

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



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in the field of

Educational Psychology and Special Education

with the title:

THE PREVALENCE AND MANAGEMENT OF STRESSORS EXPERIENCED BY
FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS IN RURAL MBOMBELA SCHOOLS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Pertunia Thobile Mabuza, herewith declare that the work entitled: The prevalence and management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools is my own work and has not previously been submitted for the requirements of another degree. I have made every effort to acknowledge all information obtained from other sources, according to the American Psychological Association guidelines.

Pertunia Thobile Mabuza

Date

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

Yanda Zoe Mohlala

My inspiration!

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ABSTRACT

This study forms part of an ongoing attempt to understand the prevalence and management of stressors experienced by teachers. The main focus for this study is foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools. Quantitative and qualitative measures were used in order to gain more insight into the prevalence and management of stressors experienced by teachers. A questionnaire with open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires was used to collect data.

The results of the study indicated a high prevalence of foundation phase teachers experiencing stressors. There was also an indication that the teachers do have the necessary skills to cope with stressors that they experience as a result of their teaching and learning environment. Exercise, spirituality and planning were the main techniques teachers used in the management of stressors.

Recommendations were made in order to assist teachers with the management of stressors they experience as a result of their teaching and learning environment. Avenues for further research are also discussed.

Key concepts:

Prevalence, management, stressors, foundation phase.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Management of stressors in education has enjoyed and still needs scholar attention (Kyriacou, 2001). The need for scholarly attention is especially necessary in rural settings. In such settings, teachers need to perform extra professional competencies which may be exacerbated by socioeconomic and other pertaining factors. These competencies are in addition to the ordinary teacher core competences which may be fraught with difficulties. It can, therefore, be expected that for teachers to execute their duties in such settings, they endure a lot of stress. These issues may be compounded in the foundation phase. Thus, investment in foundation phase education is indicated.

The importance of investing within the foundation phase of education has really meant that children are groomed at this stage to become successful citizens. Most of the responsibility of grooming is bestowed upon the teachers who spend much time with the children. The foundation phase teacher's role in a rural school can easily move out of the classroom (C. P. Maseko, personal communication, May 30, 2014).

Travers and Cooper (1996) state that the responsibility of being surrogate parents, social workers and educators is seen as compulsory to teachers. The role of teachers seems to include educating, disciplining, as well as caring for the social problems of the children, and teachers in the foundation phase are placed at a very fundamental stage of child development. The scope of a teacher at this stage includes creating an atmosphere of emotional warmth (Whitebread, 1996). The author also emphasized the need for children to receive love and security at an early age.

According to Mphahlele (2005), foundation phase teachers should be adequately equipped with effective teaching strategies that will foster a good foundation for the learners, thus improving their well-being. Without a good foundation, a child may

miss the basic building blocks required for development. Thus, failure in this regard may impact negatively on children and possibly contribute to social problems.

Sometimes this failure may be due to teachers' career choices. Putter (2003) argues that for some teachers, the teaching profession was not their first choice and, therefore, they may not be happy in their work. Working with children requires some degree of patience and understanding and teachers who find it difficult to work with children may be more at risk of work-related stress than those who do not. Teachers may find the demands of being of the profession difficult, and even stressful.

Teacher maladjustment may be due to the need to manage children with different mental capacities. Mainstreaming implies that all learners should be accommodated in the same classroom and be treated equally irrespective of their differences in physical and/or mental abilities (Kapp, 2006). This may have possibly posed as a challenge to a teacher who now has to cope with having a broadened scope of practice. This may lead to exhaustion experienced by teachers. Engelbrecht and Snyman (1999) maintain that teachers in mainstream education have not been provided with the necessary skills and disposition to handle learners with special needs in the classroom. This may create more stress on the teacher who has inadequate skills.

Emotional exhaustion can be seen as the central element which can translate feelings of stress into depression (Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk & Gloria, 2011). When stress accumulates to a level that is unbearable for the teacher, emotional exhaustion may result (Steinhardt, et al., 2011). This may result in reduced capacity to carry out teacher duties. Partly, this may be accounted for by physical and other ailments.

Classroom size, job demands, inadequate resources, and learner behaviour can contribute to stress. The effects of stress can be detrimental to the health of the teacher. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, (2001) maintain that perceived stressors lead to emotional reactions, thus leading to emotional, mental and physical maladjustment.

Putter (2003) commented that teachers who experience stressors often experience emotional, cardiovascular, gastronomic and behavioural manifestations. Travers and

Cooper (1996) agree that teacher stress can have a harmful effect on their physical, emotional and behavioural well-being. The teacher's efficiency in the classroom may be compromised in the presence of stress.

Moracco and McFadden (1982) view teacher stress as an event which is considered threatening to a teacher's well-being or self-esteem. Kyriacou (2001) explains it as the experience by a teacher of negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher. This can possibly affect not only the school environment, but may also spread into the home.

Schools in rural settings may not have adequate resources to manage stress. The researcher would like to determine if anything has been done to offer support for rural foundation phase teachers specifically on stress management, therefore this study is being undertaken.

1.2 Motivation for the Study

According to Kyriacou (2001), teacher stress has become a widely researched topic in many countries worldwide. Researchers have attempted to identify stressors in the foundation phase, as well as the management thereof. Internationally, researchers have looked into pre-school learners entering school without the necessary social emotional skills to involve themselves positively in learning settings, as being one of the major stressors in the teaching and learning environment (Thompson & Raikes, 2007).

In their study of learners' competencies in Grade R to 3, McClelland, Morrison and Holmes (2000) state that teachers reported that most learners could not adhere to instructions or study on their own without becoming distracted.

While other studies by Lee, Grigg and Donahue (2007), Barbarin, Bryant, McCandies, Burchinal, Early, and Clifford, (2006) and Qi and Kaiser (2003) show empirical findings that most foundation learners have early reading difficulties and cannot achieve required reading skill criteria as stipulated by the 'No Child Left Behind' program before third grade. Half of the learners who participated in the study

were found to be struggling with concentration, especially those who came from a poor background.

Studies by Blase, Blase, and Du (2008) and Geving (2007) have reported poor student behaviour as the main contributing factors to teacher stress, the absence of administrative support and the extreme number of duties which are obligatory of new teachers who are required to complete their tasks but do not possess the necessary expertise to effective task-management.

Kyriacou (2001) notes that an area of research that has been neglected is the impact of the teacher-pupil interaction on the classroom environment. Teacher stress can be seen as potentially damaging to the classroom environment. The teacher might overreact with hostility towards learners if work has not been done, or done incorrectly. And this could have negative repercussions for both the learner and educator.

A range of mental illnesses can be diagnosed in childhood (Harrington & Holub, 2006). Children can display anxiety-based disorders, mood disorders, eating disorders, learning disorders, as well as attention and behavioural problems. A great percentage of these children who need mental health treatment fail to receive the treatment they need, therefore, creating a greater burden to the teaching and learning environment (Harrington & Holub, 2006).

In South Africa, the policy on corporal punishment in the schools has been abolished; there has been a debate on abolishing spanking of children in the home by parents/guardians (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). In their study of Children's experiences of corporal punishment, Breen, Daniels and Tomlison (2015) found that children exposed to violence are at risk for poor developmental outcomes and physical and mental health problems. This might aggravate conduct problems in children and create even more stress for the teacher. Brouwers and Tomic (2000) and Raver, Jones, Li-Grining, Zhai, Metzger and Solomon. (2009) in their research on the development of early childhood educators and classroom-based interventions suggested the provision of mental health consultants in order to help teachers implement reforms and policies to cope with learners' conduct difficulties.

Organisational stress was ranked as the major stress in a study by Akpochafo (2012) on perceived sources of occupational stress among primary school teachers in Delta

State of Nigeria. These teachers were found to be concerned mostly with salaries, fringe benefits, and promotion aspects. Teachers in South Africa have similar issues and national strikes (Rossouw, 2012) highlighting the organisational needs of teachers.

In a study of teacher characteristics as predictors of poor teacher-student relationships by Yoon (2002), teacher stress was found to predict the number of learners with whom they had a negative relationship. Negative relationships between teacher and learner may affect the classroom environment negatively, creating a stressful environment in which to work.

A study conducted in Israel on professional self-concept as a predictor of teacher burnout by Friedman and Farber (1992) found a correlation between a teacher's low self-concept and burnout. It is assumed that the teaching and learning environment should be one that is fulfilling to the teacher who is considered to be grooming future leaders. If it is not fulfilling to the individual then it could result in poor self-concept, which could further exacerbate the stress experienced by the teacher.

Poverty was found to be a major problem for many pupils in Zambian primary schools (Baggaley, Sulwe, Chilala, & Mashambe, 1999). This was considered to be the main source of stress for the teachers. Poverty and lack of resources may possibly be a source of stress to teachers in developing countries. Rural South African schools face a similar situation (Timaeus et al, 2011; Equal Education, 2011).

Louw, George, and Esterhuysen (2011) in a study on burnout amongst urban secondary school teachers, concluded that teachers in Namibia experienced stress levels that compared with those in most other countries. The study may have yielded different results, had it been conducted in a rural setting. Inadequate resources, poverty and poor admin support may be more prominent in rural areas.

Ngidi and Sibaya (2002) established that the degree of stress experienced by secondary school teachers in KwaZulu-Natal was fairly higher compared to other countries. The research is designed to measure the degree of stress in a rural setting.

In their study of stressors and stress symptoms of Life Science teachers in North Tshwane schools, Crafford and Viljoen (2013) found that the major stressors were:

lack of time to get through work, learner behaviour, discipline and attitude, as well as big classrooms.

It seems that the rural foundation phase teacher in South Africa experiences personal and work related stressors that may impact on the teaching and learning environment negatively. The learner entering school may not be ready for formal schooling as they appear to not have the necessary skills to learn effectively. The learners' behaviour and mental disorders may also be challenging to the teacher. Many learners in rural areas come from poor backgrounds. This may negatively affect their learning in the classroom.

This study hopes to confirm that rural teachers experience stress and it will also show that they do not have the necessary skills to manage stress effectively.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The recent face-off between a non-governmental organisation named Equal Education and the Minister of Basic Education on the implementation of basic norms and standard for all schools in South Africa shows that education support services especially for foundation phase are under-resourced and unable to deal with a large number of learners in need and therefore, their barriers to learning are not being addressed effectively (John, 2013). Brouwers and Tomic (2000) allude to the fact that such weaknesses in the education system have the potential to lead to teacher stress.

The study hoped to answer the following:

- What is the extent to which foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environments?
- What necessary skills do foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools respond with to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environments?

- What is the relationship between stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and the following variables; educational qualification, and years of teaching experience?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to determine the prevalence and management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools.

This study is conducted with the following objectives in mind:

- To ascertain the extent that foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environments.
- To establish the necessary skills foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools respond with to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environments.
- To determine the relationship between stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and the following variables; educational qualifications and years of teaching experience.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The researcher drew up a list of hypotheses in line with the research objectives as follows:

- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environments.
- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools do not have the necessary skills required to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environments.

- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and their educational qualifications
- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and years of teaching experience.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study attempted to obtain information from teachers in order to know, understand and assess factors that concern them with their work on a daily basis. The issue on stress experienced by teachers has caused a lot of fear, anxiety, nonchalance, confusion and depression, as teaching is regarded as one of the most high risk professions (Kovess-Masfesty, Rios-Seidel & Sevilla-Dedieu, 2007).

This study will assist in identifying the stressors associated with teaching and learning in foundation phase classrooms in rural primary schools. It will also look into whether teachers are adequately equipped to deal with stressors in their work environment.

The results generated from the study may provide the South African education system with a basis for developing an intervention program that will be aimed at assisting teachers to gain healthy strategies to deal with stress (Vaughan, 2013). A program may also be developed for prospective teachers and implemented into teacher training programs in the years they are studying. This may then equip the new teacher with skills to manage stress more effectively.

A teacher who can manage work stress better will have reduced level of exhaustion, thus being able to fulfil other familial duties like duties to spouse and children. This may be a great benefit to the home environment, further reducing levels of stress.

The school environment may be negatively affected by a teacher experiencing stress. Therefore, the ability to manage stress efficiently may lead to a teacher who is able to focus on educating the learner and coping with the several challenges that the learners bring (Wainwright & Calnan, 2002). A teacher may feel more confident about his or her ability to cope with challenges faced within the work environment.

Ultimately, the education system may benefit by having teachers that are motivated to stay in their jobs and are willing to have a positive influence on the teaching and learning environment.

1.7 Research Methodology

An exploratory research design will be used for this study. It offers an initial understanding into a problem in order to provide direction for further research (Babbie, 2010). The study is a non-experimental research with quantitative and qualitative methodology. Neumann (2003) states that research methodology is what makes social research scientific. The aim of the research study is to identify factors that cause stressors experienced by foundation phase rural teachers, and the management thereof.

1.7.1 Description and Selection of Participants

Babbie (2010) describes the population for a study as that group typically of people around whom one wants to draw conclusions, while a study population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected.

The researcher works in Mpumalanga province. The Ehlanzeni district was randomly selected for this study by pulling a name out of a hat. Two circuits were also randomly selected, namely; White-Hazy and White River circuits from the schools list provided by the Department of Education. The schools were selected by choosing the third school from each circuit. As a result fourteen schools were selected for the study. Hence, a total number of 150 participants, i.e., all the educators at the schools were requested to be a part of this study.

The data for the study was, therefore, collected from approximately 150 participants through the use of questionnaires from fourteen (14) rural schools within the Ehlanzeni District in the Mpumalanga Province. All the foundation phase teachers in each school were invited to be part of the study. They were all teaching foundation phase and varied in teaching experience. Heads of Department were also included in the study.

1.7.2 Description of Procedures

1.7.2.1 Questionnaire design and administration

The questions were designed to accommodate both open-ended and closed-ended questions, to avoid each participant giving different answers and making it hard to establish trends (Welman, Mitchell & Kruger, 2005; Jackson, 2008). The questions were conducted in English. The questions in some parts had both boxes to tick with predetermined answers and an option for answers that may fall outside the range of available answers.

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the Department of Education as well as selected schools' principals. The researcher met with the participants in order to brief them on the nature of the study. Confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation was discussed with the participants before they completed the questionnaires. They were required to give informed consent before completing the questionnaire. The questionnaires were handed out to participants by the researcher. The participants were asked to use own pens to complete the questionnaire. The researcher was available to answer questions the participants had concerning the study and the questionnaire. They were given a week to complete the questionnaires so that their school work is not affected. The questionnaires were then collected by the researcher after a week. At the end of the study, the researcher went back to the schools to give feedback on the findings.

1.7.2.2 Data analysis and interpretation

"Quantitative research collects and analyses data into numbers which, when manipulated, represent empirical facts in order to test an abstract hypothesis with variable constructs" (Neumann 2003, p.440).

The data will be analysed and interpreted in order to draw conclusions about understanding of rural foundation phase teachers' stressors and the management thereof. The analysis and interpretation will indicate whether the teachers have the necessary skills to deal with stress.

This study will be analysed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20.0). Jackson (2008, p.88) observes that "the quantitative researcher characteristically starts with a hypothesis for testing, observing and collecting data, statistically analysing the data, and drawing conclusion." The questionnaires will be

collected and the data will be loaded into the computer. For easy understanding, the data acquired for this study will be presented in simple tables and examined using simple graphs and figures that are computer-generated.

The study will also make use of qualitative measures to analyse open ended questions. Babbie (2007, as cited in De Vos et al, 2011) describes qualitative analysis as the "nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships." The data collected will be coded into categories and themes, and then presented in text, tables and/or figures (De Vos et al., 2011).

1.8 Validity

Content experts will be consulted in order to analyse the adequacy of the test as a content sample (Flitzpatrick, 1983). This includes judging how well each item of the test corresponds to the defined content domain that the item was written to reflect, as well as how well sets of items represent the content domains to which they are judged to correspond (Flitzpatrick, 1983).

Expert validity was the utilised in the validation of the research instrument. Experts in the field of stress and burnout, psychologists, were consulted in the development of the instrument. Simon (2011) views expert validity as one of the foremost evaluating strategies whereby, the expert is provided with an instrument in order to critique all the important aspects of the study to be reviewed. Grant and Davis (1997) contend that content experts are asked for their expert opinion in the judgement stage of the content validation of instruments.

De Vos et al., (2011) concord that content validity looks at whether the instrument really measures what we assume it is, or does the instrument provide an adequate sample of items that represent the concept. according to Rubin and Babbie (2001, pg. 194) as cited in De Vos et al., (2011), "content validity is established on the basis of judgements; that is researcher or other experts make judgements about whether the measure covers the universe of facets that make up the concept."

1.9 Ethical Considerations

Written consent was sought from the Department of Education, Mpumalanga Province for permission to conduct the study. A letter seeking permission to conduct the research was also sent to each principal of the 14 schools and included in the study.

All foundation phase teachers from the identified schools were given a letter that explains the purpose of the study, as well as seek their consent to participate in the study. The researcher will explain voluntary participation, anonymity, as well as confidentiality. This study does not pose any harm to the participants. The nature of the topic investigated has the potential to elicit negative emotions. The participants were made aware of psychological services that are available at Themba hospital as well as Rob Ferreira hospital, should a need arise.

Before the administration of the research tool, the informed participants will be required to give consent in the form of a signature. Informed consent and respect of participants will be maintained in this study (Welman, Mitchell, & Kruger, 2005). The researcher will be available to answer any questions that the participants might have.

The research results will be made available to the participating schools, the Department of Education, and the University of Zululand library.

1.10 Definition of key terms

Prevalence: This term refers to the proportion of individuals in a population who have the condition at a specified point in time (Porta, 2014).

Stressors: This term refers to a physical, psychological, or social forces that puts real or perceived demands on the body, emotions, mind or spirit of an individual (Hopper, 2016).

Foundation phase: This is the phase in primary education that starts from grade R up to grade 3.

1.11 Chapter Outline

Chapter One

This chapter includes problem statement, aims of the study, research methodology, and the methods of data analysis to be used in this study.

Chapter Two

This chapter will look into previous literature conducted on the topic of teacher stress, to include the most prevalent stressors in the teaching and learning environments. This chapter will also look into the management/or lack thereof of such stressors.

Chapter Three

The focus of chapter three will be the research methodology. It will include data collection and analysis methods.

Chapter Four

This chapter will present the interpretation of the data gathered. The data will be discussed in detail.

Chapter Five

This chapter contains a summary of the study, discussion of the research findings, and recommendations for the Department of Education. Possibility for further research, as well as limitations of the study will be discussed.

1.12 Summary

This chapter was an introduction to the study. The background and the motivation for the study were discussed. The chapter also looked at the research methodology that is used in the study. Brief literature review was also given. The following chapter reviews in-depth literature already available on stressors experienced by teachers as a result of their teaching and learning environment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the literature that is relevant to this study. It will look at the theoretical approaches that are appropriate and supportive in achieving the aims and objectives of this study. The chapter seeks to explore the prevalence and management of stressors experienced by teachers. Although the focus of the study is on foundation phase teachers in rural areas, in this chapter, different avenues will be explored.

A teacher may find the demands of the profession to be stressful. The demands of the job as well as family responsibilities can all contribute to stress experienced by the teacher. Stress can have detrimental effects on the health and happiness of the teacher, the learners, colleagues, and families they interact with on a daily basis.

Many studies have attempted to explain the main causes of stress and the management thereof (Kyriacou, 2001). Teaching as an occupation has become very stressful and may be regarded as one of the high stress professions (Kovess-Masfesty, Rios-Seidel & Sevilla-Dedieu, 2007). Koen and Ebrahim (2013) also agree that the teaching profession reports one of the highest levels of stressors experienced in the work place. It may be intensified by increasing workload brought about by curriculum changes. Berkhout (1999) stressed that such changes can be contributors to the stress experienced by the teacher. A study by Makeleni, p.74 (2014) indicated that teachers are still unsure of the design of formal assessment and still have a gap in understanding how to design formal assessments in line with the curriculum assessment guidelines.

Teachers' responsibilities include preparing for the lesson, classroom teaching and management, instilling good morals, as well as extracurricular activities. Travers and Cooper (1996) looked into the responsibility of teachers as that includes being surrogate parents, social workers and educators to the learners. This responsibility may weigh heavily upon a teacher who works in unfavourable conditions, such as

poor infrastructure and inadequate resources, which may be a reality to teachers who work in rural schools.

2.2 The Concept of Stress

Many authors have attempted to explain stress in the teaching and learning environment. Colman (2008) describes stress as psychological and physical strain or tension generated by physical, emotional, social, economic, or occupational circumstances, events, or experiences that are difficult to manage or endure. When the individual has enough resources to cope with the demands, this may be seen as a challenge. However, when demands surpass the resources available, they are then viewed as stressors and the stress response is triggered (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Russel (2000) looks at stress as an overload of demand that is made upon the individual's mind and body capabilities to adapt which becomes evident physically and/or mentally. These may manifest as symptoms of stress.

2.3 Eustress versus Distress

The terms eustress and distress differentiate adaptive from maladaptive features of reactions to stress (Kupriyanov & Zhdanov, 2014). Stress is understood to be either positive or negative. Eustress is understood to be positive and distress is understood to be endowed with negative features. The positivity or good in stress is found in its ability to motivate individuals to self-actualise and in events that signify positive development among other things. Stress as a maladaptive entity is seen in experiences that hinder development and in events that undermine wellbeing.

Scholars who study stress seem to differ in their conception of what characteristics of stress account for the differences between eustress and distress (Kupriyanov & Zhdanov, 2014). One of broadly two schools of thought looks to physiology to explain this. The other school of thought explains this phenomenon using cognitive psychology. From the physiological standpoint, eustress and distress are hormonal reactions to a stressful event. Thus, the experience of a stressor as either positive or negative depends on the hormones stimulated in an individual's system.

The main critique of the physiological explanation is informed by the understanding that, from this perspective, it appears that eustress and distress are two reactions that can occur simultaneously. This dilemma seems to have led to the exploration of the cognitive part to the experience of stress. According to Kupriyanov and Zhdanov (2014), scholars reached a conclusion that cognitive evaluation accounts for the difference between eustress and distress. Thus, whether stress can be considered negative or positive depends on an individual's appraisal of the stress.

This means that Colligan and Higgins' (2005) heavy reliance on intensity and duration of arousal to differentiate between eustress and distress may fail to put the role of cognitive evaluation in the right context. However, Colligan and Higgins (2005) go further to explain that one's evaluation of a stressor depends on his or her appraisal of his or her capacity to cope with the stressor.

In general, individuals will have a cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and physical response to both eustress and distress. These responses are directly related to the individual's capacity to cope with the presented stressor. In an individual's cognitive appraisal; how we interpret, a stressor is directly related to the individual's resources for coping.

2.4 International Studies on Stressors in the Teaching and Learning Environment

The prevalence of teachers experiencing high levels of stressors is an endemic worldwide. International studies that look into stressors experienced by teachers appear to indicate that this is a common phenomenon worldwide. The subject of teacher stress seems to have attracted a lot of attention (Kyriacou, 2001) with scholars aiming to provide insight into the stressors experienced by teachers worldwide.

The nature and intensity of stressors may vary across countries worldwide. Teachers' experiences of stressors may also vary due to their own appraisal of the stressor. However, there seems to be a common trend on the stressors experienced by teachers. Dunham and Varma (1998) in their study of stress in teachers, looked

at the major categories of the sources of stress that have been consistently found to be widely present. They are:

- Learner misbehaviour
- Work overload
- Poor relationships with fellow colleagues and school principal
- Poor working conditions and inadequate resources
- Poor promotion prospects (Dunham & Varma, 1998).

Learner misbehaviour is mentioned as one of the major stressors experienced by teachers (Dunham & Varma, 1996). Blase, Blase, and Du (2008), and Geving (2007) also report poor student behaviour as one of the main contributing factors to teacher stress. Geving (2007) adds that teachers who report more behaviour problems in their classrooms are more likely to experience the most stress in their work. This indicates that poor learner behaviour problems can have an impact on the teacher's wellbeing. In his American study of sources of stress among teachers, Blasé (1986) also identified learner misbehaviour as a major contributor to the stressors experienced by teachers in the workplace. He emphasises that stress that results from discipline issues is associated with teachers having to play the different part of a babysitter, or a ruthless authoritarian. This can easily cause responsibility overload.

It may be daunting for a newly qualified teacher to work under stressful conditions. Although they may be more likely to start off in high spirits, the difficulties within the profession may soon dishearten the new teacher. They may still be unsure of when and how to discipline learners. Fuller (1969, p. 220) calls discipline in the classroom as the “blatant consistent concern of most new teachers.” A disciplinary plan may take a while for a new teacher to develop.

Liethwood (2006, cited in Kyriacou, 2001) found that in Canada, teachers in primary schools experience extreme levels of stress and burnout. This may also be true for South African schools, especially those in rural areas.

Murphy (1995) mentions that stress can be the result of any number of situations in the workplace. He demonstrated the following as categories for workplace stressors:

- Workload; which includes hours spent at work, as well as the work environment.
- Work relationships; such as poor relations co-workers.
- Career development; which entails advancement issues
- Responsibility within organisation; such as role ambiguity.
- Organisational structure and climate, management and communications styles (Murphy 1995).

2.5 South African Studies on Stressors in the Teaching and Learning Environment

The education system in South Africa has experienced a many changes especially with regards to the curriculum. This on its own can pose a threat to the teachers' self-efficacy in terms of job performance. Teachers may be overwhelmed by the added workload and extracurricular duties that they need to perform, such as sport and cultural activities.

Crafford and Viljoen (2013) in their study of teacher stress in Tshwane found the following to be the major stressors experienced by teachers:

- Lack of time to get through work
- Learner behaviour
- Discipline and attitude
- Overcrowded classrooms.

This profile is almost comparable to that which Dunham and Varma (1996) found in their London study.

Marais and Meier (2000) found poor learner behaviour to be a major source of stress for teachers. They state that maladaptive behaviour and failure to conform to societal expectations may be a result of feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. This may cause a conflict between learner and teacher and further add on the stress experienced by the teacher, while the learner also fails to receive the attention that he or she needs.

Mainstreaming may also prove to be a challenge for teachers. According to Engelbrecht and Snyman (1999), teachers are not equipped with the needed disposition and skills that will enable them to handle difficulties that arise due learners with special needs.

2.5.1 The Implications of Teaching Foundation Phase

Learners in the foundation phase are at a stage where they still need a great deal of attention and warmth from their teachers. Koen and Ebrahim (2013) describe this stage as the time of greatest risk and greatest opportunity. Whitebread (1996) stresses that at this age, children need love, security and emotional warmth. This might be a challenge for a teacher who is already compounded by stressors such as an overcrowded classroom or work overload.

Biggs and Tang (2007) state that studies conducted in the Philippines, Jamaica, and Brazil highlight the significance of early cognitive and social-emotional stimulation of a child in order to prepare for optimal functioning later on in life. Therefore, proper grooming in early childhood is crucial to the future functioning of the child.

2.5.2 The Condition of Schools in Rural Areas

South Africa is still regarded as a developing country. A large number of people are still living in poverty. Poor infrastructure and inadequate resources may still be a reality for schools in rural areas. Timaeus et al. (2011) found that poverty is a major problem in the rural schools.

Lack of resources and poor infrastructure in these schools may exacerbate teacher stress. In such areas, a teacher's responsibility may easily include that of a caregiver. Gardiner (2008) states that poverty and poor infrastructure are reflected in the quality of education available in rural schools.

2.6 Management of Stressors in the Teaching and Learning Environment

Stress is almost inevitable in the teaching and learning environment. Although it is often perceived as negative, Van der Bank (2001) suggests that it should not be removed entirely from the work environment, but should be managed in a way that will minimise the negative effects it might have on teachers.

With stressor already observed to be emanating from different sources, the management should also be multi-dimensional. A more holistic approach to the management of stress would be welcome.

Wainwright and Calnan (2002) recommend an approach to the management of stress as that which starts with the identifying the individual's source of stress in order to enable therapeutic intervention. It can be said that teachers experience stressors differently due to their dispositions. Therefore, individual therapeutic intervention may need to be tailored according to the teacher's needs.

Stressors in the education system cannot be avoided altogether. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers learn to manage stress and cope in stressful circumstances. However, it is not possible to avoid stressful conditions completely. Van der Merwe (2003) is cited by Van Deventer and Kruger (2006) emphasising that stress management should be part of the school's functioning as well as individual teachers' practice on a daily basis.

Lack of skills to manage stressors can easily result in serious mental health problems such as depression. Mental health practitioners therefore have a crucial role to play in assisting teachers to cope with work related stressors. Socio-economic factors may exacerbate stressors experienced by the foundation phase teacher who work in a rural area. Mental health practitioners may also not be readily available in rural settings. This is regrettable considering the possibility that teachers in rural settings would benefit from the services of a Psychologist, Social worker, or Counsellor. The rural teacher would benefit from working cooperatively with a mental health practitioner to bring about the diagnosis, intervention and treatment of stress related problems.

Brouwers and Tomic (2000) and Raver et al. (2009) in their research on the development of early childhood educators and classroom-based interventions suggested the provision of mental health consultants in order to help teachers implement reforms and policies to cope with learners' conduct difficulties.

Kipps-Vaughan (2013) suggests that teacher wellness programs within the school environment may have a positive outcome in reducing stress and burnout in teachers. This may lead to reduced absenteeism, positive self-efficacy, job satisfaction and a generally improved teaching and learning environment that allows the teacher to attend to the needs of the learners.

Cooley and Yovanoff (1996) focused more on physiological coping strategies against stress and recommended the following:

- Aerobic activity. This entails any form of activity that increases the pulse rate. This includes swimming, and jogging.
- Biofeedback, which is an electronic measurement of mind-body functions and the practice of controlling those functions.
- Muscle relaxation. This is self-regulated progressive relaxation that allows for the individual to experience a state of extreme restfulness.

Davies, Ellison, Osborne and West Burnham (1990) suggested two stages in their stress management strategy to be used at an individual or school level. Stage A, which entails recognition and analysis of the problem, and Stage B, which is focused on planning and generating alternative solutions. Such a strategy would be useful in managing stressors in individuals as well as in a group.

Any successful stress management program should be designed such that it brings about a change in the perception, appraisal, as well as management of stressors. The teacher should feel strengthened and be able to cope amidst stressors. This might lead a decline in absenteeism, job dissatisfaction and health problems that arise as a result of stressors experienced in the teaching and learning environment.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Occupational Stress

Occupational stress theory is also called work stress by Cooper and Marshall (1978, pg. 112), who define occupational stress as the "condition wherein job-related factors interact with the worker to change, either disrupt or enhance, his or her psychological or physiological conditions such that the individual's mind and/or body are forced to deviate from normal functioning". The authors pointed out that the main consequences of stress to the organisations are in the forms of high job discontent, absenteeism, low morale, loss of energy, poor communication and poor-decision making. This is linked to the Self-Worth theory and Goal theory (Covington, 2000, Kelchtermans, 2005) which are all interrelated.

2.7.2 Transaction and Coping Theory

The Transactional and Coping theory is one of the Integrative models of occupational stress hypothesised by Parker, Martin, Colmar and Liem (2012). It is described as the process part within the integrative model. The Integrative model combines three areas of connectivity which are process, context and components (Parker et al., 2012). The stressors were identified by Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) as physical environment, individual level which includes roles and career development variables, group level based on relationship, organisational level which includes climate, structure, task features and job plan and extra organisational factors. Transaction and Coping theory highlights the transaction between an individual and the environment over time (Cooper & Marshall, 1978; Parker et al., 2012).

The Transactional and Coping theoretical approach to stress and burnout considers the role of integrating individual differences to underlying psychological variables and procedures introduced in reaction to teaching situations that can encourage stable pattern which could assist person's disposition to use particular coping tactics to perceived challenges (Parker et al., 2012). The costs of absenteeism and abrasion which are the results of ill-managed health and experienced burnout have made it a significant area for researchers to seek clarification on how teachers perceived the demands of the profession and their coping mechanism to meeting assessed

demands. Numerous factors which are referred to as stressors may be linked to occupational stress. Through the application of the transactional and coping within the Integrative model, the inclusion of teachers' stress reduction in training and intervention would assist foundation rural teachers to be better able to cope with job stressors. This may result in improved efficacy which may spill into the classroom.

2.7.3 Self-Worth Theory

The Self-Worth theory looks at what stressors teachers perceive as threats to their self-worth in the school environment. Self-worth theory's basic intent to motivational initiative is the upholding and endorsing of self-worth among teachers (Butler, 2007; Covington, 2000). It provides a motivational model for the teacher. The theory of Self-worth within the school context explains the stressors that teachers perceive as threatening to their self-worth, the behaviour to control damage or to uplift self-worth and the efficiency of the protective strategies of self-worth. Studies have shown that teachers are vulnerable to their self-worth (Kelchtermans, 2005; Zembylas, 2003) due to the pressures of social moral, social and professional expectations of exemplary models teachers should always maintain.

The teaching role of teachers is seen as that of great importance, and any perceived attack on it may be viewed as a threat to this role therefore deemed as stressful (Kelchtermans, 2005). Scholars have described how the perceived threat to the teaching role would be assessed as threatening in connection to self-worth or at risk self-image. For example, learners' misconduct, teacher performance measurement scales, regular school and students ratings, etcetera (Kelchtermans, 2005; Zembylas, 2003).

With the perceived self-worth cherished much within the teaching profession as foundation phase teachers value the positive role model ascribed to their careers, it is appropriate to enable them to establish coping mechanisms in assessing threatening challenges. To prepare teachers from feeling embarrassed, losing respect to important others, appearing incompetent, which is threatening to their self-esteem, Covington (2000) makes the self-worth theory application fitting to address stressors linked to self-confidence more especially in the rural area.

2.7.4 Goal Theory

Goal Theory looks into the component aspect of the integrative model as it addresses the preservation of self-worth and protection of teachers' identity as role models (Covington, 2000; Parker et al., 2012). The Goal Theory provides relevant constituents for the individual's skill to mastery orientation, self-worth threat or failure avoidance through problem focused or emotional focused behavioural responses which affect teacher's experiences of burnout or engagement. In the failure-avoidant orientation, the goal theory seeks out to reduce of chances of failure and the expectant results of failure as it arises from fear of failure (Covington, 2000; Martin & Marsh, 2003). Foundation phase teachers focusing on the task to preserve self-worth through improving their competencies would make their task more enjoyable in order not to be viewed as less competent by community members who must have put more faith in their abilities.

The foundation phase teachers can draw out goals to achieve, more especially since they are more looked upon in the rural schools to provide the much needed leadership qualities and not be weighed down by stressors. Goal theory maintains that success and competence depend on effort, and that obstacles can be eradicated through efforts (Covington, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

2.8 Summary

This chapter discussed literature already available on the prevalence and management of stressors within the teaching profession. The chapter has outlined on the theoretical framework of stress that applies to this study. This was done with specific focus on the teaching and learning environment. International, as well as South African studies on stressors experienced by teachers were discussed. The interpretation of the main concepts have been discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology are the procedures used in making systematic observation or any procedures used in obtaining data or information as part of a research study. According to Babbie (2010), research methodology are the methods, techniques and procedures that are employed in the process of implementing the research design or research plan, as well as the underlying principles and assumption that underlie their use. This chapter looked on the research methodology of the study, research design, population sample, instrument, delimitation, ethical considerations, values of the study and all the procedures for collection of data. The aim of this chapter is to show details of how this research is conducted. It will also look at the research questions, objectives and hypetheses of the study.

3.2 Statement of the Problem

The study answered the following questions:

- What is the extent to which foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environments?
- What necessary skills do foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools respond with to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environments?
- What is the relationship between stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and the following variables; educational qualification, and years of teaching experience?

3.3 Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted with the following objectives in mind:

- To ascertain the extent that foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environments.
- To establish the necessary skills foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools respond with to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environments.
- To determine the relationship between stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and the following variables; educational qualification and years of teaching experience.

3.4 Research Hypothesis

The researcher drew up a list of assumptions and hypotheses in line with the research objectives as follows:

- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environments.
- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools do not have the necessary skills required to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environments.
- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and their educational qualifications
- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and years of teaching experience.

3.5 Research Design

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2011) the research design is the plan for collecting and utilising data so that desired information can be obtained. This

study will use a mixed method which means both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used in the study. The reason that the researcher chose the mixed methods is due to the fact that one single approach would have been inadequate for gaining a thorough understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2014). The study made use of an exploratory sequential design, which according to Creswell (2014, pg.6), “the intent is to use qualitative methods and then use quantitative methods to help explain the qualitative results in more depth”.

3.5.1 Population

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2011) define population as the large pool from which our sampling element is drawn and to which the findings are generated. The population was all foundation phase teachers in Ehlanzeni district, Mbombela. They all had an equal right to be included in the study and out of the population a sample was drawn.

3.5.1.1 Sampling

A sample is a group or unit of people to be included in the study and from the population that where the sample is chosen. According to De Vos et al. (2011), a sample comprises elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study or it can be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which we are interested. Babbie (2010) states that study population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actuality selected. In order to have a random selection method, the researcher must set up some process or procedure that assures that the different units in the population have equal probabilities of being chosen.

In this study probability sampling was used. De Vos (2011) states probability sampling method is any method of sampling that utilizes some form of random selection. It is based on purely randomization.

The Ehlanzeni district was selected out of four districts. Two circuits were randomly selected, namely; White-Hazy and White River circuits from the schools list provided by the Department of Education. The schools were also randomly selected by choosing the third school from each circuit. As a result fourteen schools were selected for the study. A total number of 150 participants was anticipated for the study.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected using the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to the foundation phase teachers in the selected schools. The total number of teachers in the selected schools was 147. Therefore; a total number of 147 questionnaires were distributed to the participants. The language that was used to collect the data is English as all the teachers were assumed to understand the language.

3.6.1 The Questionnaire

According to Sekaran (1984), survey questionnaires are pre-formulated written set of questions to which participants record their answers. Leedy (1998) agrees by stating that its basic function is to collect data. He further stated that the questionnaires must be planned or designed to fulfil a definite research objective. The questionnaire was carefully constructed with both structured and unstructured questions to facilitate maximum response and at the same time, obtain more detailed information. The questionnaire was made up of four sections which are sections; A, B, C and D.

Section A consisted of biographical details of the participant, section B focused on concerns that teachers may experience as a result of personal stressors and Section C of the questionnaire focused on the concerns that teachers may experience as a result of work environment stressors. Sections B and C comprised of close-ended questions and quantitative data was gathered from these sections. Finally, section D focused on how teachers handle stress and burnout. All the questions in this section were open-ended questions.

3.7 Ethical consideration

The researcher obtained a letter of consent from the Department of Education, Mpumalanga Province to conduct the research. Ethical clearance from the University of Zululand was also granted for this study. Both these letters were presented to the participants before conducting the study. The participants were also given a consent letter to sign prior to completing the questionnaire. The researcher explained in detail the objectives of the study, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw from this research. Participants were required to sign a consent form which indicates their

willingness to participate in the research study. All relevant research documents were handled as private and confidential and only the researcher had access to them.

3.7.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Grinyer (2012) making data anonymous implies removing the participant's name in order to protect one's identity. The researcher took as much precaution as was possible to protect anonymity by handling data with utmost care. Confidentiality relates to the protection of the data collected. Where the aim of the research is specifically to access private feelings, and concerns, the researcher was clear about how the confidentiality of that data will be respected. The questionnaires were collected by the researcher and immediately sealed in an envelope in order to protect confidential information.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Du Plooy (2002) states that face validity, expert validity, criterion-based validity and construct validity are various procedures or methods that could be used to support the validity of a measurement. In this study, content validity was used. Content experts were consulted in order to analyse the adequacy of the test as a content sample (Flitzpatrick, 1983). This includes judging how well each item of the test corresponds to the defined content domain that the item was written to reflect, as well as how well sets of items represent the content domains to which they are judged to correspond (Flitzpatrick, 1983).

Expert validity was utilised in the validation of the research instrument. Experts in the field of stress; psychologists in the University of Zululand were consulted in the development of the instrument. Simon (2011) views expert validity as one of the foremost evaluating strategies whereby, the expert is provided with an instrument in order to critique all the important aspects of the study to be reviewed. Grant and Davis (1997) contend that content experts are asked for their expert opinion in the judgement stage of the content validation of instruments.

Joseph, Hair, Babin, Money and Samuel (2003) explain that reliability is associated with consistency of a measure and validity is related with accuracy. If there are any

interpretations of the findings, the credibility of the study must be recognised through the determination of its reliability and validity.

3.9 Trustworthiness

According to Krefting (1991), models used to evaluate quantitative research are rarely relevant to qualitative research. He looks at trustworthiness as a tool that can be used in the evaluation of qualitative research. Billups (2014) describes trustworthiness as the framework for evaluating qualitative. There are four (4) elements in trustworthiness noted by Billups (2014), namely; credibility, consistency, transferability and confirmability. In order to ensure trustworthiness in the qualitative analysis, the researcher used Billups' elements of trustworthiness as follows:

- **Credibility.** To ensure credibility, the researcher aimed at safeguarding that the findings are truthful, capturing a complete picture of the subject under study. The research was conducted in the participants' familiar environments. The researcher was also familiar with the school settings.
- **Consistency.** This concept looks at the dependability of the study. This was achieved by asking graduate students with experience in research to act as inspectors of the questionnaire.
- **Transferability.** The careful construction and use of qualitative instruments ensured that the findings of the study is applicable in similar settings. The study was based in rural primary schools in Mbombela. The findings should be applicable to a similar situation, such as similar rural primary schools in South Africa.
- **Confirmability.** The researcher was aware of her own preconceived ideas and bias surrounding the subjects under study, and therefore ensured that the results of the study were as accurate as possible.

3.10 Data analysis

A large number of statistical techniques are available for analysing data and the researcher decided to use the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20.0) to analyse data in this study. Welman, Mitchell and Kruger (2005) states that SPSS is a statistical software program that gives the statistical tools for data exploration and data descriptions. All statistical routines are complemented by graphs, figures and tables to enhance the user's visual understanding of the statistic. The program performs the standard statistical computations as well as a selection of bivariate descriptive and inferential statistics.

The study also made use of qualitative measures to analyse open-ended questions. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' and Delport (2011) cited Babbie (2010, pg.378) who describes qualitative analysis as "the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships." Thematic analysis was used in the study. The data was collected and thoroughly read to find common themes. Then the researcher used colour coding in order to group the data into categories and themes. The data was then be presented in text and tables (De Vos et al., 2011).

3.11 Summary

Research methodology reveals the process and the tools used in a research. The plan of how the research will be conducted is revealed in the research design. This research used a mixed method in order to understand the stressors experienced by the foundation phase teachers. Therefore the research methods in this study were selected carefully in order to ensure validity and reliability.

The next chapter is focused on the analysis of the data. This will look at both the quantitative and qualitative measures of data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study made use of both quantitative and qualitative measures of analysing data in an attempt to investigate the prevalence and management of stressors experienced by teachers in this study. The data is presented in both text and graphs. The quantitative measures allowed for the statistical analysis of the data, while the qualitative measures focused on the non-numerical analysis and presentation of the data (De Vos et al., 2001).

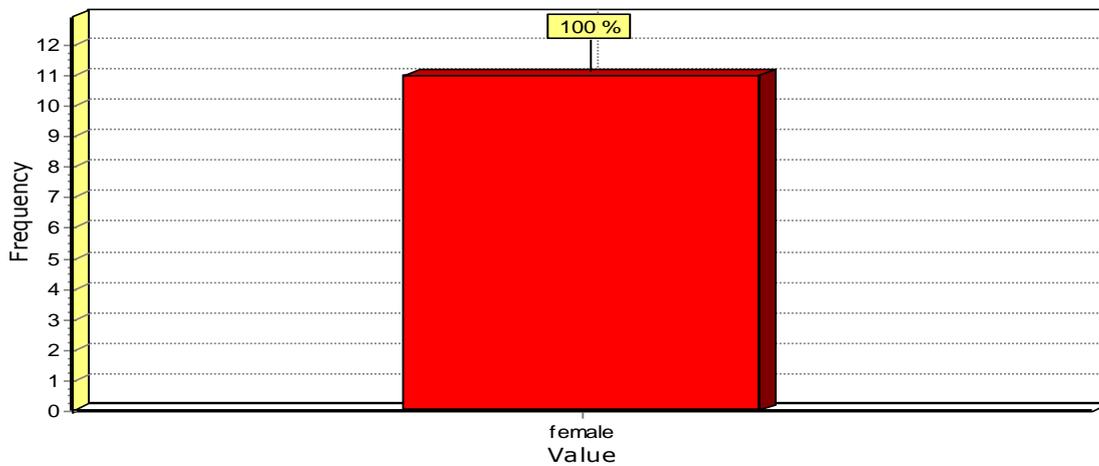
A total number of 147 questionnaires were handed out and 118 were completed and returned by the participants.

When analyzing all the data collected the researcher focused on the list of assumptions and hypotheses that had been designed in line with the research objectives. They were as follows:

- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environment.
- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools do not have the skills required to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environment.
- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and their educational qualifications
- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and years of experience.

4.2. Quantitative data analysis

4.2.1 Gender

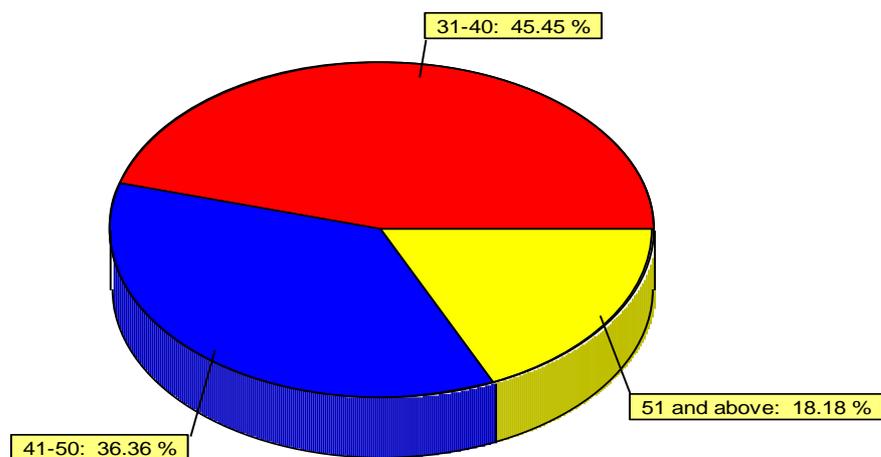


$N=118$

Figure 4.1 Participants' gender

The participants in this study were females only.

4.2.2 Age group

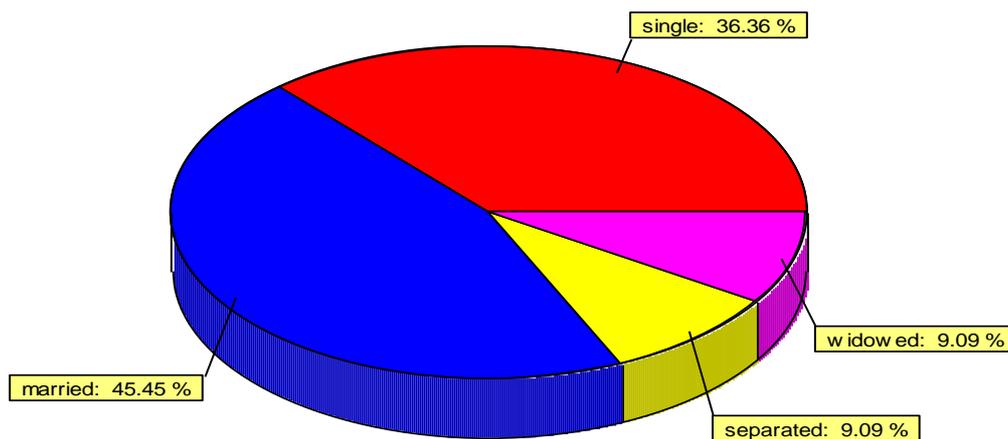


$N=118$

Figure 4.2 Age group

The figure 4.2 illustrates the age categories of the participants in the study which ranged from 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, 51 years and above. There were no participants in the 21-30 years age group. The participants were grouped as follows: 45.45% were between 31-40 years of age, 36.36% were between 41-50 years of age, and about 18.18% were 51 years old and above. The highest percentage was the 31-40 year group which constitutes about 45.45% of the sample population.

4.2.3 Marital status

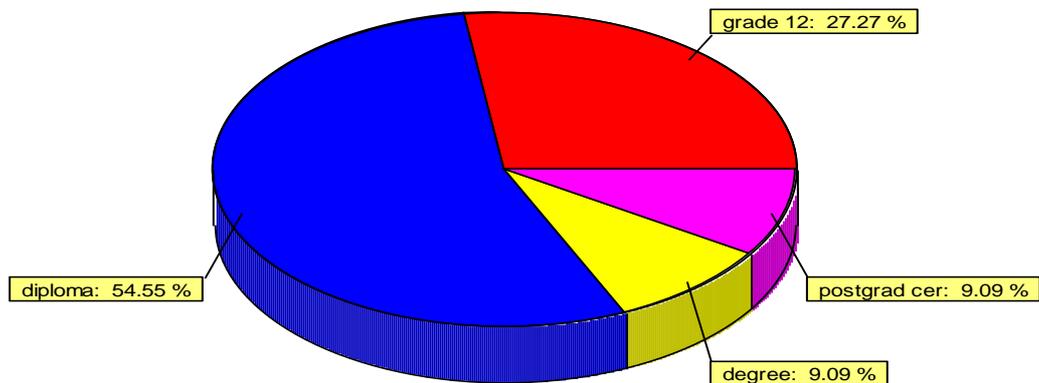


N=118

Figure 4.3 Marital status

This figure 4.3 reveals the participants' marital status. It indicates that 45.45% of participants are married, 36.36% were single, 9.09% separated, and 9.09% widowed. The results illustrate that the highest percentage of participants in this study are married.

4.2.4 Highest qualification

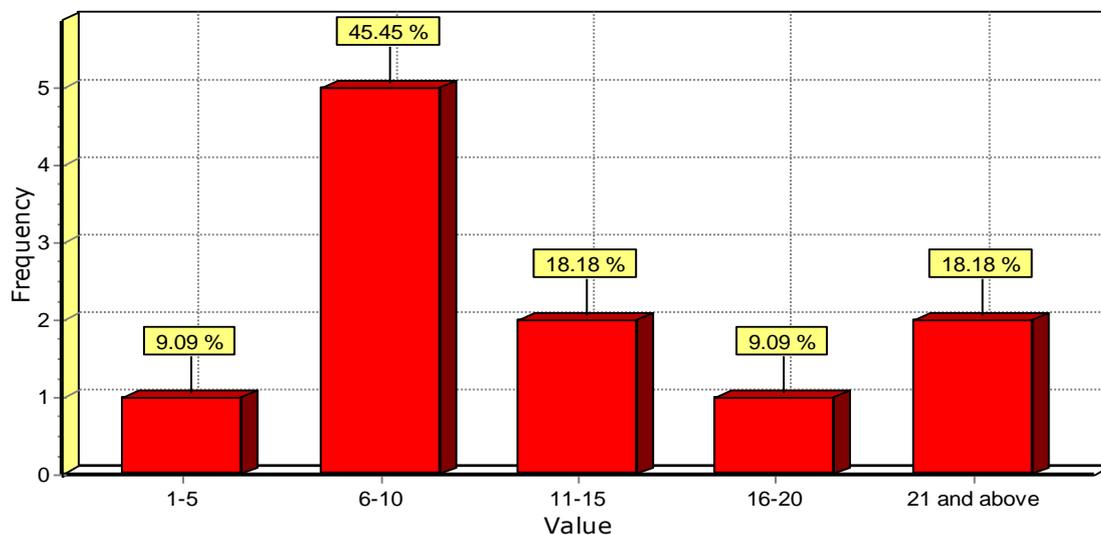


N=118

Figure 4.4 Highest qualification

The pie graph 4.4 indicates that 27.27% obtained grade 12, 54.55% of the participants have college diplomas, 9.09% of the participants have undergraduate university degrees, and 9.09% obtained postgraduate certificates as their highest qualifications.

4.2.5 Years of teaching experience

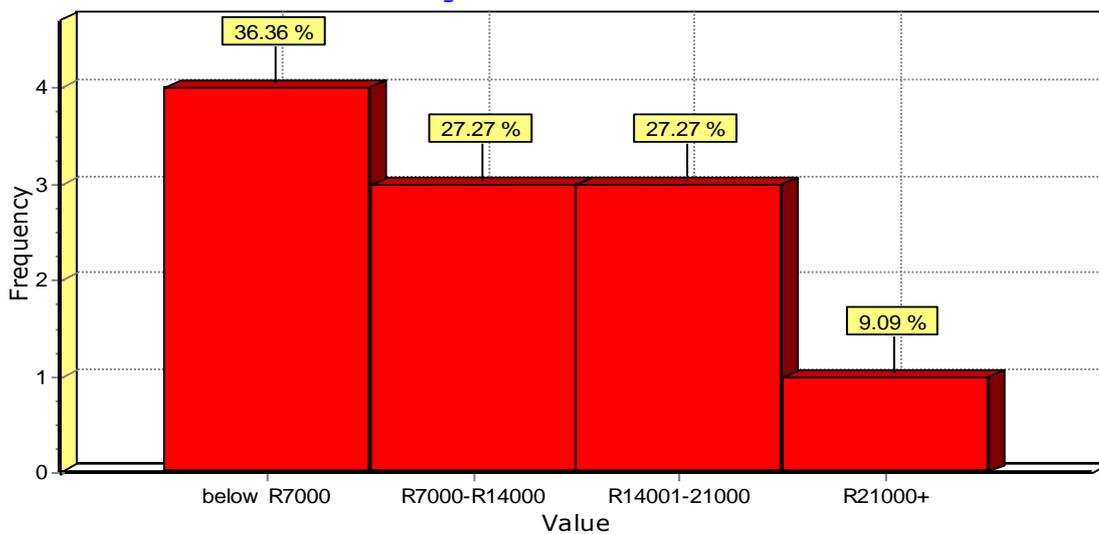


N=118

Figure 4.5 Years of teaching experience

The bar graph 4.5 illustrates the participants' years of teaching experience. There were 45.45% of the participants with 6-10 years of teaching experience, 18.18% of the participants with 11-15 years and 21 and above years of teaching experience respectively. Participants with 1-5 years and 16-20 years of teaching experience obtained the lowest percentage of the total population which is only 9.09% respectively. This was an indication that the majority of the participants in the study had only 6-10 years of teaching experience.

4.2.6 Salary range



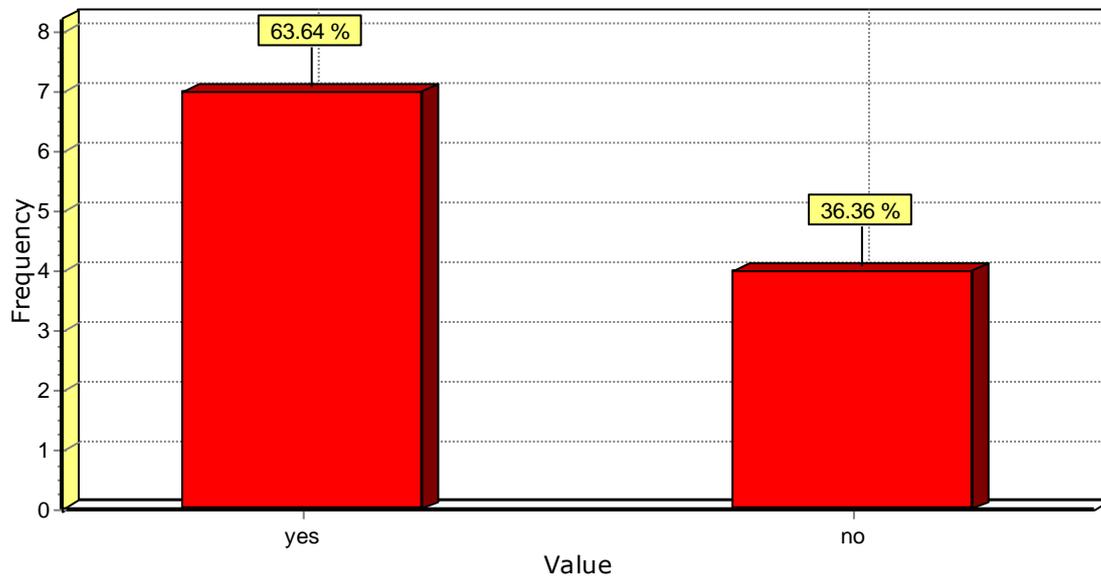
N=118

Figure 4.6 Salary range

With regards to earning potential 36.36% of the participants indicated that they earn below R7000. Participants who earned within the ranges of R7000-R14000 and R14001-R21000 made up 27.27%, respectively. Only 9.09% of the total population

sample earned R21000 and above. The majority of the participants earn below R21000 per month.

4.2.7 Teaching as a first preference

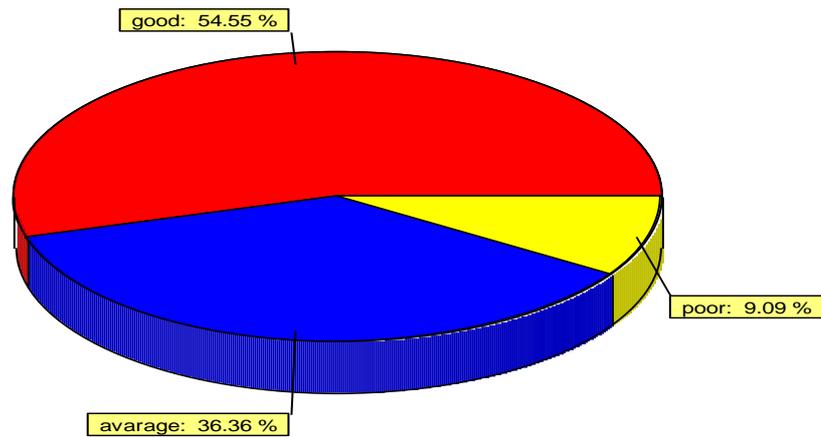


$N=118$

Figure 4.7 Teaching as a first preference

This graph 4.7 reflects that the majority of the participants (63.64%) chose teaching as a first preference in terms of their career options however, 36.36% of the participants indicated that teaching was not their first preference. Teaching was an alternative. They had to opt out into teaching. Levels of commitment may differ if it is not the preferred option.

4.2.8 Health status

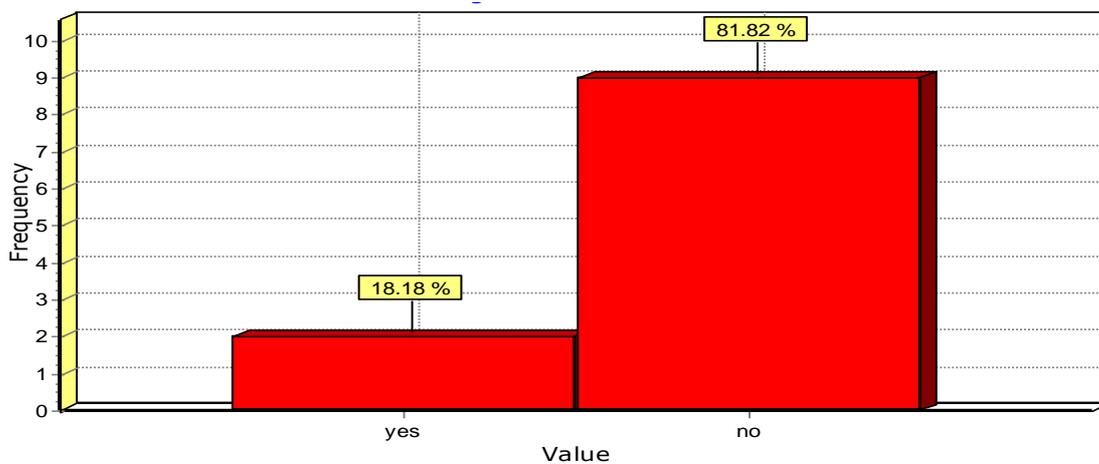


N=118

Figure 4.8 Health status

The majority of respondents (54.55%) revealed that they had good health, with 36.36% of the participant reporting that their health is average. The lowest percentage was those who reported poor health (9.09%). This was an indication that poor health was not a significant problem for the participants.

4.2.9 Chronic illnesses

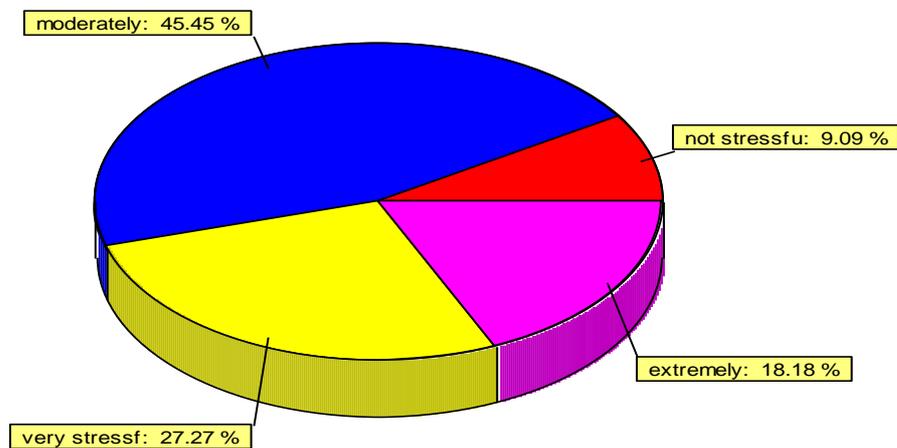


N=118

Figure 4.9 Chronic illnesses

The graph 4.9 confirms that health related issues are not a major concern for teachers who participated in this study, since 81.82% of the participants mentioned that do not suffer from any chronic illness, while only 18.18% indicated that they suffer from chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, ulcers, arthritis and hypertension which may require some form of medical intervention.

4.2.10 Home circumstances as a source of stress



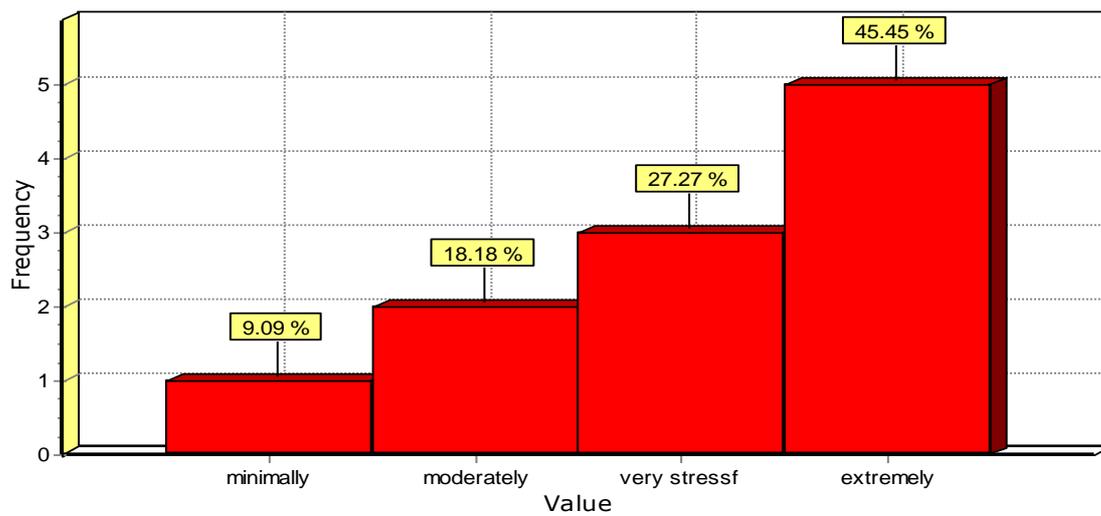
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Figure 4.10 Home circumstances as a source of stress

Little less than half the participants (45%) reported that they were moderately stressed by their home circumstances, while 27.27% indicated that they found their home circumstances very stressful, and 18.18% of the participants found their home circumstances to be extremely stressful. The minority (9.09%) indicated that their home circumstances were not stressful at all. Home circumstances appear to be one of the more stressful environments for the majority of the participants (91%) in this

study indicating that home circumstances present as either a moderately, very or extremely stressful circumstance.

4.2.11 Financial concerns as a source of stress

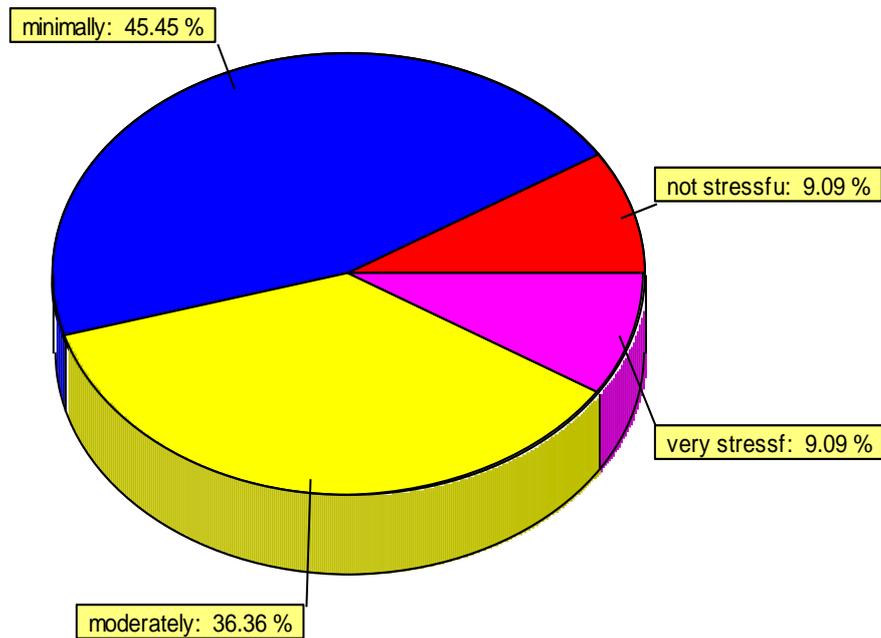


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Figure 4.11 Financial concerns as a source of stress

The financial concerns of the participants as disclosed in the bar graph above reveal that the majority of participants (45.45%) are extremely stressed about their financial situation, 27.27% of participants are very stressed about their financial concerns and 9.09% indicated that their financial concerns were minimally stressful. None of the participants indicated their financial concerns as not stressful at all. This is an indication that financial concerns was a universal concern amongst all participants in this research study.

4.2.12 Issues regarding housing

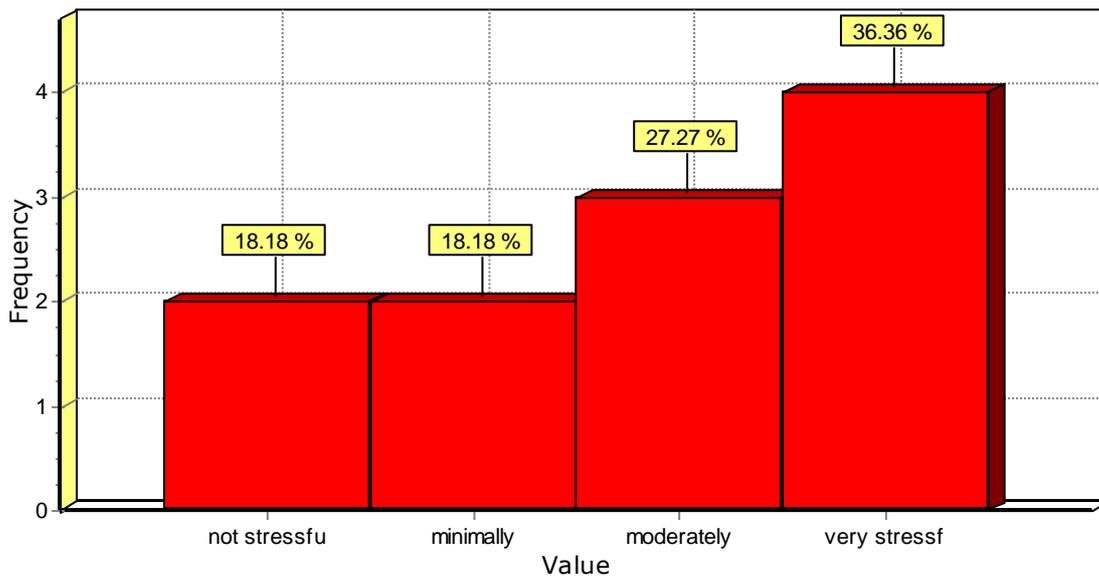


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Figure 4.12 Issues regarding housing

Participants also find issues around housing stressful with 45.45% of participants mentioning that they are minimally stressed as a rest of issues related to their housing needs while, 36.36% show that they are moderately stressed due to housing issues, and finally 9.09% of participants demonstrated that they are very stressed. This could be as a result of poor or inadequate housing or lack of support when attempting to source housing since many teachers teach away from home.

4.2.13 Time constraints as a source of stress

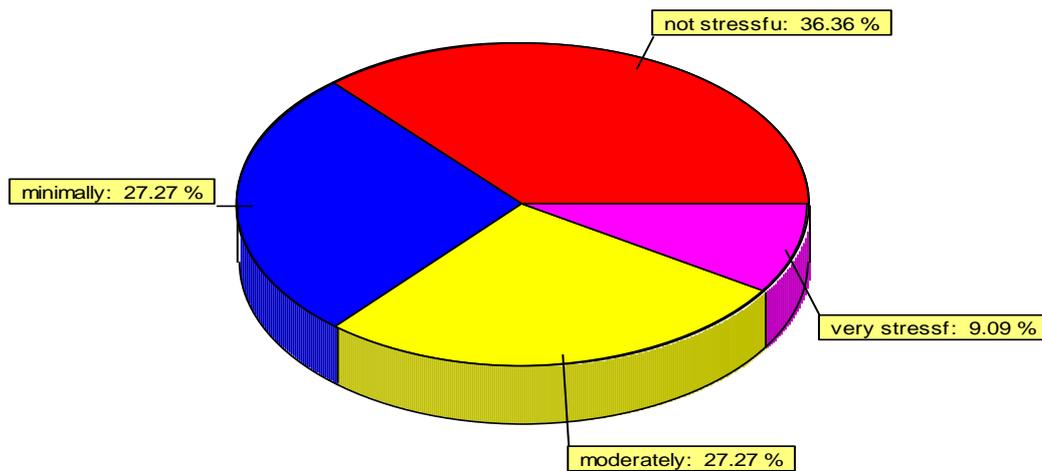


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Figure 4.13 Time constraints as a source of stress

Finding time to spend with friends and family can very stressful especially if one has a profession that places serious time constraints on the individual. Participants felt that it was particularly difficult to find time to spend with family and friends and 36.36% of the participants found this activity very stressful, while 27% reported that it was moderately stressful and 18.18% of the participants reported that finding time to spend with friends and family is minimally stressful.

4.2.14 Marital and other intimate relationship issues

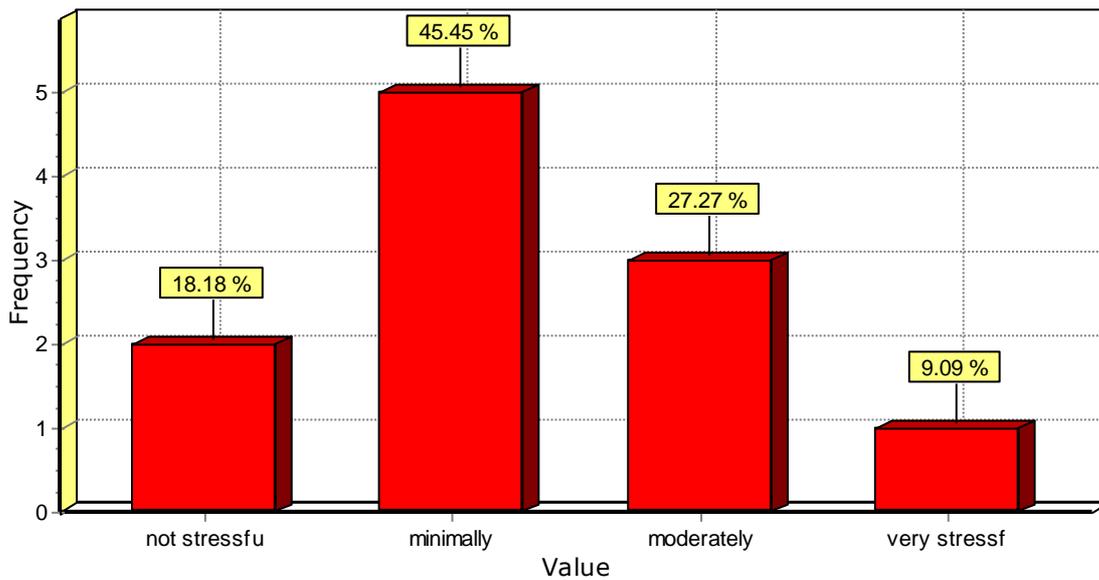


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Figure 4.14 Marital and other intimate relationship issues

The pie graph 4.14 represents marital and other intimate relationship issues. Some participants (36%) indicated that they do not find their intimate relationship issues stressful at all. Other (27.27%) indicated that it was moderately stressful, and another 27.27% found it minimally stressful. Only 9.09% of the participants indicated that their intimate relationship issues were very stressful. The majority of participants (64%) admitted to experiencing some form of stress (minimally stressful, moderately stressful or very stressful) in their intimate relationships. This could impact on this professional performance.

4.2.15 Concerns about children

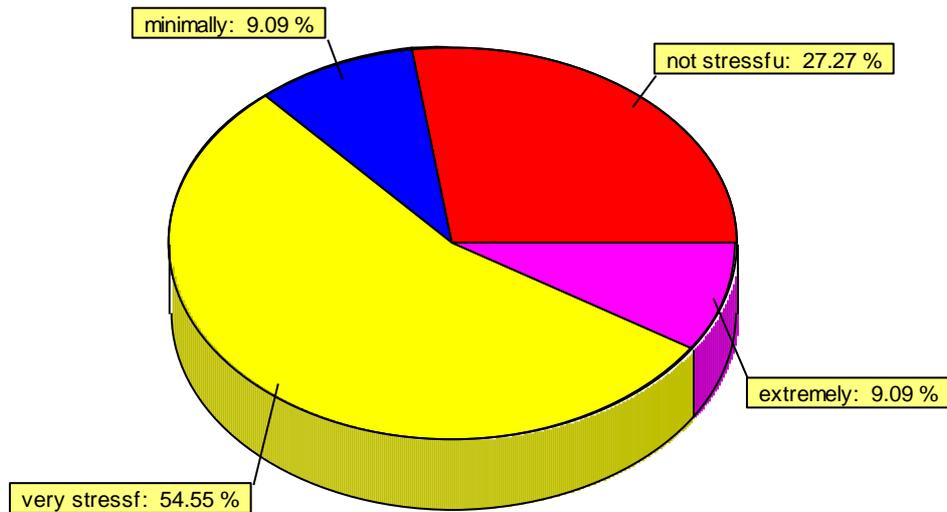


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Figure 4.15 Concerns about children

Concerns about children did not seem to be a significant problem for the participants as 45.45% of the participants found this to be minimally stressful. 27.27% indicated that this was moderately stressful. 18.18% felt that concerns about their children are not stressful at all, while the remaining 9.09% revealed that this was very stressful for them. This graph indicates that although this may be a significant concern for some of the participants, just a little less than 50% (45.45) were content with issues regarding their children.

4.2.16 Concerns about in-laws

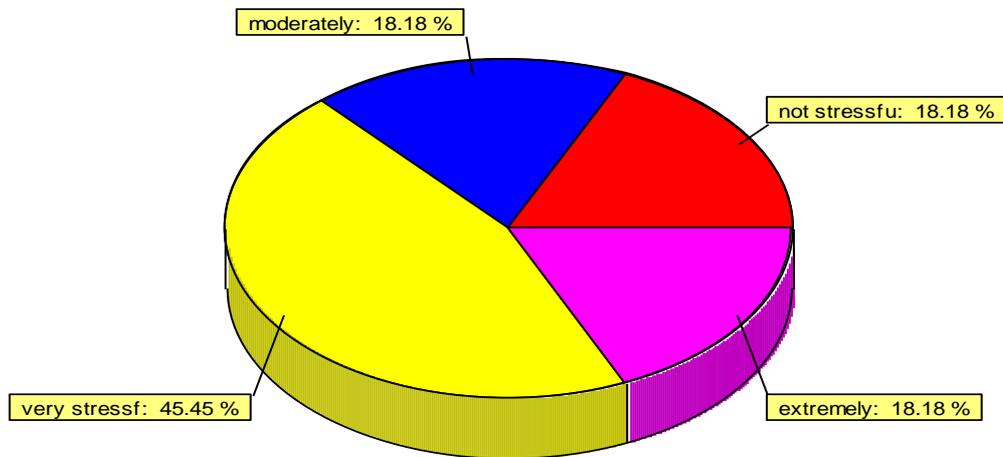


N=118

Figure 4.16 Concerns about in-laws

The majority of the participants (54.55%) indicated that concerns about their in-laws were very stressful, 9.09% of the participants indicated that they found concerns about their in-laws extremely stressful, while another 9.09% indicated that it was minimally stressful. Only 27.27% of participants experienced no stress when interacting with their spouses' family. More than two thirds of the respondents experienced some form of stress where their in-laws were concerned.

4.2.17 Support from the Department of Education

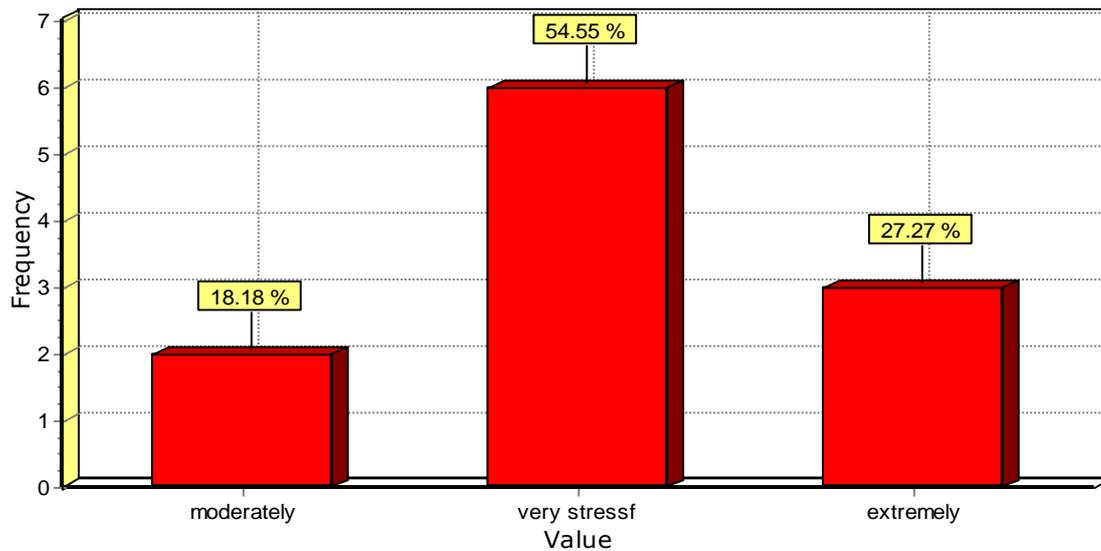


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Figure 4.17 Support from the Department of Education

Support from the Department of Education is often not forthcoming and 45.45% of the participants found that the lack of support from the Department of Education was very stressful, while another 18.18% indicated that this was extremely stressful and another 18.18% found it moderately stressful. A group of 18.18% respondents indicated that the lack of support was not stressful at all. The vast majority of participants (81.81%) agreed that support-related issues from the Department of Education resulted in stress for teachers.

4.2.18 Increased workload (planning for the lesson, sports)

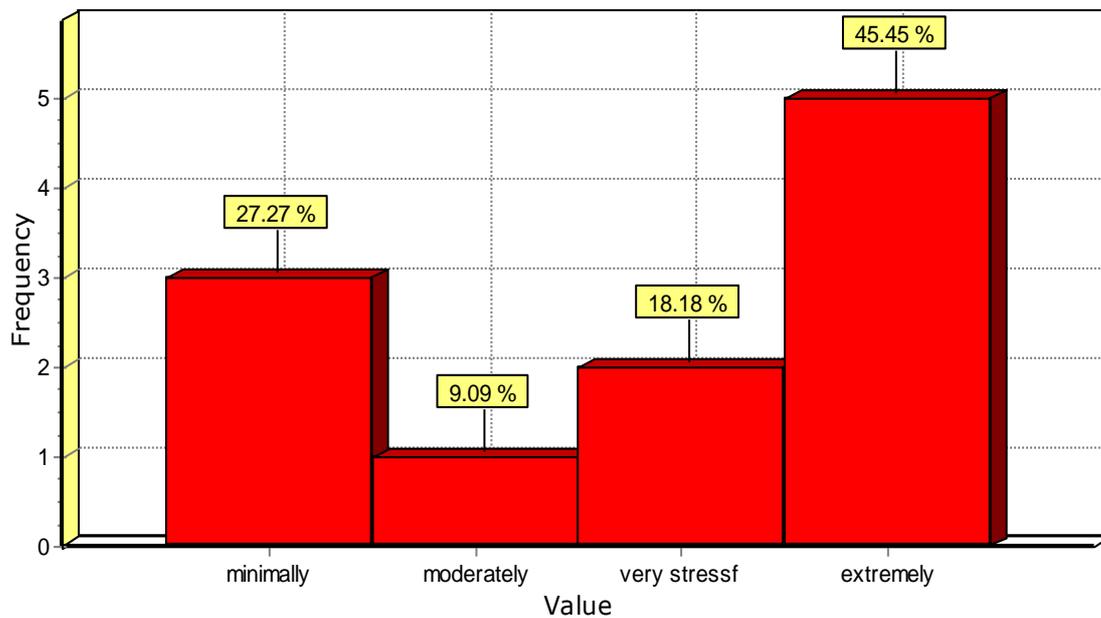


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Figure 4.18 Increased workload (planning for the lesson, sports)

The workload that teachers are expected to manage at school has increased over the years and all the participants unanimously agreed that the increase in their workload either in the classroom or due to extra-curricular activities has resulted in higher levels of stress. The majority of participants (54.55%) indicated that the increased workload was very stressful, 27.27% of respondents found the workload to be extremely stressful, while 18.18% indicated that the workload was moderately stressful.

4.2.19 Handling discipline in the classroom

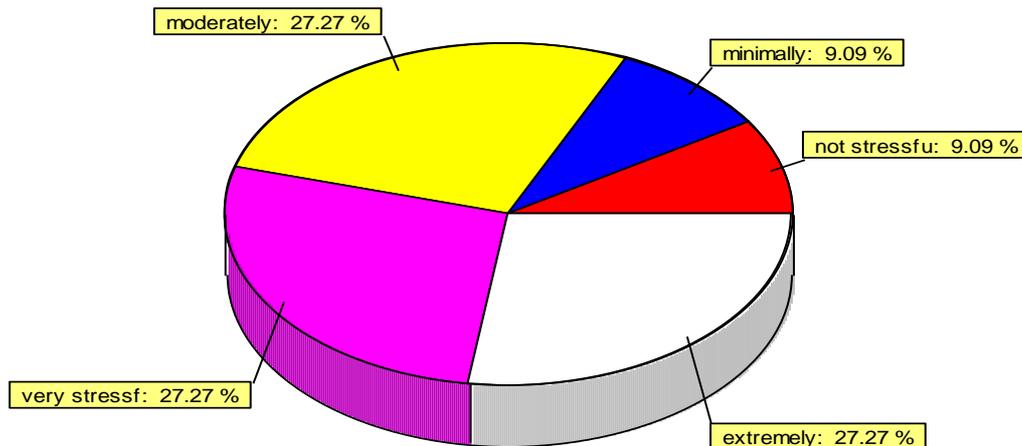


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Figure 4.19 Handling discipline in the classroom

With the abolishment of corporal punishment teachers have had to consider alternate means of disciplining learners in the classroom and behaviour management has become very difficult. Classroom management is a technique that many teachers struggle with. The above bar graph revealed that all participants found handling discipline in the classroom stressful to some degree, with almost half (45.45%) of the participants indicating that it was extremely stressful for them and 27% of the participants found it to be minimally stressful. Another 18.18% of the respondents indicated that handling discipline was very stressful, and 9.09% of the teachers who participated in the study said that handling discipline issues in the classroom was a moderately stressful event.

4.2.20 Working in an overcrowded classroom

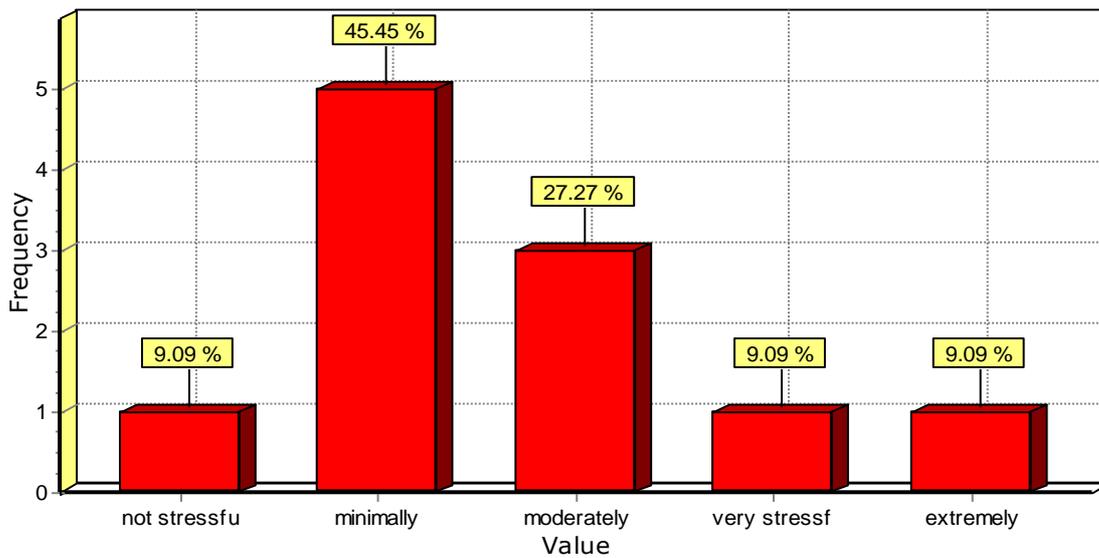


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Figure 4.20 Working in an overcrowded classroom

Overcrowded classrooms are commonplace in many schools where the physical infrastructure is not available to accommodate the learners. As per figure 4.20, it was interesting to note that only 9.09% of participants indicated that working in an overcrowded classroom was not stressful at all. Other participants responses were as follows: 27.27% of the participants indicated that it was extremely stressful to work in an overcrowded classroom, 27.27% found overcrowding very stressful, another 27.27% found it moderately stressful and 9.09% were minimally stressed when expected to work in an overcrowded classroom.

4.2.21 Inadequate in-service training

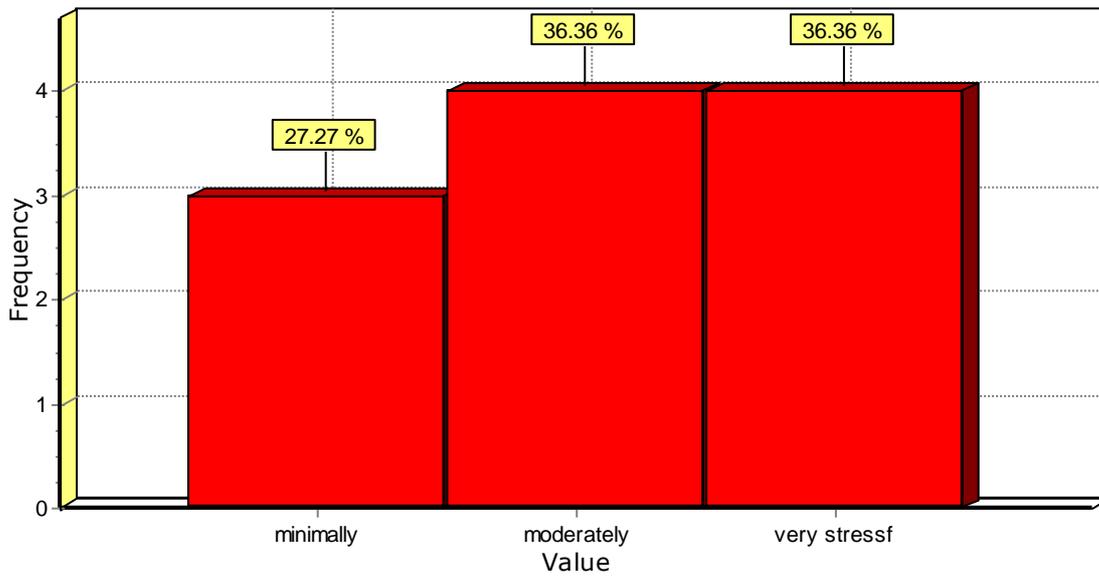


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Figure 4.21 Inadequate in-service training

In-service training ensures that teachers remain relevant and current. Participants indicated that inadequate in-service training was minimally stressful (45.45%), moderately stressful (27.27%) and 9.09% was allocated to the participants who found inadequate in-service training not stressful at all, very stressful and extremely stressful respectively. It is evident that there is insufficient in-service training being provided, but teachers are not substantially stressed by there lack of preparedness.

4.2.2 Unpleasant working conditions

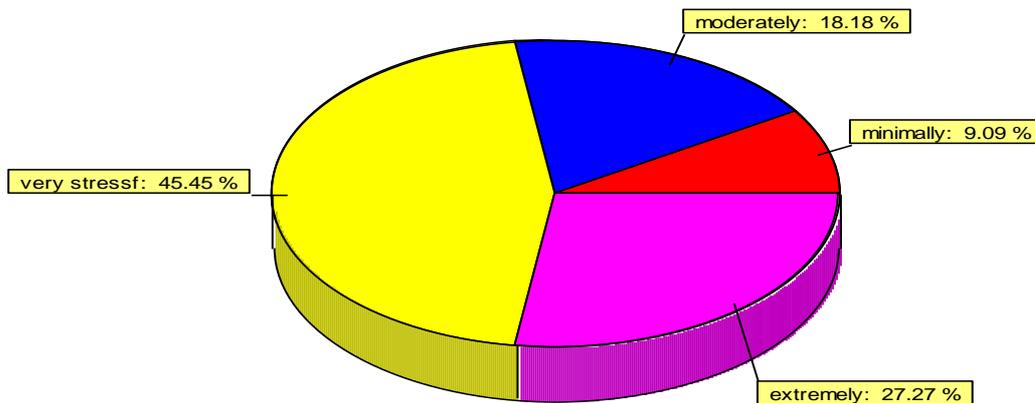


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Figure 4.22 Unpleasant working conditions

Unpleasant working conditions also created some degree of stress for teachers who participated in the study. Of the participants 36.36% indicated that unpleasant working conditions were very stressful, while another 36.36% found this moderately stressful and 27% indicated that unpleasant working conditions were minimally stressful. All the participants felt stressed when placed in an unpleasant work environment.

4.2.23 Having learners with special needs in the classroom

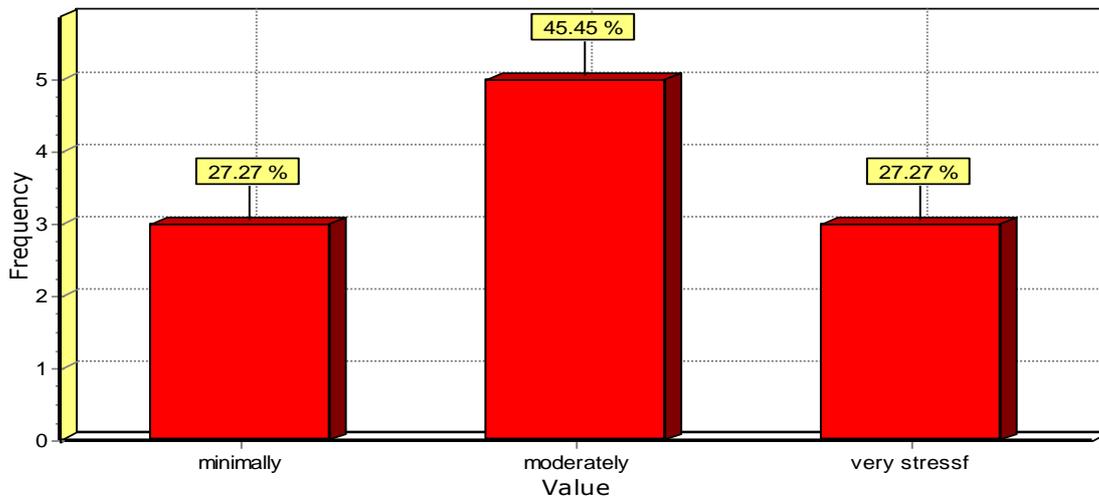


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Figure 4.23 Having learners with special needs in the classroom

Figure 4.23 indicates that 45.45% of the participants found having learners with special needs in the classroom very stressful, while 27.27% found this extremely stressful and 18.18% indicated that this was moderately stressful and 9.09% found it minimally stressful. Educators find teaching learners with special needs stressful at varying levels and this could be as a result of a number of reasons as mentioned: inadequate in-service training, insufficient teaching material, and etcetera.

4.2.24 Senior staff providing support with discipline issues



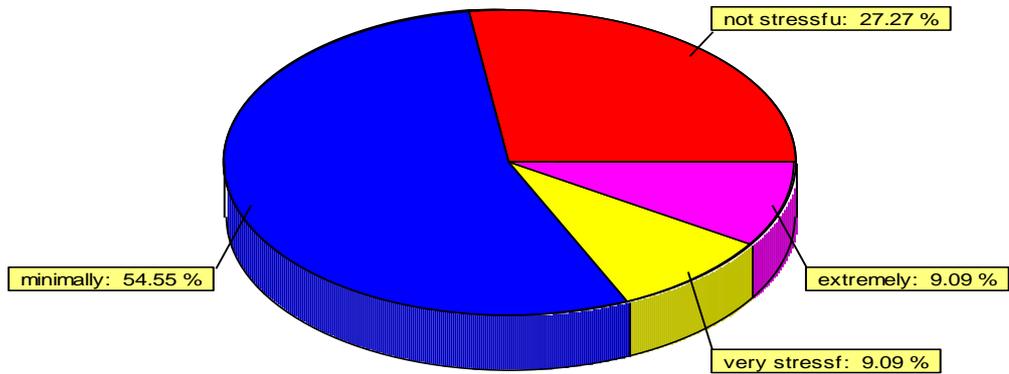
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Figure 2.24 senior staff providing help with discipline issues

Almost half of the participants (45.45%) revealed that they were moderately stressed because by their senior staff not providing support with discipline issues. 27.27% indicated that they found this very stressful, while another 27.27% found this issue minimally stressful.

There seemed to be a consensus between the teachers about handling discipline as one of the major stressors in the school environment. Marais and Meier (2000) also agreed that the behaviour of children is one of the most stressful aspects in the teaching and learning environment. Although corporal punishment was abolished many years ago (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 & The South African Schools Act, 1996), teachers are still unsure of discipline measures that do not include physical punishment (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

4.2.25 Insufficient teaching material

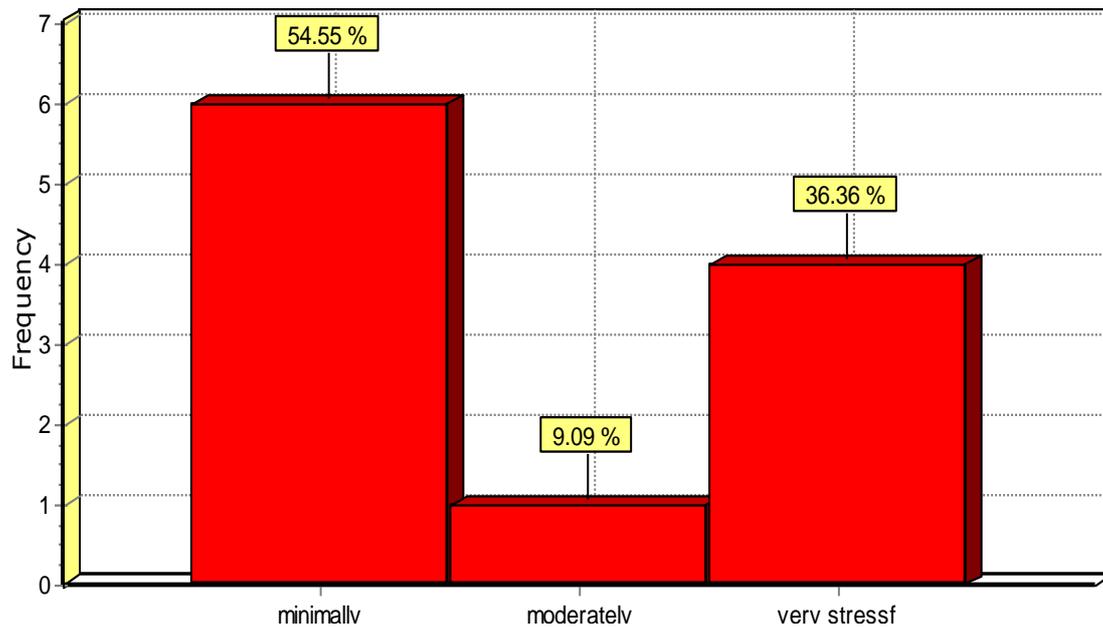


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Figure 4.25 Insufficient teaching material

The majority of participants (54.55%) felt that availability of the teaching material was minimally stressful, while 27.27% indicated that it was not stressful at all and 9.09% of the participants indicated that this variable was very stressful and extremely stressful respectively. Whilst the lack of sufficient teaching resources did not result in high levels of stress amongst all the teachers who participated in the study it did produce some measure of stress in more than two thirds of the participants.

4.2.26 Lack of advancement (promotional aspects)



N=118

Figure 4.26 Lack of advancement (promotional aspects)

This figure 4.26 outlines how the participants in the study feel about the lack of career advancement. All the participants found the inability to progress further in terms of their career stressful in fluctuating levels. Most (54.55%) found the lack of promotional aspects minimally stressful, whilst 36.36% found it very stressful and the rest (9.09%) were moderately stressed by their inability to access promotional opportunities.

4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

4.3.1 Introduction

In order to analyse the qualitative data, the researcher read the questionnaires thoroughly in order to recognise the themes that were common among the participants. Colour was then used to code the data into themes. The data is then presented in the form of tables and text (De Vos et al., 2011).

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2011) hypothesised that when applying thematic analysis; different categories will appear, which will then give way to answers to the research questions. These categories may then be coded before the final interpretation is done.

The research questions were taken into consideration during the qualitative analysis:

1. What is the extent to which foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environments?
2. What necessary skills do foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools respond with to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environments?
3. What is the relationship between stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and the following variables; educational qualification, and years of experience?

4.3.2 Emerging themes

4.3.2.1 Experience of stressors

This section sought to answer Research Question 1 (one) which looks at whether teachers experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environment. Participants were asked how often they experience stressors. They were provided with the following answers as options:

- "All the time",

- "Daily",
- "Every day",
- "Maybe once a week",
- "On Mondays",
- "Once or twice a month",
- "Not often",
- "I dont usually get stress",
- "Rarely"

These answers were then grouped into **Daily, Weekly, Monthly, and Rarely**. The results are tabulated in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1

Experience of stressors

Response	Number of participants
1. Daily	65 (55.1%)
2. Weekly	38 (32.2%)
3. Monthly	11 (9.3%)
4. Rarely	4 (3.4%)

n=118

These results indicate that the majority of participants experience stressors on a daily basis. Only four participants reported that they rarely experience stressors. This indicates that the teachers teaching in rural Mbombela schools experience their

profession as highly stressful. Kovess-Masfesty, Rios-Seidel and Sevilla-Dedieu (2007) also agree that teaching is a high risk profession with regards to stressors experienced. The teachers' experiences of stressors may differ but the results indicate that in general, teachers experience a great deal of stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environment.

The participants revealed exactly what it is that they find the most stressful about their job. Most of the participants mentioned **overcrowded classrooms, handling discipline, work overload, as well as learners with special needs** as the most stressful aspects about their job. Their responses are documented below:

a. Overcrowded classrooms

Participant 1: "The most stressful part of my job is the big classroom. Its very difficult to get to all the children."

Participant 2: "Overcrowding in the classroom is the most stressful."

Participant 3: "Our classes are too big for one teacher. Even the space is not enough. It would help if we had more classes."

Participant 4: "Overcrowding of our classrooms is a problem in our school."

Participant 5: "I have too many children in my class and I find it very hard to cope with the big class..."

Participant 6: "The school needs more classes since the ones we have are not enough for the kids."

b. Work overload

Participant 1: "Theres not enough time to do all the work that is expected from us."

Participant 2: "...I sometimes have to take work home with me."

Participant 3: "The work can be too much sometimes, especially before exams."

Participant 4: "Teaching has too much work..."

Participant 5: "I think the workload is the most stressful thing about my job."

Participant 6: "It is most stressful to do too much work when you are a teacher."

c. Handling discipline

Participant 1: "The childrens behaviour is very stressful."

Participant 2: "Its very stressful not to know how to treat the children if they misbehave."

Participant 3: "Discipline is very tricky since the new regulations do not allow corporal punishment was abolished by our government."

Participant 4: "The part that is the most difficult is how to get the learners in my class to behave."

Participant 5: "... and the treatment of the children when they are naughty."

Participant 6: "Instilling discipline is the most stresful part of my job."

d. Learners with special needs

Participant 1: "Having learners with special needs in the class is very stressful."

Participant 2: "Some learners have special needs, such as the slow learners who struggle to learn."

Participant 3: "Slow learners make it difficult to manage the classroom because they need extra care."

Participant 4: "I have a couple of hyperactive children in my class. It is very hard for me to teach."

Participant 5: "Learners with special needs is the most stressful."

Participant 6: "The most stressful for me is having slow learners in the class."

4.3.2.2 Skills to manage stress

The first research question looked at whether teachers are experiencing stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environment. This section attempts to answer the second research question 2 of the problem statement which looks at whether teachers have the necessary skills to deal with stressors. The themes that emerged here are presented in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2.

Emerging themes

Theme	Explanation
a. Exercise	n=72 (61.0%) The majority of the participants used exercise as a means of preventing and warding off stress that arise as a result of their teaching and learning environment.
b. Spirituality	n=68 (57.6%) Most of the participants indicated that spirituality is their means of preventing and managing stress. They made examples such as, prayer, places of worship and meditation.
c. Planning	n=47 (39.8%) Proper planning was mentioned by of the

	<p>participants as their means of preventing stress in the learning and teaching environment.</p>
--	---

n=118

a. Exercise

Exercise seemed to be used by a majority of the participants (61.0%). The exercise routine varied from one participant to the other, but it seemed to help when they felt the pressure of a hard day at work. It is a positive means of managing stress.

Participant 1: "I try to jog in the mornings to clear my mind before going to work."

Participant 2: "I exercise when I feel stressed."

Participant 3: "Exercise helps me keep my stress under control."

Participant 4: "I exercise, eat healthy and drink lots of water."

Participant 5: " After going to the gym I usually feel refreshed and my stress goes down."

Participant 6: "I do taebo after a very stressful day..."

b. Spirituality

Participants (57.6%) indicated that spirituality helps them to manage stress. A number of teachers made indications of spirituality as a means of combating stress as is evident from their response:

Participant 1: "Going to church and singing always helps when I am feeling stressed."

Participant 2: "I pray or talk to my Pastor if I feel stressed."

Participant 3: "...reading the bible always helps keep stress in check."

Participant 4: "I meditate and try to keep my head clear of all stresses."

Participant 5: "Singing gospel songs helps me when Im down."

Participant 6: "Prayer always help me if I feel stressed. I know that when I talk to God, things will be ok."

Stanely (2011) recommends that teacher 'connections' or spirituality within stressful educational settings can play a positive role in stress management. He mentions that in his study, spirituality helped the teachers to maintain efficacy and anxiety reduction and also through using it as a tool to connect with students (Stanley, 2011). For many participants in the study, spirituality was a helpful tool in preventing and managing stressors in the work place.

c. Planning

Other teachers who participated in the study (39.8%) mentioned that proper planning helps them prevent stress and avoid stressful situations. This is particularly important as teachers work in an environment that requires good planning in order to avoid unnecessary stress.

Participant 1: "I always find that if I plan for my lesson, I am less stressed since I'm not rushed."

Participant 2: "Making sure that I don't procrastinate helps me prevent stress. I do my best to make sure my work is submitted before the deadline."

Participant 3: "I do my marking as soon as the children are done to make sure that the work load does not get too much."

Participant 4: "I submit my work to the HOD before the due date to avoid stress."

Participant 5: "It helps to plan in advance to avoid situations whereby you find yourself feeling stressed because there is too much things to do."

Participant 6: "I plan my time to prevent stress."

The common themes emerging from the analysis seem to point to positive means of handling stressors. This may be an indication that teachers are equipped with the skills to deal with stressors that arise as a result of their teaching and learning environment.

Not all the participants managed to deal with their stress in a positive manner. Some teachers indicated that they do not have the necessary skills to deal with stressors. These teachers will require some assistance to cope with the stress that they are experiencing. Below are some of their responses:

Participant 1: "I always withdraw when I feel stressed. I dont want to talk to anyone. I prefer to keep things to myself".

Participant 2: "I drink sometimes to drown my sorrows".

Participant 3: "I really dont know what to do when my work stress me out. The HOD does not treat us like humans with a feeling".

Participant 4: "I would like to talk to someone about my stress, but there is noone".

Participant 5: "I sit alone when I am stressed out".

Participant 6: "I dont do anything when I am feeling stressed. I must accept that life is tough".

4.3.2.3 The relationship between stressors and the following variables:

Educational qualifications and years of experience

This section seeks to clarify if there is a relationship between the variables mentioned below and stressors experienced by the teachers.

4.2.2.3.1. Educational qualifications

Table 4.3.

Educational qualifications

Qualification	Number of participants experiencing daily stressors
Grade 12	19 (29%)
College diploma	27 (41.5%)
University degree	10 (15.3%)
Post graduate certificate	9 (13.8%)
Post graduate degree	0

n=65

The data on table 4.3 revealed that the participants who indicated that they experienced stressors on a daily basis were those teachers who had either a College Diploma as their highest qualification or Grade 12. Teachers who had higher qualifications (e.g., University degree, Post graduate certificate or Post graduate degree) were less likely to experience daily stressors. Educational qualifications

seem to play a role on the stressors experienced. It seems that studying further may have a positive influence on the experience of stressors on teachers.

4.3.2.3.2. Years of teaching experience

Table 4.4.

Years of teaching experience

Years of experience	Number of participants experiencing daily stressors
1-5	6 (9.2%)
6-10	31 (47.7%)
11-15	13 (19.1%)
16-20	7 (10.3%)
21+	11 (16.1%)

n=68

Table 4.4 indicates that participants who experienced daily stressors were mostly participants who had 6 to 10 years teaching experience. Teachers who had 1-5 years teaching experience were the least stressed. This might be an indication that years of experience do not have a direct effect on the stressors experienced.

4.4 Support for Teachers when they are stressed

The questionnaire asked the participants to state the nature of support they receive from their school when stressed. The majority of the participants reported that no support is provided by their schools when they are stressed. Teachers, when stressed have to manage the problem on their own. They support one another, seek the assistance of a psychologists or learn to deal with the stress on their own.

Geving (2007) stresses that lack of administrative support is a major contributor to teacher stress. This was also made evident by the results of the study. Below are some of the responses provided by the participants:

Participant 1: "There is no support that is provided by our school. Everyone has to deal with their problems on their own."

Participant 2: "No support is given."

Participant 3: "We are not supported by management in terms of stress."

Participant 4: "None. We are told to sort ourselves out when we are stressed."

Participant 5: "I dont think there is any support in my school because when I was stressed I had to arrange to see a psychologist but my school did not do anything about it."

Participant 6 (HOD): "We try to enforce a culture of openness and care in our school but so far, there isnt much that we do to support one another when we are stressed."

4.4 Summary

This chapter focused on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in this study. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were employed. The results revealed answers to the problem statement mentioned in chapter one of the study. The results revealed that teachers are experiencing stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environment. The outcome was overwhelming, with the majority of teachers indicating that they experience stressors on a daily basis. The results also pointed out that although teachers might have the necessary skills to deal with stressors, these are still inadequate, in that the teachers still feel that they lack support from their schools when they are stressed. The next chapter will conclude the study and provide recommendations based on the results obtained in this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE STUDIES

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter handled the analysis and discussion of data and chapter five which is the final chapter aims to conclude the study, summarise results, and also make recommendations for future studies. The limitations of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study attempted to establish the prevalence and management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools. When analysing all the data collected, the researcher focused on the list of assumptions and hypotheses that had been designed in line with the research objectives. They are as follows:

- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools experience stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environment.

This hypothesis can be supported. The findings indicate a definite incidence of teachers in rural Mbombela schools experiencing stressors as a result of their teaching and learning environment. The majority of the teachers reported that they experience stressors on a daily basis.

- Foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools do not possess the necessary skills required to manage stressors experienced as a result of their teaching and learning environment.

The study also hoped to understand if teachers have the necessary skills to deal with stressors. The significant themes that emerged here were; exercise, spirituality and planning. This was an indication that teachers may have the skills to deal with stressors so this hypothesis cannot be supported. Planning, exercise and spirituality were the main positive methods used by participants to prevent and manage stressors. However a small minority of participants mentioned drinking alcoholic

beverages, shopping and isolation as some of the negative means of managing stressors.

- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and their educational qualifications.

The study found that there is a relationship between stressors experienced and educational qualifications. The hypothesis can be supported. Teachers who had post graduate certificates and degrees seemed to experience less stressors in comparison with those who had lower qualifications.

- There is relationship between the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools and years of experience.

There was no relationship between years of teaching experience and the stressors experienced. The hypothesis cannot be supported.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Despite the researcher taking care that the study is conducted without any drawbacks, some circumstances were beyond the researcher's control. Therefore, the researcher would like to mention that the following limitations were noted during the process of executing the research.

This study was conducted among foundation phase teachers in the rural schools that are in the Mbombela area, and therefore the results of the study may not be generalised to the entire South African community. The prevalence and management of stressors may yield different results in other parts of the country.

The researcher was unable to be present with all the participants, while they were completing each questionnaire. It is possible that the research would have yielded different results should the researcher had been present to explain or clarify each question that was unclear to the participants.

Some participants mentioned to the researcher that they were reluctant to complete question number seven (7) in Section D which asked participants about the support that is offered by their school when they are stressed. This was despite her having

explained to participants issues of confidentiality and anonymity. The participants mentioned that if their superiors got hold of that information, it may have caused trouble for them. Therefore, this question may not have been answered honestly by some participants.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Formulating and implementing policies that include stress management in the curriculum during teacher training.
2. Providing teachers with workshops that will equip them with techniques on handling stress.
3. Encouraging capacity building especially for older teachers, who possibly experience difficulties with the new curriculum, through workshops.
4. Providing mental health care practitioners that will assist teachers in the prevention and treatment of stress related matters.
5. Promoting a culture of transparency and support between school management and the teachers.
6. Encouraging support groups at school whereby teachers are able to discuss their problems regarding work related stressors. This will allow them to share not only their problems but also possible solutions.
7. Schools should encourage teachers to use the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and other wellness initiatives that the Department of Education have available for teachers.

5.5 Proposals for Future Research

There are many other avenues for further research that researchers may consider as a result of this research study. Below are some options:-

The findings of this study indicated that some foundation teachers in the rural Mbombela areas are experiencing stressors and not all of them have the necessary skills to deal with the stress that they are experiencing. This may have an adverse effect on the learners taught. Kyriacou (2001) notes that an area of research that has been neglected is the impact of the teacher-pupil interaction on the classroom environment. The researcher proposes a study that will be focused on what effects a stressful teaching and learning environment can have on the learners in rural schools versus urban schools.

Another aspect that researchers may consider in the future is an intervention program in school to help teachers combat stress. This could be a pre- and post-intervention program and examining various possibilities such as exercise and spirituality as options.

Future researchers could also examine if other variables such as the urban-rural dichotomy play a role in determining whether or not teachers experience stressors in their work environment.

There is a great divide between public and private schooling in South Africa and an alternate study could be a comparative report examining the nature of stressors reported by teachers at each of these types of institutions.

5.6 Conclusion

This study sought to explore the prevalence and management of stressors amongst foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela. The prevalence of stressors seemed to be very high among the teachers that were part of the study. The results of the study also indicated that teachers have the necessary skills to deal with stressors.

The researcher also sought to understand if qualifications and years of teaching experience have an effect on the stressors experienced by the foundation phase

teachers in rural Mbombela schools. The study indicated that years of teaching experience do not have a direct influence on the stressors experienced by the teachers. It was also discovered that teachers with post graduate qualifications experienced less stressors than those with lower qualifications.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: candidate's originality declaration (research papers, mini-dissertations, dissertations and theses)

ORIGINALITY DECLARATION

Full Names and Surname	PERTUNIA THOBILE MABUZA
Student Number	20060381
Title of dissertation/thesis	THE MANAGEMENT OF STRESSORS EXPERIENCED BY FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS IN RURAL MBOMBELA SCHOOLS

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's policies and rules applicable to postgraduate research, and I certify that I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with their requirements.

In particular, I confirm that I had obtained an ethical clearance certificate for my research (Certificate Number UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2015/173) and that I have complied with the conditions set out in that certificate.

I further certify that this dissertation is original, and that the material has not been published elsewhere, or submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university, except as follows:

.....N/A.....

I declare that this dissertation is, save for the supervisory guidance received, the product of my own work and effort. I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with the University's Plagiarism Policy and acknowledged all sources of information in line with normal academic conventions.

I have subjected the document to the University's text-matching and/or similarity-checking procedures.

Candidate's signature	
Date	10/12/2015

ANNEXURE B: Plagiarism report



Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author: Thobile Mabuza
Assignment title: Quick Submit
Submission title: final dissertation
File name: final_draft_thobile_dec_2015_ame...
File size: 303.75K
Page count: 91
Word count: 18,127
Character count: 112,146
Submission date: 31-Dec-2015 07:55PM
Submission ID: 618015165

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ANNEXURE C: Ethical clearance certificate

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6887
Fax: 035 902 6222
Email: ManqeleS@unizulu.ac.za

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2015/173							
Project Title	The prevalence and management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela Schools							
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	PT Mabuza							
Supervisor and Co- supervisor	Dr. S Govender							
Department	Educational Psychology & Special Education							
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year		Master's	x	Doctoral		Departmental	

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate.

Special conditions:

- (1) The Principal Researcher must report to the UZREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.
- (2) Documents marked "To be submitted" (see page 2) must be presented for ethical clearance before any data collection can commence.

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved.

Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

Classification:

Data collection	Animals	Human Health	Children	Vulnerable pp.	Other
X					
Low Risk	Medium Risk		High Risk		
	X				

The table below indicates which documents the UZREC considered in granting this Certificate and which documents, if any, still require ethical clearance. (Please note that this is not a closed list and should new instruments be developed, these would require approval.)

Documents	Considered	To be submitted	Not required
Faculty Research Ethics Committee recommendation	X		
Animal Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Health Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Ethical clearance application form	X		
Project registration proposal	X		
Informed consent from participants	X		
Informed consent from parent/guardian			X
Permission for access to sites/information/participants	X		
Permission to use documents/copyright clearance			X
Data collection/survey instrument/questionnaire	X		
Data collection instrument in appropriate language		Only if necessary	
Other data collection instruments		Only if used	

The UZREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Certificate if
 - Any unethical principles or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in this Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting the research.



Professor Nokuthula Kunene
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee
 29 September 2015

CHAIRPERSON UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC) REG NO: UZREC 171110-30 21-10-2015 RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE

ANNEXURE D: Permission letter from the Department of Education

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR MS P.T. MABUZA: MA



education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Building No 5, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umyango we Fundo

Departement van Onderwys

Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Enquiries: A.H. Baloyi
Tel: (013) 766 5476

Ms P.T. Mabuza
P O Box 2949
Whiteriver
1240

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MS P.T. MABUZA

Your application to conduct research was received on 17 March 2015. The title of your study is: "the management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools." The research objectives, significance and overall design of your study give an impression that the outcomes of the study will be useful and valuable in improving the management of stress among foundation phase teachers. Your request is approved subject to you observing the content of the departmental research manual which is attached. You are required to discuss with the principals of the sampled schools regarding the approach to your observation and data collection as no disruption of tuition will be allowed. You are also requested to adhere to your University's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics document.

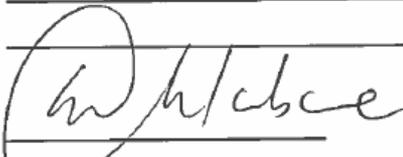
In terms of the attached manual (2.2. bullet number 4 & 6) data or any research activity can only be conducted after school hours as per appointment. You are also requested to share your findings with the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department.



**APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR MS P.T. MABUZA:
MA**

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za. The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

APPROVED/~~NOT~~APPROVED:



**MRS MOC MHLABANE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

18/3/15
DATE



ANNEXURE E: Letter to the Head of Department: Education requesting permission to conduct research

P. O. Box 2949
White River
1240

20 February 2014

Ms. M.O.C. Mhlabane
Head of Department
Department of Education (Mpumalanga Province)

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am conducting research on stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural schools. The aim of the research is to determine the types of stressors teachers in foundation phase are faced with and to establish whether foundation phase teachers are equipped to deal with stressors experienced within the teaching profession and learning environment.

I, therefore, require permission to conduct research within the Ehlanzeni district, White-Hazy and White river circuits. Fourteen schools have been selected to be part of this study.

The study will make use of a questionnaire given to foundation phase teachers at the above-mentioned schools. There is no risk associated with taking part in this study. Participation is voluntary. Anonymity will be maintained and all questionnaires will be treated with confidentiality. This will take approximately half an hour. The results of the study will be made available to the Department of Education.

This study is in partial fulfillment of the Masters in educational psychology program, under the supervision of Dr. S. Govender at the University of Zululand. Should you have any questions regarding the research, my supervisor may be contacted on 035 9026 442 or govenders@unizulu.ac.za.

Yours faithfully,

Pertunia Thobile Mabuza
Intern Educational Psychologist
Mobile: 079 538 2857
email: thobilemabuza@ymail.com

ANNEXURE F: Letter to the principals of the selected schools requesting permission to conduct research

P. O. Box 2949
White River
1240

20 February 2014

The Principal,

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am conducting research on stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural schools. The aim of the research is to determine the types of stressors teachers in foundation phase are faced with and to establish whether foundation phase teachers are equipped to deal with stressors within the teaching and learning environment.

I, therefore, require the cooperation of the foundation phase teachers at your school in completing a questionnaire. This should take approximately half an hour. There is no risk involved with taking part in this study. Participation is voluntary. Anonymity will be maintained and all questionnaires will be treated with confidentiality.

Permission has been sought from the provincial Department of Education to conduct the research study.

This study is in partial fulfillment of the Masters in educational psychology program, under the supervision of Dr. S. Govender at the University of Zululand. Should you have any questions regarding the research, my supervisor may be contacted on 035 9026 442 or govenders@unizulu.ac.za.

Your consideration will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Pertunia Thobile Mabuza

Intern Educational Psychologist

Mobile: 079 538 2857

email: thobilemabuza@ymail.com

ANNEXURE G: Participant informed consent declaration

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title: The management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools

Pertunia Thobile Mabuza from the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to determine the stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers and the management thereof.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards identifying the stressors associated with teaching and learning in foundation phase classrooms in rural primary schools, as well as determining whether teachers are adequately equipped to deal with stressors in their work environment. This may provide the South African education system with a

basis for developing an intervention program that will be aimed at assisting teachers to gain healthy strategies to deal with stress.

4. I will participate in the project by completing the questionnaire given to me by the researcher.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. There are no risks associated with my participation in the project.
8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a journal article or conference paper. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
9. I will receive feedback in the form of a pamphlet regarding the results obtained during the study.
10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by Pertunia Thobile Mabuza (079 538 2857).
11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurized in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....

Participant's signature

.....

Date

ANNEXURE H: White River and White Hazy Circuits list of primary schools

District	Circuit	Name	NatEmis	Sector	TelCode	Telephone	Streetname
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	BAMBANANI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800000521	Public			STAND NO. 483 PHOLA TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	CELANI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800002014	Public			STAND NO.255
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	GEORGE MHAULE PRIMARY SCHOOL	800004549	Public	013	7980957	STAND NO. 001 NUMBI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	IFALETHU PRIMARY SCHOOL	800006064	Public	013	7370902	1786 NYONGANE TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	INKHAMBENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800006379	Public	013	7370006	STAND NO. 262 SANDRIVER
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	KHOMBINDLELA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800007724	Public	013	7983421	MAHUSHU(DAYIZENZA) 11
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	LUNDANDA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800010835	Public	013	7983160	MAHUSHU
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	MAJIKA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800011775	Public	013	7370218	260 D SAND RIVER
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	MANZINI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800012435	Public	013	7963610	MASOYI TRUST CHOCCHOCHO 99
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	MASOYI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800013078	Public			69 SWALALA TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	MDUMISENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800013904	Public	013	7981101	STAND NO. 1000 MASOYI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	MDZIMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800013938	Public			STAND NO. 360
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	MPUNZANA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800015743	Public	013	7370508	402A SHABALALA TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	MTIMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800015941	Public	013	7980117	STAND NO. T10
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	SALUBINDZA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800019778	Public	013	7980125	20 SALUBINDZA TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	SIYAFUNDZA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800021493	Public	013	7884049	STAND NO.151
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	SIYAMUKELA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800034783	Public	013	7370648	330 TSHABALALA TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	TFOLINHLANHLA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800022806	Public	013	7370648	T10 SOWETO SECTION
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	TSEMBANANI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800023887	Public			STAND NO. 1000
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	ZAKHELENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800025742	Public			NEXT TO INHLANHLA SUPERMARKET
EHLANZENI	WHITE HAZY	ZAMANI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800025783	Public	013	7886028	STAND NO.50

EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	AA KHUMALO PRIMARY SCHOOL	800030817	Public	013	2623117	BACK DOOR TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	CHWENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800002147	Public	013	7968284	SPIOENKOP ROAD CHWENI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	EDWALENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800003129	Public	013	7963237	EDWALENI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	EMBONISWENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800003525	Public	013	7963000	MBONISWENI
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	ENDLUNKULU PRIMARY SCHOOL	800003707	Public			1103 MGANDUZWENI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	IMPUMELELO PRIMARY SCHOOL	800006239	Public			MDLANKOMO TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	INKHANYETI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800006403	Public	013	7884264	MGADUZWENI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	KHULANI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800007831	Public	013	7884265	JERUSALEM TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	KUSILE PRIMARY SCHOOL	800008599	Public			NHLALAKAHLE 200
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	LEGOGOTO PRIMARY SCHOOL	800010017	Public	013	7884126	JERUSALEM TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	LINDANI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800010470	Public			3501 ZCC STREET, MOYENI SECTION
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	LIVELETHU PRIMARY SCHOOL	800012252	Public			MAKOKO 315
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	LWALENG PRIMARY SCHOOL	800010926	Public			ATHERSTONE BROOKES FARM
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	MAKOKO PRIMARY SCHOOL	800011932	Public	013	7968004	MAKOKO TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	MALEKUTU PRIMARY SCHOOL	800012070	Public	013	7964002	29 MALEKUTU TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	MGANDUZWENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800014050	Public	013	7884268	STAND NO. 554
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	MGCOBANENI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800014068	Public	013	7981102	MGCOBANENI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	MOHLAKWAAN PRIMARY SCHOOL	800014936	Public	013	7512711	LOCHABER ESTATE
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	SIYANCOBA PRIMARY SCHOOL	800021543	Public			MGADUZWENI TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	TSEMBALETFU PRIMARY SCHOOL	800023879	Public	013	7961860	KHUMBULA TRUST
EHLANZENI	WHITE RIVER	VUTSELANI PRIMARY SCHOOL	800025130	Public	013	7964000	STAND NO. 33

ANNEXURE I: Research questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Project title:

The prevalence and management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools.

The researcher is conducting research on the management of stressors experienced by foundation phase teachers in rural Mbombela schools. The aim of the research is to determine the nature of stressors teachers in foundation phase are faced with and to establish whether foundation phase teachers are equipped to deal with stressors within the teaching and learning environment.

Kindly assist by completing the questionnaire and handing it to the school principal upon completion. This will take approximately half an hour.

Researcher:

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Dr. Sumeshni Govender

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Section A

Biographical Details

School name: _____

Circuit : _____

Biographical details of the participant

Please mark the appropriate answer with an X

Please specify your gender:

Male	Female

Age group	21–30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51+ years

Marital status	Single	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed

Grade taught	R	1	2	3

Highest Qualification	Grade 12	College diploma	University degree	Postgraduate certificate	Postgraduate degree

Years of teaching experience	Under 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+

Salary range	Below R7000	R7000- R14000	R14001-R21000	R21001+

Was teaching your first preference?

Yes

No

Health status	Good	Average	Poor	Other, please specify

Do you suffer from a chronic illness?

Yes

No

If yes, please indicate the nature of your illness below:

Section B: Rating questions

This section comprises concerns that teachers may experience as a result of personal stressors. Please indicate how stressful you find the following factors. Tick the appropriate box using the scale provided below.

Key:

- Not stressful - 1
- Minimally stressful - 2
- Moderately stressful - 3
- Very stressful - 4
- Extremely stressful - 5

Types of concerns	1	2	3	4	5
Home circumstances					
Financial concerns					
Issues regarding housing					
Time to spend with family and friends					
Marital or other intimate relationship issues					
My children					
My in-laws					
Support from my spouse					
Other strained family relations					
Please specify					
.....					
.....					

Other, please specify					
.....					
.....					

Section C: Rating questions

The following are a number of concerns that teachers may experience as a result of work environment stressors. Please indicate how stressful you find the following factors. Tick the appropriate box using the scale provided below.

Key:

- Not stressful - 1
- Minimally stressful - 2
- Moderately stressful - 3
- Very stressful - 4
- Extremely stressful - 5

Types of concerns	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of support from the Department of Education					
Increased workload (planning for the lesson, sports)					
Handling discipline in the classroom					
Working in an overcrowded classroom					
Inadequate in-service training					
Unpleasant working conditions					
Having learners with special needs in the classroom					

Senior staff providing support with discipline issues					
Insufficient teaching material					
Lack of advancement (promotional aspects)					
Other, please specify					

Section D: Management of stressors

This section comprises questions on how you handle stress. Kindly provide sincere answers concerning your responses to these questions.

1. How do you prevent stress?

2. How often do you experience work related stressors?

3. What do you find most stressful about your job?

4. Does work related stress have an impact on your personal life?

Yes

No

If yes, how does it impact on your personal life?

5. How do you manage work related stress? Please mention the specific techniques used.

6. Which of the techniques mentioned in 5, do you find most helpful?

7. What support is provided at your school for teachers when they feel stressed?

8. How would you prefer to be assisted with stress management?

Thank you for your participation.