THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING (WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO STRESS MANAGEMENT AND COPING SKILLS), IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS.

by

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<u>DECLARATION</u>

THE AUTHOR HEREBY DECLARES THAT THIS THESIS, UNLESS
SPECIFICALLY INDICATED TO THE CONTRARY, IS A PRODUCT OF HER OWN
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ABSTRACT

Burnout is considered the final step in the progression of unsuccessful attempts at coping with a number of stressful conditions.

The present study aimed to explore the perceived effectiveness of training of educational psychologists at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg to manage and cope with stress and burnout. The study also explored the perceived effectiveness of training to cope with demands of the profession, and the choice of coping mechanisms in stress management. The sample consisted of 8 educational psychologists who had completed their degrees at the University of Natal, Pietermartizburg. The sample comprised five males and three females.

The study was qualitative in nature and the data was analyzed employing Kruger's phenomenological approach. A semi-structured interview was conducted consisting of four questions. The data received was thereafter analyzed by the phenomenological steps stipulated by Kruger (1988). Categorization of the data revealed the following themes : (a) incongruencies in practice and training; (b) perceived influence of professional training on the choice of coping skills and stress management techniques; (c) stress management techniques and elements that psychologists thought should be included in the training programme; (d) contributory factors of stress and burnout in psychologists, and society's perception of psychologists.

A gap was perceived between the training received and practice. The respondents felt that there was a lack of focus on issues pertaining to educational psychology. The meta-issue that arose was that the professional training received was incongruent with work demands. With regard to the choice of coping skills, the training received was perceived as being unhelpful, but aided in the refinement of existing coping skills.

The findings of the study are discussed, limitations of the study considered, and suggestions for further research offered.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the Study

Interest in the phenomenon of burnout has increased steadily since the early 1900's (Basson, in Black, 1991). Freudenberger (1974) is generally given credit for selecting the term burnout to describe the emotional and physical exhaustion of some human service workers in health care agencies. Maslach and Jackson (1981a) subsequently developed a multidimensional definition of burnout to incorporate the three components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Burnout is a response to the emotional strain of dealing extensively with other human beings and is considered a type of job stress. However, what is unique about burnout is that the stress arises from the social interaction between helper and recipient (Maslach, in Rutsch, 1997).

Burnout is considered to be the derivative of ongoing, unmediated (or unsuccessfully mediated) stress, experienced particularly by those people working in emotionally charged interpersonal contexts (Manlove, 1993). Burnout among psychologists has been an area that has received a great deal of interest. According to Farber (1983) human service professionals are said to be particularly at risk for such "burnout" because they share three basic characteristics -

a) they perform emotionally taxing work;

b) they have certain common personality characteristics that make them vulnerable to burnout; and

c) their work has a client - centred orientation.

According to Farber (ibid) virtually all human service workers complain of long hours, isolation, lack of autonomy, client 'neediness', public misunderstanding of the nature of their work, insufficient resources, lack of criteria to measure accomplishments, inadequate job training and demands of productivity.

Those who work in institutional rather than private settings are often faced with stresses endemic to organizational structures, most notably role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload (ibid).

Little has been written regarding the concept of burnout and the various registration categories. According to Nichols (1988) heads of clinical, educational and occupational psychology departments do not appear, in the main, to create support systems in their departments or to insist on the use of support structures by active therapists. Little or no attention is given to the practitioners' mental and emotional well-being (ibid). The issues mentioned above pertain equally to psychologists within the South African context.

Psychology in South Africa is an area that is going through a much needed process of redefinition in relation to its role and relevance to the needs of the South African society (Donald, 1991). The role of educational psychology in South Africa has also, over the last decade been placed more sharply in the spotlight too (ibid).

Early in the 20th century, E.L. Thorndike declared that the purpose of educational psychology was to clarify educational aims by defining them in measurable terms, and statistically determining the probability of their attainment (Reynolds, Gutkin, Elliott and Witt, 1984).

An issue of contention within the field of educational psychology, has firstly been that of finding an inclusive definition. In conducting this search the question that often arises is "So you are an educational psychologist ?". This question is often transformed to "But what do you do ?". An attempt to answer this question is suggested by the following ideas :

- teach
- conduct research
- design instructional research
- develop assessment instruments
- work in school settings
- work in mental health settings
- develop educational products to be used in the home

- own/work in consulting companies

- serve as resource consultants.

Sharratt (1995) suggests that there are a number of views on the role of educational psychologists in South Africa. Firstly, 'the traditional view with its main emphasis on the expert management of individual children with problems of various kinds' (p 22). The second view of the educational psychologist's role is seen as centred in the management and psychology of schooling. This view is more progressive than the former one quoted. Finally, a third representative view of educational psychology emphasizes it primarily as a research discipline, not definitively distinguished from psychology itself.

Because the practitioners of educational psychology cannot agree upon a core professional identity, role ambiguity exists when role definitions and/or performance expectations are unclear (Huebner, 1993). Such confusion is understandably a source of stress for individual educational psychologists as they strive to clarify or change the expectations of the recipients and supervisors of their services (ibid).

Basson (1988) outlined potential sources of stress for educational psychologists in South Africa. Although dated, the issues raised in this paper have relevance to educational psychologists presently. The issues raised included the organization of the school psychological services along racially segregated line; the itinerant nature of the work thus making the possibility of follow-up problematic and inconsistent; and more recently the Department of Education, due to insufficient funds, dismissing the majority of educational psychologists.

These issues have impacted on the identity of the educational psychologist and have become potential sources of stress within the field. Thus these concerns have implications for training as well.

In particular, the training needs in the field of educational psychology are of concern at a time when the role and function of the middle-level psychologist/mental health worker are being debated (Kriegler, Moller & Schoeman; du Toit, in Donald, 1991).

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One of the turning points in the development of psychology as a profession was the 1949 Boulder Conference in the United States of America which dealt mainly with the training of clinical psychologists. It was recommended that training programmes should be structured to deliver scientific-professional psychologists, through education and training in which research and applications would be important.

The Boulder model is of particular importance as it has strongly influenced training, especially of clinical psychologists, and has gained acceptance in South Africa as it appears from the combination of academic, practical, and research training in the Master's degrees in clinical, counselling, educational, and industrial psychology (Van der Westhuyzen and Plug, 1987).

According to Donald (1991) defining the training needs in educational psychology for a South African society requires a basic shift in perspective from that which has generally prevailed in training institutions to date. This shift involves a fundamental acceptance of the imbalance of services and resources between the privileged and non-privileged sectors of society.

Donald (ibid) goes on to say that two major issues face those who train in the field of educational psychology. The one relates to numbers, were the issue is how to train enough professionals in the area of educational psychology to service the needs of an already under supplied and rapidly growing child and school-going population. The second relates to the content and process of training where the issue is how to adapt curricula in order to train professionals who are equipped to meet the particular social and educational problems of this society.

According to Sharratt (1995) amongst the suggested changes in training are that there should be an emphasis on coping skills, required to manage stress and the demands of the profession.
It appears as if the prospective psychologists are not trained to deal and cope with the well documented stressors arising from the emotional and psychological demands of their profession. Yet there is little literature pertaining to training to prepare psychologists for the emotional demands of their jobs, with specific reference to stress and coping. However, the literature has much to say on burnout and psychologists (Farber, 1983).

The present study hopes to explore the perceived effectiveness of training of educational psychologists at the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg to manage and cope with stress and burnout.

The study also looks at the perceived effectiveness of training to cope with the demands of the profession and the choice of coping mechanisms in stress management.

1.2   Overview of the Study by Chapter

Chapter two elaborates on the theoretical overview of the major areas of interest. Chapter three examines the methodology used in the study, and chapter four focuses on the findings. This is followed by a discussion of the findings in chapter five. Finally recommendations, a critique of the study, and conclusion is offered.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL ISSUES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews some of the background issues behind the concepts of stress, occupational stress, burnout, and coping. Professional training is explored within a South Africa context with specific reference to educational psychologists, leading to a rationale for the study.

2.2 Stress and Models of Stress

The concept of stress is elusive because it is poorly defined. There is no single agreed upon definition in existence (Cox, 1982). Lazarus (1966) argues that the term is most usefully employed to connote a broad area of study but that stress may be qualified by the adjectives psychological, physiological, and sociological. It was the physiological pattern of responses on which Seyle's concept of stress was based (Appley and Trumbull, 1986).

Selye (in Ross and Altmaier 1994) was interested in the response of the body to demands made upon it, and believed that this response was 'non-specific'. He believed that whatever the external or internal demand on the body, the person's response to stress followed a universal pattern, which he termed the General Adaptation Syndrome. However, by the 1960's it had become apparent that the relationship between stressors and human beings was more complex then Seyle had allowed for (O' Neill, 1996).

The second approach referred to as the stimulus-based approach was offered to explain the concept of stress. Historically, this approach which links health and disease to certain conditions in the external environment can be traced back to Hipprocrates, in about the fifth century BC (Sutherland and Cooper, 1990).

It was the belief of the Hippocratic physician that characteristics of health and disease are conditioned by the external environment. The rationale for this approach is that some external force impinges on the organism in a disruptive way (ibid). The identification of potential sources of stress is the central theme of the stimulus-based model of stress.

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These models were regarded as inadequate as they failed to account for the individual differences evident in relation to stress, and the cognitive processes which underpin these differences (Ross and Altmaier, 1994). Richard Lazarus described a third view, the transactional or interactional approach, a dynamic model, which views stress as the reflection of a 'lack of fit' between the person and the environment (Lazarus and Launier, 1978).

The response and stimulus based models of stress were considered to narrow for the focus of this study, whereas the transactional view is considered to be more relevant to the study and will be further explored.

2.3 Person -Environment Transaction Model

This model reflects the dynamic nature of ongoing transactions between individuals and their environments, and states that environments can influence people and that people can influence environments. Thus, according to this model, any particular person-environment encounter has implications for both the person and the environment (Ross and Altmaier, 1994).

The interactive model of stress (Figure 1) provides a basis for the person-environment fit approach to the understanding of stress at work (French, Cooper, in Sutherland and Cooper, 1990). Fit is assessed in terms of the desired and actual levels of various job conditions. The main criticism of this approach is that it infers some static situation, whereas in reality response to stress and potential stressor situations are dynamic processes (Sutherland and Cooper, 1990).

Stressor   Appraisal   Reaction

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┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐         ┌──────────┐
│ Stressor │───────▶│ Primary  │────────▶│ Stress   │
│          │        │ Appraisal│         │ Reaction │
└──────────┘        └──────────┘         └──────────┘
      │                  ┌──────────┐         ┌──────────┐
      │                  │ Secondary│────────▶│ Coping   │
      │                  │ Appraisal│         │ Response │
      │                  └──────────┘         └──────────┘
      └──────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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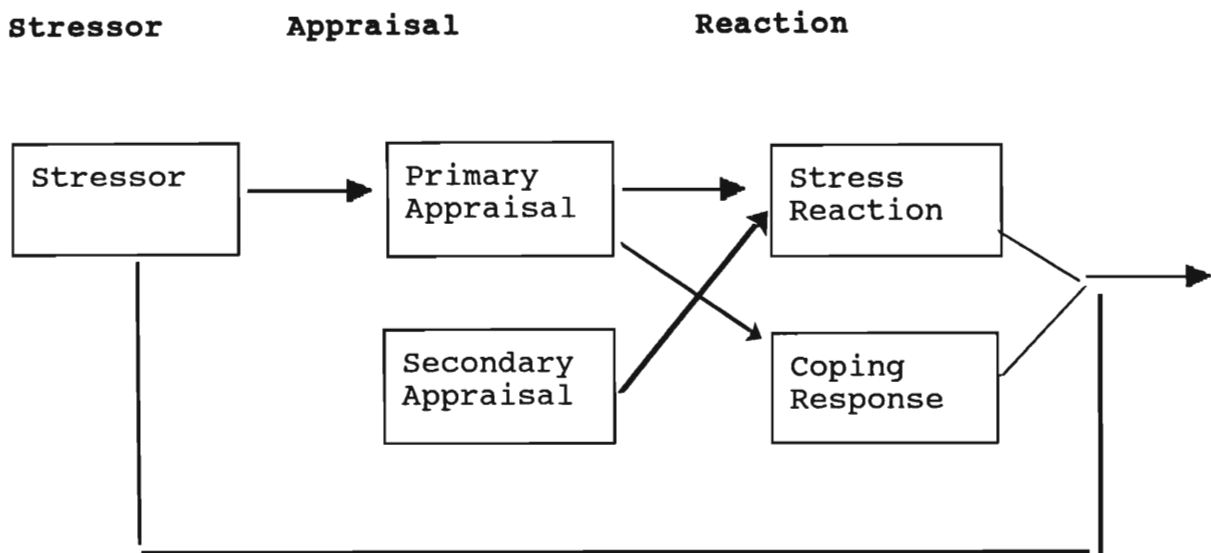
Figure 1 : Interactional Model of Stress and Coping (Ross and Altmaier, 1994, p 6)

Lazarus' model (Figure 1), in Lazarus and Launier (1978) begins when the person evaluates a particular event, situation, or demand. This evaluation, termed "primary appraisal", is concerned with whether negative outcomes can occur in the encounter (p 22). An appraisal of harm means that damage has already occurred, while an appraisal of threat refers to harm that will likely happen in the future.

According to Lazarus (in Aldwin 1994) the perception of stress, or its appraisal, depends upon the extent of the environmental demand and the amount of resources that an individual has to cope with the demand. Lazarus and Folkman (in Aldwin 1994), identified five types of appraisal harm, threat, loss, challenge, or benign. The other dimension of appraisal that is important is its severity, which may in part be related to what Lazarus and Folkman (in Aldwin, 1994, p 25) termed "secondary appraisal".

Secondary appraisal follows primary appraisal, and is the individual's attempt to define what coping options are available for dealing with harm, threat, or challenge. These options might be internal or external, and might be resources or responses (Ross and Altmaier, 1994).

The model is interactional or transactional in that the available coping resources have a strong influence on the future appraisal of the event or situation as stressful (ibid).

According to Ross and Altmaier (ibid) the model allows us to understand stress as the combination of personal issues and concerns, which change over time, as well as the resources and responses that a person can call upon in time of stress, which can also change over time. These responses in turn affect the initial situation or stressor, and may cause us to appraise it, or think about it differently. Thus, the stress response is truly a transactional one, where the balance of demands and resources defines stress : if the demands are greater than the resources, then stress occurs (ibid). The severity of a problem is thought to be the function of the (mis) match between environmental and individual resources (Aldwin, 1994).

According to Schmitz (in Adendorff 1997) stress literature supports a link between workplace conditions and physical and mental health. The negative impact this has had upon the individual, the home, the family, and the workplace has resulted in a surge of public and professional interest in the concept of occupational stress over the last two decades (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993).

2.4   Occupational Stress

According to Basson (1988) the specific concept of occupational stress was explored by Kahn and his workers in 1964 who drew attention to aspects of role functioning and personality factors in the stress response of factory workers in the United States of America.

Research into occupational stress, as in all areas of stress, is complicated by the use of a variety of different approaches (Adendorff, 1997). Ross and Altmaier (1994) define occupational stress as the interaction of work conditions with characteristics of the worker such that the demands of work exceed the ability to cope with them. This definition fits the person-environment context and allows for the examination of the joint contribution of worker characteristics, job conditions and their interactions with occupational stress.

Basson (1988) in his paper, *Potential Sources of Work Related Stress for the Educational Psychologist in the Republic of South Africa*, drawing on the models of Cooper and Marshall (1976) and Moracco and McFadden (1982), constructed a model for discussion of potential sources of work-related stress for educational psychologists in South Africa (refer to Figure 2).

In terms of this model the actual stress reaction is a function of the cognitive appraisal mechanism used by the individual to assess threat or self-harm. This appraisal mechanism is in turn influenced by mediating variables, including personality factors, physiological, situational and sociological factors (Basson, 1988). The potential sources of stress are seen as being either work-related, home-related or related to broader societal issues.

Basson (ibid) discusses several different issues that could pertain to the high level of stress among educational psychologists, namely :

a) school psychological services were initially organized along racially segregated lines. This meant that psychologists largely dealt with one population group only, with little or no knowledge and contact with other groups and systems.

Since then the various education departments have collapsed into one national education system, and, due to the lack of funds, psychologists have in the interim been dismissed. Those that were not dismissed by the department have left to open private practices with very few left to handle the caseload of the department.

b) since school psychological services are auxiliary departments of the Department of Education, school psychologists were subject to organizational and administrative control of educational administrators.

c) prior to 1988, school psychologists were not required to register with the South African Medical and Dental Council (SAMDC). This could have had the effect of enforcing the perception that educational psychology is inferior in status to clinical and counselling psychology.

d)   since school psychological services were organised along racially segregated lines, this resulted in significant and obvious inequalities in the type of psychological services offered to the different schools. This was further impacted on by the ratio of pupils to psychologists in the different schools, with black schools having fewer psychologists.

e)   the itinerant nature of the work further contributed to the stress experienced by the school psychologists. This involved travelling for long distances and also made follow-up difficult.

f)   most of the services function primarily as psychometric services that rely heavily on testing rather than more advanced psychological assessment techniques. Most of the types of services offered have not progressed beyond this level of service delivery.
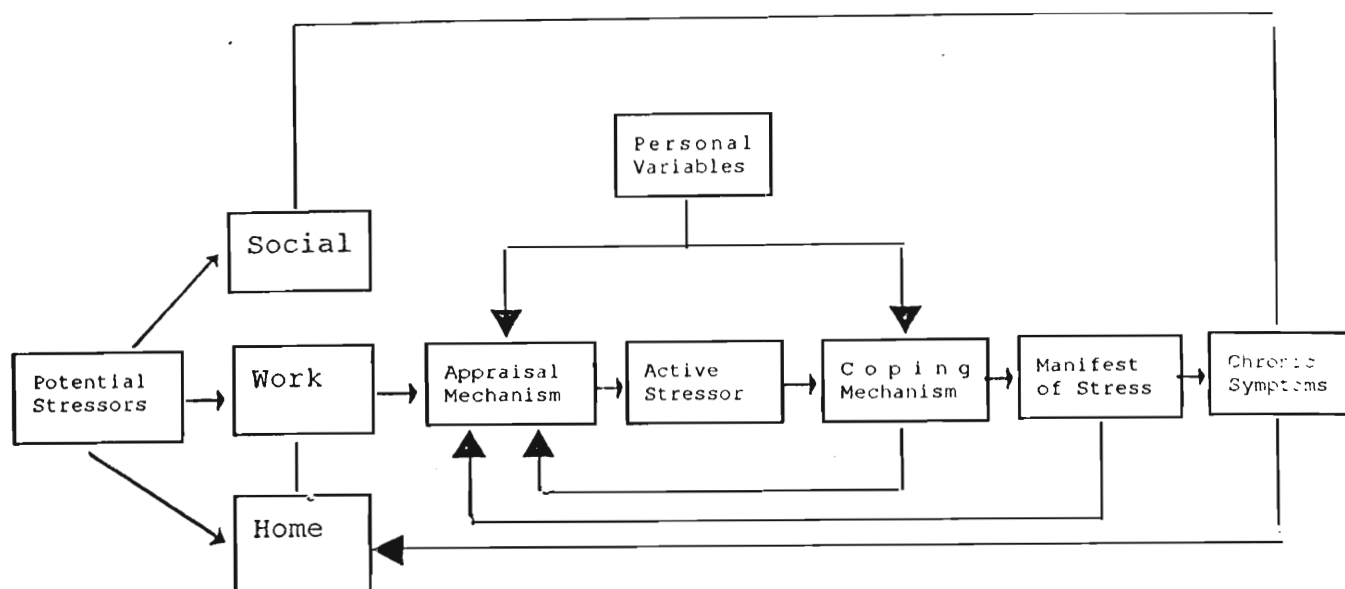
Figure 2 : Potential sources of stress for the educational psychologist (Moracca and McFadden, 1982) (Basson, 1988, p 205)

Basson (ibid) went on to discuss the specific aspects of the work setting that could contribute to stress among educational psychologists (Figure 3). The sections discussed were as follows :

a)   Factors intrinsic to the job

1)   itinerant nature of the job - psychologists have to go to areas unknown to them and stay away from their families for periods of time.

2)   lack of facilities available to learners, especially those requiring special education needs. Psychologists are unable to find adequate placements, which then leave them with a sense of inadequacy and incompetence in the way that their job is done.

3)   lack of adequate individual psychological assessment techniques. A substantial number of these techniques are normed on the middle class white population and therefore bears little or no relevance to other population groups (ibid).

4)   the stress associated with working with clients who themselves come from poor socio-economic settings with limited financial resources.

5)   having to work with reluctant school teachers, and students who view educational psychologists within a school setting with suspicion.

6)   stresses associated with working in dangerous environments and rural areas.

b)   Role in the Organization

One of the primary sources of potential stress for the educational psychologist is that of role definition as either an educationalist or psychologist (ibid).

Watmough (in Basson 1988) points out that educational psychologists work primarily in multi-disciplinary settings. As a result he/she may experience role confusion resulting from unclear role descriptions. This could then result in problems of role boundaries with other professionals. Role-conflict, role overload and role ambiguity (ibid) are other frequently mentioned issues, which have been previously discussed.

c)   Professional and Career - Related Issues

As previously discussed, the category of educational psychologist was the last to be recognised for registration purposes with the SAMDC. This served to enhance a sense of low professional self-esteem in relation to other spheres of psychology, namely clinical and counselling (Basson, 1988).

d)   Organizational Structure and Climate

Educational psychologists who are members of educational auxiliary services are subject to constraints of working in organizations that perceive them as addenda to the main thrust of the organization (ibid).

In relation to broader issues such as curriculum development and planning, educational psychologists feel as if they have little or no say, and often their professional decisions are questioned by less qualified, but more senior personnel.

Potential Sources of Work-Related Stress
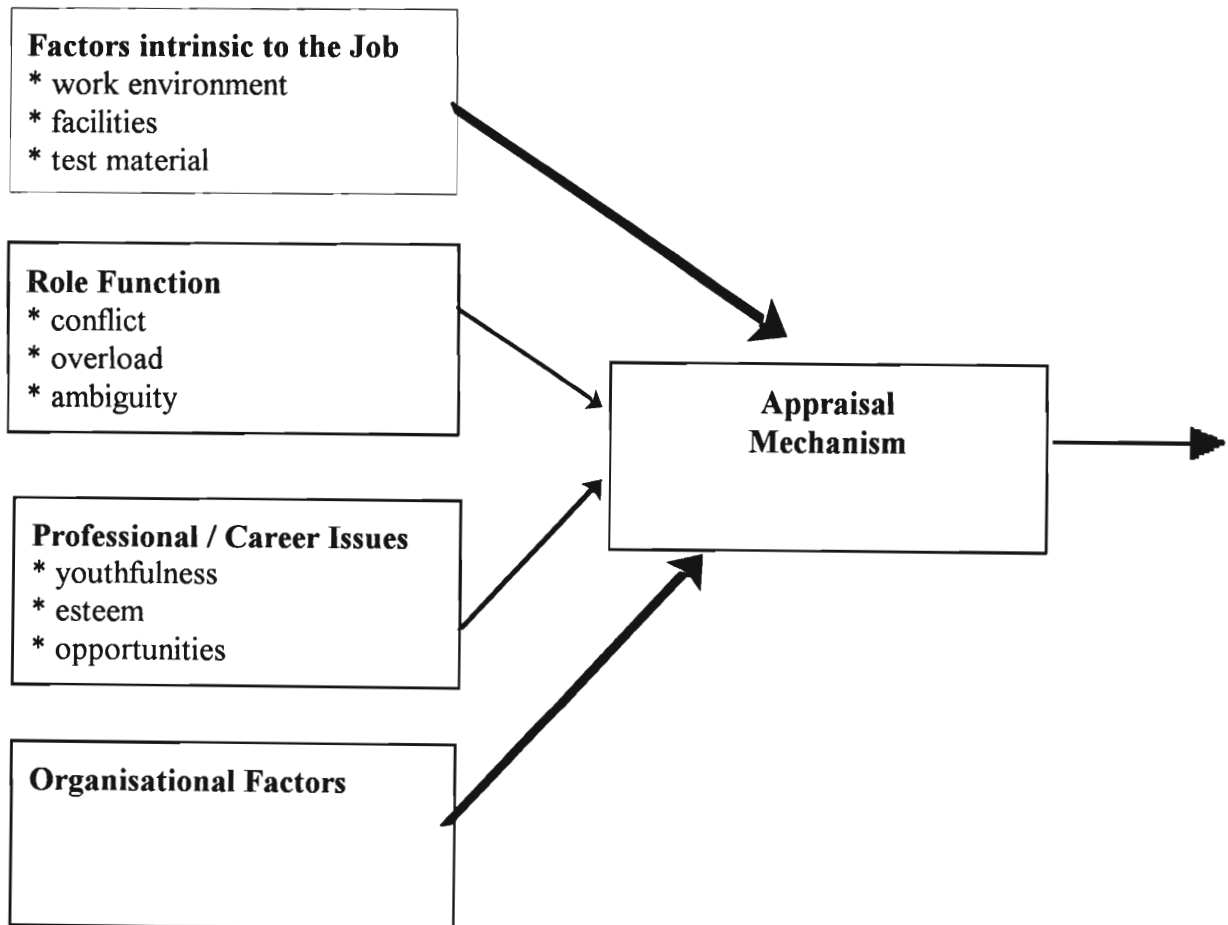
__Figure 3 : Potential sources of work-related stress for educational psychologists. (Basson,__ *__1988, pg 206)__*

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Thus it appears that there are significant sources of stress present in the educational psychologists working environment. This highlights the interactive model of stress which defines occupational stress in terms of a poor- environment fit.

2.5 Burnout

Staff members in human service institutions spend a great deal of time in intense interaction with other people. Stress can arise from this intense involvement, and chronic stress can lead to burnout (Caton, Grossnickle, Cope, Long and Mitchell, 1988).

Farber (1983) points out that while the concepts of 'stress' and 'burnout' are often equated in literature, they are not the same. He states that burnout is often the result of unmediated stress, that is, having no 'buffer' or support system. Brill (in Black 1991) notes that stress can lead to burnout, but not all individuals who are stressed 'burnout'. Burnout is therefore the final step in the progression of unsuccessful attempts at coping with a number of stressful conditions.

2.5.1 The Concept of Burnout

The term burnout was first used by Freudenberger (1974) to describe the physical and emotional symptoms that he observed in residential child care workers. Maslach and Jackson's (1981a) research indicated that individuals in a number of helping professions were withdrawing from work because of excessive, accumulated stress and dissatisfaction.

Maslach and Jackson (1981b) felt that individuals involved in prolonged, intensive, and constant interaction with people in an emotionally charged atmosphere are susceptible to the burnout syndrome. They found that the burnout syndrome has three separate and distinct aspects :
(a) emotional exhaustion, (b) negative attitudes towards clients (depersonalization), and (c) loss of feeling of accomplishment on the job (Caton et al., 1988).

Recent efforts have been made toward understanding how various correlates are associated with each of the three dimensions (Burke and Richardsen,1993; Cordes and Dougherty,1993; Shirom in Lee and Ashforth, 1996). The conservation of resources theory of stress (Hobnoll, 1989; Hobnoll and Freedy, 1993) suggests a framework for understanding how such correlates are

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related to burnout (Lee and Ashforth, 1996).The theory suggests that burnout occurs when certain valued resources are lost, are inadequate to meet demands, or do not yield the anticipated returns. The major demands of work include role ambiguity, role conflict, stressful events, heavy workload, and pressure.

The major resources include social support from various sources: job enhancement opportunities, such as control, participation in decision-making, autonomy, and reinforcement contingencies (Burke and Richardsen, 1993; Cordes and Dougherty, 1993).

The theory also states that certain behavioural coping and attitudinal outcomes are likely to occur as a result of resource loss and burnout (Lee and Ashforth, 1996). The major outcomes include behavioural coping responses, turnover intentions, and erosion of organizational commitment, job involvement, and job satisfaction (Burke and Richardsen, 1993; Kahill, 1988).

Using the conservation of resources framework, Leiter and Maslach (1988) suggest that work demands and resources are potential sources of stress in the stress-strain-coping-evaluation process. They go on further to comment that emotional exhaustion as a form of strain is directly affected by these correlates, whereas depersonalisation as a form of defensive coping, and personal accomplishment as a form of self-evaluation are indirectly affected through emotional exhaustion.

2.5.2   Impact of Burnout on Psychotherapists

Burnout can lead to a deterioration in the quality of services provided by the helping profession. Psychotherapists have been neglected in studies of work-related problems and attitudes. Sarason in Farber 1983) has attributed this historical neglect to three major factors :

- society's positive judgement about such work;
- the individual's professional, uncritical acceptance of society's view upon entering the profession; and
- the resistance of professional organizations to self-scrutiny.

It has been related to high turnover, and reduced productivity in a variety of settings including schools, mental health centres, hospitals, and residential treatment areas (Huebner, 1993).

According to Farber (1983) burnout professionals may become cynical towards clients; are frequently absent or late for work; become noticeably less idealistic and more rigid; their performance at work deteriorates markedly; and they may fantasize or actually plan on leaving the profession.

According to Huebner (1993) numerous studies have demonstrated that burnout is associated with impaired physical health and emotional health (e.g. depression). In addition burnout reflects interpersonally on their competence as technicians and on their competence as people (Pines and Aronson, 1988). The use of alcohol and drugs have also been linked to burnout (Maslach & Jackson in Huebner, 1993). For educational psychologists, the consequences to clients may be particularly extensive as they work with numerous 'clients' including children, school personnel, and members of other community agencies such as mental health personnel (Huebner, 1993).

Burnout researchers have proposed interactional models to account for the development of burnout (Maslach and Jackson, 1981b), which can be related back to the discussion on the interactive model of stress and coping, covered earlier in this chapter.

In these models, individual differences in burnout reactions emerge as a function of the complex interplay of environmental stressors (eg. occupational stress and events) and individual difference variables (eg. personality characteristics). Cherniss (1980a, 1980b) examined the interaction of individual helper's expectations and goals (their ideal notions of the helping relationship), the institutional constraints of working in and for large bureaucracies, and the public's perception of the nature of such work (the 'professional mystique'). The professional mystique involves the public's belief that professionals experience a high level of job autonomy and job satisfaction, are highly trained and competent, work with responsive clients, and are generally compassionate and caring (Farber, 1983). Cherniss (1980a) argues that this mystique is initially accepted by incoming professionals and serves to reinforce their unrealistically high expectations. However, the mystique clashes with the reality of bureaucratic constraints and work-related stresses, ultimately

culminating in disillusionment and burnout (Farber, 1983).

According to one formulation (Maslach, 1982), burnout can originate from three possible antecedents :

a) organizational factors

b) interpersonal factors (eg. quality of peer and supervisory interactions);

c) interpersonal factors (eg. personality traits, competencies).

a) Organizational Factors/ Work Related Factors

Organizational factors have received the most amount of research attention to date. Frequently mentioned issues are :

Role ambiguity which exists when role definitions/ and or performance expectations are unclear. Role ambiguity remains a problem for psychologists as the profession itself continues to struggle to resolve identity issues (Last and Silberman in Huebner, 1993).

Role conflict has also been linked to burnout and refers to the experience of coping with inconsistent role expectations or service demands. Role overload refers to situations in which helping professionals become over extended in terms of job responsibilities.

b) Interpersonal Factors

The quality of support systems available to the helping profession has been correlated with burnout (Huebner, 1993). For school psychologists important sources of support include supervisors and peers. The supervisor can be a major source of stress or a significant figure in the prevention and management of burnout (ibid). Supervisors who respond effectively to supervisee's needs, increase their feelings of confidence, competence, and control, whereas supervisors who respond ineffectively may increase negative feelings.

A low degree of social support also contributes significantly to burnout (Maslach and Jackson, 1981b). Peers can offer technical help, comfort, insight, comparison, rewards, and escape.

c)   Intrapersonal Factors

Inadequate preparation for the job is a crucial intrapersonal variable in the burnout process (Huebner, 1993). Like other professionals, school psychologists who have not received adequate training to fulfil their various roles and functions, are more prone to burnout (ibid).

A further possible contributory factor that has been linked to burnout is personality. Huebner and Mills (in Sandoval 1993) examined the relationship between burnout and selected personality characteristics and role expectations in a sample of South Carolina school psychology practitioners. Using multiple regression they predicted Maslach's burnout dimensions of depersonalisation and personal accomplishment from personality factors measured by the NEO-Five Factor Inventory, demographic factors, and from role-satisfaction measures (Sandoval, 1993). The resulting equations suggested that the personality factors are equally or more able to explain burnout variance than the demographic factors, and contributed uniquely to prediction. School psychologists experiencing burnout tended to be high in competitiveness and egocentricity, low in conscientiousness and extraversion, to be frustrated with professional roles, wishing to spend more time in consultation and counselling, and to have high work loads (ibid).

The concept of personality and burnout is not the primary focus of this study, but was included because of its relevance to the transactional model of stress which reflects the dynamic nature of ongoing transactions between individuals and their environments.

Many theorists have also considered characteristics of people who seem to cope effectively with a range of difficult situations in an effort to identify personality traits linked with successful coping (Ross and Altmaier, 1994). Environmental resources and coping as an interaction was also reviewed.

The following section reviews the concept of coping and coping strategies.

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3. Coping

The study of coping has its roots in the recognition that there are individual differences in reactions to stress ,i.e that similar stressors may have varying effects on different people (Aldwin, 1994).

According to Pines and Aronson (1988) coping refers to efforts to master conditions of harm or threat, or challenge when an automatic response is not readily available. Richard Lazarus (in Pines and Aronson 1988) suggested two general types of coping : (1) direct action, in which the person tries to master the stressful transaction with the environment, and (2) palliation, in which the person attempts to reduce the disturbances when unable to manage the environment or when action is too costly for the individual. Direct coping, or direct action, is a strategy applied externally to the environmental source of stress, and indirect coping is a strategy applied internally to one's behaviour and emotions.

In addition, Pines and Aronson (1988) found an inactive/active dimension. Active ('approach') coping strategy involves confronting or attempting to change the source of stress or oneself, while inactive ('avoidance' or 'withdrawal') coping strategy involves avoidance or denial of the stress by cognitive or physical means.

A personality trait linked with successful coping is that of a sense of coherence, proposed by Antonvsky (in Ross and Altmaier 1994) as a way of seeing the world that emphasizes it as predictable and comprehensible. According to Ross and Altmaier (1994) three themes are included in the concept of coherence, namely :

a)   comprehensibility - where people view their life and experiences as ordered, structured and predictable.

b)   manageability - people believe they have resources at their disposal that are adequate to meet the demands placed upon them, and finally

c)   meaningfulness - the way in which people believe life and experiences make sense to them,

and also that many of life's problems and challenges are worth their investment of time and energy.

Coping with stressors and difficulties can be eased by having resources available in the environment. One such resource is the availability of social support (Ross and Altmaier, 1994). It is clear that having supportive friends and family plays a large role in determining how well people adapt and adjust (ibid).

The role that social support plays in assisting individuals to deal with stressors has been termed the buffering effect: namely, that stressors will have negative effects on people who have little social support, but less negative effects on individuals with stronger systems of support in their environment (Cohen and Wills, 1985).

3.1 Social Support :
Three conceptualisations of social support exist. Each will be discussed below.

3.2 Perceived Social Support :
This has been referred to as the extent to which an individual believes others value, care for, and desire to aid him or her (Sarason, Shearin and Sarason, in Zeidner and Endler, 1996). Perceived social support therefore reflects a belief about the nature of social relationships, and in this sense might be seen as an attitude, with the object of this attitude being others in the person's social network.

Perceived social support may influence coping through the appraisal of personal characteristics (Pierce, Sarason and Sarason, in Zeidner and Endler, 1996). Individuals also develop more effective and realistic coping strategies for dealing with particular situations (Zeider and Endler,1996).

Perceived social support may also enable individuals to confront challenges more effectively because they believe others will help them if the challenge exceeds their personal resources (ibid). However those individuals low in perceived social support may avoid asking others for assistance

because they fear aid will not be forthcoming.

The creation of support groups is a frequently recommended interpersonal strategy which serve as buffers for the individual, helping maintain the psychological and physical well-being of the individual over time (Huebner, 1993).

3.3 Supportive Relationships :

Supportive relationships are those dyadic social bonds from which individuals are able to derive resources that may aid in coping (Pierce et al., in Zeidner and Endler, 1996). Supportive relationships may influence coping by providing assistance in coping with a stressful event once it has occurred, or rendering individuals less vulnerable to experiencing specific life events.

3.4 Supportive Networks :

Supportive networks are a combination of an individuals supportive relationships.

Supervision is considered an important component in the burnout prevention and management process (Huebner, 1993). Both psychologists and supervisors need to be aware of burnout and its manifestations. Psychologists tend to forget to provide care for themselves and their colleagues.

"Professionals can be their own worst enemies. Trained to be independent, creative, assertive, competitive, and hard driving, they do not readily acknowledge that they are in trouble or need assistance. More often their combination of socialization and personality characteristics leads them to struggle on with a problem long after many other people would have at least sought consultation from family members or friends. Solitary battles are the most destructive for anyone because of the ease with which one loses perspective"

(Kilburg in Huebner, 1993, pg 45)

Supervisors are particularly well positioned to notice signs of burnout among their supervisees and to take appropriate action. When the manifestations of burnout are not so serious as to require outside referrals, clinical supervisors must be prepared to provide appropriate supervisory services

to facilitate appropriate actions (Huebner, 1993).

Organizational change components are also often needed in comprehensive stress management plans (ibid). To deal effectively with stress as it is experienced by employees, the ways in which the work environment might be contributing to the problem needs to be considered (Ross and Altmaier, 1994). A number of different methods have been suggested to alter the workplace in order to help individuals deal with stress.

Hubener (1993) cites various examples of organizational goals relevant to school psychologists. These might include negotiating a revised job description for staff psychologists, changing the administrative position of a school psychology department from under special education to regular education, changing the referral system, modifying systems of processing paperwork, securing additional fiscal resources through grant writing, and implementing formal, systematic decision-making procedures to reduce conflict in multi-disciplinary teams.

It is clear that coping is a complex combination of things that people can do to deal with stress. The process of coping can also be viewed from Lazarus transactional model. According to Lazarus (in Ross and Altmaier 1994) coping consists of all of the cognitive and behavioural efforts that a person makes to manage the demands of a stressor. These efforts can be focussed on the problem, such as what information might be sought to change the problem or behaviour in the environment. These efforts are also influenced by one's feelings about the problem, as one attempts to cope by trying to regulate the emotional distress caused by the situation.

The concept of stress, where the process of coping is linked to the ongoing appraisal of the stressor.

Burnout prevention and intervention plans often will necessitate the formulation of complex, multifaceted approaches. In order to accomplish such a task, it is likely that greater attention needs to be devoted to the topic of burnout management among trainers involved in the professional training of psychologists at the pre-service and in-service levels (Huebner, 1993).

The following section reviews the professional training of educational psychologists in South Africa.

4. Professional Training of Educational Psychologists in South Africa

School psychology, which has its developmental roots in the late 1800's, is presently one of the most vital and active disciplines in contemporary psychology (Reynolds et al, 1984). Since its inception, school psychology's major goals have been to provide direct and indirect psychological services to children and youth to improve their mental health and educational development (ibid).

Defining educational psychology is problematic since there exists no inclusive definition that everyone agrees upon. In addition, the areas to which each can be applied are both diverse and constantly evolving (Weinstein, in De Jong, 1996). This state of affairs then results in problems for the graduate preparation of future educational psychologists. Graduates often seek academic positions but increasing numbers are looking for employment - business, industry, government, professional schools, and private consulting firms are just some of the alternative career options being pursued (ibid).

According to Fox (1994) there is a lack of clarity and consistency in how we define ourselves. The American Psychological Association (APA) standards for providers of psychological services contain definitions for clinical, counselling, school, and industrial psychology but no generic definition of the profession that encompasses all of the applied areas (APA, 1987a). Similarly, their accreditation provides separate criteria for evaluating specialities such as clinical, counselling, and school psychology but no generic criteria for judging professional training programs as a whole (APA Committee on Accreditation, in APA, 1987b).

This incredible diversity makes it difficult to define the 'typical' educational psychologist. However, this lack of apparent unity is also a strength of the profession since it creates a number of challenging career options with new ones constantly evolving.

In this spirit, the APA (Division of Educational Psychology) Committee on the Future of Educational Psychology offered the following definition :

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"...the branch of psychology that is concerned with the development, evaluation and application of a) theories and principles of human learning, teaching, and instruction, and b) theory-derived educational material, programs, strategies, and techniques that can enhance life-long educational activities and processes"

(Wittrock & Farley, 1989, p 38).

This definition then implies or casts the field of educational psychology as an 'applications-only field'. Identifying with this perspective removes educational psychologists from a position of potential influence in regard to policy and management in education (Sharratt, 1995).

Educational psychologists within school settings thus become frustrated because they are not consulted on issues pertaining to the everyday running of the school. They are seen as not having a say on the management advisory teams with the result that psychologists feel alienated by not being able to contribute to the policy of the school and its influence on the students. The sense of not being able to adequately contribute to the work environment, could then lead to stress and ultimately burnout.

Sharratt (ibid) in her article *"Is Educational Psychology Alive and Well in South Africa"*, believes that most postgraduate programmes in South African universities, in general, tend to support an idea of educational psychology in practice, as an applications-only field.

Psychological training programmes have also often fostered cultural encapsulation. This term refers to : (a) the substitution of model stereotypes for the real world; (b) the disregarding of cultural variations in dogmatic adherence to some universal notion of truth; and (c) the use of a technique-oriented definition of the counselling process (Sue and Sue, in Kriegler,1993).

There exists a discrepancy between these sectors in that the privileged sectors of society have resources and services comparable to those of first world countries, whereas the needs of the non-privileged majority are minimally provided for in terms of both services and resources.

The issue of numbers was further compounded by the fact that not only was there an overall shortage of educational psychologists, but there existed a disproportion of educational psychologists serving the different departments (Basson, 1988). Since then the various education departments have collapsed into one national education system. However due to the department having insufficient funds, they have in the interim dismissed the majority of their psychologists. Those that were not dismissed by the department have left to open private practices.

The central issue of this controversy is then the training requirements of educational psychologists. Donald (1991) sees the need to return to the training and to question a registration requirement where educational psychologists have to undergo six to seven years of training. This training requirement is lengthy and within a South African context is less economically accessible.

The cost of such a training both to individual students and the national economy is excessively high, and economic priorities in South Africa are such that this training will necessarily be limited to a select few (ibid).

According to Kriegler (1993) many potential candidates lack financial resources, for example, women who are single parents. Also, psychology compares poorly with more popular vocational choices like social work, where training is problem based from the first year and linked to guaranteed internship placement and future employment prospects. To address a similar problem of unemployment and under-utilization of psychologists in Cuba and in Mexico, an agreement was reached between the department of health and the national university (ibid). The university trains students, emphasizing community psychology, and in turn students are guaranteed placement for practical training and an eventual permanent position in a health care centre (ibid).

Educational psychology interns are becoming increasingly frustrated as when they complete their first year of their masters studies, many are then expected to serve out the internship year without any pay. This imbalance or discrepancy with regard to the internship could then serve to further propagate the believe that educational psychology is a less important discipline of the profession of psychology.

Kriegler (ibid) believes that a much larger body of professional workers should be trained to offer basic mental health care in schools and health and community contexts. Psychologists should be trained to be able to work in multidisciplinary teams in urban settings, but should also be able to work independently of the customary network of medical and paramedical professionals, to whom anything 'non-psychological' is referred (ibid).

The next issue raised by Kriegler (ibid) pertains to the acquirement of a bachelors degree and its use. Thousands of students attain a bachelors degree in psychology, yet cannot perform any useful mental health role. This is a costly and tragic waste (ibid). Problem-solving and programme design should feature from first year of training level (ibid). Donald (1991) suggests the notion of a mental health worker whose skills are not simply a truncated version of the professional psychologist's, but specifically focussed on community work.

Kriegler (1993) strongly advocates for the creation of specialized schools of psychology attached to certain universities, where the focus would be on producing graduates with the understanding of the biopsychosocial dimensions of human behaviour. Specialization should come later. This idea might be implemented in some universities to some degree next year with the reappraisal of the bachelors degrees.

According to Kriegler (ibid) the next pertinent issue is the lack of emphasis given to cultural issues. With the diversity of ethnic groupings present in South Africa, there exists a dire need for adequate exposure to culturally different clients. Kriegler (ibid) states that the traditional university-cum-clinic context cannot provide sufficient opportunities to work with culturally different clients or to launch community based, multidisciplinary projects. Kriegler (ibid) suggests a cross-cultural training institute or unit associated with a university or hospital, which must be based in and function in close consultation with particular target communities.

It should never be assumed that the mere acquisition of cultural knowledge and academic teaching skills are enough to train effective cross-cultural helpers (Pedersen, in Kriegler,1993). The curriculum must focus on immediate social problems and needs, each course containing a consciousness-raising component, an affective component, a knowledge component, and a skills

component (Kriegler,1993). Indigenous languages should feature prominently in training courses.

Aspects that Kriegler (ibid) also sees as important is that trainers will have to market the new professional roles envisaged for psychologists in the private and public sectors where they want their graduates to be employed. This should include informing and changing the attitudes of members of primary health care teams, clergy, and social workers. Marketing new professional roles and job creation for graduates should be seen as an integral part of the training responsibility (ibid).

An issue that Donald (1991) believes that requires attention is that there is a need to train educational psychologists to the present level of specification in order to deal effectively with more complex and specialized problems at individual, family, group and institutional levels. Mental health workers could be equipped to engage with a wide range of problems in schools and communities, at a primary and preventative level of intervention (ibid).

South Africa experiences a multitude of social and educational needs. According to Donald (ibid) three broad areas that have particular relevance to educational psychology and require specific attention, are as follows :

a)   Special Educational Needs - The generally accepted model of service delivery where special educational needs are concerned, is that problems identified by parents, teachers, or others are referred on an individual basis to educational psychologists for assessment.

Following this, recommendations are made for special educational placement or the provision of special educational services within the mainstream. In light of the severe shortage of educational psychologists (1:12000 of school-going population) as well as special educational facilities and services, it becomes clear that this model might not be a very viable option (ibid).

Donald (ibid) goes on to suggest indirect service delivery for special educational needs. Here psychologists would be trained to work as consultants in relation to teachers, parents or others who have daily contact with children who have special disabilities (Sharratt,1995).

The advantages of using the indirect service delivery approach are that fewer psychologists will be needed to reach a wider range of children with special educational needs than in the referral system; secondly the consultees would benefit in their general teaching skills, as well as in their ability and competence to solve a wide range of special educational problems in the classroom (Donald, 1991).

b)   Underachievement in Black Education - where this issue is concerned, educational psychologists have conventionally operated within a model of child deficit (ibid). Traditionally interventions have focused on identifying why a child is underachieving. This method of intervention is no longer sufficient. According to Donald (ibid) what is needed is a paradigmatic shift to perceiving this problem in the first instance as fundamentally and systemically related, and secondly a radical shift in both perception and practice from a child deficit to a system deficit model.

c)   Problems in Relation to Family Breakdown and Parenting - Donald (ibid) advocates for (1) the training of mental health workers who could operate across psychological, educational, social work and medical boundaries, and (2) the adoption of a community psychology model, incorporating traditional healing modes of intervention.

A conflict commonly experienced in educational psychology practice is that of parents who have consciously rejected the traditional belief system with the associated rites and ceremonies that place their children under the protection of the ancestral spirits. If their children begin to manifest developmental or educational difficulties many such parents are plagued by feelings of vulnerability, doubt and guilt which their adopted belief system does not allow them to acknowledge (ibid).

Such conflicts have been found not only to cripple decision-making but also to be decisive within family units (Donald & Hlongwane, in Donald, 1991). Clearly socio-political change is necessary to solve these types of issues. One such way would be to accept that no single helping profession can on its own be effective (Donald, 1991). What would be helpful would be a relaxation of professional and bureaucratic boundaries on the part of all professions involved in this area

(psychology, education, social work and medicine). The result of such multidisciplinary integration and skill sharing could be more effective, economical and accessible problem solving within the communities concerned. The training of a mental health worker across these boundaries is a good example (ibid).

Kriegler (1993) sees the need for psychology to re-generate itself through more appropriate training next generation, possibly through re-training and re-service training. Greater numbers of effective and cross-culturally competent helpers must be trained, and more time and cost-effective training models must be devised.

Donald (1991) believes that the ultimate challenge then becomes to examine both degree structures as well as the content and process of training of educational psychologists. According to Sharratt (1995) no study has compared postgraduate programmes in South Africa. Attempts to find studies comparing post-graduate programmes after 1995, by the author, proved unsuccessful. It was thus necessary for the author to look to foreign universities for their evaluations of their professional training in educational psychology, to determine whether or not links exist between their findings, and concerns raised by educational psychologists trained at the University of Natal. Literature from foreign universities reveal one such evaluation carried out at the University of Birmingham on their Professional Training in Educational Psychology. The study was carried out by a trainee in 1985 as part of her dissertation.

The investigation was carried out among practising educational psychologists who had been trained on the Birmingham Course during the previous six years. They were asked to comment on two issues, namely which areas of work they found to be most important when beginning their first local authority posts; and how well prepared they considered themselves to be on completing their training course to meet the professional demands of their new posts. It was hoped to produce an evaluation from practising psychologists of the perceived effectiveness of their own professional training (Faulkner, 1990).

The survey was carried out in the form of a questionnaire that was administered to 62 educational psychologists. Faulkner (ibid) identified 40 items concerned with five areas of educational psychology practice :

* Professional Competence, or the ability to establish and maintain effective and productive relationships as part of the job.

* Practical Skills, or the ability to investigate, appraise, and make appropriate decisions regarding problem situations.

* Special Educational Needs, or the working knowledge of important legislation and government recommendations relating to the special needs of children and young people.

* In-service Training, or the ability to disseminate effectively, both to individuals and groups of other professionals.

* Research Capabilities, or the ability to undertake research of a practical relevance to a local authority.

These five areas represented those identified as important for newly trained psychologists within the aims of the Training Course. The results of the study were as follows :

a) Professional Competence was perceived by psychologists as an area of great importance when starting out their profession.

b) Findings of section 2 (practical skills) tended to support the problem-solving/skills-based approach which is emphasized in the professional training of this Course.

c) Psychologists felt that they were 'inadequately' prepared in this area to meet the professional demands of their new posts.

d) All participants perceived in-service training as an important part of their professional practice, however, they considered themselves to be 'adequately' prepared on leaving the Course to carry out the practical skills of producing hand-outs and using audio-visual material.

e) Participants considered themselves to be less than 'adequately' prepared, especially where personal professional development was concerned.

In the final section of the questionnaire, the psychologists were asked to comment on any significant deficits they perceived in their own training. Many of the suggested deficits were centred around practical issues and the need for more professional practice in specific areas. Other issues mentioned included more knowledge of severe learning difficulties; more practical work etc (ibid).

In July 1984 the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA) attempted to evaluate the various aspects of the training of professional psychologists in South Africa. The Committee of University Principles approached PASA for its comments on a memorandum received from the Professional Board for Psychology. The memorandum addressed two broad issues.

First, the Professional Board indicated that mental health services in South Africa are inadequate, especially in rural areas, and require urgent attention. Second, attention was drawn to problems experienced in the training of psychologists, for example, a shortage of posts for interns, a shortage of senior psychologists in hospitals training intern clinical psychologists, inadequate supervision of some internships by university departments, problems in the financing of internships, and inadequate subsidization of professional training in psychology at the universities (Van der Westhuyzen and Plug, 1987).

Although dated, the document has some bearing on present training programmes. In February 1985 Professor A.T. Moller was requested to investigate and report on these matters (ibid).

Besides the one other study by Ebersohn in 1983, which has only indirect implications for the training of psychologists, there appears to have been no comprehensive investigation of the

training of South Africa psychologists (ibid).

Preliminary discussions indicated that problems are mainly experienced in the following areas : university subsidies, intern training, practical training before the internship, matching the supply of psychologists to the demand, the need for continued training (after registration as a psychologist), the need for specialist training, and the selection of students for professional training (ibid).

These issues were referred to the five institutes of PASA (the Institutes for Academic and Research Psychology, Educational Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Counselling Psychology and Industrial Psychology).

Thereafter two questionnaires were constructed. One of these was intended for South African universities, and the other for institutions that train psychology interns.

It was found that although formal teaching was divided equally between undergraduate and postgraduate classes, the credits that form the basis for calculating the subsidy that most departments earn is derived mainly from undergraduate teaching.

Training in industrial and educational psychology is almost entirely by means of directed degrees. This is also true of clinical and counselling psychology at master's level, though not yet at honours level (ibid).

Professional training requires special facilities and skills. Most of the departments surveyed reported that they experienced a shortage of specialist staff, especially of lecturers with practical experience, specialized knowledge of certain psychotherapeutic approaches, and research experience. If departments used outside experts in their training programmes, these persons are usually paid from the department's budget (ibid).

Circumstances at various universities differ to such an extent that uniform tuition fees for professional training in psychology does not appear to be a realistic goal (ibid). This point

continues to have some bearing on tuition fees today. However, this point would be more influenced by the government subsidies allocated to each university.

To combat the issue of the lack of expert knowledge, two options were considered. The first was that each department could specialize in only certain theoretical and applied fields, leaving the rest to other institutions. The second option was to establish a non-binding but ordered exchange of specialists between universities (ibid). The responses by university and intern training institutions to questions about the need for continued training of registered psychologists leaves no doubt that such a need is felt by many (ibid).

Consensus was reached on the point that trainees should carry the cost of any training programme. Respondents expressed themselves in favour of a system that would enable registered psychologists to receive specialist training. The reason given was usually that such training is necessary to ensure a high quality of professional services in a field where techniques are changing rapidly (ibid). The preoccupation of training schools has however, been almost exclusively with theoretical material, and traditionally no attention has been given to developing skills for dealing with people or with the stressors experienced by the professionals. More recently, as a result of wide spread information about burnout, there has been a trend to provide practitioners with more concrete skills and practical training. And yet there is still not enough attention given to the stressors the workers could expect and how to deal with them (ibid). Even in modern, more 'enlightened training' manuals in which the professionals are asked to engage in role-taking activities (taking the role of the client as a way of building on empathy), these training exercises are almost never directed towards building empathy for the plight of the professionals who are forever giving and never receiving (ibid).

Thus it can be seen that the concerns expressed back in 1987, are still issues that warrant concern today. Time has come for the implementation of changes with regard to the training of educational psychologists in South Africa if we are to be efficient service providers for a rapidly changing South African context and education system.

Due to the concerns raised by the quality and emphasis of the current educational psychology programmes, it was decided to undertake a qualitative study to determine the perceived effectiveness of the training programme at the University of Natal -Pietermaritzburg. Numerous studies (e.g. Cordes and Dougherty, 1993) have looked at various issues relating and contributing to the burnout syndrome, but none have examined the role of professional training in preparing educational psychologists to deal with their job demands.

The rationale for adopting a study that is qualitative in nature will be elaborated on in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aim of the Study

Research in the area of burnout has mainly focused on personal and organizational variables. Little attention has been given to the impact of professional training on stress management and coping skills. This qualitative study focuses on a specific sample of educational psychologists' perceptions of their training.

Using a sample of 8 educational psychologists, the aim of the study was to qualitatively explore their perceptions of their training as revealed by their responses to the following questions presented in a semi-structured interview:

a) How has your training prepared you to cope, if it has, with the demands of your job ? Please elaborate.

b) Has your training influenced your choice of coping mechanisms utilized in the management of stress related to your job ? Please elaborate.

c) Please elaborate on elements you think should, or should not be included in the training programme to assist psychologists to manage and deal with stress and burnout.

d) How has society's view/perception of psychologists influenced the way in which you manage and deal with stress and burnout ?

3.2. Respondents

The respondents were a non-random sample of 8 educational psychologists who had completed their Masters degree in educational psychology at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The nature of the study is such that it reviews perceived reactions to the professional training received. It was therefore decided to obtain a small convenient sample of 8 educational psychologists, rather than a larger sample number.

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The respondents utilized in the study were contactable, i.e they still reside in the Pietermaritzburg area, and had been through the same degree course. Five of the respondents were male and three were female.

The average number of years of experience was 6.3 years. These 8 case studies were selected from the year 1974 to 1996. Some of the respondents had completed their degrees on a part-time basis, while others did the full-time course.

All of the respondents were willing to answer the questions posed to them.

3.3   Procedure

Subjects were identified from the Department of Educational Psychology's records. Each respondent was then telephonically contacted. The aim of the study was explained and permission was sought to interview them. Each interview was allocated approximately 45 minutes.

Permission was also sought from the respondents to have the interviews audio taped. Confidentiality was assured. Interviews were then scheduled at the convenience of respondents.

Each interview was then transcribed, and the data obtained analyzed.

3.4   Method

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each respondent. The four central questions making up the interview are included in Appendix A. Several open-ended questions were then posed to the respondents to elicit further data. The nature of the open-ended questions were dependent upon the nature of the responses, and for the purpose of clarification.

A semi-structured approach was adopted as the study aimed to explore the four areas mentioned.

In order to grasp the essence of the experience inherent for each individual, the open-ended questions were used as a method of exploring the individual perceptions of stress and burnout, thereby gaining a more holistic sense of the individual meanings and perceptions attached to the concepts.

3.4.1 Demographic Questionnaire

The Demographic Questionnaire (included in Appendix A) comprised items pertaining to the respondents name and address, which were optional, gender, age, marital status, number of years of experience and primary occupational setting.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data was analysized using a phenomenological approach. Previous research in this area has largely been quantitative in nature, seeking correlations between variables of stress and burnout. Little or no attention has been given to the qualitative exploration of these variables.

3.5.1. Rationale

The core of a qualitative analysis lies in the related processes of describing phenomena, classifying them, and seeing how the concepts interconnect (Dey, 1993). Various approaches to qualitative data analysis exist, for example, discourse analysis, content analysis and phenomenology (Miles and Huberman, 1994). However, common features do exist across the various approaches. Some of those features include the role of the researcher in gaining a holistic overview of the context under study; the isolation of themes and expressions; and finally to explicate the way people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations (ibid).

According to Van Manen (in Miles and Huberman, 1994) qualitative data, with its emphasis on people's "lived experience", are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structure of their lives: their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them (p7).

The choice of method for this study was that of the qualitative, phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach was adopted as the aim of this study was to 'describe' the 'experiences' of the respondents, and the meaning attached to these experiences. The meanings attached to a phenomenon are then influenced by the context.

The level of stress and burnout experienced by the respondents is dependent upon their perceptions of the world/context within which they operate. The perceived effectiveness of the training is also impacted upon by the environmental context and vice versa. This suggests that there exists a reciprocal relationship between the variables and they cannot be viewed in isolation.

The phenomenological researcher is thus required to move from a natural attitude to a transcendental attitude through a process of phenomenological reduction - a process of suspending, or bracketing personal preconceptions and presuppositions by making them explicit (Kruger, 1988).

The data obtained for this study will be interpreted using the method set out by Kruger (ibid). This method involves delineating Natural Meaning Units (N.M.U.'s) and the expression of central themes with reference to the training of educational psychologist and coping skills utilized in stress management. In order to structure the data, phenomenological stages have been followed to guide the research. The various steps in the analysis of the data, summarised from Kruger (ibid), is listed below :

a)   **An intuitive and holistic grasp of the data** - involves initial readings of the protocols were the reader brackets personal preconceptions and judgements. Repeated readings of the protocols in this early phase assists the researcher in retaining a sense of the wholeness of the data despite its dissection in subsequent phases.

b)   **Spontaneous emergence of Natural Meaning Units (NMUs)** - the protocols are broken down into naturally occurring units each conveying a particular meaning which emerges spontaneously from the reading. An NMU is defined as 'a statement made by (the subject) which is self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single, recognizable aspect

of the experience' (p 153). The task of this phase is an articulation of the central themes that characterize the respective unfolding scenes of each protocol.

c)   **Rigorous Reflection and Transformation** - the researcher proceeds to reflect on the natural meaning units and central themes, which are still expressed essentially in the concrete every-day language of the subject. The researcher then transforms the language into formal psychological language.

d)   **Synthesis and Description** - the final phase comprises two steps. In the first step the researcher must synthesize the insights attained by taking into account all the expressed intentions derived from the natural meaning units. The second step states that the researcher has to communicate this phenomenological synthesis to the world of critical opinion. This is conveyed either as a specific description of a situated structure or as a general description of a situated structure. The specific description is one which communicates, through a psychological perspective, the unique structure of a particular phenomenon within a particular context, a general description is one which communicates the meaning-structure of a phenomenon in general and which attempts to overcome the limitations imposed by any specific context.

The rationale behind the steps was to synthesize the themes that arose, and to determine discrepancies that might have occurred. The themes that arose from the data were conveyed as a specific description of a situated structure, namely the perceived adequacy of the training programme to help educational psychologists deal with stress and burnout.

e)   **Rigour of Explication by the Use of Intersubjective Judgement** - the use of a panel of judges to determine whether the specific description or the general description is true to the phenomenon. This stage of the data analysis was not carried out as the sample size of the study was small. This issue will be further elaborated on in chapter six.

The nature of the data collected for this study demanded that NMU's be firstly coded in terms of their reference to the four areas being explored.

The various steps discussed were applied to the data as follows :

1) All the protocols were read so as to formulate an overview of the researcher's intuitive and holistic impression of the data.

2)The protocols were then bracketed into NMU's.

3) NMU's were then colour coded in terms of their reference to the four structured questions asked in the interviews. The four questions were as follows :

a) How has your training prepared you to cope, if it has, with the demands of your job ? Please elaborate.

b) Has your training influenced your choice of coping mechanisms utilized in the management of stress related to your job ? Please elaborate.

c) Please elaborate on elements you think should, or should not be included in the training programme to assist psychologists to manage and deal with stress and burnout.

d) Has society's view/perception of psychologists influenced the way in which you manage and deal with stress and burnout

4) Thereafter NMU's were examined to reveal themes. The every day language of the subjects were transformed into formal psychological language. NMU's that captured the essence of the themes were identified and double bracketed for illustration purposes.

CATEGORIES OF THEMES :

Incongruencies between training and practice

* Course curriculum in relation to educational psychology training.

* Training in terms of preparation for job demand

* Competence and training

* Registration categories

Work-related stress :

* Psychological and emotional job stressors

* Job stressors

* Work environment and stress

Course content :

* Theoretical/practical nature of the course

* Internship year and impact thereof.

* Contribution of placements to equip you to deal with job demands

* Supervision

Stress management :

* Types of relaxation techniques

* Additional methods of stress reduction

* Elements included on the course to help deal with stress management and burnout

* Supervision and stress management

* Stress Management and burnout

* Elements excluded from the course to help psychologists manage and deal with stress and burnout

Impact of training :

* Training and coping mechanisms

* Training in relation to dealing with emotional demands of the job

* Stress Management, Coping Skills and Training

Contributory factors of stress and burnout in psychologists :

* Personality and Burnout

* Factors that make psychologists vulnerable to stress and burnout

     5) The final phase of data analysis consisted of two steps, namely,

          a) themes were synthesized and described taking into account all the NMU's, and finally

          b) a general description of these meaning structures were applied to the four structured questions asked (Appendix A).

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

A summary of the analysis of the data is presented in this chapter. The method set out by Kruger (1988) was employed to analyze the data. This was discussed in chapter three. This chapter begins with a presentation of the demographic characteristics of the sample. This is followed by a discussion of the central categories and themes that emerged from the transcripts.

4.2. Demographic Information

8 respondents took part in the study. All the respondents were educational psychologists, residing in the Pietermaritzburg area, who had completed their masters degree at the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg, between the years 1973 to 1995.

The average number of years of experience of the respondents was 6.3 years (Table 1). However respondent no 1 recorded 23 years of experience which had the effect of skewing the data, thereby increasing the average number of years of experience. The primary occupational settings of the respondents are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 1. Year of training and number of years of experience

	TRAINING	EXPERIENCE
Respondent 1	1973-1974	23 years
Respondent 2	1993-1994	3 years
Respondent 3; 6 and 7	1991-1992	5 years
Respondent 4	1994-1995	1.5 years
Respondent 5	1990-1991	6 years
Respondent 8	1994-1995	2 years
AVERAGE		6.3 years

Table 2. Primary Occupational Setting

Primary Occupational Setting	Number
Clinic Based	1
School Based	3
Private Practice	5
University Based	2
Other (please specify)	1 (Technikon)

* Most respondents were based in more than one setting.

4.3.   Data Analysis

The first step of Kruger's (1988) method, as discussed in Chapter Three was carried out. The first stage involved reading the protocols in order to gain a holistic view of the data. The readings of the protocols reveal that the respondents appear to have mixed reactions regarding the quality of professional training received. The respondents cited numerous sources of stress inherent in their work environment. There was a perception that the professional training received was incongruent with the demands of the job. The perception of the professional training and its effectiveness appears to be influenced by the year in which the training occurred. Stress management was an area that was covered during the training, but the focus appeared to have been more on the client than on the psychologist. Suggestions were offered for elements that should be included in the curriculum to equip psychologists to meet the demands of their jobs.

The difficulty inherent in attempting to work within the phenomenological, qualitative framework was trying to remain true to the data collected, and report the experiences of the respondents objectively.

The themes that emerged were a function of the structured interviews, centring around the three questions asked. From within these meta-themes then arose subsequent themes and issues.

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4.4. META-THEMES :

* **Incongruencies in Practice and Training**
* **Perceived Influence of Professional Training on the Choice of Coping Skills and Stress Management Techniques.**
* **Stress Management Techniques and Elements that Psychologists thought should be Included in the Training Programme.**
* **Contributory Factors of Stress and Burnout in Psychologists, and Society's Perception of Psychologists.**

Each theme will be discussed.

4.4.1. Incongruencies with training and practice.

A constant theme that emerged throughout the transcripts was that of factors considered stressful within the work context. A gap was perceived between the theory that was learned and the actual practice of that theory. This is highlighted in the example below.

> *" People would come and say to you that the child presents with that, what are you going to do about it, and feeling pretty helpless about that and finding theories don't give much when you are actually looking at the person"*

A feeling of helplessness appears to prevail as the psychologist is unable to draw together theoretical training and the demands of practice.

The course was perceived as stress inducing in that the training received was not focused on educational psychology. Respondents felt that they had completed the training but came out not knowing much about educational psychology issues.

"Also what is stress inducing, not so much while you are there because you were enjoying it, but when you came into an educational psychology setup,
suddenly you realise that you have been taught absolutely nothing about what an educational psychologist should know"

The question that then arises is "What do educational psychologists think they need to know ?", and has the training then focused on these issues ? If ones perception of what an educational psychologist should know is not congruent with the training received, feelings of incompetence and stress will arise.

Issues raised with regard to the quality of the training course content include sketchy educational psychology input, lack of focus on area of specialization, and the educational psychology input pertaining more to historical issues.

Respondents felt that the training equipped them to deal with the clientele (i.e. children and adolescents) that they saw at the completion of their training. They now find that they are working in different contexts and seeing a different sort of clientele, which has become a source of stress.

On the other hand some respondents found that the course did not adequately prepare them to deal with the demands of their job. They found that the training did not give sufficient attention to educational psychology issues, as discussed previously. They found that the psychometric material that was taught was out of date and a great deal of training had to occur within the formal working environment.

The respondents felt that they had received greater exposure to the clinical and counselling training programme, with the result that the focus on educational psychology was inadequate. A further stressor was that although the professional training received focused on clinical and counselling issues, the educational psychologists felt that they were unable to practise in those areas demarcated for counselling and clinical psychologists.

"So you lose out by not being trained as an educational psychologist, educational wise, and you are not allowed to practice a lot of the stuff that you have being taught, so you sort of fall in - between two chairs and you have to climb up to decide which stool you want to sit on. Do you want to be an educational psychologist, or be like my colleague who is an educational psychologist at home but a clinical psychologist in practice. It's which stool you want to sit on. It's hard if you want a definite identity, then you would be very frustrated and your training would suffer from it"

The level of competitiveness between the categories becomes a source of stress, as the distinguishing factor in a common training course as the one offered at the university under study, is the type of internship one completes.

The lack of role definition proved problematic for those who were seeking an identity in terms of the training received. They felt that there was nothing on the course to say that it was an educational psychology course, and that educational psychology was almost added on.

"The training that I received in the MEd course had very little relevance, if any, to education which meant that at the end of the day I personally didn't feel that I'm an educational psychologist. When it comes to issues that pertain to education matters, example learning disabilities, reading, speech and comprehension etc., I know very little about those issues despite being a senior psychologist in a context that involves that, and I compare that to others who have received training in educational settings which is very much slanted to that and those issues"

A respondent then went on to criticize the theoretical year of the Master's Degree as being not well organised.

The perceived lack of focus on educational psychology can be considered a peculiarity of the course when the training of all psychologists, namely clinical, counselling and educational occurs within one training programme. The perception of inadequate training is a common experience for the respondents. The meta theme that can be articulated as training being incongruent with

work demands.

Focus was then shifted to the inability of the psychological services to meet the needs of the majority of the people, another issue considered stressful. This source of stress can be linked to the perceived incongruence between training and practise.

"Personally I think as well that psychology as a profession has not being sufficiently at the forefront of transformation, that is a kind of political view and we have tended to hide away in our little individual worlds trying to deliver therapy to 5 people when 50 000 people need it"

The perception is that psychology as a profession has not kept abreast of transformations within society, and the areas in which there appears to be a dire need for psychological interventions. The profession of psychology appears to be more accessible to the upper and middle classes of society, and less accessible to those at the grass root levels.

The issue of counselling services at large was mentioned as stressful by one respondent. There exists a lack of clarity with regard to the role of psychology within the school and tertiary institutions.

"Counselling has historically been seen as a luxury and every time there are budgetary cuts, counselling goes first. So maybe that can be viewed as something and right now within the education departments in transition it's not clear where the direction of counselling is going to be. That could be viewed as a possible stressor. There is no clarity about where the service is going"

This statement serves to illustrate the level of uncertainty and unpredictability that exists within the profession of psychology. As long as psychology doesn't expand its focus, and increase its accessibility, its potential as a primary health service provider will be undermined.

The abovementioned issues pertained to the perceived incongruencies between training and practice. From the protocols, work-related stressors arose as phenomenological themes from within the structured themes. The issues addressed by the psychologists pertained specifically to their work environments and its impact on levels of stress experienced.

4.4.1.1 Work-Related Stress

Firstly the lack of a support network was perceived as stressful when the training was complete. Feelings of incompetence and frustration were experienced upon completing the training, and having no support or structure to turn to. Respondents attempted to get supervision from senior psychologists but felt reluctant to expose their incompetencies. The feeling was that support structures need to be created to help the newly qualified psychologist.

Some respondents cited their work settings as being stressful, and felt that the different work settings impose different sources of stress.

> *"The other thing I would say is the setting that one works in has quite significant differences in terms of the stress one is exposed to"*

The school setting was cited as stressful. The stresses were considered to be related to poor management of the school, which lead to feelings of unproductivity. Respondents were stressed by the individuals in management positions whom they perceived as lacking adequate management styles. They believe that the school system is not psychologically geared, and that individual views on what one should offer as a psychologist, did not synchronize with that of the institution.

Within a university setting, one respondent found it difficult and stressful to divide time between individual needs and administration needs. Job demands and role conflict were seen as sources of stress.

The nature of the work was considered stressful in terms of the variety and intensity of cases seen.

"Well the one thing is obviously dealing with such a variety and intensity of difficulties. We would just have to swing from a marital thing to sexual abuse to learning difficulties, and to be able to make those shifts and treat them all equally empathically, I think is a pretty demanding thing"

This quote was chosen as it highlights the intense nature of the job and the emotional conflicts that arise for the psychologist.

Other factors mentioned included having to listen to people and constantly give of yourself; getting subjectively involved with clients; people's and clients expectations of you; clients expecting you to know everything; and having to keep abreast of new developments and trends within the field. The large caseload and having to see people in pain, was also considered stressful.

The training was also perceived as being unable to cater for the stressors involved in abnormal working situations, like private practice. The meta-theme is that practitioners are being forced into private practice, and the training needs to address why this is occurring.

A respondent in private practice also found the following stressful : -

- time restrictions
- having to do ones own accounts
- setting up ones own appointments, and
- having to work most evenings

The stressors inherent in ones work environment are individualistic and context specific in nature.

The psychologists then went on to discuss alternate areas within the realm of course curriculum, in relation to preparation for job demands.

4.4.1.2. Course Curriculum in Relation to Perceived Preparation for Job Demands.

With regard to the quality of the course content respondents felt that the course provided a useful theoretical component. One respondent felt that the exposure to the course material varied depending upon the time when the training was received, and impacted differently on ones coping strategies. The perception was that the course content that one was exposed to, was in someway influenced by the individuals coordinating the course.

Work placement and training was the other area that received focus. Some respondents found the placements effective in preparing them for the demands for their job. The placements were considered useful in that the focus was on the educational settings. One respondent now finds himself working with adults, an area not covered by the practical training component.

The area of supervision was perceived as problematic by respondents. They felt that the supervision received was inadequate and greater emphasis needs to be given to this area. The inadequate supervision received extended into the internship year of training. The structures were in place for the intern educational psychologists to receive supervision from senior psychologists in the community, but due to the lack of proper organisation, the process fell through which precipitated stress for the psychologist. The lack of supervisory input was attributed to the lack of a support network for psychologists.

Finally, respondents felt that the course curriculum should include a closer look at a variety of occupational settings for integration purposes, as the perception was that a psychologist does not function in isolation, but rather as an integral component of the occupational setting.

4.4.2. Perceived Influence of the Professional Training on the Choice of Coping Skills and Stress Management Techniques

The influence of the training component appears to be dependent upon the year in which the training occurred, as does the levels of stress experienced. In relation to stress and burnout respondents felt that the training helped them gain a theoretical perspective of the concepts as well

as an understanding of certain dynamics. The respondents perceived their training as helping them achieve a greater awareness of their emotional states and reactions.

> *"In someway I feel that I'm a bit more introspective so I might think about what's going on, and maybe I would use those as theoretical references. I will understand them in those terms, and maybe that would give me some kind of handle on it"*

With reference to the contribution of training to the choice of coping skills, the respondents felt that the training had not influenced the choice of coping skills but contributed in that it refined some of the coping skills that had already existed. The training was thought to have enhanced the existing coping skills by framing them within a theoretical model, and enhancing their confidence. Previously the respondents felt that they had gone on instinct. The acquisition of the various coping skills were thought to have being natural, and therefore not influenced by the training.

One respondent felt that the course helped trainees cope by implication rather than giving them specific strategies. The training was designed to help others cope, and the thought was that some of the input should have influenced the trainee in some way.

The training was thought to have helped the trainees cope via incidental exposure to the course. Exposure to the individuals who handle the course was perceived as useful in the personal development of the trainee. This can be related back to the role and influence of the mentoring relationship.

Stress and burnout were areas that had received some attention during the training year, but the focus was on how to help clients.

4.4.3. Stress Management Techniques and Elements Psychologists Thought Should Be Included in the Training Programme

The preceding sections have focused on issues of contention within the framework of professional training. The final section of the interview asked the respondents to elaborate on elements that should or should not be included in the training programme to assist psychologists to manage and deal with stress and burnout.

Stress was considered to be a very individual phenomenon, with people experiencing different levels of stress. The interviewees felt that ones understanding of stress and the situation could differ, and it was therefore difficult to say what elements should be included on the course to aid in the management of stress.

Stress management was an area that had received a great deal of attention. All respondents stated that they had covered theories of stress and burnout in their training. One respondent felt that at that stage of the training, not much thought was given on how to apply the material learned to oneself. Rather the concern was on how to use stress management techniques to help others. The perception was that all psychology students know about stress, and one has to therefore make a conscious decision as to whether or not you are going to make the application to oneself, to decrease stress levels.

Possible elements that respondents thought should be included in the training to help the psychologists deal with stress and burnout, was dependent upon the perception of the quality of training received. The suggestions ranged from specifics being included on the course, on how to help psychologists to practice effectively, and how to be able to disengage and switch off. Boundary and limit setting were thought to come with experience and exposure.

Supervision from senior psychologists, peer supervision, and additional exposure to concepts of stress and burnout were further suggestions offered.

Progressive relaxation was the only technique that was covered on the course as a method of stress management. The interviewees found the practical session on progressive relaxation to be very enjoyable and effective. Except for progressive relaxation, the respondents felt that they had learned nothing specific on the course on how to handle stress. The respondents felt that they had already being using various stress management techniques in the form of engaging in sport, taking a break, socializing, and talking to people. Other forms of stress management mentioned included religious support, importance of ones belief system, leading a balanced life, familial support, and physical health.

Alternate suggestions offered included hypnotherapy, meditation, alternate therapy, and teaching the trainees entrepreneurial skills for when they go into private practice. Alternate therapy was offered by a respondent who felt that the use of progressive relaxation would not be beneficial to those people who were not visual, and had problems with the process of visualization.

Respondents advocated for the inclusion of group therapy. They believed it served a two-pronged purpose. Firstly, they believed it to be a forum that one could use to discuss work-related stressors, which covered the personal sphere. Secondly, professional skills were also learned. Individual psychotherapy for therapists was considered an important and effective means of stress management. Individual therapy was considered relevant because of its emphasis on the importance of nurturing oneself, growth therapy, and providing a forum for the trainee to take their feelings of stress and to work through their own issues. The psychologist's frame of mind and sense of stability were seen as critical to their effectiveness.

Peer supervision was the other area considered to have great benefit to the process of stress management. Peer supervision was considered to be helpful with dealing with the stressors of a demanding case and seeking expert help. Peer supervision was considered to be able to provide a forum to discuss and share work-related stresses, and questions about oneself. Peer supervision was considered by many as a process that occurred naturally during the training year, but then disappeared once the training year was over. This could then be linked to the lack of a support structure considered stressful for the newly qualified psychologist.

" The kind of thing that I'm thinking about, that I know a lot of private practitioners have is a peer supervision kind of thing. For me the purpose would be to help each other deal with the stressors of a demanding case or questions about oneself, what are you doing and why and that sort of thing. I think that sort of thing would be very helpful"

Peer supervision is considered a method of addressing ones perceived inadequacies in a supportive, affirming environment.

One respondent also felt that it would have benefitted them if the lecturers could be more open and honest with regard to their own coping strategies. The mentoring relationship was considered a possible avenue for that sort of support.

" You can read about stress management anywhere you want but to have your mentors, your supervisors saying what works and doesn't for them is what you need at that kind of level, because unless people you look up too are applying this stuff, why should you ?"

The value and support of the mentoring relationship cannot be over emphasized. The newly qualified psychologists look to their mentors as sources of support and knowledge as their level of experience is considered valuable.

Personality factors were considered relevant to the management of stress. Setting and maintaining boundary limits were considered important. The combination of personality and training were considered essential in the ability to disengage and nurture oneself to avoid stressors, and to learn that when you continually think about your cases it induces stress.

Finally, it was suggested that the internship year of training be managed better with a greater focus on supervision, as beginning to work without support was considered as perhaps one of the most stressful times.

The final theme that arose was based on the researcher's hypotheses.

4.4.4. Contributory Factors of Stress and Burnout in Psychologists and Society's Perception of Psychologists

The researcher attempted to investigate the samples' perception of whether society's perception of psychologists impacts on their coping of stress and burnout (See question 4 in Appendix A).

Firstly, the psychologists interviewed felt that they should be able to cope with stress in ways that other people are not capable of. This was attributed to their perception of a better than average, or more robust ability to cope with stress. Secondly, the respondents perceived that society expected them to be stronger than most, and to cope better. A lot of this was attributed to society's view of what psychologists should do, and the nature of the job.

> " Yes you always get it that you are stronger than most. Society's view - a lot is due to ignorance of what psychologists are and what we do. Maybe psychology has being partly to blame for that. But there is pressure for you to give advice, to behave in your personal life as if you are a miracle man, and maybe we have fallen into that trap of trying to be like that, instead of just being normal"

Thirdly, being in the helping profession psychologists tend to neglect their own mental health. This was once again attributed to the psychologists perception of their capacity to cope. Other reasons offered include psychologists finding it difficult to seek help because they are professionals, and are therefore not supposed to be stressed out. Stress and burnout are areas that are considered the domain of psychology. The perception is that psychologists should have the knowledge and skills on how to manage and deal with stress and burnout.

> "I think that it's more difficult for professionals in general to go for assistance perhaps and maybe it does have something to do with society that if you are a professional and you are a psychologist, then you are not supposed to be stressed out and you are not supposed to be affected by these problems"

Other factors that were thought to contribute to burnout among psychologists were the intensive nature of the job, and the inequality between the psychologist to client ratio. For those who worked in institutions as well as being in private practice, time restrictions were considered a major contributory factor to burnout.

4.4.5   Conclusion

The educational psychologists trained at the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg cited numerous stressers inherent in their jobs. The content of the course was perceived by some of the respondents as not adequately preparing them to cope with the demands of their jobs.

Upon review of the various categories of professional registration that arose, there appears to be severe implications for this group of respondents where the training for the three categories occurred simultaneously. A possible impact of this scenario is that one registration category would feel that less emphasis will be given to their registration.

In a time of changing professional demands, with the profession being in a state of transformation, the issues highlighted by this group need to be given cognizance for future training programmes. The process of transformation does appear to be occurring and can be beneficial, but the process needs to be managed.

The year of the training and the individuals involved in the training impacted upon the trainees perception of stressers inherent in their jobs; perceived competence and quality of training received. The respondents felt that the lecturers on the training course, via the different emphasis to the theoretical input, influenced their perceptions of competence. The psychologists that trained later in the nineties expressed higher levels of stress, which could be associated with their lack of experience. The views and perceptions of the trainees are specific descriptions of a situated structure, namely the perception of the quality of the professional training received.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This study has attempted to explore the perceived sources of job-related stress using a sample of educational psychologists at the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg. The study also looked at the perceived effectiveness of training to cope with the demands of the profession and the choice of coping mechanisms utilized in stress management.

The findings of this study (i.e the themes that arose) will be discussed in relation to the theories and research findings presented in chapter two. It is important to bear in mind that the data obtained was qualitative in nature, and the experience of each respondent in relation to the focus of the study has to be understood within the framework of their different work contexts. Another factor that needs to be considered is the number of years of experience of each respondent and its impact on perceived stresses inherent within the workplace, as well as the choice of coping mechanisms.

5.2. Incongruencies with Training and Practice

Numerous needs have been identified by the respondents of this study. Numerous authors have recently been questioning the role and contribution of educational psychology. The process of transformation has been at the forefront of the profession, with the training of educational psychologists at South African universities in the spot light for some time now.

The respondents felt that the course content of the Master's Training programme was not adequate in preparing them to meet the demands of their jobs. They felt that there was a lack of focus on issues pertaining to educational psychology. It would stand to reason that perceptions of levels of competence would be impacted upon, if respondents perceived the training curriculum to be lacking an educational psychology perspective.

The issue of being trained for the job is a constant theme that arises. One then needs to look at the perceived role definition of educational psychologists.

The inability of the discipline of educational psychology to articulate its own role and identity has been consistently raised as problematic. Basson (1988) commented on the lack of a role definition as being a potential source of stress for educational psychologists, their definition as either educationalist or psychologist, and the resultant conflict emanating from expectations from the organisation one works in. The question that then arises is 'What is the job of an educational psychologist ?'.

The perceived role of educational psychologists, according to Sharratt (1995), falls within three categories. The traditional view of an applications only field (emphasis on assessment and management of problematic children), a progressive view where emphasis is centred on the management and psychology of schooling, and finally a third view where the focus is on educational psychology as a research discipline (ibid). The conception of the nature of the job and the service demands influences job expectations, which then impact on the perceived quality and adequacy of the training received.

Firstly, there appears to be a need for the discipline of educational psychology to articulate a definition for itself wherein there is consensus regarding the degree of specialization and diversity within the discipline (ibid). Secondly, curriculum development programmes need to encompass the variety of occupational settings of educational psychologists, and the expanding role of the discipline. Huebner (1993) calls for interventions at the organizational level, including negotiating revised job descriptions for educational psychologists.

Psychologists within the school setting perceive that the value and contribution of psychology within a school environment is not recognized. One would then need to analyze the role played by psychologists within the school setting.

Traditionally the focus of educational psychologists within the school setting has been based on the alleviation of educational and emotional problems that interfere with the process of schooling, and has had little to do with the general process of learning and schooling, nor have they been concerned with educational policy issues (Sharratt, 1995). The professional training programmes for educational psychologists has not kept abreast of transformations within the field, with the result that the perception of what an educational psychologist can offer within a school setting has been narrow in focus. There needs to be a move towards a more holistic and systemic view of the profession's capabilities.

According to Sharratt (ibid) identifying with the view that educational psychology is an applications -only field removes the educational psychologist from a position of potential influence in regard to policy and management in education. As long as the professional training emphasizes the 'traditional' view of educational psychology, the potential role and contribution of educational psychology will remain unrealised.

Donald (1991) suggests alternate service delivery models. Firstly, he advocates for indirect service delivery. In this model psychologists would work as consultants where the basis of the consultation would be a negotiated, mutual, on-going, problem-solving relationship (ibid). The aim of this model would be for the psychologist to impart skills and knowledge.

Secondly, Donald (ibid) calls for a radical shift in both perception and practice from a child deficit to a system deficit model. Interventions will thus be based on systems theory.

Finally, Donald (ibid) advocates for (1) the training of mental health workers who could operate across psychological, educational, social work and medical boundaries, and (2) the adoption of a community psychology model, incorporating traditional healing modes of intervention (Sharratt, 1995).

There appears to be a dire need for the profession of Educational Psychology to re-conceptualise its emphasis. The profession of Educational psychology appears to be extending the nature of its work to include a variety of circumstances and contexts, which the training

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needs to take note of. As long as the training of educational psychologists does not keep abreast of the transformation that are occurring within the field, practitioners will experience feelings of inadequacy and incompetence.

At this junction the role of continuing education for the practitioner can be considered as a method to alleviate feelings of inadequacy and to aid in keeping practitioners abreast of new trends within the field. Universities should also attempt to produce curriculum development courses leading to paradigm shifts.

The training was perceived as not keeping abreast of the transformations within the field, initially by not keeping track of the trends within the field of psychology and secondly by not taking cognizance of the larger social context. The issue of culture and society needs to be emphasized if the profession is to become an effective service provider. Donald (1991) in his calls for alternate service delivery models, advocates for the adoption of a community psychology model, with an emphasis on traditional healing modes of intervention.

By the professional training programme taking cognizance of the wider social system within which educational psychologists operate from, the contribution of educational psychology in areas such as school management and policy will not be ignored. Therefore, in order for the discipline of educational psychology to be at the forefront of the process of transformation within the field of psychology as practised within an educational context, there needs to occur an evaluation of the present training programme.

From as early as 1991, Donald was calling for a shift in perspective in terms of training requirements and service provision to an under supplied and rapidly growing population. The first being how to alleviate the imbalances of services and resources, and secondly training professionals to meet the needs of the social and educational problems of this society.

As previously discussed Donald (ibid) recommended the indirect service delivery model, or the consultation model. This suggestion again illustrates the need for the professional training programme to adopt a more holistic view of what educational psychologists can offer. This approach would also aid in a greater number of clients being accessed, with the result that the service reaches a wider majority of people.

The second issue pertains to the ratio of educational psychologists to clients. In order to increase the number of educational psychologists, the Professional Board of Educational Psychology has to rethink the training requirement of 7 years, and the job opportunities available to educational psychologists as most Education Departments are terminating the services of educational psychologists (Kriegler, 1993).

Donald (1991) suggested the notion of a "middle-level psychologist" or a "mental health worker" whose skills are not simply a truncated version of the professional psychologist's but specifically focused on community consultation and preventative work (p 39) . There now appears to be a move toward this notion with the possible introduction of an alternate four year degree culminating in the registration of psychologist. However, the finer details of this proposed degree have yet to be resolved.

Education has been identified as the instrument for shaping mentally healthy attitudes and values. This implies that the mental health challenge can only be approached by way of an integration. Psychology must expand its repertoire by including an educational mould, whereas education must design structures for the promotion of mental health among the population at large by formal, non-formal, and informal educational programmes (Kriegler, 1989).

Kriegler (ibid) goes on to say that educational psychology is uniquely positioned to answer this challenge as it is related both in education and psychology. Hence it is qualified to play a key role in the transformation of the psychology profession into a socially relevant and dynamic factor in society.

The role of educational psychologists can be extended so that they can become key members of the mental health team. This could then impact on the role definition of educational psychologists to include a broader, holistic conception of the profession. One such way of enhancing the role of educational psychologists could be by moving towards a more consultative view of educational psychology. By moving away from the individual focus to a consultative method of working, stronger relations could be forged with schools and teachers.

The pertinent question that arises is "What barriers are there to changes inherent in the system?" Possible barriers could be the narrow focus that prevails within the discipline of educational psychology, and the lack of emphasis on a consultancy model of service delivery. An area raised as stressful by the educational psychologist has been the inability of the counselling services to meet the demands of society. The sample of educational psychologists feel that the profession should be addressing the needs of the majority, instead of focusing only on those privileged individuals who are financially able to seek their services. Why then has the professional training committee not taken cognizance of this fact and introduced a more community oriented focus ? This issue was also raised by Sharratt (1995) when she put forth that educational psychology needs to re-define itself and the role of educational psychologists in the context of a rapidly changing South African society in order to service the needs of the majority of the population.

The introduction of a community oriented focus to educational psychology would probably mean a move away from the traditional, one to one assessment strategies that has become so much a part of the culture of educational psychology. Within the school environment, educational psychology should attempt to focus on the school environment, and the facilitation of the school's organizational functioning, rather than on the individual child.

It was reiterated by the respondents that the training didn't prepare them to meet the demands of their jobs. An area that educational psychologists thought lacked attention was that of adult clients. The lack of attention on adult clients could be attributed to the perceived focus of educational psychology being concerned only with problematic children. This can be linked to Huebner's (1993) finding that inadequate job preparation is a crucial intrapersonal variable in

the burnout process. This suggests yet again the call for educational psychology to broaden its focus and take cognizance of the variety of work contexts within which educational psychologists could work in.

5.2.1. Work-Related Stress

The issues raised as stressful by the respondents of this study are concerns that have been raised on previous occasions. The first is that of a perceived lack of support. The notion of support is not limited to supervisory support but also extends to peer support. According to Huebner (ibid) a low degree of peer support contributes significantly to burnout. The role of support and support networks has been named the 'buffering effect'. As stated in chapter two, stressors have a less negative impact on individuals who have some sort of support structure in place. As the role and contribution of support structures have been investigated, why does the professional training not attempt to build such structures into place?

The need for a support network needs to be viewed in the context of the demands of this profession. The nature of work of a psychologist is emotionally demanding, with constant developments in the field. With the lack of attention given to ongoing professional training and a perceived network of support, stress becomes an almost inescapable phenomenon.

It appears that the professional training programme followed by the respondents does not take cognizance of the importance of the emotional well-being of the psychologist. A similar argument can be related to the concept of supervision. The respondents of this study had also voiced their concerns regarding the inadequate supervisory structures in place.

The supervisory relationship is seen as especially important to the inexperienced young psychologist who looks to their supervisor to allay fears and anxiety (ibid), and provide technical assistance and feedback. Greater emphasis needs to be given to the supervisory relationship. After the completion of training, structures for continued supervision by senior psychologists should be made available, with specific emphasis on the internship year of training.

Respondents cited their work settings as stressful. The work environment was identified by Basson (1988) as a potential source of stress, and can be related to the person-environment transaction model. As stated in chapter two, the person-environment transaction model reflects ongoing transactions between individuals and their environments, and has implications for both the person and the environment. Therefore the impact of the work context on the psychologist needs to be viewed from within the transactional model due to the reciprocal relationship that exists between the two.

Organizational demands and role conflict has been linked to burnout (Huebner, 1993), and refers to the experience of coping with inconsistent work demands. Role ambiguity and role conflict have also been areas of contention for the newly qualified educational psychologist.

Role overload is an area that has also been linked to burnout (ibid), and refers to situations in which helping professionals become over-extended in terms of job responsibilities. These factors might then be said to contribute to the feelings of unproductivity and inadequacy that exist in terms of service expectations, which could have the impact of increasing levels of stress.

Other factors mentioned as stressful by the educational psychologists was the intensive nature of the work. This can be linked to the finding of Maslach and Jackson (1981b) who felt that the individuals involved in intense interaction with people are susceptible to burnout. Therapists must continually deal with the widest range of human emotions and are often themselves the target of irrational expressions of love, hate, envy, or need (Farber, 1983). Empirical and clinical investigations have constantly found that face-to-face contact with patients is a basic source of stress that is inherent within the psychotherapeutic situation (Bermack, English, Farber & Heifetz, Freudenberger & Robbins, in Farber, 1983).

The creation of supportive networks for therapists would be a possible buffer against the emotionally demanding nature of psychotherapeutic work.

5.2.2. Course Curriculum in Relation to Perceived Preparation for Job Demands

This area has tended to overlap largely with that of incongruencies between training and practice. The placement component of the training was perceived as being useful as it concentrated on the typical work environment of an educational psychologist, thereby providing a sense of identity and belonging. Within these placements the registration category of the educational psychologist was attended to, and in a sense fulfilled the role definition or identity.

The constant perception of the year in which the training was received, impacting on the quality and adequacy of preparing one to meet job demands can be related to the impact of transformation within the profession. Originally those psychologists who trained as educational psychologists worked for the Department of Education. Due to the process of transformation this avenue for employment was terminated with the result that the newly qualified psychologist has to actively seek other employment opportunities. In a sense the educational psychologists role identity was stripped of them because the Department of Education was seen as an organization for them in which to practice their skills and expertise. This then contributes to the feelings of stress experienced by the psychologists.

Lastly, within the theme of course content, the educational psychologist once again raised the issue of poor and inadequate supervision received, which has been discussed in the previous section.

5.3. Perceived Influence of the Professional Training on the Choice of Coping Skills and Stress Management Techniques

The year in which the educational psychologist trained influenced the levels of stress experienced. The more experienced and older the therapist was, the lower the level of stress noted. This finding can be related to that of Cherniss (1980b) who stated that burnout is also greatest when the psychologist is young since previous experience gained in a task, stressor and or situation usually attenuates the effects of stress. Mastery gained in the past seems to increase the attitudinal and motivational factors that make one less vulnerable to stress.

It would appear that one possible way of attenuating the effects of stress would be via the creation of support networks for the younger and less experienced psychologist. The literature on stress does highlight the effects of systems of support on the levels of stress experienced (Huebner, 1993).

One could then speculate that the perceived effectiveness of the training received could be related to experience gained. If one feels incompetent regarding ones skills, the cause of that incompetence will be attributed to the quality of the training received.

The training was perceived by the respondents to have contributed to a greater awareness of ones emotional state. Via exposure to the course content, the trainee psychologist is able to become more psychologically minded. The advantage of this increased awareness is that the therapists are more aware of their motivations, unconscious processes, and difficulties (Farber, 1983). The negative aspect would be that the therapists could tend to over-identify themselves with patients. It would be at this junction that the importance or contribution of supervision, mentoring and individual psychotherapy for the psychologist, can be highlighted.

5.4. Stress Management Techniques and Elements Psychologists Thought Should Be Included in the Training Programme

Stress management was an area that was covered during the training, but the focus was on how to use stress management to help ones clients. Peer supervision, the mentoring relationship and individual therapy, were suggested as possible buffers against stress.

Stress and burnout can lead to a deterioration in the quality of services provided by the helping profession (ibid). Burnout has ben related to high turnover and reduced productivity (Huebner, 1993). The less experienced the therapist the higher the level of stress (ibid). The inexperienced therapist feels incompetent and inadequate, thereby contributing to the amount of stress experienced. The more experienced therapists are able to gain confidence in their abilities as they gain greater exposure to the job and its demands. Although the profession is aware of the negative impact of stress and burnout, there appears to be no emphasis in the training on relating stress management to psychologists (ibid).

It is truly ironic that in a field where psychological and emotional well-being is the core of the profession, the same courtesy is not extended to the profession's service providers. This can be linked to the perceived lack of support experienced by psychologists.

According to Huebner (1993) numerous studies have linked burnout to impaired physical and mental health, levels of competence and effectiveness as therapists. This gives rise to the question , why has the training not focused on the psychologists emotional well-being ? Is the profession wary of admitting to the possibility of burnout being inherent in the psychological profession when stress management is supposed to be an area of expertise for psychology and psychologists. Since the nature of the work is intensive, the professional training can serve as the structure that puts into place support networks for psychologists, and emphasizes the importance of the therapists' well-being. At present the only recommendation made to the trainees, is to engage in their own individual psychotherapy, which is not mandatory. A possible suggestion is that individual psychotherapy be made mandatory for all psychologists, so as to aid in the management of stress and burnout.

Various suggestions were offered by the respondents of this study. Peer supervision is considered as a source of support by the respondents, as discussed in section 5.2.1. Yet once again no formal structure is put into place during the training years. The mentoring relationship was also cited as helpful. Due to the possible lack of experience and knowledge perceived by the young psychologists, they tended to look to their 'mentors' as experts in various areas. However, the mentoring relationship can also have negative consequences. If the inexperienced psychologists depends too much on the mentor, they will not feel secure enough to develop their own methods of coping with aversive situations. Finally, the mentoring relationship and peer support are structures that can be set up in the professional training to provide a form of support. The psychologists' psychological and emotional well-being are integral and should be emphasized within the training year, when feelings of inadequacy and incompetence are high.

Intrapersonal strategies have been proposed in the burnout literature. Such strategies as continuing education, relaxation techniques, time management, realistic goal setting, and recreational outlets have been frequently suggested (ibid).

According to Huebner (ibid) organizational change components are also often needed in comprehensive stress management plans. He also suggests examples of organizational goals which might include negotiating a revised job description for staff psychologists; changing the administrative position of a school psychology department from under special educational to regular education, changing the referral system, modifying systems of processing paperwork, securing additional fiscal resources through grant writing, and implementing formal, systematic decision-making procedures to reduce conflict in multidisciplinary teams.

5.5. Contributory Factors of Stress and Burnout in Psychologists' and Society's Perception of Psychologists

The respondents felt that they should be able to cope with stress in ways that other people are not capable of, and that society expected them to be stronger than most.

Public attitude toward psychology is considered a stressor (Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980). Many members of the public are sceptical, or afraid of psychology and its association with mental illness. Edelwich and Brodsky (ibid) point out that the public understands as much about what the human services are about as about any other subject that is susceptible to media sensation.

The perceptions of the respondents can be linked to the issues raised by Sarason (in Farber, 1983). These issues include society's positive judgement about the nature of the work, and the individual's professional, uncritical acceptance of society's view upon entering the profession.

Has the profession of psychology then propagated this view ? In some way it has, via the resistance of professional organizations to self-scrutiny (Sarason (in Farber, 1983). The other way in which the profession probably aids in the propagation of this view, is by deemphasizing the importance of the psychologists emotional state and by the emphasis during the training year being largely on the client.

The larger need that exists for psychologists in reference to society and ones personal relationships, is two-fold in nature. The one issue becomes how to deal with ones personal relationship and ones relationship to organizations, and the other issue focuses on ones professional versus personal roles.

Farber (1983) spoke about the "professional mystique", which encompasses society's perception of the nature of the work, and the incoming professionals acceptance of this mystique (p25). As mentioned in chapter two this mystique ultimately culminates in disillusionment and burnout. The onus is then on the individual to set and maintain boundaries in relation to ones personal and professional life, as spillage of one into the other has far reaching consequences for both the individual and the organization.

5.6. Conclusion

The time has arrived for the discipline of educational psychology to take cognizance of its impact on society, and those individuals who train as educational psychologists. The glaring question that emerged from this study has been whether or not the discipline of educational psychology has kept abreast of transformations within the field of psychology. It is evident from the information gleaned from the respondents that there is a dire need for the process of transformation to occur at the level of the professional training if the discipline of educational psychology is to realise its potential.

The emphasis of this transformation should not been limited to the content and focus of educational psychology per say, but should include a focus on the individuals who train within this field with a view to preparing individuals for a redefined role within a rapidly changing South African society.

It would appear that the profession of educational psychology has not in many instances kept abreast of the transformation process. In order for this discipline of educational psychology to become a force to be reckoned with and accepted as an acknowledged branch of the profession of psychology, changes need to occur at both the content level, as well as at the practitioner level.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The sheer complexity of the burnout system has made it a rich and inviting field of research. The aim of the present study hoped to explore the perceived effectiveness of training of educational psychologists at the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg, to manage and cope with stress and burnout. The study also aimed to look at the perceived effectiveness of training to cope with the demands of the profession, and the choice of coping mechanisms in stress management.

Five themes emerged from the transcripts. The first dealt with perceived incongruencies between training and practice. A gap was perceived between the training received and the actual practice of the training. The course was considered stress inducing in that the respondents felt that there was a lack of focus on educational psychology issues. The meta-theme that then arose was the professional training received being incongruent with the work demands. The inability of the psychological profession to meet the needs of the majority of people, and the lack of clarity with regard to the role of psychology was also considered stressful.

From within this theme arose two further areas of contention, namely work-related stressors, and the course curriculum in relation to the perceived preparation for job demands.

The issues considered stressful by the respondents include inadequate support and supervision, the work setting, and the intensive nature of the work.

With regard to the course curriculum, respondents felt that the course provided a useful theoretical component. The area of supervision was once again raised as problematic and inadequate. However, the work placements were considered useful in that attention was directed to problems of an educational psychology nature.

The third theme dealt with the perceived influence of the professional training on the choice of coping skills and stress management techniques. The training was perceived as unhelpful in the choice of coping mechanisms, but aided in the refinement of existing coping skills. Respondents felt that the training received contributed to a greater awareness of ones emotional state. The higher the level of experience gained, the lower the levels of stress experienced. Experience and age served as buffering effects against stress. Finally, respondents felt that the training was designed to help others cope, rather than the psychologist.

The fourth theme focused on stress management techniques, and elements respondents thought should be included in the training programme. Stress management was an area that was covered during the training year. Progressive relaxation was the method of stress management covered on the course. The respondents stated that they had learned nothing specific on the course to help them deal with stress and burnout. Stress was considered an individual phenomenon, and respondents found it problematic to say what elements should/should not be included on the course to aid in the management of stress.

Individual psychotherapy for the psychologist, peer supervision, and supervision by senior psychologists were considered beneficial in the management of stress. The mentoring relationship was also considered useful. Other suggestions offered to help aid educational psychologists manage with stress and burnout include hypnotherapy, alternate therapy, group therapy, meditation, and teaching psychologists entrepreneurial skills.

The final theme based on the researchers hypotheses was that society's perception of the nature of psychologists work influenced their handling of stress and burnout. This addressed the contributory factors of stress and burnout in psychologists' and society's perception of psychologists.

The respondents interviewed felt that they should be able to cope with stress in ways that other people are not capable of. They perceived that society expected them to cope better because of the nature of their job, and that they tended to neglect their own mental health. Other stressors noted by the respondents include the nature of the job, inequality between psychologist and client ratio, and the stress inherent in private practice e.g. time restrictions.

6.1.   Limitations of the Study

Although qualitative analysis is an effective means of data collection, the researcher used a set of prescribed questions, which in some way lead the data and the type of responses received. Open-ended questions were then asked based on the responses of the respondents for clarification purposes.

Secondly, the sample size was small therefore making generalisations difficult. Also the respondents that were interviewed did not complete their training in the same academic year, and the quality of the training differed because of the year in which it was received. Furthermore some respondents had trained full-time, and others part-time. Also the interpretation of the results involved some assumptions which at times generated more questions than it answered.

According to Kvale (1996), the qualitative approach to data collection is considered by many to lead to objective and scientific knowledge, and is unreliable as it rests upon leading questions. However, this approach was nevertheless chosen as the method of data collection as the study emphasizes the perceived nature of stress and burnout, and the perceptions of effective training were thought to be more illuminating than quantifiable data.

The final stage of the analysis was not carried out by the researcher. The rationale for not carrying out the final step of the analysis includes the fact that, firstly the sample number was very small, comprising only 8 respondents. Secondly, by the use of open-ended questions during the interview process, the researcher had in some way lead the data collection. Finally, the themes that arose are not generalizable, as they represent the experiences of this particular group of respondents with the brief of addressing the issue of curriculum planning on the

course.

6.2. Recommendations for Future Research

Several potential research suggestions have arisen out of this study's findings. They are as follows:

Firstly, to what extend has the lack of transformation within the discipline of educational psychology contributed to the feelings of stress and burnout among educational psychologists Secondly, a closer look at the relationship between stress perceived and work context needs to be investigated. Further, the data obtained could have been confounded by the fact that some of the respondents were not exclusively educational psychologists, but had completed further training/internships in either counselling or clinical psychology. Thirdly, a study that is longitudinal in nature so as to assess the perceived effectiveness in training after some experience has being gained. Fourthly, an evaluation of the professional training programmes across universities involved in the professional training of psychologists is required, so as to obtain a comprehensive view of elements offered on the various training programmes to equip psychologist to be competent practitioners. Individuals' dynamics also need to be considered in future research. The impact of an individual's culture, socio-economic context etc. are all integral components of what a person could contribute to the profession, and can also impact on stress and the process of coping. Finally, the use of a larger sample size so as to generalize the findings. For generalization purposes the interview process would need to be restructured, the subject base broadened, and validity studies need to be introduced.

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APPENDIX A

CONFIDENTIALITY IS ASSURED

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA QUESTIONAIRE

Name : (optional) --------------------------------

Address : (optional) -------------------

Please indicate choice by means of a cross
Gender :

------ Male

------ Female

Age : -------

Marital Status :

------ single

------ married

------ divorced

------ widowed

------ other (please specify)

Number of years of experience : -------

Primary Occupational Setting : ------- (clinic based)

------- (school based)

------- (private practice)

------- (university based)

------- (Other) Please Specify

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How has your training prepared you to cope, if it has, with the demands of your job ? Please elaborate.

----

2. How has your training influenced your choice of coping mechanisms utilized in the management of stress related to your job ? Please elaborate.

----

3. Please elaborate on elements you think that should, or should not, be included in the training programme to assist psychologists to manage and deal with stress and burnout.

----

4. How has society's perception of psychologists influenced the way in which you manage and deal with stress and burnout ?