of the Kenya highlands at a height of 1,700m above sea level. The area of study serves as a political administrative, regional and international centre. As an industrial and commercial city it attracts people from all over Kenya and elsewhere. Nairobi has four districts namely: Nairobi East, Nairobi West, Nairobi North and Nairobi South. The study covered Westlands division of Nairobi West district.

The selection of Nairobi was purposive because it was easily accessible to the researcher and there was no language barrier. The researcher was also familiar with the area hence there is

no need for a guide, thus reducing costs. In addition Nairobi was conveniently chosen because it would save time and resources for the researcher.

3.3 Sampling Design

The study adopted both non- probability and probability sampling. Singleton *et al* (1988) defines non-probability sampling as a process of case selection other than random selection. Non –probability sampling does not involve random selection at any stage, meaning that each case in the population does not have an equal chance of being included in the sample.

The sample size was 60. From the Kilimani zone the study interviewed 35 teachers. While in Parklands 25 ordinary teachers were interview. Westlands division has 27 primary schools that are divided into two (2) zones. Parklands has 13 schools while Kilimani zone has 14 schools; therefore it constitutes two clusters (Kilimani and Parklands). For each cluster simple random was used to sample. From Kilimani 4 schools were selected. From Parklands 3 schools were selected.

This probability sampling consists of selecting the Kth case from a complete list or file of the population, starting with a randomly chosen case from the first K case on the list. Such a procedure has two requirements, a sampling interval K and a random start. The sampling interval is the ratio of the number of cases in the population to the desired sample size. The study drew a sample of 60 teachers out of the 159 teachers in the division. These schools were divided into two zones; Kilimani (104 teachers from 4 schools) and Parklands (55

teachers from 3 schools). The two zones were subjected to systematic sampling to get a sample of 60.

In this case Kilimani zone, to get a sample of 35 teachers from a list of 104 teachers, we divided 104 by 35 to obtain a sampling interval of 3. We then select a random number between 1 and 3 and started with that number, we selected every 3rd teachers thereafter until our sample was 35 teachers was reached.

In the case of Parklands zone, to get a sample of 25 teachers from a list of 55 teachers, we divided 55 by 25 obtain a sampling interval of 2. We then select a random number between 1 and 2 and started with that number, we selected every 2nd teacher thereafter until our sample was 25 schools.

3.4. Methods for Data Collection

As pointed out the study utilized quantitative methods of social investigation. Quantitative methods deal with measures of association and it is the major explanatory design. It is mostly used when generated data is descriptive. Descriptive statistics include frequency distribution, percentages and measures of central tendency.

Interviewing: The study employed face-to-face interviewing. This is because it has a high response rate which means less bias as a result of non-participation of sampled persons. The study interviewed ordinary primary school teachers from various schools. Key informants were also interviewed. An interview guide as a tool of data collection to collect mainly qualitative data through in-depth interviewing of key informants was used. Key informants

were drawn from counseling teachers, the education officers from the division and some head teachers who have held that position for a long time. The study interviewed at least 5 key informants who were head teachers, counseling teachers and education officers.

- 1) **Observation:** This method is nearly used as a supplementary method to other primary methods. The study observed the working conditions of teachers e.g., the number of pupils in a class was big, and classes were generally congested. The teachers desks were looking old and in bad shape. The staff room was also observed to see if the teachers were comfortable.
- 2) **Document review:** The desk or documentary research was used in generating secondary data that was used to understand the question at hand at the theoretical level. This involved reviewing various research reports, books, articles and class registers.

3.5 Tools for Data Collection

Questionnaire: The main data collection tool for ordinary teachers in the study was a questionnaire, which had open and closed ended questions. Open-ended questions enabled the researcher to capture the respondent's personal view that would have been hard to capture while using closed ended questions. This primary data was obtained from the survey where 60 ordinary primary school teachers were interviewed.

Interview guide: An interview guide was used for key informants. Key informants were a good source of primary data whereby 5 key informants were interviewed. The

guide helped the researcher remain focused on the research objectives. Those interviewed were: Head Teachers, Education Officers and Guidance and Counseling teachers.

Observation guide: The observation guide was used to capture what was observed by the researcher. It contained observing the number of students in a class, whether the class was congested or not. The condition of the teacher's desk and how much he or she had to mark at that time.

3.6 Units of Analysis

According to Singleton *et al* (1988:69) a unit of analysis is "what or whom is to be described or analyzed." The researcher's unit of analysis was therefore the perceptions, rituals and mechanisms of stress management among public primary school teachers in Nairobi.

3.7 Units of Observation

An observation unit is the aggregation of elements from which information is collected. Hence in this case, public primary school teachers together with key informants were the unit of observation. Key informants helped get a better perspective of stress among these teachers and how it was managed.

3.8 Data Analysis

The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were employed. According to De vause (1986), descriptive statistics is a way of categorizing variables by summarizing patterns in the response of people in the sample. Descriptive

statistics included frequency distribution, percentages and measures of central tendency. Data presentation was done by use of tables and charts and cross tables. Qualitative data from key informants interviewed was described and summarized.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents characteristics of respondents, perceived sources of stress, impact of stress and finally stresses management at school level. This information is presented in form of tables and narratives based on thematic issues.

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

4.1.1 Sex

The respondents interviewed were 15 (25%) male and 45 (75%) female. This corresponds to the fact that most primary school teachers in this study are female.

4.1.2 Age

The respondent's age distribution was as follows: 1(1.7%) 20-24 years, 6(10%) 25-39 years; 10(16.7) 31-35; 16(26.7%) 36-40years and those above 41 years were 27(45%). Therefore most teachers are aged 41 years and above.

Table 1: Respondents' Age Distribution

Age of respondent	Frequency	Percent
20-24	1	1.7
25-39	6	10.0
31-35	10	16.7
36-40	16	26.7
41 and above	27	45.0
Total	60	100.0

4.1.3 Marital Status

Most of the respondents, 47 (78.3%) were married, 11 (18.3%) were single 1 (1.7%) widowed and 1(1.7%) separated. Therefore most primary school teachers were married.

4.1.4 Professional Attainment

Most of the respondents, 28 (46.7%) had P1 certificate (diploma in education); 14 (23.3%) had Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education (KCSE) and 18(30%) had university degrees.

4.1.5 Length of Service

Majority of the teachers 50 (83.3%) had over 10 years teaching experience while 10 (17%) had been teachers for 6-10 years. This means that most were teachers before the inception of Free Primary Education programme in 2003 and are therefore better placed to tell the difference between the two time periods in terms of teaching load and experiences. Teachers reported that the current classes present the challenge of individual attention to pupils and it has increased workload because of the large numbers of pupils.

4.2 Perceived Sources of Stress

The teachers interviewed pointed out some aspects which they perceived as stress causing as follows: low salaries, very large classes leading to work overload, poor working environment and pupils' indiscipline.

4.2.1 Respondents' Perceived Sources of Stress

Respondents were asked to give their opinion the various types of causes of stress. The table below summarizes the responses.

Table 2: Opinion Scale on Perceived Sources of Stress

Type of stressor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total No.
Low salary is a major source of stress to me.	45 (75%)	10 (16.7%)	1 (1.6%)	2 (3.3%)	2 (3.3%)	60
Large classes have increased my workload.	40 (67%)	15 (25%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	2 (3.3%)	60
I do not feel recognized as a teacher.	30 (50%)	20 (33.3%)	6 (10%)	0 (0%)	4 (6.6%)	60
My working environment as a teacher is poor.	42 (70%)	12 (20%)	3 (5%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.6%)	60
Pupils indiscipline is a major hindrance to performing my duties effectively.	29 (48.3%)	15 (25%)	8 (13.3%)	5 (8.3%)	3 (5%)	60
Total cell score	186	72	18	12	12	300
Cell representative	62%	24%	6%	4%	4%	100%

NB: Figures in parenthesis are percentage distribution of the respondents while the numbers of respondents (n) is indicated at the top of each cell.

As can be observed, all the indicators of perception are tending towards agreeing that all of them contribute to causes of stress. Strongly Agree (SA) has a percentage cell score of 62% while Strongly Disagree (SD) has a percentage cell score of 4%.

(a) Low Salaries

The first perceived major sources of stress was low salaries, majority 55 (92%) of the respondents identified low salaries as a major source of stress. This means that the teachers' remuneration still remains a source of discomfort. Low salaries cause stress because teachers work load has considerably increased with less corresponding reward. Most teachers indicated they hardly meet their basic needs and are forced to look for other source of income in order to supplement their income. For example a primary school teacher earns Kshs 25,000 per month compared to 40,000 Kshs for a secondary school teacher to them this is quite low considering the high taxes they pay. The main source of stress is that they have little time to engage in other livelihood activities for supplementation. Given the low salary, they are forced to engage in extra teaching/coaching beyond normal teaching hours for supplementation. While this somehow moderates their income, it however increases workload.

(b) Large Classes and Increased Work Load

Another perceived major source of stress was large classes. 55 (92%) of the respondents cited large classes as a major source of stress. Some classes still have 100 pupils to date yet the average number expected in class is 40. The teacher student ratio is too big (Aduda, 2005). Therefore, big classes now exist due to the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy that saw increased enrolment unlike previous years when primary education was not free. Enrolment

in public primary schools has increased from 5.8 million in 2002 to about 7.2 million but the number of teachers remain unchanged in these schools at about 180,000 and could even be less due to natural attrition (MOEST, 2005).

This explains the increased work load if previously a teacher was marking books for 30 pupils but now that teacher marks an extra 30 books on average which implies 100% increase. Since pupils must perform well in their national exams then the teachers must strain to attend to the bigger number besides giving many more assignments. To teachers or in schools keen on good performance the workload has almost doubled without corresponding remuneration. Some head teachers were reported not to give support to teachers even when they had legitimate concerns. They give unattainable targets or unrealistic reporting time. This leads to stress.

In Kenya the recommended ratio of teachers to pupils is 1 to 40 (MOEST, 2005). A recent survey by UNESCO (Daily Nation 2005:pg19) showed the average ratio in 162 schools sampled as 58:1 against the required 40:1. Such class sizes in public schools make it difficult for teachers to teach lessons effectively.

Table 3: School Vs. Class Size

Selected schools	Class size(Number of pupils in STD 3)
Kihumbuini primary	65
Kilimani primary	55
Westlands primary	68
Kangemi primary	83
	Total 271 (mean 67.75)

Using class registers of classes taught by the respondents and based on actual counting by class registers, the average class size was 68 pupils per stream (see table 3 above). This is by all means a big class therefore not to be effectively handled by a teacher.

Frequent absenteeism among colleagues means that their work is taken over by other teachers who already have their own work that is a lot. This increased work load leads to stress. Also because of the increased enrolment, there is an automatic increase in the workload because of the large numbers that need the teacher's attention.

According to the study majority, 34 (56.6%) of the respondents mark 1-6 assignments per week currently, while before FPE, 26(43.3%) of the respondents marked 1-6 but then the pupils were fewer compared to the present time. Despite the fact that majority of the teachers still mark between 1-6 assignments per week they are now dealing with bigger numbers than before hence more workload and more strain.

Apart from the fact that now teachers have a bigger number of pupils to deal with than before the inception of Free Primary Education, they also have the burden of making sure that their schools excel in the national examination. Many schools set high performance targets due to the stiff competition. High performance implies that teachers are expected to put in more effort beyond official working time which contributes to stress. The obsession for a high mean score in national exams put too much strain on the teacher.

(c) Lack of Recognition

The other perceived major source of stress was lack of professional recognition. A total of 50 (83%) of the respondents identified professional recognition needs as the third major cause of stress among teachers. This suggests that teachers also desire to be professionally recognized by their employers. Teachers are rarely promoted and hardly attend any promotional seminars.

(d) Work Environment

Another identified source of stress is the working environment for teachers. 54 (90%) of the respondents said their working environment was not conducive. As observed, some offices were too small or the staff room too congested. After primary education was made free, little or no infrastructure was put in place to facilitate the implementation. Many schools are overwhelmed by the numbers since classrooms were not expanded. This makes it difficult for teachers to teach effectively and many end up stressed. The strain put on them in that working environment does not augur well for teachers.

(e) Indiscipline among Pupils

Pupil's indiscipline was also causing stress to teachers since the banning of the cane. About 44 (73.3%) indicated that pupils indiscipline was causing them stress. Teachers can no longer cane the pupils to instill discipline. Corporal punishment in Kenyan schools was banned through a *Kenya Gazette* notice of March 13, 2001 by the then Minister for Education. Teachers find their hands tied when pupils display lack of discipline in school or get into some vice because they know the teacher will not subject them to corporal punishment. The banning of caning disarmed the teacher who now works at the mercy of the pupils.

(f) Reporting Times.

According to the study, majority 50(83.3%) of the respondents actually reported at 7.00 a.m. or earlier while 8(13.3%) reported at 7. 30 a.m. and only 2(3.3%) reported at 8.00am (as shown in table 4 below). According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST, 2005) the official reporting time is 8.00 a.m. but most teachers indicated to report earlier. Therefore we can say that the teachers are more strained now than before the Free Primary Education was introduced in terms of reporting time. Only 2 (3.3%) of the respondents reported at the recommended reporting time. This factor inevitably stresses teachers. Although the official time is 8.00a.m, the actual reporting time is before 8.00 a.m. for remedial classes and marking. This unofficial reporting time is strictly enforced by head teachers. This implies that more and more time is spent at school than necessary. Generally as shown on table 2a below, 44 (73.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that reporting and departure time was a source of stress.

Table 4: Actual Reporting Time

Actual reporting time	Frequency	Percentage
7.00a.m.	50	83.3
7.30a.m.	8	13.3
8.00a.m.	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

(g) Departure Time

According to the study, majority 48(80%) of the respondents actually left school after 5.00 p.m. while 4(6.7%) left at exactly 5.00 p.m. and only 2(3.3%) left at 4.00 p.m. and another

2(6.7%) at 4.30 p.m., only 4 (6.7%) leave at the recommended time (as shown on table 5 below). According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST, 2005) the official leaving time is 3.10 p.m. Even though the recommended leaving time is 3.10 p.m. a big majority 48(80%) of the teachers leave after 5.00 p.m. Since also most teachers report to school earlier than the recommended time and leave later than the recommended time, they are bound to be stressed especially when their pay is not equal to the work they have to do. What stresses teachers even more is the fact that no additional motivation is given to them nor is the increased time input considered. This implies that teachers have much less time for themselves and put in a considerable amount of extra time for which they receive no pay.

Table 5: Actual Departure Time

Departure time	Frequency	Percent
3.10p.m	4	6.7
4.00 p.m	2	3.3
4.30 p.m	2	3.3
5.00 p.m	4	6.7
After 5.00 p.m	48	80
Total	60	100.0

4.3 Manifestations of Stress

4.3.1 Increased Absenteeism

According to the study, 35(58.3%) of the teachers/respondents had missed work due to stress related issues. This suggests that there is stress among primary school teachers and that is affecting their work. According to key informants especially head teachers, the frequency of teachers absenteeism from work or even asking for permission to be absent has increased considerably than it used to be in the 1990s. To them this implies that the teachers are carrying too much. As observed in table 6 below most teachers had reported absenting themselves from school in the last two months. According to the key informants who were headmasters, head of departments and senior masters, the incidences of absenteeism has been on the increase.

Table 6: Respondent Absenteeism

Ever missed work	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	58.3
No	25	41.7
Total	60	100.0

4.3.2 Not Enjoying Work

According to the study, a big majority 54(90%) of the respondents did not enjoy their work as teachers. This is due to the number of factors they named as being responsible for stress in the last one year namely: heavy workload, high productivity targets, unreasonable

Headmasters/Headmistress/Head of Departments, new Heads of Departments and frequent absenteeism among colleagues. To most key informants one who does not enjoy his or her work is actually a stressed teacher. Key informants also reported to have received reports of teachers who were trying to move to other professions because of loss of interest in teaching. This could be attributed to many factors. According to the study findings majority of teachers did not enjoy their work.

4.3.3 Increased Social Isolation

According to the study, majority, 53(88.3%) of the respondents felt socially isolated and lonely while only 7(11.7%) reported not feeling the same.

4.3.4 Frequent Out Bursts

According to the study, majority (58.3%) of the respondents frequently lost their tempers with family. Only 25% of the respondents reported not losing their tempers because of stress. The remaining (16.7%) were undecided on the issue. The respondents cited anger with occasional bouts of rage and irritability, shouting at students and quarreling with colleagues. In the study 40(66.7%) of the respondents reported shouting at their pupils. The other 20(33.3%) did not.

Table 7: Respondents Shouting at Pupils

Ever shouted at pupil	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	66.7
No	20	33.3
Total	60	100.0

4.3.5 Poor Performance

Another outcome of stress is failure to prepare for lessons, repeated absenteeism and poor time keeping which translates to poor performance in pupils. In the study, 30 (50%) of the respondents did not prepare their lessons early and were often absent. Most head teachers (key informants) indicated the frequency of teachers not preparing for lessons or going to class and not teaching very common and attributed this to stress. Other key informants also concurred and reported that some schools were performing poorly due to lack of commitment to preparing and teaching their pupils.

4.3.6 Increased Consumption of Intoxicants

Stress leads to poor health and illnesses according to the researches done. A person's immunity is suppressed when they are stressed. Drunkenness as a ritual of stress release leads to alcoholism and lacking of confidence and poor self esteem. In the study, 40 (66.7 %) of the respondents reported falling sick often. The key informants confirmed increased consumption of alcohol especially among male teachers.

4.4 Stress Management

Stress is a normal occurrence. However, with increasing demands of work and home life, stress on the job is a problem, causing physical, mental, and financial consequences for employers as well as employees. Studies show that stressful working conditions are associated with increased absenteeism, exhaustion and intentions by workers to quit their jobs. Although some stress is a normal part of life, excessive stress interferes with your productivity and reduces your physical and emotional health. It is therefore important to find

ways to keep it under control. Fortunately, there is a lot that you can do to manage and reduce stress at work.

Employers should provide a stress-free work environment, recognize where stress is becoming a problem for staff, and take action to reduce stress. Stress in the workplace reduces productivity, increases management pressures, and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing. Workplace stress affects the performance of the brain, including functions of work performance; memory, concentration, and learning.

Stress has been defined as, "the inability to cope with a perceived or real (or imagined) threat to one's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being which results in a series of physiological responses and adaptations" (Seaward, 1997). In addition to responding physiologically, people may respond cognitively and emotionally to stress. Studies indicate that 70-80% of all disease and illness is stress-related (Seaward, 1997).

Stress affects each of the five dimensions of health: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. Rather than how much stress individuals experience, the critical issue seems to be how they perceive stress and respond to it. Seaward (1997) points out that coping with stress is an ongoing process.

It is critical that teachers and other school staff possess emotional wellness in order to manage their own lives as well as the lives of the children within their circle of influence. According to Pransky (1991), teachers who have participated in school health promotion programs report decreased absenteeism, enhanced morale, improvement in the quality of their

teaching, enriched attitudes about their personal health, and a sense of well-being. Moreover, healthy teachers and staff serve as positive role models for children and their families. A staff wellness program might include instruction in relaxation techniques, diet planning, communication skills, smoking cessation, and incentives for lifestyle improvements, such as lower health insurance rates, bonus checks, and free or reduced-cost health club memberships.

The transactional model defines stress as occurring when there is a persistent imbalance between demands and resources or potential of the individual concerned. The enormous human and economic costs associated with occupational stress suggest that initiatives designed to prevent and/or reduce employee stress should be high on the agenda of workplace health promotion (Daykin 1998).

Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of your thoughts, emotions, schedule, your environment, and the way you deal with problems. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun – plus the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on.

4.4.1 Rituals of Stress Management among Teachers

According to the study findings, teachers manage stress in various ways as shown in table 8 below. On answering the question how respondents manage stress and ranked them according to importance, the respondents ranked prayer (22) followed by watching television (18) mostly at night where they watch solace and entertaining programmes like *vitimbi*. Frequent

drinking (9) was the third most important means of releasing stress whereby they drink more in quantity. The second most important was reading mostly novels and comics (18) and sleeping (11) more frequently than before when they get the opportunity. From table 8 below it is evident that teachers use a combination of strategies to manage stress and it is mostly the ones that are more accessible to them and at the same time they should be cheap or should not involve money. The above implies that religion is an important factor in teachers stress management.

Table 8: Modes of Stress Management

Means of stress release by teachers	The first most important (frequency)	The second most important (frequency)
Watching TV	18	3
Drinking	9	5
Smoking	0	4
Sleeping	7	11
Prayer	22	10
Playing	1	3
Reading	2	18
Others(music, talks, walks)	1	6
Total	60	60

As observed in the study, majority (88.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement 'Stress can make you feel isolated and alone but counselling can offer you sympathetic support system in a confidential environment while you overcome your stress-related problem.' This implies that many teachers appreciate the role counseling plays in stress management. They therefore would wish that they get counseling services when they need

them. But as the study found out, schools did not offer counseling services as they did not have any programmes on that and none of the schools had a functional operational stress management committee but for those that had a form of committee, it was not operational.

4.4.2 Availability of Counseling Services for Teachers in Schools

The study found that 70% of the respondents reported that their schools did not offer counseling services to teachers. This suggests that the affected teachers did not get any assistance in their respective schools. This is evident as majority of the respondents reported that the schools were not well equipped therefore could not offer the much needed counseling services. Those who said their schools had counseling services cited counseling by voluntary untrained counselors. Administration sometimes allowed teachers to go for seminars or the school gave advice on how to manage/cope with stress, and if it persisted one was granted some days off work. The head teachers indicated that they had that challenge of lack of counseling services. They said that they are only provided with a counselor for students and not for teachers.

Of the seven schools sampled, none had a counselor for teachers. All of them had counseling services for pupils. Even most of the respondents who cited counseling services in their schools, meant counselors for pupils as the study found out.

4.4.3 Existence of an Operational Occupational Stress Committee

Out of the seven schools in the study only one had a stress management committee but the committee was dormant. The other six (6) schools did not have an operational occupational

stress committee. This is a group of about 6-8 members who come together occasionally or periodically to look into stress issues affecting staff members. This means that majority of the teachers had nowhere to turn to at work when stressed. On further inquiry, the study found that the dormant committee had not worked for 7 years, also the teachers counselor was not trained but did part time because she was a preacher and felt she could do some counseling.

Table 9: Stress Committees

Operational Stress Committee	Number
None existent	6
Exist but dormant	1
Total	7

4.4.4 Ability of Schools to Manage Stress

Majority 57(95%) of the respondents said that schools were not at all equipped to manage stress among teachers. Only 3(5%) of the schools were fairly equipped to manage stress. This implies that many schools are not equipped to manage stress. Not equipped means that the school does not have a Counseling Unit for affected teachers nor does it have an Operational Stress Committee. As reported in table 5, about 35(58.3%) of the teachers interviewed had missed work due to stress related issues. This may mean that all the affected teachers may have no help in their schools. Also as reported in the study, most teachers (93.3%) appreciated the role of counseling in managing stress. The respondents reported that they had not been trained on how to manage stress. And yet they had had teachers with stress related problems but the school did very little. It was reported that no one cared for teachers; they

lacked the expected support from other stakeholders. There were no trained counselors and the counseling department was not established.

Most schools did not offer counseling services for teachers; counseling teachers were only for pupils. Also none of the schools had an Operational Stress Committee. And finally a majority of the respondents (95%) reported that schools were not at all equipped to manage stress among teachers meaning they did not have a counseling department or unit for affected teachers or an Operational Stress Committee. Only 5% reported that schools were equipped. Therefore according to the study schools were not equipped to manage stress.

4.4.5 Stress as a Major Concern in School System Today

According to the key informants, stress is a major concern in school systems because it affects teachers' performance negatively and those teachers cannot deliver. Stress also causes teachers to miss work and pupils' performance may be affected. Stress leads to frustration hence inefficiency. This is made worse by the fact that teachers have a big work load with little pay.

Teachers are in a position to really influence the pupil's life either negatively or positively. They therefore need to be in good shape physically and psychologically to be able to deal with the pupils well. There are also very high expectations from parents and the Ministry of Education while the teachers' workload is very large. Because authority fails to recognize the professional needs of a primary school teacher, it leads to job dissatisfaction therefore poor performance or inefficiency.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study achieved its objectives as set out. This chapter gives a summary of the findings of the study and makes conclusions based on those findings.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study found that the perceived sources of stress include low salaries and large classes, among others. On the impact of stress in the school system, the study found that absenteeism and losing temper easily top the list. On the question of stress management, the study found that teachers released stress by watching TV, drinking, among others. There were no counselors for teachers and in most schools operational stress committees did not exist.

5.1.1. Low Salaries

To determine the perceived sources of occupational stress among public primary school teachers, the study found out that, low salaries were perceived as the major source of stress among teachers. Further, it was noted that staff have low job satisfaction caused by conflicting responsibilities and inability to meet their desires. Coupled with high standards of living these teachers end up getting a lot of stress. They are therefore over-ambitious in enrolling for various courses in universities and colleges which is quite expensive. Most teachers have debts in form of loans which they have taken to pay for these courses and also

meet their own home development issues. This means that the teachers need an upward review of their salaries.

5.1.2. Large Classes and Increased Work Load

The second perceived major source of stress was large classes. Majority of the respondents cited very large classes as a major source of stress among teachers. This is as a result of the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy that has seen increased enrolment unlike previous years when primary education was not free. According to respondents, reasons for stress among teachers included work overload due to under-staffing, large unmanageable classes and poor remuneration. Work overload, meeting deadlines and emerging issues are potential issues causing stress. Teachers are also supposed to be counselors to pupils compounded with high expectations from stakeholders.

5.1.3. Lack of Recognition

The third perceived source of stress was lack of recognition. A good number of the respondents cited professional recognition needs as cause of stress among teachers. This suggests that teachers also desire to be professionally recognized by their employers.

5.1.4 Working Environment

Working environment for teachers was the fourth source of stress among them. Majority of the respondents said their working environment was not conducive there was no improvement in the infrastructure after the introduction of Free Primary Education. This means that the classes were too small to accommodate the increasing numbers of pupils. The staff rooms were not sufficient enough since the teachers had no enough space to store their

teaching materials and pupils' exercise books. This led to congestion hence resulting to inefficiency in working among teachers thus amounting to stress.

5.1.5 Low Self Esteem

The fifth perceived source of stress according to key informants is self esteem. Teachers suffer from low self esteem due to stress. They can also be disorganized and fail to make adequate preparation for their lessons. They are affected by frequent sickness and most of them reported stress-related complaints of various nature. Most stressed teachers miss work and this may lead to high incidences of absenteeism. This suggests that there is stress among primary school and that is affecting their work. Teachers who had low self-esteem were also found to present symptoms of anger; they did not enjoy their work and had frequent emotional out-bursts.

5.1.6. Lower Performance

The study found that stress lowers performance in teachers because it affects the learning process and work. This translates to poor grades among pupils, projection, fighting back and even deviant behavior like drug abuse strikes, stealing, cheating among others.

5.1.7. Projection of Stress to Learners

Sometimes this stress is projected to learners (pupils). Occasionally one can withdraw and also coming late to work. Other consequences of stress as reported by key informants are fatigue and confusion; don't care attitudes, and alcoholism.

5.1.8. Management and Mitigation of Stress

- (a) In management of stress, the study found that teachers release stress in various ways. This includes prayer, taking alcohol frequently, reading novels, sleeping more and watching entertaining programmes on television.
- (b) In order to establish approaches employed to mitigate the impact of stress on teachers, the study found that most schools did not offer counseling services to teachers. Where counseling services that existed was offered by non untrained counselors on voluntary basis.
- (c) The study found that there is little or no mechanisms geared towards stress management in schools put in place to mitigate stress among teachers. Most schools did not have anything to help cope with stress. The study found that, what schools have are one or two counselors for pupils and not teachers. According to the other respondents, some of the schools that claimed to have stress committees, said that these committees were not functional and this meant the same thing as not having a committee.

The church was also identified by most respondents as an important institution for stress management in the absence of school based alternatives.

5.2 Recommendations

In view of the above findings and conclusions we wish to make the following recommendations for consideration by stakeholders who include Primary School Communities, School Managers and Administrators, Government Agencies and even Private sector interest groups.

- (a) There is need for communities to strengthen church/religion as they play a leading stress management role.
- (b) There is need for school administrators and government agencies to improve working conditions for teachers which includes reviewing salaries upwards, providing better working tools and regular promotions.
- (c) The government should unfreeze the freeze on hiring teachers and recruit more because there is serious understaffing in many schools. Moreover teachers now have to deal with big classes with increased work-load due to under staffing.
- (d) There is need for schools to establish counseling department staffed by qualified counselors. This can be done as a consortium where a group of neighboring schools could share the cost of establishing and maintaining the service.
- (e) There is need to improve school infrastructure to alleviate the overcrowding in classrooms especially following the introduction of free primary education.

5.3 Conclusion

The general objective was to find perceptions, rituals and management of occupational stress among public primary school teachers. The preceding section has outlined key findings and strategies employed in managing the challenges. The study has established that teachers do not enjoy their work due to various reasons as outline above. There is stress among teachers and that this affects work hence low output. The study found out that the consequences of stress were not desirable and they included illnesses and absenteeism among others. Lastly, little if any, stress management strategies for primary school teachers exist. The objectives of

the study were achieved and recommendations to mitigate the impact of stress among primary school teachers are outlined above.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

Further research should be done to establish the following:

- What are the counseling needs for ordinary primary school teachers?
- The reason why most schools do not have an established counseling department complete with trained counselors.

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CITY COUNCIL OF NAIROBI



TELEGRAM "SCHOOLING"
TELEPHONE: 221166/224281
EXT: 2426 /2590

CITY HALL ANNEXE
P. O. BOX 30298 GPO
NAIROBI

CITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

GL/NC/141 VOL III/124

6th October, 2009

**THE HEADTEACHERS
NAIROBI WEST DISTRICT
NAIROBI**

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

I write to certify that Hellen Omwanga from University of Nairobi, a Bonafide postgraduate student at the Department of Sociology & Social Work, has been granted permission to visit schools in Nairobi West District for the purpose of collecting research data.

She is carrying out a research on: **"Occupational Stress: Perceived causes, consequences and moderators: A Case of Public Primary School Teachers in Westlands Division"** in Nairobi West District.

You are requested to facilitate this activity to enable her complete her studies.


TABITHA T. KAMAU
For: DIRECTOR OF CITY EDUCATION

cc. - M.E.O. - Nairobi West
TAC - Tutors - Parklands Zone
- Kilimani Zone

APPENDICES – RESEARCH TOOLS

Appendix I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORDINARY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Age (1) 20-24 (2)25-30 (3) 31-35 (4) 36-40 (5) 40 and above
2. Sex (1) M (2) F
3. Highest level of education attained.....
.....
4. How big are classes that you teach? (1) 20-30 (2)31-40 (3) 41-50 (4) 51 and above
5. For how long have you worked as a teacher? (1) less than 1 year (2)1-5yrs (3)6-10yrs (4) above 10 yrs
6. What is your marital status (1)Married (2) single (3) separated (4)widow

SECTION B: PERCEIVED SOURCES OF STRESS

7. For each of the statement below on are perceived sources of stress, Please indicate by a tick (☐) whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree or you Strongly Disagree.

Type of stressor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total N
Low salary is a major source of stress to me.						
Large classes have increased my workload.						

I do not feel recognized as a teacher.						
My working environment as a teacher is poor.						
Pupils indiscipline is a major hindrance to performing my duties effectively.						

8. Below are factors known to caused stress in the work place; which ones **caused you** stress in the last one year.

- a) Too many demands on time
- b) Excess overtime
- c) New technology
- d) A new or unreasonable boss
- e) Increased productivity targets
- f) High sickness absence in colleagues
- g) NONE of the above

9. What is your reporting time.....

10. What is your departure time.....

11. How many assignment do you give per week.....

SECTION C: THE IMPACT OF STRESS

12. Have you ever missed to go to work due to stress related issues/illnesses?

- (1) Yes (2) No

13. Do you like your work as a teacher

- (1) Yes (2) No (3) undecided

14. Do you feel isolated and lonely as a teacher?

(1) Yes (2) No

15. Are you losing your temper too easily with your spouse or children?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) N/A

16. Are you looking for excuses to avoid spending time with your family?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) N/A

17. Do you drink?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) N/A

18. Do you feel as if you are losing control of your life?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) N/A

19. Do you find it easier to watch TV, or to be alone rather than to be around people?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) N/A

20. Do you feel overwhelmed by your problems and can't find a way out?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) N/A

SECTION D: MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

21. Do you agree with this statement? 'Stress can make you feel isolated and alone but counselling can offer you sympathetic support system in a confidential environment while you overcome your stress-related problem.'

(1) Yes (2) No (3) I dont know

22. How well equipped can you say your school is to manage stress among teachers.

(1) Very well equipped (2) Well equipped (3) Fairly equipped (4) not at all equipped

23. Has management ever tried to identifying potential stressors at the workplace,

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Dont know

24. Does the school offer counseling services for stressed teachers?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Dont know

25. Does the school have an operational occupational stress committee?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Dont know

26. Why is stress a major concern in the school system today?

.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU.

Appendix II: AN INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. How well equipped can you say schools are to manage stress among teachers.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Does management try to identifying potential stressors at the workplace (schools)?
.....
.....
.....

3. Do schools offer counseling services for stressed teachers?.....
.....
.....

4. Do schools have an operational occupational stress committee?.....
.....
.....

5. Is there developed communication strategies in schools so people can identify problems and be involved in solving them?
.....
.....
.....

6. Are distressed teachers encouraged to visiting professionals to seek medication or therapy?.....
.....
.....
7. Do teachers receive individual help for problems,
.....
.....
8. Do counsellors provide feedback on work-related issues to the organisation to improve its work environment?
.....
.....
.....
9. Do you agree with this statement? “ Stress can make you feel isolated and alone but counselling can offer you sympathetic support system in a confidential environment while you overcome your stress-related problem”.....
.....
.....
10. How well equipped can you say schools are to manage stress among teachers?.....
.....
11. Why do you think stress is a major concern in the school system today?.....
.....
.....
.....
.....