MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS ON STRESS IN HEI IN EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE IN SOUTH AFRICA: CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a global phenomenon that affects everyone regardless of gender, resources and environment. Although this phenomenon is well researched, teachers' experiences of stress remains a worrying challenge particularly to schools' effectiveness. This study sought to establish how monitoring and management mechanism that can assist teachers to cope with stress challenges. These are some of the recommendation: that the school disciplinary committee should be trained in various disciplinary measures that may be implemented in the school to curb learner ill-discipline and lack of commitment, that working relationship should be built between schools and the Department of Basic Education, motivational speakers and educational counsellors should meet with all learners on a regular basis to motivate them to have high desire for and interest in education and to build their self-confidence in the classroom, providing all the schools with healthy environment in classrooms, provision of learning and teaching materials to all schools, schools should set up an effective school-parents partnership in order to promote a safe drug and alcohol free environment, employ enough teachers in all secondary schools and the Department of Basic Education at district level should make room for stress management workshops for teachers.

Keywords: Teacher Stress, Ill-Discipline of Learners, School-Parents Partnership.

INTRODUCTION

Managing teachers' stress in schools is one of the fundamentals in the improvement of the academic performance of secondary school learners. This study sought to establish how monitoring and management mechanism that can assist teachers to cope with stress challenges. Stress is a global phenomenon that affects everyone regardless of gender, resources and environment. Although this phenomenon is well researched, teachers' experiences of stress remains a worrying challenge particularly to schools' effectiveness. Teachers face many challenges in South African schools such as ill-discipline of learners and vandalism of schools. It is vital that schools need to come up with better intervention programs that may assist teachers to overcome stress. Jepson and Forrest (2006) define stress as a general term used for pressure that people are exposed to in life, as the individual harmony effort that the person displays against a stimulant which has excessive psychological and physical pressure on the person. Olivier and Venter (2003) believe that the word stress has been derived from a Latin word "*strictus"* which means rigid or stiff. Stress is defined as a condition of anxiety that arises from a real or perceived demand that calls for a change or adaptive behaviour (Olson et al., 1989). Selye (2013) rely on the definition of Oliver and Venter, (2003) in which he defines the condition of stress as a

psychological term that directly affects the physical condition. This type of responses is seen when the accomplishment of some goal, body is directed to do specific tasks. Sometimes the environment also leads towards few acts for the survival. According to Decenzo and Robbins (2006) stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (2008) defined stress as an unpleasant emotion, which arises when people worry that they could not cope with excessive pressures or other types of demands placed upon them. Sees stress as a pressure, tension or worry resulting from life events; and life event is anything that causes a person to deviate from normal functioning. Researcher believes that life events are part and parcel of living and so is stress, a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from normal functioning. Teachers, like other workers in different professions experience stress. Also define stress as a word borrowed from the discipline of physics that actually mean pressure. It is the inner pressure caused by three set of factors as mentioned below: Endogenous; exogenous and interaction of endogenous. Endogenous means internal (endo means inter; genous means origin or genesis) or origination from within; exogenous means external (exo means outside) or originating from outside. The third set of factors would emerge when the internal and external factors interact with each other.

From my general observations of many teachers leaving the teaching profession before retirement age, it transpired that most complain about the demanding situations they faced in their schools. Buka and Molepo (2016) also maintain that teachers' work is suffering under demanding conditions with prevalence of vandalism, school violence and drug abuse. Teachers perceive that the conditions under which they work are not conducive at all to a satisfactory environment and feel frustrated with their lack of control over their stressful work situation.

Numerous studies have been done on the stress among teachers in a different dimension for example (Sabherwal et al., 2015) found out in secondary school's teachers shows that the determinants of stress among the teachers are numerous and varied, with compilation of results, time pressures, lack of infrastructure, student's indiscipline and poor pay prospects as a very high ranked stressor.

Jeyaraj (2013) worked on government and Aided higher secondary school teachers, with the sample of 185 Aided schoolteachers and 120 Government Teachers. Result shows that teachers who reported greater stress were less satisfied with teaching; conducted the comparative study of occupational stress of secondary school teachers in relation to their demographic variables for example gender, types of school and locality. Results showed that there was no significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers on gender, type of school and locality basis

In another comparative analysis of male and female teachers, Sang et al. (2007: 1305) report that female teachers experienced significantly higher levels of work-family conflict and reported lower levels of job satisfaction and higher turnover intention than their male counterparts. The research suggests that female teacher professionals experience higher levels of work stress than their male teachers.

Kumar and Deo (2011) explored the different aspects of work life of college teachers in general and to find out difference in perception of male and female as well as junior and senior teachers with regard to their responses in particular. Findings revealed that junior college teachers experienced significantly more stress on most of the dimensions of stress in comparison to senior teachers. While in Australia, Haynes and Love (2002) identified workload, long hours

and insufficient time with family as the three most significant stressors experienced by teachers. Similarly, Lingard and Francis (2004) found that teacher professionals worked longer hours and experienced higher levels of burnout.

Previous research has shown that teaching professionals experience high levels of work stress. Significant proportion of studies has almost always taken place in developed economies, such as Australia (Haynes & Love, 2002), the United Kingdom (UK) (Djebani, 1986) Hong Kong, however, none of these studies focus This study sought to establish how monitoring and management mechanism that can assist teachers to cope with stress challenges in Mthatha, OR Tambo Inland Education District in South Africa. Thus, this study filled the gap in the literature. In order to achieve this objective, the following sub objectives were discussed: how teachers' stress affect learners' performance, establish how may monitoring and management mechanism by Department of Education assist teachers to cope with stress challenges, investigate how schools may address the stress challenges among teachers.

International Perspective (Developed Countries)

Siddiqui (2012) in a study on occupational stress in teachers: a comparative study of public and private schools in Hyderabad city in India, found out it was a fact that teachers working in public schools lack resources like advanced technologies, as compared to those working in private schools. Somehow, this could be considered a contributing factor in their stress level.

Bickford (2005) reveals that stress is an ever-present issue with the majority of Canadians. According to results from the 2001 Canadian Mental Health Survey 500 Canadians were asked the question, thinking about stress in your life, how often do you feel really stressed… all the time, a few times a week, about once a month, a few times a year, once a year or less often, or never? In response, 9% of Canadians said they felt really stressed all the time, 43% felt really stressed a few times a week, while 24% felt really stressed about once month that shows stress is an ever present in daily life of a human being. In Finland, teaching was linked to burnout, and the ill health of teachers, whereas motivation and teacher well-being was linked to feeling engaged, and supported by the organisation (Hakanen et al., 2006).

Developing Countries

Student-teachers also experience stress associated with job demands when they attend schools for practice teaching as found in UK study with secondary school student teachers (Chaplain, 2008). In that study, 38% of student-teachers were psychologically stressed following their practicum experience. They identified behaviour management, workload and lack of support as significant professional demands effecting on their stress levels. Overall, student teachers felt that their teaching experience had been extremely stressful. The practicum was not directly associated with stress. German student-teachers did not have a practicum, but 44% reported mental health issues (Zimmermann et al., 2008). Research into stress among school teachers has become popular in the last 20 years. In that time, a great deal of international research has been carried out, the results of which all indicate the negative effects of teacher stress.

African Perspective

Mapfumo et al. (2008) found stress levels among teachers in Zimbabwe have become a great concern. The main causes of stress include among others, problems with difficult learners, low salaries, heavy workload, and shortage of teaching and learning materials, supervision-related matters and the effect of home responsibilities (Mapfumo & Chitsiko, 2012). Soon after attainment of independence in 1980, the new government prioritized the provision of education on an unmatched scale in the history of third world countries (World Bank, 1983). This phenomenal growth precipitated a myriad of challenges for teachers like overcrowded classes, hot seating sessions, poor teacher accommodation, use of unexperienced supervisors and a general decline in the conditions of service (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010).

Teacher stress affects various aspects of teacher health and may influence the performance of teachers in the classroom with potential repercussions on teaching and learning (Kokkins, 2007). Stress may contribute to lateness at work, failure to meet deadlines, violent behaviour on pupils, failure as well as general frustration with life (Chan and Huang, 2012). In some instances, research has found that stress may lead to serious health problems leading to loss of confidence and performance anxiety. Alenu et al. (2014), in their study on experience of stress among student-teachers enrolled in Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching: the case of Haramaya University cluster centres, Ethiopia, concluded that many practicing student-teachers report high levels of stress.

Similarly, teachers may experience health problems such as increased blood pressure, rapid heartbeat and depression leading to alcoholism. This situation resulted teachers spending more time seeking medical attention at the expense of teaching children. In order for teachers to perform to their maximum, they need to be in sound physical and mental health so as not to deprive children of their learning time. It is on account of this information that this study set out to explore the cause of work related stress and its effect on performance of teachers in Zimbabwean schools.

South African Perspective

The stress levels among teachers in South Africa have become a great cause for concern (Mapfumo et al., 2008). South African teachers, stress is the result of the rapid democratic changes, which transpired in 1994. Ngidi and Siyaba (2012) agree that rapid changes cause stress. Democracy in South Africa was an attempt by the post-apartheid government to redress the legacy of apartheid. The main causes of stress include among others, problems with difficult learners, low salaries, heavy workload, and shortage of teaching and learning materials, supervision-related matters and the effect of home responsibilities (Mapfumo & Chitsiko, 2012). To add on that long distance to and from schools taken by teachers' daily cause stress, changing of curriculum by government, syllabus coverage that are disturbed by activities of school, large numbers of learners in one class and work pressure coming from the department.

Specifically, with regard to education, democracy brought about an inequitable allocation of resources and other severe educational changes. Many South African schools are still ill-equipped (Khoza and Milner 2008) and struggle to the cope with these changes. Consequently, teachers struggle to cope due to inadequate resources and develop severe stress. Internal educational changes include amongst others; the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, which necessitated the enrolment of learners from grades 0 to 12 (Reiman, 2008); the change to an inclusive education system, which allowed for the inclusion of learners with special needs at

schools (Eloff et al., 2001); the National Qualifications Forum (NQF), Curriculum 2005 now known as Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which focused on the continuous assessment of learners' progress without emphasis on passing or failing them (Ngidi & Siyaba, 2002); the National Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA) of 1995 and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) prior to the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. Training and Development in the year 2000, which set out additional roles and responsibilities for teachers (Department of Education, 2000) and the abolishment of corporal punishment which necessitated the implementation of different methods of enforcing leaner discipline (MacDonald, 1993).

Many South Africans struggle to balance work and family life (Oosthuizen & Van der Bijl, 2007). Women have taken up the role of the provider while men acquired more responsibilities at home, and often their family responsibilities clash with their responsibilities at work. Consequently, they experience work-home conflict, where work interferes with family life or family-work conflict where family interferes with work. Both these situations impact negatively on the quality of the individual's life and can cause stress (Nelson & Quick, 2014). In South Africa, both situations can apply due to changes in family structures such as single parents and dual career couples. Females struggle to cope and have difficulty to balance work which can culminate in less life satisfaction, anxiety and work stress. Difficulties which families encounter in effecting such transitions, especially unexpected ones, such as retrenchment, may result in psychological and interpersonal conflicts or confusion and threaten family security, stability, quality of life, status and the very identity that work provided for the individual as well as family (Buys et al., 2009). However, the South African teachers working environment causes exhaustion and threatens the status, economic stability, self-esteem, basic beliefs and loved ones of individuals, which causes stress (Hobfoll, 1989).

Eastern Cape Perspective

In Eastern Cape teaching in overcrowded classrooms creates an enormous challenge in producing productive learning classroom environments where effective teaching and assessment strategies are crucial (Nomtshonwana, 2014). Teachers cannot practise a variety of methods, such as higher-order questioning and active learning approaches. In fact, teachers are effectively confined to the 'chalk and talk' instructional method (Opoku-Asare et al., 2014). This is widely practiced in South African schools. For example, some schools in the Eastern Cape have more than 130 learners squeezed into one classroom and teachers are obliged to present lessons with their backs pressed up against the blackboard (Opoku-Asare et al., 2014).

The disruptive, counterproductive effect of overcrowding is explained as follows: Teachers don't have time to grade each paper. Instead they just check off whether the student completed the task and overlook whether they did not work the right way (KEZI 9 News, 2012). Such wrong ideas then remain in the learners' minds, and are in all probability never corrected. This could be one explanation for poor matriculation results. Further-more, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers cannot pay attention to all the learners (Imtiaz, 2014) and are unable to differentiate their attention amongst learners. This is affirmed by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) who argue that teachers cannot persuade or take all learners to participate and they tend to ignore those who are passive.

Teaching can be a very stressful occupation and teacher stress appears to have increased in recent decades Yaacob and Cong (2015) cited Kyriacou (2001). In educational sector, stress is increasing day by day because teaching today's young people is not only difficult work, but can

be dangerously stressful. Teachers have to cope with their task to give knowledge as well as to educate learners to be good citizens. With the increase demand from learners and parents, as well as the job requirement, the stress levels were readily increasing. In Malaysia, a total of 237 secondary teachers out of 36, 000 teachers in the state, sought psychiatric treatment because of stress from work and personal problems over the last 10 months. The Malaysia State Education Department views this matter seriously although the number is smaller. Teachers reported stress out because of work pressure, financial problems, depression and loneliness. (Mohd Adib, 2012) identified stress inducing factors in academic staff include work overload, home-work interface, role ambiguity and performance pressure. The main cause of stress in the organization is work overload. Malaysian teachers have raised serious concern about the long working hours reporting an average hours as high as 77 hours per week (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2012). Teachers being burdened with administrative and clerical work felt it was hard to focus on their core business which is teaching learners. Besides, teachers were also engaged in administrative duties that take a large portion of their time resulting in a decrease in their ability to focus on teaching and learning. Sometimes teachers are also asked to attend meetings and courses that are not related to their job and take them away from their classroom. The workload and challenges faced by teachers increase each day and to burden them with more work. This will not go down well especially with the examination period being around the corner. The increase in workload in the schools without taking into account the availability of time to carry out the tasks may lead to occupational stress.

When roles of the teachers are ambiguous, it will lead towards the conflicting demand placed on them and role ambiguity and role conflict are positively associated with the work stress experience by the teachers. Higher work stress experienced by the teachers, lower will be their satisfaction with their job. According to teachers experience occupational stress due to the increase performance pressure. They experience role ambiguity where there was conflicting demands placed on them, their role was not very clear as to what to do, what not to do, who to report and what targets are to be achieved and also they have to work longer hours and feel overloaded in their role. Besides, the daily interaction with learners and colleagues and the incessant and fragmented demands of teaching often lead to overwhelming pressure and challenges, which may lead to occupational stress (Brown & Uehara, 2008). Teachers are also under a lot of pressure because of work-family conflict. Teachers must do some work, such as preparing lessons plan for the next day and grading exam papers at home. They have to devote time to their work outside school hours, which result in sacrificing time that could be devoted to housework and their children (Simbula, 2010). This may cause problem known as work-life conflict or work-family conflict. The teachers can satisfy with their jobs and life if they can balance their work and family life. Anyway, work family conflict was one of the problems in modern society (Kappagoda, 2013). The amount of stress a teacher experience at work was likely to be a result of the interaction of a number of factors such as types of work they are doing (their occupation), the present of work stressors, and the amount of support they received both at work and at home.

Several studies found that occupational stress influences the employee's job satisfaction and overall performance in their work (Simbula 2010). This is because most of the organizations are demanding for employees' better job outcome. Stress can bring undesirable impact on employees through job dissatisfaction. Teachers are also subject to problems of dissatisfaction at workplace. If they are not satisfied, they may not be committed to deliver the best to achieve the target in teaching Research done by Simbula (2010) showed that when sources of stress increase

in the job environment, job satisfaction reduces. They also reported that low job satisfaction can be predicted through resources of stress such as demands of the profession and great volume of work. Employees with low occupational stress reported have more job satisfaction than those with high occupational stress

Monitoring and Management Mechanisms on Stress Challenges

One of plans that may assist teachers to cope with stress was that one of KwaZulu Natal because it concentrates on curriculums that also have impact on teacher stress. Jika iMfundo is a campaign of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education that has been piloted on scale in 2015–2017 in all 1 200 public schools in two districts (King Cetshwayo and Pinetown) so that the model is tested on scale and lessons are learned before it is rolled out across the province from 2018. The implementation of Jika iMfundo is supported by the Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes (PILO) and funded by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT). The management focus was on all Circuit Managers and Subject Advisers at district level and on all the School Management Teams at school level. The teacher focus is on providing curriculum support materials to teachers from Grades 1–12. Jika iMfundo seeks to provide district officials, teachers and School Management Teams with the tools and training needed to have professional, supportive conversations about curriculum coverage based on evidence so that problems of curriculum coverage are identified, solved and learning outcomes improve across the system. It achieves this with a set of interventions at school and district levels. It works from foundation phase to the FET phase by building routines and patterns of support within and to schools that will have a long-term and sustained impact on learning outcomes. The overarching strategic objective is to improve learning outcomes. Theory of change to achieve this objective is that, if the quality of curriculum coverage improves, then learning outcomes will improve. In order for curriculum coverage to improve, the following behaviours associated with curriculum coverage must improve: monitoring curriculum coverage, reporting this at the level where action can be taken and providing supportive responses to solve problems associated with curriculum coverage. These are the lead indicators that must change before we will get change in the lag indicators of curriculum coverage and then learning. The goal is to make behaviours supportive of quality curriculum coverage routine (embedded and sustained) practices in the system

A good relationship and motivational workshops between the department, principal and the teachers can eliminate stress to teachers, meaning a situation whereby the views of the teachers are observed by the principal and department of education, likewise the views of the department and the principal are being accepted by the teachers (Simbula, 2010).The author went on to say that a good relationship was where the department of education constantly meets with the teachers and the teachers feel free to meet with the principal and their department so as to improve the performance of the learners at school. It is in the researchers' opinion that, if the teachers find it difficult to contact the principal and their department when there is a problem or the principal and department of education also find it difficult to contact the teachers when there is a problem, then it will mean that the relationship is not the best. The researcher believes that to eliminate stress among teachers, department of education must have motivational workshops.

Dunn and Goodnight (2011) found out seek help from experienced colleagues can eliminate stress. He continues saying no one person is responsible for doing everything. Also, no-one knows everything, therefore it was expected that each and every person will need the support and advice of others to help in a specific task or activity. The level and type of support will vary depending on the request. All teachers will therefore require different types, levels, and

intensity of support in their workplaces. This support may come from a variety of people and resources. Department of education provide support to teachers and offer them a wealth of resources during the normal course of business.   For the purpose of the manual, the person providing the support will be defined as the „provider‟ and the person asking for support as the „recipient‟. Experience colleagues can help others new and old colleagues at work to eliminate stress.

Other ways that were found to eliminating stress to teachers was to join sport. In a development context the definition of sport usually includes a broad and inclusive spectrum of activities in which people of all ages and abilities can participate, with an emphasis on the positive values of sport. Other scholars in 2008, the United Nations (UN) Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace defined sport, for the purposes of development, as "all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organised or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games".

According to the Charter of the Council of European Sports: "Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels"

Findings show that governments worldwide were increasingly using sport for development purposes. This includes programmes in support of "sport for peace"; a "green" environment; fighting poverty and crime as well as substance abuse; awareness around issues of HIV and Aids; women, children and people with disabilities and as strategy to eliminate stress among people or teachers. Sport works primarily by bridging relationships across social, economic and cultural divides within society, and by building a sense of shared identity and fellowship among groups that might otherwise be inclined to threaten each other with distrust, hostility or violence. By sharing sports experiences, sports participants from conflicting groups increasingly grow to feel that they are alike, rather than difference.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this paper was to establish monitoring and management mechanism by Department of Education assist teachers to cope with stress challenges. In order to achieve this objective, the following sub objectives were discussed: investigate how schools may address the stress challenges among teachers, and establish how monitoring and management mechanism may by Department of Education assist teachers to cope with stress challenges.

Managing teachers' stress in schools is one of the fundamentals in the improvement of the academic performance of secondary school learners. Stress is a global phenomenon that affects everyone regardless of gender, resources and environment. Although this phenomenon is well researched, teachers' experiences of stress remains a worrying challenge particularly to schools' effectiveness. Teachers face many challenges in South African schools such as ill-discipline of learners and vandalism of schools. It is vital that schools need to come up with better intervention programs that may assist teachers to overcome stress. The findings revealed that factors contributing to stress among secondary school teachers are, among others: ill-disciplined learners, lack of resources, inadequate school buildings with broken windows, learner absenteeism, shortage of learning and teaching materials, conditions that are not conducive for teaching and learning, huge workload, increased workload and job overload that result in low performance of learners, some learners carry dangerous weapons to school, this could promote

threat and unsafe environment that ultimately lead to poor academic performance of learners, use of drugs and alcohol by learner in schools frustrate teachers and consequently affect learners' performance.

RECOMMENDATION

School disciplinary committee should be trained in various disciplinary measures that may be implemented in the school to curb learner ill-discipline and lack of commitment, that working relationship should be built between schools and the Department of Basic Education, motivational speakers and educational counsellors should meet with all learners on a regular basis to motivate them to have high desire for and interest in education and to build their self-confidence in the classroom, providing all the schools with healthy environment in classrooms, provision of learning and teaching materials to all schools, schools should set up an effective school-parents partnership in order to promote a safe drug and alcohol free environment, employ enough teachers in all secondary schools and the Department of Basic Education at district level should make room for stress management workshops for teacher.

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