

**WORK-RELATED STRESS: TEACHERS' EXPERINCES AT ONE PRIMARY
IN LESOTHO.**

BY


MAJOEL ALICE MOLAPO

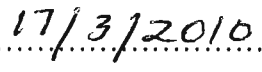
**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education in the Faculty of Education, University of
Kwazulu-Natal.**

2009

DECLARATION

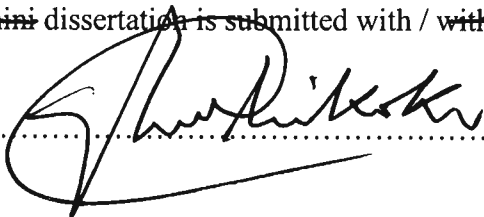
I hereby declare that “work related stress: Teachers’ experiences at one primary school in Lesotho” is my work and that all sources consulted and cited have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references. In the event of any failure to comply completely with the aforementioned declaration, I apologise and confirm that it was not my intention to do so.


.....
Signed


.....
date

The statement by the supervisor:

This ~~mini~~ dissertation is submitted with / ~~without~~ my approval.

 (17/3/2010)
.....

Prof. Vitalis Chikoko

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Molimo ke tla busetsa’ng ho uena ntate”

Glory to God who gave me life and strength to complete this journey of research.

I would like to acknowledge the following:

My supervisor, prof. Vitalis Chikoko, for his endless patience, guidance and motivation that he always provided me with to complete this study.

My husband, ntate Makhabane, for his love, encouragement and acceptance of caring for the family and children unaided during my studies.

My children, Joel, Halejoetsoe and Talimo for their support and love that they gave me while I was completing my studies.

My grandson, Mosa and his father Lebohang Namane for their assistance and love that they provided following the difficulty of losing our beloved one Likhapha Mamosa Molapo Namane.

My brothers, Fihlang, Somoro and Leponesa for their encouragement and love they showed me during my studies.

My colleagues, Amelia, Mamolibeli, Marabele, Bongani, and my Nigerian friends, Itjeoma and her husband Jute for their encouragements that I could do this.

My sisters, Malefa Khethisa and Mathabo Khau for their unmeasurable assistance that they rendered to me from first year till now.

I greatly indebted to Lesotho government in the form of Manpower and Teaching Service Department by making life easy for me by financing this study.

I wish to thank all the participants for their information which enabled me to write this piece of work.

To you all I say thank you without you I could have not done it.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late daughter Likhapha Mamosa Molapo Namane, I know she would appreciate her mother's achievement.

TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page no
Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication	iii
Table of content	iv
Abstract	vii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and purpose of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	5
1.3 Sub-problem	6
1.4 Setting of the school	6
1.5 Significance of the study	6
1.6 Limitations of the study	7
1.7 Organisation of the study	7

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Work-related stress	10
2.3 Concepts of stress	10
2.4 Potential causes of stress	13
2.4.1 Leadership	13
2.4.1.1 Inadequate communication system	14
2.4.1.2 Failure to provide adequate resources	15
2.4.1.3 Principal displaying favoritism towards some staff members	16
2.4.1.4 Lack of support from the principal	17
2.4.2 Work load	18

2.4.3 Role demand	19
2.4.4 Interpersonal relationships	20
2.4.5 Time pressure	21
2.5 Studies on teacher stress	22
2.5.1	22
2.5.2	23
2.6 Life events	24
2.6.1 Personal factors	24
2.7 Symptoms and consequences of teachers stress	25
2.7.1 Behavioral symptoms	25
2.7.2 Physiological symptoms	26
2.7.3 Psychological symptoms	26
2.8 Coping strategies	27
2.9 Conclusion	29

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 research design	30
3.3 Participants	32
3.4 data production methods	32
3.4.1 Interviews	33
3.4.1.1 Semi-structured interviews	34
3.4.2 Observation	36
3.4.2.1 Unstructured observation	37
3.5 Data analysis	38
3.6 Trustworthiness	38
3.7 Ethical issues	39
3.8 Summary	39

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction	40
4.2 Background information	40
4.3 Teachers' experiences	41
4.3.1 Interaction with the principal	41
4.3.2 Teacher-teacher relationship	43
4.3.3 Resource utilization	46
4.3.4 Human resource	48
4.3.5 Application of policies	50
4.3.6 High workload	51
4.3.7 Teachers' role demand	55
4.4 Emerging issues	57

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Summary	60
5.3 Conclusions	61
5.4 Recommendations	63
5.5 Limitations of the study	64

REFERENCES	66
------------	----

APPENDICES

Appendix A semi-structured interview	74
Appendix B observation schedule	75
Informed consent for the participants	76
Informed consent for the Senior Education Officer	78
Informed consent for the principal	

ABSTRACT

Stress has been a concern all over the world. The study of teacher stress is not a new area of research. However, most of the research studies have been oriented around secondary and high school teachers. Teaching in primary schools differs from secondary and high schools. Therefore, their experiences differ. This project has been conducted with the purpose of investigating teachers' experiences of stress in a primary school and what they think the school is doing to help them cope if it does.

The study was conducted in one primary school in Lesotho which was selected because of its accessibility to me as I was a teacher in this school. Twelve teachers were interviewed as participants. The case study methodology based on semi-structured interviews and observations were employed. These methods were used to help me gain understanding of the teachers' experiences of stress and for the validation of the data. Ethical issues were considered in this study as permission was requested from the authorities and informed consent letters for the participants were also sought. Pseudonyms were used for confidentiality. The interview questions were formulated in themes. As a result, data presentation and findings was done in accordance to those themes.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers' experiences of stress are: teachers' interaction with the principal; teacher-learner relationships, inadequate resources; workload; role demand.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

This study sought to explore teachers' experiences of stress at one primary school in Lesotho. Lesotho is a small and poor country of about 30 355 square km. It is situated in Southern Africa. It is a landlocked country surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, a position that bears socio-economic and political implications. In other words, this has an effect on the society, economy and politics of Lesotho. The developments of the Republic of South Africa affect Lesotho as the neighbouring country. Like many other countries, Lesotho has a colonial history which was shaped by Britain as a former colonial master, hence the use of English as an official language is influential to people's ability to secure employment. The majority of people are illiterate, so they are engaged in subsistence farming. They were previously unable to pay the nominal fees charged by proprietors at schools which were mainly church schools. These fees differed from school to school and were based on the needs of each school. This allowed schools to have low and controlled enrolments, as most parents were unable to pay the fees. On the other hand, this disadvantaged many Basotho children and hindered their right to education. This resulted in the increase of illiteracy in the country.

Historically, formal education in Lesotho was pioneered by the missionaries, thus schools were owned by the churches, the churches built schools and employed teachers. The government funded the churches to pay teachers' salaries. The missionaries' education

was characterised by providing literacy to the nation (Seotsanyana, 2002). That is, they wanted to produce people who were able to read the Bible. The development of the lifelong skills of an individual was not an objective of the church schools (Task Force Report, 1982). The running of school was in the proprietors hands, and in this case, 'proprietor' means the churches (owners of schools). There were three main denominations, namely the Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC), the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL). Each church had its own schools, and its own syllabus which was suitable to meet the needs of the owners of the school (Seotsanyana, 2002).

In the year 2000 the government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) which started with Class One. It was introduced in stages during 2000 to 2006 when the first intake was doing Class Seven which is the last class at the primary level. It was aimed at:

- Making education accessible to all Basotho children.
- Offering children an equal opportunity in life.
- Giving children the right to contribute to the development of their nation and to be worthy citizens of Lesotho.
- Rescuing the parents of the burden of fees which was a deterrent to the education of their children (Ministry of Education, 2000).

FPE was meant to reduce poverty which resulted in children being over-aged before sent to school or not sent at all (Review of Educational Sector Analysis, 1999). As much as

FPE is good, it brought about some challenges that teachers encountered in its implementation. These can be summarised as follows:

- Enrolment increase
- Inadequate resources
- High rate of dropouts
- Poor completion rates
- Inclusion of adults in the mainstream
- Inclusion of street children
- Lack of children's and parents' interest in attending school

They are briefly discussed below:

- Enrolment increase means the rise of learners' numbers in school.
- Inadequate resources refer to the inadequate supply or availability of materials for learners and teachers.
- The high rate of drop-outs means that the number of learners who quit school before completing their external class is too great, for example, Class Seven in the primary school.
- Poor completion rates refer to external class results that are not pleasing. In other words, results with more failures than passes.
- The inclusion of adults in the mainstream means the incorporation of people usually present in primary schools during the introduction of FPE policy. These are people ranging from 18 years upwards who are enrolled in the lower classes such as Class One to Class Four.

- Street children are children who live on the streets and are deprived of care and protection.
- Because the government is taking the responsibility for paying primary school fees and providing children with stationery, parents do not take care whether the attendance of their children at school is poor. They are unwilling or unable to buy any stationery items, even a pencil if the pencils are finished at school.

FPE was also influenced by international trends. This is due to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which were agreed upon by almost all nations in the world (Mosisili, 1999). The Convention suggests that children have a right to basic education, and that it is the responsibility of every country to ensure that children have access to basic education. All these are developments which are likely to stress teachers, so this study intends to research teachers' experiences of stress.

My motivation for this study derived from the literature where I discovered that studies have been conducted on stress by psychologists and educationists (Steyn, 2000 & du Preez, 2003; Jongeling & Lock, 1995; Klos, 2003; Moluka, 2001; Motseke, 1998; Saptoe, 2000 & Steyn and Van Niekerk, 2002). These studies revealed that people in different professions experience stress, but that teachers experience some of the highest levels of stress. Teaching is also viewed as the most stressful job (de Jesus & Conboy, 2001). This confirms what I perceived in the Lesotho context, and this implies that teacher' experiences of stress need to be studied.

This study investigated teacher's experiences of stress. It is a case study of one school, Mafome ACL Primary School, at Limapong, in the Leribe district of Lesotho. My attention was drawn to this school due to its location. It is located in Maputsoe and is surrounded by industries. As a result it has a very high enrolment of children of parents who work in industries. For example, each class has three classes with approximately 80 children in each. Furthermore, the population in this school is from many different districts, and they are not all foundational in this school. In other words, the learners have not all started Class One or have not all been through all the classes in this school. Children are transferred from time to time as their parents' jobs are terminated.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to literature, teachers are exposed to wide variety of multidimensional stressors within their work situation and these have a bearing on their performance (du preez, 2003 ; Govender (2002); Joseph, 2000; Klos, 2003; Moduka, 2001; Motseke, 1998; Saptoe 2000; & Thanyani, 2003). For example, in Lesotho teachers have many authorities such as education officers on behalf of the government and the proprietors (church owners) as most of the schools belong to churches. These authorities have various demands on teachers which result in stress. In this study the experiences of stress among teachers are investigated. The research problem is teacher experiences of stress at one primary school in Lesotho.

1.3 Sub-problems

The following sub-problem was addressed in this study.

1. What are the experiences of teacher stress in a Lesotho primary school?

1.4 Setting of the school

Mafome ACL primary school is a church school. It is located in Limapong village in Maputsoe town in the Leribe district in Lesotho. Maputsoe is one of the biggest industrial areas of Lesotho. This means that it has a high population. Pupils in Mafome A.C.L. are from the ten districts of Lesotho. Their parents migrated to Maputsoe to look for jobs. Mafome ACL primary school is surrounded by private schools. Private schools consist of those that are not owned by the churches, including government schools. In private schools, high fees are still paid. They do not practice the FPE policy. Mafome ACL primary is a school which practices the policy of FPE, and accepts learners in all classes in that area. As a result, it has a high enrolment of 1,600 to 1,700 learners with 18 teachers. Prior to the introduction of FPE, Mafome ACL had 600 to 700 or 800 pupils as its highest enrolment of learners, and employed 18 teachers.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study has the potential to explore teachers' experiences of stress in Mafome A.C.L. Primary School. The findings of this study may help teachers and the principal with information about issues of stress. It may also help them to deal with stress in school. It may also help the principal to devise ways in which to approach teachers. In addition, research on teachers' experiences of stress is important, as it may help to improve work

performance, productivity, as well as health, and the behaviour and well-being of teachers, not only in the working environment, but also in their daily living. Furthermore, it may help to explain why some people fare better than others when encountering stress in their work (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

1.6 Limitations

This study is restricted to one school. The focus of the study is on teachers' experiences of stress in one primary school in Lesotho. As this study is a case study of one school and according to the limitations of case studies as briefly described by Nieuwenhuis (2007) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), it cannot be generalised unless other readers see the application and transfer it. A case study of only one school limits the findings because it may be fewer representatives of Lesotho primary schools. With this study, information could be distorted because participants are familiar with the researcher, and they may want to impress the researcher, rather than stating the truth. The use of two data production methods (interview and observation) helped to reduce the possibility of distortion as they complemented one another.

1.7. Organisation of the study

This chapter has introduced the study which is to be undertaken. It covered the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, the sub-problem, and the significance of the study, its limitations, delimitation and the organisation of the study.

Chapter Two deals with the relevant literature review on teachers' experiences of stress. It covers the following issues: concepts of stress, work-related stress, teachers' experiences of stress and coping strategies. The theoretical framework is constructed around some of the key causes of stress and it informs the analysis of the study.

Chapter Three focuses on the research design and the methodology used to collect data. This study takes the form of a case study using interviews and observation for data collection. The chapter also clarifies the selection of the participants.

Chapter Four focuses on data presentation and discussions. The discussions are based on some of the findings from the interviews and observations. They are also supported with literature.

Chapter Five presents a summary of the research findings. Recommendations and conclusions are made for the present and future.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the context and overview of the study. I detailed the focus, rationale and the key research questions that drive the study. In this chapter I present the literature review. My motivation for this review emanates from the search for literature on teachers' experiences of stress in my country. The search revealed that there are very few studies on teachers' stress in Lesotho. The studies that are found on teachers' experiences of stress in Lesotho have only been conducted at high school and secondary levels. However, there are several studies from other Southern African countries which are relevant to this study.

The review and analysis of literature in this study is therefore framed by the question "How will my readings on the concepts of stress, work-related stress, teachers' experiences of stress and organisational coping strategies inform my study of primary school teachers' experiences of stress and coping strategies in Lesotho?" There are four issues in this review, namely the concepts of stress, work-related stress, teachers' experiences of stress and organisational coping strategies. This review is divided into four parts to provide an overview of the conceptual framework context. The theoretical framework is embedded in the literature review.

2.2 Work-related stress

There is a huge body of literature on the subject of work-related stress (Jacobson, Ponsette & Thylefors, 2001; Jackson & Rothmann, 2001; Tarling, 2006; Detert, derosia, Caravella & Duquette, 2006; Tennat, 2007; Jongeling & Lock 1995; Loock, Grobler & Mestry, 2006; Alay & Kocak, 1999 & NIOSH, 1999). Studies conducted in America point out that job stress has become a common and costly problem. Jackson and Rothmann (2006) in the North West Province also argue that occupational stress is associated with an increase in negative work-related outcomes. In other words, stress in the workplace decreases productivity. This review is concerned with stress in educational institutions, focusing specifically on primary schools. However, the literature found related only to secondary and high schools. For example, Tennat (2007) conducted a study on the experiences of polytechnic teachers in New Zealand, Jongeling and Lock (1995) undertook a study on teachers' stress in one high school in Western Australia, and Schulze and Steyn (2007); Joseph (2000) and Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) conducted studies on teacher stress in South African secondary and high schools. Motseke (1998) investigated stress among educators in township schools in Free State Province. There are few studies conducted in primary schools. As a result, this study focuses on primary school teacher stress.

2.3 Concepts of stress

Stress is defined by Joseph (2000, p. 15) as “an excess demand made upon the adaptive capacities of the mind and body.” In other words, stress is the physical and mental demands on the body that exceed the person’s ability to cope. In line with Joseph (2000), Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) and Tarling (2006) view stress as some type of response to the physical or psychological demands on a person and the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure. Researchers define the term ‘stress’ by means of the degree of mismatch between the demands made upon an individual and the individual’s ability to cope with these demands (Kyriacou, 2001). The key words here are ‘excessive psychological and physical demands’. For this study, stress is taken to be the personal reaction to an extreme demand or other types of work pressure placed on teachers, resulting in unpleasant and negative emotions such as frustration, anger, anxiety and depression (Rogers, 2002).

A stressor is defined by Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) as a source of stress that is a factor that contributes to people’s stress. They further argue that stress can be due to individual characteristics such as gender, age, needs and personality. Three classes of stressors are environmental, organisational and personal (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Environmental stressors are found outside school, for example, teacher-community relationships. Organisational stressors are related to work. They are found in school where there are large classes, inadequate resources, heavy workloads and time pressure, to mention but a few. Personal stressors are related to teachers’ health and family problems (Thanyani, 2003).

Selye (1976) in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002), in his pioneering work on work stress, developed a general adaptation syndrome (GAS). This shows that people have different levels of resistance to stressful situations. For instance, some people are able to tolerate stress more than others. The three stages of GAS are: alarm, resistance and exhaustion.

Alarm: The teacher experiences a stressor which results in alarm. This alarm may be in the form of panic, or a feeling of hopelessness (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). The teacher loses hope of overcoming the stress.

Resistance: At this stage, the teacher resists the negative effects of the stressor. S/he tries by all means to overcome or cope with the stressful situation. For example, when she has a lot to do, or the task is beyond her capacity, she asks assistance from her colleagues. Sometimes s/he can work after hours, or take the work home, where possible, in order to finish (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002; Van der Merwe, 2003 & Holmes, 2003).

Exhaustion: At this stage the stressor is extreme, and the teacher does not find any resolution. There is no help from colleagues, and even when working after hours s/he does not finish due to time pressure and heavy workload (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002).

Selye (1976) draws a distinction between “eustress and distress”. According to him “eustress” is a pleasant or positive stress. It is a feeling that one gets when facing a challenge. In line with Selye (1976), Joseph (2000) views “eustress” as a motivator since, in its absence, one lacks the edge necessary to achieve one’s best performance. On the other hand, distress is unpleasant or negative stress. It leads to stress-related disease. Joseph (2000) adds that research has shown many jobs, including teaching, are frequently associated with negative stress. This study thus explores teachers’ experiences of stress in a primary school to find out what negative stress they experience. De Jesus and Conboy (2001) argue that teachers present lower levels of motivation and higher levels of stress than any other professional group. Jeena’s (1998) study also indicates that there were high levels of stress for all participants interviewed in one secondary school in South Africa, in comparison with people from other professions.

2.4 Potential causes of stress

2.4.1 Leadership

Dimmock and Walker (2005) define leadership as an influence process between leaders and followers. Some add that the influence amounts to getting staff to agree to act in ways that they may not otherwise have been inclined to choose. In other words, leadership is viewed as capable of inspiring performances and achievements among staff to an extent beyond what might reasonably have been expected. Dimmock and Walker (2005) continue by saying that, consequently, leadership is culturally influenced. In line with Dimmock and Walker (2005) Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999, p.7) define leadership to be “the reflection of assumptions that it involves a social influence process

whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person or group over other people to structure the activities and relationship in a group or organization.” This is also confirmed by Bush and Middlewood (2005) that leadership is about influencing others’ actions to achieve desirable ends. In addition, Alay and Kocak (1999) mention that organisations through their leadership hire employees to reach their organisational goals. In the case of the school, the leaders are the principals, and, as a result, they have the potential to cause stress to other members of the organization (school). This can happen because people’s needs and wishes are not always the same. For instance, Jongeling and Lock (1995) indicate various ways in which school principals can cause teacher stress:

- Inadequate communication system
- Failure to provide adequate resources
- Principal displaying favouritism towards some staff members
- Lack of support

2.4.1.1 Inadequate communication system

Joseph’s (2000) study which investigated experiences of teachers’ stress found that teachers experience stress due to poor communications systems. Communication is the transmission of ideas, information, opinion, attitudes and feelings (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002; Schutte and Mc Lennan, 2001; & Van der Westhuizen, 1997). This can occur through one or more media that produce some response (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Communication is very important in an organisation, as it is through communication that members of an organisation share ideas, pass on information and express their feelings. Furthermore, communication is a meeting of meanings. In other words, communicating

people have the same understanding of the message (Schutte & Mc Lennan, 2001). Communication is also found to be one of the sources of most problems and complications in the workplace (Schutte & Mc Lennan, 2001). At school level, communication can be a source of teachers' stress if the principal does not have enough communication systems.

Researchers such as Jongeling and Lock (1995) argue that an inadequate communication system includes reliance on one system, for example, written notes. They further argue that principals' domination, overload, and pseudo-participation are included in inadequate communication. In other words, a discussion may be held about something regarding which a conclusion has already been reached. For example, at school, a principal may call a meeting of teachers to discuss something that she has already reached a decision about. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) attest that, failure in communication lies at the heart of problems in an organisation's goal setting and productivity. On the other hand, an adequate communication system means that there are different means of communication such as face-to-face, written notes and telephonic. Good communication and good performance go together. This means teachers can perform well and produce good results when there is effective communication which does not stress them.

2.4.1.2 Failure to provide adequate resources

A leader has been defined as someone who influences and encourages other people to work towards the achievement of organisational goals (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). This

means that a leader provides employees with good working conditions. Good working conditions include resources and other equipment. The availability of resources is the responsibility of a leader. Resources are materials that can be used to help in the achievement of organisational goals and aims (Wehmeier, 2005).

In a school context, the leader is the principal, and the principal is responsible for teachers' motivation (Joseph, 2000). Teachers are motivated if they have resources to use in their teaching. The principal has to ensure that the school is well-equipped with resources, which include both human resources and physical resources. For example, the principal has to see to it that there are enough qualified teachers and enough classrooms in order to avoid overcrowding. There should also be sufficient stationery and furniture for all classes. Researchers such as Boyle, Borg, Falzon and Baghoni (1995) identify lack of resources as one of the great sources of stress to teachers when they are expected to perform well and produce good results. This is confirmed by Joseph (2000) who asked teachers the following question, "In your experience, what causes stress in education?" He received various responses one of which was "inadequate resources". In agreement with this, Younghusband (2005), in her study in Canada, also revealed that inadequate resources contribute to teachers' perceptions that their work is stressful. They further argue that lack of materials and supplies makes teachers' work more difficult. Teachers have to use their resources and contribute personally in order to maintain their classrooms and this places a strain on their performance.

2.4.1.3 Principal displaying favouritism towards some staff members

This is one of the types of leadership behaviour that is likely to cause stress to employees (Jongeling & Lock, 1995). Jongeling and Lock (1995) found that some principals display favouritism towards staff members, while some favour one gender over the other. Organisations have policies that are to be obeyed and followed, but there are some employees who do not care about the rules and regulations mainly because they know that they are favorites and the leader is not going to say anything to them. In the case of a school, principals have rules and regulations which are used to regulate the learners' behaviour and guide the behaviour of teachers (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). In some schools these rules and regulations are not consistently applied and they are likely to stress teachers. According to Schutte and Mc Lennan (2001), policies are inevitable and inequitable, in other words, they are not the same for everyone. For example, in Lesotho, the Ministry of Education has a policy that Class Seven teachers should come to school even if the learners have left after writing their external examination at the end of the year. This policy is applied differently in some schools, depending on who is teaching Class Seven.

2.4.1.4 Lack of support from the principal

Studies have shown that committed and supportive administrative personnel are pivotal determinants of teachers' perceptions of stress in the workplace (Younghusband, 2005). Support is distinguished by two categories namely: formal support and informal support. Formal support is that received from leaders and supervisors. If leaders are not supportive, the staff may experience stress. In the case of a school, the principal as a

leader has to support the teachers. This can occur in many different ways. For instance, appreciation of teachers' efforts is one of the characteristics of a supportive principal. This is confirmed by Roger (2002) who articulates that principals have to provide teachers with a supportive working climate. Younghusband (2005) also found that reasonable expectations and appreciation of teachers' efforts by principals were highly related to teachers' satisfaction with their work. However, 55% of Younghusband's Participants in the high stress group pointed out that they received "little recognition" for their performance from their principals.

There are other work-related causes of stress, however, besides leadership and these include work demands, role demands, interpersonal relationships, and time pressure.

2.4.2 Work demands

Work division and its design are very important in an organisation as this can stress organisational members (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). For example, work containing too many deadlines and high standards are likely to stress organisational members. Work demand is referred to as a workload which entails having to complete work at home in order to keep up to date. Sometimes this can stem from unrealistic expectations and a possible inequality in work distribution, as well as the tremendously diverse nature of the job (du Preez, 2003 & Holmes, 2003). In other words, excessive workloads resulting in the need for evening and weekend work at home stress teachers. Two types of workload can be distinguished, namely quantitative workload and qualitative workload. Quantitative workload refers to more work being expected from organisational members

than they are able to do. The argument here is that the work required is too much within the given time (Joseph, 2000). Qualitative workload refers to work that is too difficult for organisational members' capabilities (Schutte & Mc Lennan, 2001). For instance, employees may feel that they do not possess sufficient skills or the ability to do the job. According to Steyn and van Niekerk (2002), people need to have a certain amount of stress in their work in order to be more productive, as too little work results in boredom and apathy.

In the case of a school, there are fixed dates for completing schemes and records of work done, and dates for examinations which teachers strive hard to meet. The syllabus is also planned to be completed within a year for each class, and teachers strive hard to finish the syllabus, however, this is not always the fault of the school. Some teachers choose to take on many responsibilities in order to impress others with their capabilities. Sometimes it may be because they want to win sympathy that they are unable to meet deadlines due to their work-overload (Joseph, 2000; Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). According to Brenda in Thanyani (2003) duties such as preparation, meetings, extra-mural activities and class teaching place both a quantitative and qualitative workload on teachers.

2.4.3 Role demands

These are other causes of work related stress (Van der Merwe, 2003). In every organisation there are positions which are espoused with a set of behaviours called roles. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) define roles as a function or position that one is expected to have in an organisation and add that some of these are too demanding and are likely to

be stressful. Role demands assume two forms which are role conflict demand and role ambiguity demand. Role conflict demand occurs when people have conflicting expectations of a person. Role ambiguity demand occurs when the responsibility and duties allocated to people in an organisation are not clear (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002 & Van der Merwe, 2003). At school level, educators have to meet learners' needs, but they also have to follow restrictive teacher methods (Conley & Woosely, 2000). In other words, a teacher has to fulfill and satisfy the learners and also abide by the teaching methods. Role ambiguity demand occurs when a teacher is not clear about the job or duty allocated. This is mainly experienced by newly qualified teachers. They are not always clear about what is expected of them. This is mainly because they are afraid of asking for clarity (Van der Merwe, 2003). Role conflict demand and role ambiguity demand are referred to as management and structure factors that are likely to stress teachers (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002, Homes, 2003 & Van der Merwe, 2003).

2.4.4 Interpersonal Relationships

According to studies that have been conducted by Kyriacou (2001); Motseke (1998) and Oliver and Venter (2003), poor learner discipline is one of the common stressors for teachers. Poor discipline includes negative attitudes towards school work, violence against educators and continuous absenteeism without valid reasons. These impact negatively on teachers and are likely to cause stress (De Jesus & Conboy, 2001). The studies that have been conducted in South Africa also confirm that learners' poor behaviour contributes to teachers' stress (Motseke, 1998). In addition, learners with special education needs may also contribute to teachers' stress. However, learners with

special education needs are not identified as one of the aspects that can stress teachers in their work (Chaplain, 1995). Due to HIV/AIDS, most learners are orphans who need care and support. As a result, teachers become parents to such learners. They provide food and clothing to learners, and even counsel them, and this is likely to stress teachers (Motseke, 1998; Bhana, Morrell, Epstein & Moletsane, 2006).

2.4.5 Time pressure

Van der Merwe (2003) points out that if members of an organisation are not able to allocate their time well that is, if they do not prioritise time, this is likely to stress them. In every organization, time is a very important factor. Organisations work according to time. Members in an organisation are working to time for every activity, and sometimes they have a lot to do within a very limited time. Similarly, in a school context, the majority of teachers find that they have a lot of work to do in a limited time. Studies such as that carried out by the Canadian Teacher Organization (2004) found that lack of time and long working hours are often revealed as significant sources of stress for teachers. It does not matter how much effort the teachers put into their work, there will still be unfinished work (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Dibbon in Youngusband (2005) Newfoundland survey study shares the same perspective as the Canadian study as it also revealed that 52% of participants found lack of time to be a problem. In every school there are fixed time-tables for lessons, for breaks and for examinations. These imply that teachers have to rush their work in order to be on time. As a result, teachers lack enough time to relax and have fun with their families (Joseph, 2000). Inadequate time forces teachers to do schoolwork at home after school hours. This has a negative effect on

teachers' private lives, and is likely to increase their levels of stress as Joseph (2000) already indicated in his findings. Schulze and Steyn (2007) in their study on stressors in the professional lives of secondary school educators in South Africa found that time is one of the greatest teachers' stressors. They found that teachers do schoolwork during weekends at home.

2.5 Studies on teacher experiences of stress

2.5.1. National studies

Schulze and Steyn (2007) identified stressors in the professional lives of South African secondary school educators. A self-report stress questionnaire by Chaplain (1995) was used. The items on the questionnaire were generated from educators' phenomenological accounts of stressful or troublesome events in their lives obtained through interview as Bell (2005) argues that an interview puts flesh on questionnaire bones. There were 192 participants and a total of 1920 questionnaires were distributed. The number of questionnaires returned was 1181. Schulze and Steyn's (2007) findings revealed that educators experience stress because of learners and parents' poor attitudes towards learning, and because of disciplinary problems in school and changing conditions.

Maphalala (2002) conducted a study on teacher stress in primary schools at Esingweni Circuit. The findings of this study revealed that the teaching stressors from the sample were curriculum changes, workload pressure, job insecurity, poor relationship with colleagues, reward and recognition, learners discipline problems, poor rapport with management and role ambiguity. Workload pressure, role ambiguity and job insecurity

were also found as teacher stressors by Jackson and Rothmann (2006) and Mokdad (2005) in their studies. The later's study was about occupational stress among Algerian teachers. The former's study was about occupational stress, organizational commitment and ill-health of educators in the North West Province.

2.5.2. International studies

The study conducted by Mathew (2005) in South India on occupational stress and coping strategies of special educators examined the sources of stress, effects and coping strategies of occupational stress among special educators in India. The study was undertaken in two districts, Calicut and Malappuran. Mathew (2005) adopted a mixed methods approach, that is, he used both quantitative and qualitative methods. To collect quantitative data, questionnaires were used. For qualitative data, unstructured interviews were used. The results from the quantitative study revealed that sources of stress spread from structure and climate, home and work interface, relationships with others and job factors.

The study conducted by Jongeling and Lock (1995) in Western Australia on teacher stress identified various sources of stress such as time, role expectations, lack of support from the principal, principal displaying favouritism towards some staff members, inadequate communication systems within the school, working in a poorly managed school, failure of the principal to provide adequate resources and lack of co-operation between the staff. These have been identified as major sources of stress in certain studies. (For example, Loock, Grobler & Mestry, 2006; Detert, Derosia, Caravella, & Duquette,

2006). Detert et al.,'s (2006) study was about reducing stress and enhancing the general well being of teachers using Tai chi movements in California.

Although teachers' work-related stress has been discussed, this does not mean that their stress originates only from work, it also emanates from life events and personal factors.

2.6 Life events

Studies have indicated that teachers' stress like that of all other people does not originate only from the work environment. There are other events that take place in life that are likely to stress and affect their work, for example, marital problems, physical illness and death of a loved one can cause life trauma (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002 & Squelch & Lemmer, 1994).

2.6.1 Personal factors

McCormick (1997) argues that it is apparent that stress is not experienced uniformly by teachers, but varies from one individual to another. Studies have provided evidence that individual personality characteristics that can influence an individuals' reaction to stress include certain attitudes, tolerance and perceptual styles (Harris & Hartman, 2002). People's personalities can be classified into two types, namely Personality type A and Personality type B (Squelch & Lemmer, 1994; Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). People with Personality type A are very competitive and devoted to their work. They also have a sense of time. According to Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002), type A personality people are more prone to heart disease. Along similar lines, Harris and Hartman (2002) point out

that type A respond with more agitation to stress than others. They often become aggressive, impatient and irritated if people interfere with their work, and as a result, they seem to be more at risk from stress-related illness (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002, & Harris & Hartman, 2002). On the other hand, type B people have a different approach. They are steady and relaxed. They are more confident about their work, and less worried about time and colleagues (Harris & Hartman, 2002). Rout and Rout (2002) argue that a mid-life crisis has the potential to increase a person's sensitivity to stress regardless of occupation. In contrast, Chaplain (1995) in his study finds no significant differences in stress between different age groups.

2.7 Symptoms and consequences of teacher stress

One cannot just conclude that one suffers from stress unless one is aware and has identified the stress signs. Early identification of stress is very important, as people respond and react to stress differently. It is essential for individual teachers to recognize the signs as soon as they become apparent (Dunham & Varma in Thanyani, 2003). The symptoms of negative stress can be hard to identify, despite the fact that these can present a variety of behavioural, physiological and psychological symptoms (Joseph, 2000; Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002 & Van der Merwe, 2003). The consequences are felt by the individual, the organisation they are involved with and their families (Joseph, 2000).

2.7.1 Behavioural symptoms

Studies that have examined the behaviour of high-anxiety teachers suggest that teacher anxiety may have a detrimental effect on teacher and pupil performance in the form of a

less positive teacher-pupil rapport (Sooful, 1992 & Thanyani, 2003). According to Joseph (2000) and Steyn and van Niekerk (2002), behavioural consequences include behaviours such as, alcohol abuse, violence, having difficulty sleeping, and consuming excessive amounts of aspirin and painkillers.

2.7.2 Physiological symptoms

According to Alay and Kocak's (1999) study on stress sources, symptoms and strategies of physical educators in elementary schools; tension and fatigue were the main symptoms. He further points out that teachers frequently report feeling completely worn out at the end of a day. They experience difficulty in getting up in the morning the next day, feel nervous and tense, and have headaches. Joseph (2000) and Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) in agreement with Alay and Kocak (1999) point out that stress is also a factor in headaches, backaches and various intestinal disorders.

These three researchers also mention various physiological illnesses which are related to teacher stress. These include high blood pressure, arthritis, gall bladder disorders, stomach ulcers, asthma, lung or breathing problems, and kidney disorders.

2.7.3 Psychological symptoms

Among the most frequently reported psychological symptoms of teacher stress are "tension headaches" and "general irritability and bad temper" (van der Merwe, 2003). Other symptoms include a lack of self-confidence, an inability to relax, excessive alcohol consumption and smoking, difficulty in concentrating and making decisions, frustration,

anxiety, and insecurity resulting from uncertainty in role definitions (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002).

Alay and kocak (1999) in his qualitative study rank-ordered the data into the following five categories of feeling states: anger state (in this state, subjects most frequently mention terms such as 'anger' and 'frustrated'); depression state, anxiety state, self-blame state and physical feeling state (which has the terms 'fatigue and tiredness' being used most often).

Another study is that of Kyriacou and Pratt in Sooful (1992) who found that the most frequently mentioned symptoms were being unable to relax or switch off after work, feeling very tense, being emotionally and physically drained by the end of the day, and sleeplessness.

2.8 Coping strategies

Coping is defined as a direct action taken by an individual or organisation to deal positively with a source of stress (Lyriacou, as cited by Thanyani, 2003). Along similar lines, Lazarus & Folkman (2004) define coping as thoughts and behaviours which people use to manage the internal and external demands of situations that are considered stressful. Researchers indicate that coping strategies adopted to deal with work-related stress are classified into problem-focused, emotional-focused, avoidance-focused and collaborative-focused coping (Engelbecht, Swart & Eloff, 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping includes making a plan of action and following it and

coming up with different solutions to difficult issues and concentrating on what has to be done. Billings and Moos (1982) in their research “Coping with occupational stress among teachers” found that better educated teachers were more likely to rely on a problem-focused coping strategy, and less likely to use avoidance coping strategies. In other words, avoidance coping strategies are found to be inactive. Emotion-focused strategies include maintaining a sense of humour, trying to look on the bright side of things and seeking support. Avoidance-focused coping includes not exposing ourselves to stressful situations.

Collaborative-focused coping includes enlisting the help of colleagues, seeking help and resources from others, and discussing problematic situations with the leader in an organisation (Engelbrecht et al., 2001). Similarly, Rogers (2002) also points out that support from colleagues enables staff to cope with stress. According to Billing and Moos (1981) talking about sources of stress and seeking more information is an active cognitive strategy. Furthermore, Newton and Keenan as cited by Sooful (1992) in their study among United Kingdom organisations found that in large organisations, people generally seek help and talk with others about stressful events. Sharing of common concerns, needs and problems helps and reduces stress better than coping alone. He further points out that supportive leadership provides an organisational relationship that underpins all other areas of staff management. Supportive leaders allow time for reflection on change requirements, and allow time for differences to be aired. In school, leaders direct support to team relationships and build team morale across the school. They make time to engage in some face-to-face communication with teachers. In other words, they invite and model

respect thus building collegial trust (Rogers, 2002). It is important that leaders or head-teachers consider these aspects of supportive leadership as it is not always the case that they have these qualities (Wide staff survey on supportive leadership, in Rogers, 2002).

In Mathew's (2005) study using qualitative research, the results suggest that increasing employees' participation in decision-making process and technical support on work-related areas are some effective ways of helping teachers cope with work-related stress.

Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001) conducted a study in South Africa on stress and the coping skills of teachers among ten mainstream primary school teachers with a learner with Downe's syndrome in their classrooms. Their study aimed to identify stressors for teachers in an inclusive educational approach, as well as the coping skills employed to reduce and help teachers cope with stress. The study was a qualitative study. Semi-structured interviews as well as questionnaires were used as data collection methods. Teachers were interviewed as participants. Their findings revealed the following coping strategies to be the best in helping teachers cope with stress:

- Problem-focused strategies.
- Collaborative strategies.
- Emotional-focused strategies.

2.9 Conclusion

The literature reviewed provides evidence of teachers' experiences of work-related stress nationally and internationally. Studies show that teachers experience higher levels of work-related stress than in any other profess

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study investigated teachers' experiences of work-related stress. This chapter addresses the research methodology of the study. Firstly, the chapter outlines the research design. Secondly, it describes participants and the reasons for their selection. Thirdly, it examines the data production methods. Finally, it explains the data analysis as well as trustworthiness.

3.2 Research design

The study was located within a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research studies people by interacting with them, and observes the participants in their natural environment. According to Creswell (2009, p. 175)

One of the major characteristics of qualitative research is that qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. They do not bring individuals into the lab, nor do they typically send out instruments for individuals to complete. This up-close information is gathered by actually talking directly to people, and seeing them behave and act within their context. In the natural setting, the researchers have face-to-face interaction over time.

It focuses on their meanings and interpretations (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This means that it is concerned with understanding and describing phenomena within their natural occurring context in order to develop an understanding of the meanings conveyed by the respondents. Hakim (2000, p.34) confirms this, as she asserts that "Qualitative research offers richly descriptive reports of individuals' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and

feelings, meanings and interpretations given to events, things as well as their behaviour.” Therefore, I perceived a qualitative research approach to be the most suitable for this study. It allowed participants to have a more open-ended way of providing their views about their experiences of stress at work. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) state that qualitative research refers to the term that denotes the type of enquiry in which qualities, characteristics or properties of the phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation. This study investigated teachers’ experiences of stress as phenomena. In qualitative research, the data consists of words in the form of rich verbal description.

Within the qualitative research approach, this study adopted a case study research design. It used a case of one school. A case study is defined by Yin, in Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.75) as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”. Teachers’ experiences of stress in their day-to-day work are the real context. Teachers provided different sources of information. Teachers gave their experiences of stress and the ways in which the school is trying to help them cope. The case study method was the most suitable for this study in the sense that teachers’ experiences of stress were studied in the real situation, enabling me to understand ideas more clearly (Bell, 2005). Fitness for this methodology is also reflected by Marshall and Rossman (2006), who argue that human actions are significantly influenced by the setting in which they occur, and that one should study the

behaviour in the real situation. This study was conducted at a school as a setting where teachers experience stress, and where they can be helped to cope with their stress.

3.3 Participants

One school in Maputsoe area was selected because of its convenience, since it was accessible to me as I am a teacher at this school and I have good relationships with the principal and the staff. Moreover, I was familiar with the events in this school, and was able to overcome the problems I encountered during the study. Twelve teachers were interviewed as participants. As I had been a teacher in this school, I had conversed with the other teachers and had learned that teachers were experiencing stress. Nieuwenhuis (2007) asserts that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study.

3.4 Data production methods

The research methods used in the production of data for this study are those which are widely accepted in case studies, namely, interviews and observation (Cohen et al., 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007 & Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The use of more than one data production method in the same qualitative study is referred to as methodological crystallisation. This means that multiple data production methods were used, and that this enabled validating results (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007), hence interviews and observation were used in this study. In addition, Creswell (2009, p.175) asserts that “qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data such as interviews, observation and documents rather than rely on a single data source”.

3.4.1 Interviews

This study was conducted by means of interviews. An interview is defined by Moser and Kalton, in Lowe (2007) as a conversation between the researcher and the respondents with the aim of gaining certain information from the respondents. Along similar lines, Marshall and Rossman (2006) view interviews as conversations with purpose. In other words, an interview is a two-way process where the researcher asks questions and the respondent responds. It is advantageous to use interviews as Denscombe (2003) indicates that use of interviews help the researcher to gain depth information which means that they are particularly good at producing data which deal with topics in depth and detail. It can also be probed, issues pursued and lines of investigation followed over a relatively length period. Interviews have insights that are, the researcher is likely to gain valuable insights based on the depth of the information gathered and the wisdom of 'key informants.' With interviews the researcher requires only simple equipment as they build on conversation skills which researchers already have. Interviews are good method for producing data based on informants' priorities, opinions and ideas, as informants have the opportunity to expand their ideas, explain their views and identify what they regard as crucial factors. As a method for data collection, interviews are probably the most flexible. Adjustments to the line of enquiry are made during the interviews itself. They allow for developing line of inquiry. Direct contact at the point of the interview means that, data can be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are called. It ensures validity. It can also be a rewarding experience for the interviewee compared to other data collection methods. It has a more personal element. People tend to enjoy the rather rare chance to

talk about their ideas at length to a person whose purpose is to listen and note ideas without being critical. However, interviews are time consuming as its analysis of data can be difficult. Transcribing and coding of interview data is a major task for the researcher which occurs after the data have been collected. The impact of the interviewer and of the context means that consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve. The data collected are unique owing to the specific context and the specific individual involved. This has effect on reliability. They are also costly in the case whereby the interviewer has to travel long distances and informants are geographically wide spread. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews produce data that are not pre-coded and have a relatively open format. It produces non-standard responses. The use of tape-recorder can inhibit the informant. As interview is an artificial situation where people are speaking for the record and on record, this can be intimidating for certain kinds of people. Interview has effect as what people say they do, what they say they prefer and what they say they think cannot be automatically assumed to reflect the truth. According to Lowe (2007) interviews limit sampling. They lack anonymity and they are difficult in maintaining eye contact while writing notes and reading interviews guide questions and probes.

3.4.1.1 Semi-structured individual interview

Semi-structured individual interviews were suitable for this study in that they are flexible, allow probing, follow up lines of inquiry, react to the respondents' emotions and investigate aspects of response that I could not find with the use of a questionnaire (Lowe, 2007). A semi-structured interview is defined by Nieuwenhuis (2007) and Lowe (2007) as predetermined questions used to guide the interview. As interviews are time-

consuming, the interviews were conducted after school hours in a classroom prepared for this purpose. They were held after school to avoid any interference with teachers' work, and to ensure quiet, as the tape-recorder was to be used for capturing data. With the tape-recorder, I was able to check the wording of statements I wished to quote. It also allowed me to maintain eye-contact and see the non-verbal actions of interviewees. Furthermore, the tape-recorder was helpful during data analysis because it allowed me to listen several times in order to identify categories, codes, and to note some important comments (Bell, 2005).

Interviewees were interviewed for one hour as the maximum time, as Patton (2002) points out that interviews should not be long. Interviews were conducted for a week. There were eighteen teachers in all, and I interviewed twelve, excluding the principal and her deputy purposefully as what stress they might be quite far different from that of teachers, while the other two female teachers were absent from school that week due to various personal commitments. I made appointments to meet teachers as individuals, at school, at times convenient to them. A brief explanation concerning the study was given before the interview. The consent of interviewees was sought for the audiotape interviews. I transcribed tape-recorded interviews later. Questions were translated into Sesotho so that interviewees would be able to understand them clearly. Respondents could also respond in Sesotho, which allowed them to express their experiences of stress more explicitly. I translated back into English when transcribing. I interviewed three teachers per day, focusing on what teachers experience as stressful at school.

3.4.2 Observation

Observation is defined by Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 83) as “the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, object and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them”. In line with Nieuwenhuis (2007), Walliman (2001, p.241) views observation “as a method of recording conditions, events and activities through non-inquisitorial involvement of the researcher”. In other words, observation helped me to record whether people acted differently to what they said or intended. In addition, observation has been traditionally characterized as non interventionist where the researcher does not seek to manipulate the situation or subject, the researcher does not pose any questions for the subject (Cohen et al., 2007). The day-to-day activities of teachers such as how communication took place and the interrelationship between the principal and staff, between teachers and learners were observed. The purpose was to gain an understanding of teachers’ experiences of stress.

Observation enabled me to gather data on the human setting, that is, the organisation of people, the characteristics and make-up of the groups or individual. Data from observation are attractive, as they give me the opportunity to gather live data from a live situation (Cohen et al., 2007). In this case, I was able to see things that might be missed and discover things that the participant might not feel free to talk about in an interview situation (Cohen et al., 2007). Observation was used to complement interviews. Through observation, I was able to gain a deeper insight and understanding, and move beyond perception-based data of the teachers’ experiences of stress as reported by the

participants. Observations took place for a week after the interviews. Notes were taken during observation.

3.4.2.1 Unstructured observation

Unstructured observations were used in this study as Lowe (2007) argues that unstructured observation is like all forms of research methods, still systematic and planned activity, but it casts its net wider than the 'structured' variety of observation. This implies that if there are some occurrences or behaviours that are relevant to the study, the researcher is at liberty to take note of them. This can happen even though the researcher had not planned this beforehand. In addition, Cohen et al., (2007, p. 398) state that:

An unstructured observation will be far less clear on what it is looking for and the researcher will therefore have to go into the situation and observe what is taking place before deciding on its significance for the research. An unstructured observation will be hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing.

Though unstructured observation is good, it has some limitations. The researcher may record and accumulate a great deal of information which subsequently proves to be of little relevance to the research question. Webb et al (1966) cited in Johnson (1994, p.55) calls this superfluous material 'dross'. Some events, and many forms of private behaviour, are not accessible to direct observation (Johnson, 1994). The implication is that the researcher should try by all means to stick to research questions when this method of data collection is used. For instance, the purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' experiences of stress at one primary school in Lesotho.

3.5 Data analysis

Being a qualitative study, data were analysed through content and thematic analysis. This means that data analysis for this study began during data production. During interviews and observations, field notes were taken (Patton, 2002). Data collected during interviews were then transcribed. After transcription, data were organised and categorised according to themes and patterns of responses. Observation data were then sorted and classified into categories that corresponded with those in the interviews.

3.6 Trustworthiness

The responses from interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts were also returned to participants for validation. Interview questions were also piloted in one primary school with similar characteristics. Direct quotations were used, and these helped me to gain dense description. Notes were taken for data collected through observation. This study was also crystallised through the use of different data production methods which consisted of interviews and observation. As Nieuwenhuis (2007) argues, crystallisation is a lens through which to view the components in qualitative research. This helped me gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' experiences of stress. According to Maree and Pietersen (2007), trustworthiness refers to the way in which the researcher is able to persuade the audience that findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of high quality. In other words, this was a way of providing an assurance that the research instruments were capable of providing accurate and meaningful answers to the research question (Bisschoff & Koebe, 2005).

3.7 Ethical issues

Permission to undertake this study was requested from the Senior Education Officer (SEO) and the school authorities, namely, the principal and the deputy. A letter of permission from the SEO and an ethical clearance certificate were produced and shown to the principal and the deputy, as proof that the study had been approved. Informed consent letters for the participants were also sought before the study started. The participants were informed about the research in which interviews were used beforehand, in order to give them the opportunity to query the meaning and implications of any statement. They were even permitted to withdraw at an early stage. Bell (2005) asserts that it is better for participants to withdraw at the start rather than halfway through. They were assured that their privacy and sensitivity would be protected. They were also assured that information would be used for research purposes only, and would be destroyed after use. It was also revealed to the participants that information would be treated as highly confidential.

3.8 Summary

This chapter discussed the methods followed in conducting this study. The research design was explained and the reasons for it as well as a discussion of the participants, the research instruments and the whole procedure which covered the data analysis, including trustworthiness and ethical issues. The next chapter is about the presentation and discussion of the data obtained through the data collection methods used in this study

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This study aimed at investigating teachers' experiences of work-related stress at one primary school in Lesotho. Through the use of interviews and observation, data were collected from twelve teachers. This chapter presents and discusses the findings. The chapter is organised according to specific themes emerging from the data. Firstly, I present findings from teachers' interaction with the principal. This is followed by the findings concerning teachers and teacher relationships. Thirdly, input on teacher and learner relationships follows. Next the researcher deals with allocation and utilisation of resources, and the application of policies. This is followed by the workload and then role demands.

Data are presented in a combined form, whereby for each theme there will be data from the two data collection methods. Because of confidentiality, teachers are named according to the letters of the alphabet from A to L.

4.2 Background information

In previous years, the Lesotho primary school curriculum consisted of five subjects namely, Sesotho, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The languages and Mathematics are compulsory subjects, as these determine the pass level of students. For example, if a learner fails one of these compulsory subjects, the level pass is three, even if in all other subjects the pass rate is one. In 1998 the curriculum was revised and was

piloted in 1999. This was during the preparations of the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE). In the year 2000 FPE was introduced and the new curriculum came into use. The time-tables were also new because of the new curriculum. As the new curriculum comprised ten subjects, education officers found it necessary that the time-tables also allowed for more than five subjects a day. They therefore decided to allocate each subject 45 minutes. This gave teachers seven subjects a day to teach, but teachers found it impossible for primary children to learn so many subjects a day. This would appear to be too much for children and teachers. In most cases, teachers found themselves eating into other subjects' time or going too fast so that learners were unable to follow what they were expected to and to acquire the correct information.

4.3 Teachers' experiences of stress

4.3.1 Interaction with the principal

Respondents were asked to talk about their interaction with the principal.

All the respondents indicated that the principal used a face-to-face system which was always conducted through gatherings or meetings. Sometimes she talked to them at lunch as they had their lunch together. Some indicated that they became frustrated due to the way they interacted with the principal. Teacher B had this to say:

She always calls us to a gathering and tells us whatever she wants to tell us. This is sometimes stressful because she does not want to be asked questions, and will sometimes ask us to discuss something that she has already decided on herself. In the end, she makes her own decisions after wasting our time. We are not free to express our feelings. But all in all, she uses face-to-face communication.

Teacher H also has this to say:

Communication is always done verbally. Our principal likes talking to people when they are together, and it stresses us because she will assign you a duty and you will not be clear about what it is you must do if you are shy like me. I am unable to ask her for clarification as I have learned that she shouts at people when they ask questions.

In addition, I observed that when the principal talked to teachers they all kept quiet. Even where they had to respond no one responded. The way she spoke to teachers indicated that she appeared to have no respect to them. She just shouted at them and they all hung their heads. For example, there was a day when she complained about the senior block teachers having left their surroundings untidy. It was lunch time when she told them. She said, "Because you are afraid of instructing the learners to clean before leaving, you will do it yourselves. I will instruct you because I am not afraid of you." One teacher belonging to that block tried to explain what had happened, but she did not want to listen, she just shouted and the teachers kept quiet. She told them to go to their classes. Nobody responded and they all stood up and left.

Teachers' responses seemed to indicate that their interaction with the principal stressed them. They mentioned that she did not like to be questioned when her meaning was not clear or they did not understand. They pointed out that they were always afraid of her. They sometimes did not even want her to call them. With regard to the principal calling teachers, teacher C had this to say:

When she is not around I feel that I am a teacher and it's me. From the time I get through the gate, I feel that I know what I am here for. Her presence stresses me to an

extent that I end up not knowing what to teach. When she is around and I see a child coming to my class to tell me that I am wanted in the principal's office, I start asking myself what I have done, what she is going to say, and who she is with. I start developing headaches and dizziness.

According to teachers' opinions, the principal lacked appropriate ways of approaching them and, as a result, she contributed to their stress as they were not happy with the way she spoke to them, but at the same time were not free to express their feelings. They reported that she shouted at them even when they needed something from her that was related to work. They feared her, and they seemed to feel that this could lead to poor performance. Schutte and Mc Lennan (2001) concur with these teachers' opinions as they argue that communication is one of the sources of most problems and complications in the work place.

4.3.2 Teacher- teacher relationships

Teachers were asked about their relationships with their colleagues and their learners.

Teachers' responses in relation to their relationships with colleagues indicated that they were all fine, they helped one another, they shared ideas, and they worked together. Due to their large numbers, they gathered in cliques, but they were still fine with their colleagues. Teacher K had this to say, "Our relationships with our colleagues are good as we treat each other like brothers and sisters. We help each other. Things are done cooperatively." However, because it was examination time I was not able to observe whether they helped one another.

Taking into consideration what teachers say about their relationships and what they said about their interactions with the principal, it seemed there that there was some contradiction between

what the teachers said and what I observed. I did not hear them talking to the principal, though they gathered together at lunch time. On the other hand, the principal did not talk to teachers except to shout at them. She talked to her deputy and the teachers also talked to the deputy. With the principal one would just answer the question if she asked one.

Regarding teachers' relationships with learners, the teachers reported that these were not fine because of learners' absenteeism. This is in agreement with Kyriacou (2001) and Motseke (1998) where they pointed out that learner discipline and apathy is one of the contributing factors of teachers' stress. They pointed out that due to FPE parents do not seem to care, and a child can be absent for some weeks. They know that the government policy said children do not have to repeat classes, or be expelled from school, and parents are not aware that this is the reason their children fail the external class. Parents are just happy that their children are not repeating classes. This frustrates teachers because, when children fail, teachers are accountable for their failure. Teacher F mentioned that:

My relationship with the learners is fine except that some have a tendency to absent themselves from school without valid reasons. Parents do not take care of their children's future because of FPE. They stress us because they know that one of the government policies that guide FPE is that 'no child should repeat a class, but parents are not aware that their children are failing the external class and that, after that there is nothing they can do except stay on the street.

Teacher K also had this to say:

Most of the learners in our school were street children. They came to school because of FPE. As a result, they are used to street life, and they absent themselves from school on Fridays especially at month-ends or on busy weekends. They steal people's money by pick-

pocketing them. They call themselves Tycoons. Some go to the border to carry for people with heavy luggage. We still have to teach them what we did during their absence, though we know their reasons for being absent. We cannot even suspend or expel them, because they may torture our children or even harm us.

According to teachers' responses they were stressed by the absenteeism because they had to promote learners even if they were not fit for the next class. This means that learners would be promoted in all classes, and that they would then fail the external class which is examined by the Examination Council, the big body responsible for the external classes' examinations. This stressed teachers because the results are publicised, and the whole country would be aware that most learners failed, and the external class teachers would be accountable for the results. Therefore, these stressed teachers as parents would complain, forgetting that they had contributed by allowing their children to absent themselves. They also allowed children to be promoted.

The respondents also pointed out that due to HIV/AIDS, most learners are orphans and, as a result, the teachers had to be parents to such learners. They had to provide food, clothes and learning materials for such learners as most of them had nobody to look after them. They stayed as children alone in the house, or they stayed with relatives who had their own children and were unable to provide for them. This is also found by Bhana et al. (2006) and Motseke (1998) who revealed that mounting numbers of HIV and AIDS orphans stress teachers as they have to provide for them. In regard to this, teacher F said:

I also have a problem with orphans. They come to school without food and this stresses me as I have to be a parent to them and supply them with food. I have a

problem teaching hungry learners as they do not concentrate, they fall asleep and are tired. I even supply stationery when the government supplies are finished.

As far as this issue was concerned, the data revealed that teacher-teacher relationships seemed to be fine. Teachers were stressed by the absenteeism of learners who ended up failing the external class which led to teachers being accused by the church, parents and the government. They were also frustrated by the many orphans they were taking care of due to HIV/AIDS. They were stressed further by teaching boys who were criminals and who they were afraid of as Looock et al (2006) assert in their study that job insecurity is one of the teachers' stressors. They were not free to control those boys who had once been street kids and were dangerous.

4.3.3 Resource utilisation

I asked teachers to tell me about the allocation and utilisation of resources at their school.

In relation to resources, I focused on two types, namely material resources and human resources. Material resources include stationery and text books, while human resources refer to teachers. In Lesotho, because of FPE, material resources are supplied by the government.

The respondents indicated that the way material resources are allocated is not that stressful. They were brought to the school already scheduled by the government as to which and how many books or exercise books, pens and pencils were to be given to each class and each child. Teacher B had this to say, "Because of FPE, material resources are supplied by the government through its department School Supply Unit (SSU) and they are already scheduled according to enrolment in classes."

However there were other teachers who viewed this allocation as stressful. They pointed out that the materials were brought late every year, three months after school re-opened for the first quarter, and that they were always insufficient. This stressed them because parents did not want to buy anything as the government had declared that education is free and they should not pay for or buy anything in connection with their children's education. Lack of resources as a source of stress is also discussed in Joseph's (2000), Steyn and van Niekerk's (2002), Van der Merwe's (2003) and Boyle et al. (1995) studies which identify lack of resources as one of the great sources of stress to teachers when they are expected to perform well and produce good results. With regard to this, teacher A reported:

The resources are never brought on time and they are always insufficient. We have to struggle and find additional materials. I sometimes use a method that is not suitable for a lesson just because of insufficient materials. In relation to stationery, each child is given four exercise books and three pencils for the whole year. These are finished within a very short time, especially in Class One. Then parents refuse to buy more, saying that their Prime Minister has said that education is free. How can children learn without writing? They frustrate us!

Though I arrived during half year examination time, I managed to observe two classes, one junior and one senior class. Junior classes are comprised of Classes One to Four and senior classes which comprise Classes Five to Seven. I discovered that there were very few learners with new exercise books for writing the examination in Class One. I noted this by simply taking in their books randomly. Others were using their high school brothers' and sisters' books that had a few pages left in them, and some had rubbed out their previous work and were writing on those dirty pages. In senior class I found that they were using foolscap, but

there were those who did not have any and who asked their friends to tear out pages for them, while others were taking pages from their exercise books.

The argument was that resources were insufficient, and that they were delivered late, as a result of which teachers had to improvise, or use methods that did not suit lessons and this seemed to be stressful for them. Teachers are expected to perform well and produce good results at the end of the year. The Lesotho education system is examination-oriented, and, as we move from Class Five to Class Seven, we start preparing learners for the external examination. Learners write a National examination and the results are publicised. The external class teachers are responsible for the learners' performance. As a result, it seemed to me that senior class teachers were most pressured by accountability and they gave learners books to learn from when they were at home or could be helped by their brothers and sisters.

4.3.4 Human resources

I asked teachers to explain how they were allocated duties. The responses seemed to indicate that the way in which they were allocated duties was not satisfactory. With this Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) attest that the division of work and its design can foster stress. They were not placed where they were suitable. People who were accustomed to teaching seniors were sometimes allocated to junior classes, and one who had been used to teaching juniors was allocated to a senior class. In regard to their allocation, teacher F had this to say:

I am allocated to Class One and I am not fit to teach this class. I cannot teach down to their level because I have been teaching senior classes for a long time. I find that from January till now, most of these learners have not yet learned to write their names. It means I am failing them, and this frustrates me, because they are supposed to be able

to write sentences and the names of their family members. Apart from that, Class One is the foundation, and this means that their foundation is going to be poor. I explained this to my principal but she did not consider it.

Teacher L also reported:

For a learner to perform well in Class Seven (the external class), one should start teaching them from Class Five in order to prepare them for their National examination. I am now allocated to Class Seven, yet it is the first time I have met these learners. Their teacher who taught them from Class Five has now been allocated to Class Three. I do not know the reasons for these changes, and I was not given the chance to ask about them. These learners are poorly disciplined, they are noisy, and are always absent, especially on Fridays. I am stressed, because at the end of the year when results are published, people will be pointing fingers at me as the one who produced poor results, without knowing that I have not taught these learners all along.

I watched teacher L when he was saying this. His face changed. He is fair in complexion, but he became pink. This led me to conclude that this teacher was angry and dissatisfied with the class allocated to him.

Teachers were not satisfied with the way they were allocated classes. This seemed to stress them. They mentioned that they are qualified, but that the way they are used is not fair, and that it seemed that the principal wanted to harass them, because if the learners fail, the one who was teaching them is accountable for their failure. I did not find out about the school policy on class allocation but, as an experienced teacher, I know that in schools there are senior class teachers who start teaching these learners from Class Five, preparing them for the external examination. There are also junior class teachers who lay the foundation. They start

teaching them from Class One to Class Four. Even if the principal found it worthwhile to implement these changes, it would be wise to change in such a way that people would have a chance to spend three to four years with the learners in order to avoid complaints such as those where teachers allege that learners are poorly disciplined.

4.3.5 Application of policies

The government formulates policies that govern the schools through its Ministry of Education. In turn, principals also formulate their own rules and regulations that regulate learners' behaviour and guide the behaviour of teachers (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). In most schools, the government policies and principals' rules and regulations are not consistently applied. I asked teachers to tell me about the policies in their school, and how they are applied. In relation to this, teacher L mentioned:

There are policies such as the one from the Education Officers which says that Class Seven teachers should not leave school when their learners leave after examinations. This means that Class Seven teachers come to school even though their learners have left. Class Seven learners write and finish their examinations in October. Teachers come to school for the whole of November, till schools close in December for no purpose other than to clock in. In some schools, Class Seven teachers are allowed to take a break after working very hard and coming to school in winter when other people were having a mid-term break. They are allowed to come to school only once or twice a week. Here, this happens only to some teachers, not to all.

In addition, teacher G reported:

There is a rule which we made together in order to regulate the behaviour of teachers fighting in front of the learners. We concluded that teachers who are in conflict should

be accused and charged, however, there are some teachers who are not accused and not charged, yet they have quarreled with others in the presence of learners and insulted one another. Others may just have quarreled and, even though they were not in front of learners, they are accused and charged.

I observed the facial expressions of most respondents when they were relating how these policies were applied in their school. Most of the respondents' faces changed at once and some cried. I concluded that these were those who had suffered as a result of favouritism.

The responses seemed to indicate that all teachers were not treated in the same way. There were some who were granted leave after their Class Seven learners had left the school. They came to school once or twice a week, however there were some who were not. The principal would tell some teachers that the government policy did not allow her to give teachers the opportunity of coming to school on certain days only after their external class had completed their year. They would be told the number of days leave teachers could have for the year. This proves that policies are not fair as Holmes (2003), Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002), and Van der Merwe (2003) attest that policies are inequitable and rules are inconsistent.

4.3.6 High Workload

In Lesotho, the enrolment of students in a primary school for each class is supposed to be 40-45 learners. Anything beyond this is too much. These primary school teachers are teaching ten subjects. According to the time-table, each lesson should be 45 minutes. In primary schools subject teaching is not practiced, though there are some schools that do practice this. This means that each teacher is teaching ten subjects, as in primary school, when one is allocated a

class it belongs to her or him. In this school, the enrolment of the whole school is about 1000 which is taught by eighteen teachers. This implies that classes are overcrowded. I asked teachers to relate stories about their workloads. In this regard, teacher C responded:

This is just too much. The classes are overcrowded. I am teaching 70 learners and they are seniors. They write essays, and when it comes to marking, it is too much. I have to mark even after school, in order to allow for other subjects, though it is impossible for me to teach seven subjects as expected by the Education Officers. I teach five subjects as my maximum per day. Even this is too much because, even with those subjects that are easily marked, marking 70 scripts and explaining them to each and every learner is just too much. Every day I go home exhausted.

Teacher G also mentioned:

There is a lot of work especially in the junior classes. We are teaching these ten subjects and we also have to use break-through to literacy when teaching languages. Children are also underage, because parents do not want to pay for pre-schools, and we cannot refuse to take them. FPE has brought many things that stress us. These underage learners is a problem because they do not speak when we ask them to, most of them cry instead of reading or answering a question, so underage adds more work as we have to nurse them. If we refuse to register these children, their parents go to the Ministry. You will hear the name of your school over a radio broadcast. No one will come to you to discuss the issue. All these are the results of FPE.

I further asked whether this break-through was meant for junior classes only.

Teacher G indicated:

It is meant to teach the juniors reading and writing. It is too demanding, as each and every child has to read a sentence and break it into words, then rebuild that sentence again. I have 80 pupils in this class. I have 80 scripts of charts writing those sentences,

as well as separate words for those sentences. This is too demanding. I do not only have to teach languages, there are ten subjects to be taught and I have to teach at least seven subjects a day, which is impossible.

All of these responses indicated that classes were overcrowded, and it seemed that teachers were stressed due to the overcrowded classrooms. This point is also found by Sooful (1992), Thanyani (2003) and Van der Merwe (2003) who argue that duties such as preparation, meetings, extra-mural activities and class teaching in overcrowded classrooms is stressful. There were too many learners to attend to, for example, senior class teachers were stressed by marking too many essays, while junior class teachers were stressed by attending to too many learners, and making so many charts for learners during their break-through to literacy. Teachers were of the opinion that most of their education officers did not have primary teaching experience and that this explains why they drew up time-tables of this nature which require primary school learners to be taught seven subjects a day.

In addition, teachers added that what stressed them most was that they did not actually know who was controlling them. They have many authorities, for example, the church and the government. The church has some statistical forms which have to be filled out quarterly for each child. In most cases the church delays sending these forms and teachers have to rush in order to meet the deadlines. There are also church ceremonies which are held every year and teachers have to contribute money for these ceremonies. For instance, the Presbyterian ceremony which all the priests from all the parishes of the district attend is compulsory. Even if the teacher does not belong to the church denomination, as long as s/he holds a job in this church denomination s/he has to pay that money. Teachers also have to clean, for example,

by painting the buildings, including the church. As a result, classroom work has to be suspended for a week or more depending on the speed of painting and the number of buildings to be painted. Teachers are also included in the schedules for preparing food for visitors. On the other hand, the government, through its Education Officers expects teachers to be in class and to do their work. They are expected to complete the syllabus by the end of the year. There are also many forms from the Ministry of Education that have to be filled in, also in compliance with deadlines. In their schemes and records of work done, they have to record what they have done for each subject at the end of every week, including the week that they were cleaning for the church ceremony. As a result, they have to find the time to teach the topics for that week. Apart from all this, the Ministry of Education has some activities that schools have to attend, and teachers are expected to prepare some activities such as songs and dramas for these in order to entertain the audiences. These add to teachers' workloads. Here teacher B reported:

Our school is a church school and, as a result, the church has power over us. There are some duties assigned to us by the church. There are also some church activities and ceremonies that we have to prepare for and attend. We are forced to pay a certain amount of money to the church. On the other hand, the government expects us to complete the syllabus by the end of the year. We strive hard to meet all these goals. So the government chases us, and the church also wants its work done. It is simply too much.

The argument here was that work containing too many deadlines was likely to stress teachers (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Teachers in this school indicated that they had too much to do. They were overloaded by both the church and the government. It seemed that there are some

competing demands placed on teachers by both the church and the government and this is stressful.

According to some teachers, the principals also add too much work to their loads. The Lesotho primary school principals are expected to have classes and teach, but the principal and the deputy in this school do not teach, although they have allocated themselves classes. Teachers who pair with them are teaching all these pupils in one class. This means that there are two classrooms which are not used. As a result, there are also two classrooms which are more overcrowded. Teachers' responses indicated that they are frustrated by this situation yet because they respect their principals there is nothing they can do to overcome this problem.

4.3.7 Teachers' role demands

Teachers have many roles to fulfill. They are expected to act as counselors. They are responsible for the pastoral care of the learners. They are leaders of extra-mural activities, they control the discipline of learners, they teach and manage the classrooms, and nowadays, they act as parents to many orphans due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Some teachers are also elected as school secretaries and Advisory school Committee secretary and many other functions and they are sometimes unable to reconcile the conflict generated by these diverse and often oppositional roles. I asked teachers about the roles they have, and whether they think their roles contribute to their stress.

The teachers' responses mentioned that their roles contribute greatly to their stress. Those who hold leadership roles in extra-mural activities such as sports, culture and music

mentioned that parents frustrated them as they did not want to pay for trips during sports competitions. Most of the competitions were held in far away places. The respondents added that they ended up paying for and preparing provisions for some learners. Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) argue that roles as functions or positions that one is expected to have in an organization are sometimes too demanding and are likely to be stressful. In this regard teacher D responded:

Roles stress us a lot. I am responsible for extra-mural activities, mostly music. I have to prepare songs and photocopy the song for each learner at my own expense. Parents do not want to do anything and the school does not have money because of FPE. Parents claim that education is free and they do not have to pay for anything. During school trips I end up paying for some learners.

Others complained that they were elected as school secretaries and Advisory School Committee secretary and that there was too much paperwork and these roles were too time-consuming. Teacher E reported:

I am a secretary of ASC which schedules its meetings during school hours when I am supposed to be in class. This means that I have to cover the time when I am not in class attending ASC meetings. I sometimes have to come to school during weekends when I am supposed to be with my family.

In addition, I observed that the principal kept on calling the school secretary. There was no single day when school ended without her calling the secretary during school hours or after school when others were leaving. I also learned that the principals do not teach, they are just in the office.

In relation to this theme, teachers' responses seemed to indicate that their roles were stressful. They had to take the responsibility of preparing materials to use for the activities they were in charge of, and even paid for learners' trips with their own money. They were also stressed by being secretaries either for the school or an ASC secretary. These meetings were held at times that were inconvenient for them. As a result, they failed to complete their work in time.

4.4 Emerging issues

This chapter has presented data collected by means of two data production methods namely interviews and observation. Data from these methods were presented in a combined form, that is, for each theme there were data from the interviews and observations.

The theoretical framework of this study was embedded within the literature reviewed. This means that the framework was constructed around some of the key causes of stress and that this informed the analysis of this study, for example, the lack of resources, the workload, teachers' role demands, teacher-teacher relationships and teacher-learner relationships.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers experience stress due to many different reasons. Firstly, learners' frequent absenteeism which leads to them failing the external examination causes teachers stress. This is because teachers are accountable for learners' failure. The issue of learners' absenteeism is also reflected in Kyriacou (2001) and de Jesus and Conboy (2001) in their studies, where they found that learners' poor discipline, including absenteeism, stressed teachers.

This study also revealed that due to HIV/AIDS there are many orphans in schools who do not have anybody to look after them. As a result, teachers care for them. Teachers provide food, clothing and even take them to clinics for medication. This is in concurrence with Bhana et al (2006) and Motseke (1998) who found that the increasing numbers of orphans due to HIV/AIDS stresses teachers as they have to provide for them.

Secondly, inadequate supply and the late delivery of resource material stress teachers. These resource materials are supplied by School Supply Unit which falls under the Ministry of Education and Training. The government is unable to provide adequate resources for the schools' large enrolments. The lack of resources as a cause of stress is also explained in Joseph (2000) and van der Merwe (2003).

I also found that teachers experience stress due to the high workload. This means that more is expected of them than they can do within the time available to them. For example, teachers are expected to teach seven subjects a day. The issue of the workload is also discussed by Holmes (2003) and Steyn and van Niekerk (2002).

Unlike the findings in the literature review, this study also found that the competing demands of the church and the government through its Ministry of Education and Training are stressful to teachers. The church has its activities assigned to teachers, while on the other hand, the government also has its tasks. For instance, the church would like teachers to take part fully during its ceremonies, while the Ministry of Education and Training expects teachers to be in

class, following the time-tables. This stresses teachers, as they end up trying to satisfy both parties.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE LIMITATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study and presents the conclusions and recommendations in response to the conclusions and lastly, discusses the limitations of the study.

5.2 Summary

The study investigated teachers' experiences of stress in one primary school in Lesotho. The first chapter outlined the background and the purpose of the study. The motivation of the study emanates from the literature, where I discovered that studies on stress have been conducted in secondary and high schools, but that few studies were conducted in primary schools especially in my country, Lesotho. These studies revealed that people in different professions experience stress, but that teachers experience the highest levels of stress. I therefore became interested in examining the teachers' experiences of stress in a primary school. Teachers' stress does not only affect teachers, but also affects their work performance and family lives.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed local and international literature. The concepts of stress, work-related stress, causes of stress, symptoms of stress as well as coping strategies were discussed. The framework of this study is constructed around some of the key causes of stress.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology used in the study. The study was located within a qualitative approach, and adopted a case study research design. The case study was based on semi-structured interviews and observation. These methods were used to help me gain an understanding of teachers' experiences of stress. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe deeply into the issues that were investigated. There were eighteen teachers in this school and twelve were interviewed. My intention was to interview all of the teachers except the principal. Four teachers were absent during the interview week due to different personal reasons.

In Chapter Four I presented and discussed the collected data. Data were presented through themes namely: interaction with the principal, teacher-teacher relationships and teacher and learner relationships, resource allocation and utilisation, application of policies, the high workload and teachers' role demands.

5.3 Conclusions

This study was guided by one key research question. I came up with the following conclusions:

1. The relationships of the government and the church seem to be problematic for teachers. Teachers have competing demands in that they are required to satisfy the church and the government. They know that they are working in a church school, but their salaries are paid by the government. As a result, they are instructed by the government and the church and this seems to be stressful for them. For instance, the

church has some ceremonies that schools should participate in fully, while the government has scheduled time-tables for teachers to follow. Teachers' stress is that they want to satisfy both parties, and this is difficult, as the church services interfere with the time-tables.

2. With regard to resources, teachers are stressed by the government's delay in delivering the materials which ends up forcing teachers to improvise, and/or even to buy materials with their own money. The materials are never adequate for the learners as the government is unable to cater for the large FPE school enrolments. This forces teachers to change their methods of teaching and use those which do not engage learners actively in the lessons.
3. In relation to human resources, the findings indicate that teachers are not allocated classes that they are confident and comfortable with and that this results in stress. However, being leaders of extra-mural activities is also part of their work, however, serving as school and ASC secretaries is stressful to teachers elected to be secretaries. The schedule of meetings that are held during school hours stresses these teachers as it consumes their teaching time.
4. In regard to teachers' relationships with learners, the findings reveal that learners' absenteeism stresses teachers. The findings also reveal that since the introduction of FPE, parents have neglected their responsibility for their children's education. They just complain when children fail their external examination which should take them to

secondary school, without acknowledging that they have contributed to the failure of their children by allowing them to absent themselves from school, and to be promoted in the previous classes even when they had not passed.

5. The findings also reveal that teachers are stressed due to their high workload. Time-tables designed by the Ministry of Education and Training stress teachers as they are expected to teach seven subjects a day. Some classes are also overcrowded because of the principals not teaching, and it is not easy for teachers teaching those classes to teach so many subjects to that many children. In other words, the time-table and overcrowded classrooms are sources of teachers' stress.

5.4 Recommendations

On the basis of the conclusions I recommend that:

1. The Committees (School Management Committees) should encourage the government and the church to meet and schedule their annual activities together.
2. Regarding the problem of inadequate resources or late delivery of resources:
 - (i) The school should select some teachers who will be responsible for the collection of materials from SSU.
 - (ii) Schools should raise funds by engaging in activities such as 'Funny Day' when learners do not wear uniform and wear their casual or funny clothes and pay R1 each.

3. In relation to the problem of ASC scheduling meetings during school hours, ASCs should give teachers an opportunity to schedule meetings so that teachers can organise these meetings in accordance with their time-tables.
4. In relation to learners' absenteeism, there should be more parental involvement in schools especially since the introduction of FPE.
5. Regarding the problem of the workload:
 - (i) Schools should advise the Ministry of Education to include teachers in re-designing the curriculum including the time-tables, as teachers are those who have to implement the changes.
 - (ii) Teachers should discuss the problem of the principals not teaching with ASC, so that ASC can advise the principals and show them why it is important for them to teach.

5.5 Limitations of the study

This study was restricted to one primary school, Mafome primary school, in which the focus of the research was mainly centred on the teachers. This limited the findings of the study, as not all of the primary schools in Lesotho were represented, however, teachers' experiences of stress are known nationally.

The research was conducted during the winter examination period for the whole school at Mafome primary school. As a result, it was not easy to observe procedures as teachers

were busy invigilating and marking. The appointments were not easily fulfilled, and I had to change time schedules, however, interviews were conducted under these difficult circumstances.

References

- Alay, S., & Kocak, S. (1999). *A study of stress sources, symptoms and strategies of physical educators in elementary schools*. Hacettepe UniversitesiEgitim Faakaltesi Dergisi, 16-17: 11-14.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your education, health and social science research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and Social Science* (4th ed.). New York: Open University Press.
- Bhana, D., Morrell, R., Epstein, D., & Moletsane, R. (2006). The hidden work of caring: Teachers and maturing AIDS epidemic in diverse secondary schools in Durban. *Journal of Education*, 38, 5-20
- Billing, A. G., & Moos, R. H. (1981). The role of coping responses and social resources in attenuating the stress of life events. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4, 157-189.
- Bisschoff, I., & Koebe, C. (2005). School choice: challenges to Sharpville Public school principals. *South African Journal of Education*, 25(3), 156-163.
- Boyle, G. J., Borg, M. J., Falzon, J. M. & Baghoni, A. J. (1995). A structural model of the dimensions of teacher stress. *British Journal of Education Psychology*, 65, 49-69.
- Bush, T., & Middlewood, D. (2005). *Leading and managing people in education*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publihers.
- Chaplain, R. P. (1995). Stress and job satisfaction: A study of English primary school teachers. *Educational Psychology*, 15, 473-489.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.) London: Routledge.

Conley, S., & Woosely, S.A. (2000). Teacher stress: The perceptions of social work lecturers in Britain. *British Journal of Social Work*, 30, 769-794.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

De Jesus, S. N., & Conboy, J. (2001). Stress management course to prevent teacher distress. *The International Journal of Education Management*, 15(3), 131-137.

Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects* (2nd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Detert, R. A., Derosia, C., Caravella, T., & Duquette, R. D. (2006). Reducing stress and enhancing the general well being of teachers using tai chi chih movement. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, 4(1), 162-173.

Dimmock, C., & Walker, A. (2005). *Educational leadership: Culture and diversity*. London: Sage.

Du Preez, P., Camppher, T., Grubbers, B., Looek, C., & Shaba, S. M. (2003). *Effective education management series: Principles of effective education management*. Sandown: Heinemann.

Elgelbrecht, P., Swart, E. & Eloff, T. (2001). Stress and coping skills of teachers with Down's Syndrome in inclusive classrooms. *South African Journal of Education*, 21(4), 256-260.

Folkman, S., & Moskowitz, J. T. (2004). Coping: Pitfalls and promise. *Annual Review of Psychology* 55, 745-774.

Govender, M. (2002). *The role of the principal in the management of teacher stress in selected schools in Chartsworth*. Unpublished master's dissertation. University of technology, Durban.

Government of Lesotho (1982). *Education sector survey task force*, Maseru, Lesotho: Government Printers.

Hakim, C. (2000). *Research design: Successful designs for social and economic research* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Harris, O. J., & Hartmann, S. J. (2002). *Organisational behavior*. New York: Best Business Books.

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W., & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Holmes, E. (2003). *The newly qualified teacher's handbook*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Jackson, L., & Rothmann, S. (2006). Occupational stress, organizational commitment and ill-health of educators in North West Province. *South African Journal of Education*, 26(1), 75-95.

Jacobson, C., Ponsette, A., & Thylefors, I. (2001). Managing stress and feeling among Swedish comprehensive school teacher. *Scandinavian Journal of Education Research*, 45(1), 37-53.

Jeena, M. (1998). *Teacher mental health status, stress levels and incident of burnout during a period of change and reorganisation within South African education system*. Unpublished master's dissertation, University of Natal, Durban.

Johnson, D. (1994). *Research methods in education management*. Britain: Longman.

Jongeling, S., & Lock, G. (1995). Teacher stress in Western Australia: An interview study. Retrieved on 22 March 2009, from <http://www.aare.edu.au...>

Joseph, R. (2000). *Stress free teaching: A practical guide to tackling stress in teaching, lecturing and tutoring*. London: Kogan Page.

Klos, L. M. (2003). *Stress experienced by the female participants in the primary and secondary educational milieus*. Unpublished doctor of education dissertation. University of South Africa.

Kyriacou, L. (2001)/ Teacher stress: Directions for future research. *Education Review*, 53(1), 27- 35.

Lazarus, R. S., & folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Loock, C., Grobler, B., & Mestry, R. (2006). *Human resource management education: The balancing scales*. Pretoria: Van Schaik

Lowe, M. (2007). *Beginning research: Ab guide for foundation degree students*. London: Routledge.

Maphalala, M. C. (2002). *Teacher stress in primary schools at Ensingweni Circuit*. Unpublished master's dissertation. University of Zululand, Durban.

Maree, K., & Pietersen, J. (2007). The qualitative research process. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 145-153). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Maree, K., & Van der Westhuizen, C. (2007). Planning a research proposal. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 24-44). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Mathew, L. (2005). *An exploratory study on occupational stress and coping strategies of special educators in South India*. Retrieved on 16 April 2009, from http://papers.ssm.com/so13/papers.c.fm?abstract_id=643192.

McCormick, J. (1997). Occupational stress of teachers: Biographical difference in a large school system. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35, 18-38.

Ministry of Education (2000). *Guidelines for implementation of free primary education, internal circular #1 of 2000*. Maseru

Moduka, R. S. (2001). *An investigation into work stress experienced by secondary school educators*. Unpublished master's dissertation. Vista University. Port Elizabeth.

Motseke, M. J. (1998). *Factors contributing to teachers' stress in township secondary schools*. Unpublished master's Dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Moos, R.H., & Bill, J. (1982). Conceptualising and measuring coping resources and processes. In C. Goldberg, and S. Breznitz (Eds.), *Handbook of stress: Theoretical and clinical aspects*, (pp. 212-230). New York: Free Press.

Mosisili, P. B. (1999). *Keynote address by the right honourable prime minister on symposium of free primary education*. Maseru Sun Hotel, 22 November 1999.

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007). Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 47-65). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007). Analysing qualitative data. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 99-117). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Niosh, L. (1999). Work related stress. Retrieved on the 22 March 2009, from <File://E:NIOSHPublications99-101STRESS-Atwork.htm>

Oliver, M. A., & Venter, D. J. L. (2003). The extent and causes of stress in teachers in the George Region. *South African Journal of Education*, 23, 186-192.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Rogers, B. (2002). Colleague support: Building a supportive ecology in schools. In B. Rogers (Ed.), *Teacher leadership and behavior management* (pp.141-153). California: Paul Chapman.

Rout, U. R., & Rout, J. K. (2003). *Stress management for primary health professionals*. New York: Kluwer Academic.

Saptoe, C. W. (2000). *Factors which cause stress to teachers in the Southern Cape*. Unpublished master's dissertation. Vista University. Port Elizabeth.

Schulze, S., & Steyn, T. (2007). Stressors in the professional lives of South African secondary school educators. *South African Journal of Education*, 27, 691-707.

Schutte, L. B., & Mc Lennan, A. (2001). *Education human resource: Capacity building programme, planning for people, module 1*. Duggan House: Mc Gill University.

Schutte, L. B., & Mc Lennan, A. (2001). *Education human resource: Capacity building programme, cooperation, module 5*. Duggan House: Mc Gill University.

Sebatane, E. M. (2000). Review of education analysis in Lesotho 1978-1999. Retrieved on 22 February 2009, from <http://www.adeanet.org/wgesa>.

Selye, H. (1976). *The stress of life*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Seotsanyana, M., & Muzvidziwa, V. N. (2002). *Continuity, change and growth: Lesotho's education system*. Retrieved on the 25 February, 2009. From <http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue4-2/01-muzvidziwa.html>.

Sooful, P. (1992). *Occupational stress factors as perceived by secondary school teachers*, unpublished doctor of education dissertation. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

Squelch, J., & Lemmer, E. (1994). *Eight keys to effective school management in South Africa*. Halfway House: Southern Book.

Steyn, G., M. & Van Niekerk, I. J. (2002). *Human resource management in education*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Tarling, R. (2006). *Managing social research: A practical guide*. London: Routledge.

Tennat, J. (2007). Work- related stress: The experiences of polytechnic teachers: Literature review. Retrieved on 20 July 2009, from <http://www.coda.ac.nz/whitireia-studsup-dl/2>.

Thanyani, N. G. (2003). *The identification of factors associated with stress among primary school teachers in Soshanguve*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

Van der Merwe, H. M. (2003). Coping with organisational stress. In I. Van deventer & A. G. Kruger (Eds.), *An educator's guide to school management skills* (pp. 49-59). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Van der Westhuizen, P. C. (1997). *Effective educational management*. Pretoria: Kagiso

Walliman, N. (2001). *Your research project, a step by step guide for first time researcher*. London: Sage.

Wehmeier, S. (Ed.). (2005). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* (7th ed.). New York: University Press.

Younghusband, L. (2005). *Teacher stress in one school district of Newfoundland and Labrador: a pilot study*. The Morning Watch, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Faculty of Education.

APPENDIX A

Semi-structured interview

We shall talk about your experiences of stress, that is, factors that contribute to your stress.

Interrelationship

Tell me about your relationships with your colleagues or your learners.

How do you interact with your colleagues?

What is your interaction with learners like?

Workload

Tell me about your workload.

Resources

Tell me about the resources that you use for teaching and learning.

Where are they from and how do you get them?

Time

What is your experience of time as one of the causes of stress?

Role demand

Do you think the roles you play contribute to your stress?

Communication systems

Tell me about the communication systems.

Do you think communication has an impact on your stress?

Are there any other experiences of stress that we have left out?

APPENDIX B

Observation schedule

Teachers' behaviour

Meetings and teachers' interactions are observed.

Teacher-learner interaction is observed.

Communication systems

How principal communicates with staff, whether by face-to-face or telephonic means.

Material resources

Material resources also are observed as learners are using them in classrooms.

APPENDIX C

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Beechwood Flat 2
Room 70
11th November, 2008

The participant
Maputsoe A.C.L. Primary School
P.O. Box 235
Maputsoe
350

Dear participant

RE: A REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

I am a Master's student conducting a research project titled; "Work-related stress: Teachers' experiences at one primary school in Lesotho." I humbly request you to participate in a study during data collection that will take place at your school. The research targets teachers, therefore you will form part of my study. You will be expected to participate in individual interviews which will be taking place at your school during frequent visits in the course of the year 2009. Observation will also be conducted in this research project.

Notes to the participants

- This study will help you in understanding work-related stress and how to cope with such stress.
- Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- All the responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

- Fictitious names will be used to represent participants' names (real names of participants and the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary therefore you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to you.
- You will not be forced to disclose what you do not want to reveal.
- Written notes and audio-recording will be done with your permission.
- Data will be stored in my locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years where after it will be destroyed by burning.

This study is supervised by Dr Vitallis Chikoko, Tel. 031 260 2639.

My contact: cell: 0784794286; Email address: molapoa@webmail.co.za or 207524505@ukzn.ac.za

I thank you in advance
 Yours sincerely
 Majoel Alice Molapo

If you understand and agree to participate, please sign a declaration form

DECLARATION FORM

I..... (Full names of the participants) hereby confirm that I have read and understood the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE

DATE

.....

.....

APPENDIX D

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Beechwood Flat 2
Room 70
17th November, 2008

The Senior Education Officer
P. O. Box 12
Leribe
300

Dear Madam

RE: A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

I am a Master's in education student conducting a research project titled, "Work-related stress: teachers' experiences at one primary school in Lesotho." I humbly request permission to undertake my research project in one of your schools, Maputsoe ACL Primary in Maputsoe area.

It is an academic study of which teachers and the Ministry of Education might benefit as it will help teachers to understand and cope with work-related stress. Also, the principal will gain an understanding of the strategies to apply to help teachers to cope with stress. The research targets teachers. They will be interviewed as individuals. I therefore ask for permission to enter the school and interview those teachers.

This study is supervised by Dr Vitallis Chikoko, Tel. 031 260 2639.

My contact: cell 0784794286; Email address; molapoa@webmail.co.za or 207524505@ukzn.ac.za.

I thank you in advance

Yours sincerely

Majoel Alice Molapo

If you understand and grant permission please sign a declaration form

DECLARATION FORM

I..... (Full names) hereby confirm that I have read and understood the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I grant permission for the researcher to conduct her study at the above mentioned school.

SIGNATURE

DATE/ STAMP

.....

.....

APPENDIX E

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood campus
Beechwood Flat 2
Room 70
17th November, 2008

The principal
P.O.Box 235
Maputsoe
350

Dear Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am a Masters in education student at the University of kwazulu- Natal conducting a research project titled; “Work-related stress: teachers’ experiences at one primary school in Lesotho.” I humbly ask for permission to conduct my study at your school. Teachers will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Teachers will be interviewed regarding their experiences of stress. The information will be treated confidentially and will not be used for any purposes other than for this study. Fictitious names will be used to represent the participants’ names.

I hope that the results from this study will be beneficial to teachers and the school as the whole. My contact details and my supervisor’s details are provided below for further clarification on this study.

Consent form

I..... (Full names) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and that I allow the researcher to conduct the research project at my school.

Signature

.....

Date/ stamp

.....

Thanks in advance,

Yours faithfully

'Majoel Alice Molapo (Mrs)

Tel. 0312603619 or 0784794286

207524505@ukzn.ac.za or molapoa@webmail.co.za

Dr Vitallis Chikoko

Tel.031 260 2639.

chikokov@ukzn.ac.za



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

05 FEBRUARY 2009

MRS. MA MOLAPO (207524505)
EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Dear Mrs. Molapo

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0024/09M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

"Teacher stress in a Lesotho primary school: organizational coping strategies"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully


.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc. Supervisor (Dr. V Chikoko)
cc. Mr. D Buchler

