A LITERATURE SURVEY ON THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN MOTIVATING EDUCATORS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

A most distressing case of suicide, occurred at Woolwich in London, where a principal shot himself. His brother gave evidence to the effect that the deceased had often complained that the work was 'killing' him, saying that the trouble of teaching did not affect him as much as the worry of management (Kyriacou 1998:1). Principals of schools have the onerous task of motivating both one's self and his or her colleagues. The aim of this chapter is to review the literature on how a specific leadership style of the principal can motivate his or her colleagues (educators) by discussing the following:

- leadership styles of principals;
- supportive principals;
- theories of motivation;
- stages of the principal's stress process;
- causes of stress among principals;
- principal burnout; and
- coping strategies among principals.

3.2   LEADERSHIP STYLES OF PRINCIPALS

According to Blase, Dedrick and Strathe (1986: 160), the leadership style that enhanced workers' self-esteem was also closely related to an educator's job satisfaction. Educators, who were trusted to work in a responsible manner, reported greater satisfaction at the work place. Substantial relationships exist among the leadership style of the principals, educator's stress, job satisfaction and performance (Blase, Dedrick & Strathe 1986: 161).

There are two fundamental categories of leadership behaviour, human relations and task achievement (Cheng 1991:25). If a principal emphasises task achievement and neglects human relations, his or her style will be described as task oriented. Cheng (1991:34) found that principals in Hong Kong were highly goal orientated but had not neglected human relations. Shared ideals may be a very important force in motivating educators to work harder and to co-operate (Cheng 1991:35).

Democratic leadership involves the staff by means of mutual consultation in decision-making. Decisions are made by means of voluntary and spontaneous communication and the leader plays an active role in the process. This type of leadership provides the staff members with an opportunity to make a contribution and offers opportunities for original and creative contributions by staff members, and in this way may lead to attaining the goals of the school (Van der Westhuizen 1996:190).

Draper and McMichael (1996:154) found that principals with an autocratic leadership style could not motivate people. A principal described himself as follows "I am the eye of the needle and everything passes through me." This principal admits that he could no longer motivate the staff members and learners, but obviously could not understand the reasons for his failure to motivate. For the purpose of this study autocratic principals always want their own way in determining policies. According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:190) an autocratic principal will make all the decisions and take full responsibility to ensure that set goals are attained. The autocratic principal creates non-existent needs among his staff who may find the pursuit of such needs stressful. Despite dissatisfaction among staff members the autocratic principal will persist with his or her plans. In delegating duties, the autocratic principal will give instructions to staff members individually instead of delegating via a pyramid structure through the Deputy principals and Heads of Department. This type of delegation may cause dissatisfaction among staff members.

The autocratic principal is personal in his or her praise and criticism. According to (Van der Westhuizen 1996:190) the autocratic principal is inclined to dominate and has difficulty with working with others.

The free reign leadership is a type of leadership that does not make his or her presence felt. The members of staff have the freedom to make individual or group decisions. A situation is created in which the individual is totally trusted to make decisions and where the principal is minimally involved in the background (Van der Westhuizen 1996:190).

According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:190) a principal who is a bureaucratic leader will use policies, laws and rules to manage the affairs of the school. Such a leadership style may be effective in some situations, such as informing educators of the various education policies. Principals who adhere strictly to the law, rules and regulations as leadership strategies will cause stress among educators. A bureaucratic leadership style among principals is described by Van der Westhuizen (1996:190) as impersonal and a quick route to solving problems. This type of leadership is rigid and the principal's authority is centralised.

The researcher is of the view that it is important for all secondary school principals to understand and apply the leadership style that is appropriate to the situation and the needs of educators. However, the ability of principals to motivate educators in secondary schools is a challenging task. A successful principal should possess the ability to communicate effectively; resolve conflicts; is accountable; provide appropriate leadership; and manage change effectively. Change in schools should provide the opportunity of creating supportive relationships, participative decision-making and recognition of good work. Personality traits of a principal, professional conduct and stress management programmes can influence job satisfaction and the well-being of educators (Smith 1994:3). A study by Grant (2003:110) showed that the best way to accomplish things is to drop the "them and us" attitude and to see him / herself as part of a complete unit.

The findings of Cheng (1991:25) show that the leadership style of the principal motivates his or her colleagues when they (the educators):

- work with a shared vision;
- share power and decision-making;
- display effective organisation skills (in curricular and extra-curricular activities) and
- form effective interpersonal relationships.

3.3   SUPPORTIVE PRINCIPALS

Supportive principal is an important leadership quality in managing work-related stress among secondary school educators. The study conducted by Littrell et al. (1994:279) provides a valuable framework in understanding supportive principals. Support from the principals influences the feeling that educators have about themselves and their work. Supportive principals are likely to have a positive effect on educator's commitment and job satisfaction (Littrell et al. 1994:279). Educators who characterise their principals as supportive find work:

- more rewarding;
- enjoy a productive career;
- enjoy a motivating work environment;
- demonstrate lower attrition rates; and
- experience less work-related stress and burnout (Littrell et al. 1994:279).

According to Littrell et al.(1994:298) support from principals is evident as four broad dimensions of behaviour:

- Emotional support: Principals show educators that they are esteemed, trusted professionals and worthy of concern by such practices as maintaining open communication, showing appreciation, taking an interest in an educator's work and considering an educator's ideas.

- Instructional support: Principals directly help educators with work-related tasks, such as providing necessary materials, space and resources, ensuring adequate time for teaching and non-teaching duties and helping them with managerial types of concerns.

- Informational support: Principals provide educators with useful information that they can use to improve classroom practice. For example, principals provide informational support by authorising educators' attendance at in-service workshops, offering practical information about effective teaching practices and providing suggestions to improve instructional and classroom management.

- Appraisal support: Principals as instructional leaders are charged with providing on-going personnel appraisal, such as frequent and constructive feedback about the educator's work, information about what constitutes effective teaching and clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities.

Non-supportive principals may contribute to stress and illness among educators, such as heart disease, ulcers, mental illness, alcoholism, headaches, fatigue, sleeplessness, depression, anxiety and irritability (Littrell et al. 1994:298).

3.4 THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

Knowledge about the various theories of motivation will assist the principals in their management and thus contribute positively in motivating personnel (Smith 1994:3).

3.4.1 McGregor's theory on motivation

McGregor identified two types of theories, X and Y. The study by Connacher (1998:6) shows the assumptions of theory X as follows:

- the average person is irresponsible;
- people are resistant to change; and
- people are indifferent to the needs of the organisation.

McGregor's theory X follows a rigid and autocratic leadership style. This theory is pessimistic and inadequate to motivate educators. The assumptions of theory Y are as follows:

- people can be motivated;
- people have potential for development and the capacity to assume responsibility; and
- people are committed towards organisational goals.

Theory Y suggests that management practice should be aimed at working with people rather than against them. The key to managing under theory Y is the ability to delegate and trust appropriately. Apathy and resentment are likely to prevail if principals do not extend trust adequately to their staff members (Connacher 1998:6). McGregor adapts Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to support his theory on motivation (Connacher 1998:7). Maslow categorises security and social needs as lower-order needs. The higher-order needs are esteem, autonomy and self-actualisation. Both higher- and lower-order needs are necessary to motivate educators. Connacher (1998:7) shows that principals who shape their management styles on serving the higher order needs of educators are tapping a potent motivational source.

3.4.2 Hertzberg's theory on motivation

According to Connacher (1998:8) principals need to develop and foster positive interpersonal feelings, fair and honest management, sensible and practical policies, pleasant working conditions, status and security for teachers. Factors such as advancement and self-actualisation should also be the focus of staff development programmes (Connacher 1998:8). Herzberg's theory makes the following assumptions:

- subordinates need to feel important as individuals;
- educators who are treated with respect will show appreciation by responding to the leadership of the principal;
- the 'satisfiers' represent the 'higher order needs' and the 'dissatisfiers' represent the 'lower order needs'; and

- 'higher' and 'lower order needs' of educators must be fulfilled to motivate educators (Connacher 1998:7).

The 'higher order needs' of Hertzberg's theory are as follows:

- achievement;
- recognition;
- work itself;
- responsibility; and
- advancement (Connacher 1998:7).
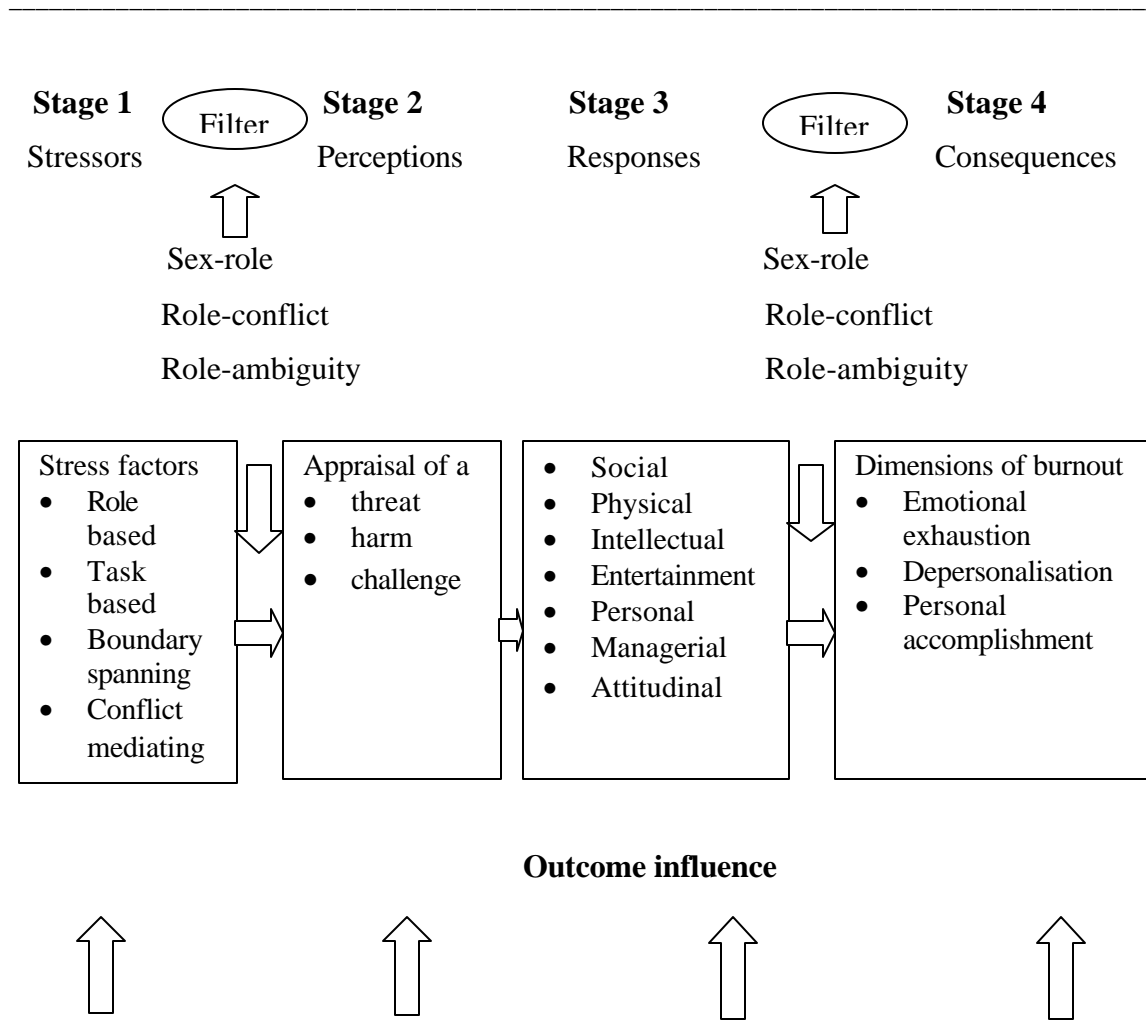
The 'lower order needs' are as follows:

- salary;
- possibility of growth;
- interpersonal relationship (subordinates, superiors, peers);
- working conditions;
- personal life;
- status; and
- job security (Connacher 1998:7).

The researcher's view is that to motivate educators, appropriate motivational theories should to be applied in the work situation by the principals. The ' lower' and 'higher order needs' of educators should be fulfilled for job satisfaction. The principal should understand educator's needs and modify any form of work-related stressors.

3.5   STAGES OF THE PRINCIPAL'S STRESS PROCESS

Figure 3.1 below illustrates the stages of the principal's stress process, the causes of stress, the effects of sex-role, role-conflict and role-ambiguity as moderating variables.

FIGURE 3.1

THE PRINCIPAL'S STRESS PROCESS

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Stage 1	Filter	**Stage 2**	**Stage 3**	Filter	**Stage 4**
Stressors		Perceptions	Responses		Consequences

Sex-role

Role-conflict

Role-ambiguity

Sex-role

Role-conflict

Role-ambiguity

Stress factors • Role based • Task based • Boundary spanning • Conflict mediating	Appraisal of a • threat • harm • challenge	• Social • Physical • Intellectual • Entertainment • Personal • Managerial • Attitudinal	Dimensions of burnout • Emotional exhaustion • Depersonalisation • Personal accomplishment

Outcome influence

Source: Adapted from Gmelch and Chan (1995:280) and Gmelch and Torelli (1994:277).

To be an effective leader according to the researcher, the principal needs to understand his or her source of stress in the workplace, perceptions of stress, the choices to be made and coping strategies.

3.5.1   Stage one

There are four sources of stress in the first stage of the principal's stress cycle (Gmelch & Torelli 1994:343). They are as follows:

- Role based stress. Principals experience stress due to the different roles they assume, some in conflict with their personal beliefs or attitudes.
- Task based stress. Task based stress arises from the performances of day-to-day administrative activities, from telephone interruptions, staff interruptions, meetings, writing memos and reports, to participating in school activities outside of normal working hours.
- Boundary spanning. Boundary spanning stress emanates from external conditions, such as negotiations and gaining public support for school funds.
- Conflict-mediating stress. This type of stress arises from the principal's handling of conflicts with educators, parents and students.

3.5.2   Stage two

This stage consists of the perception or interpretation of the stressors. Principals who perceive demands as harmful or exceeding their abilities will create stress within themselves and therefore, could become ineffective as leaders (Gmelch & Torelli 1994:343).

3.5.3   Stage three

This stage presents choices to the individual. The principal responds to the stressor as perceived to be harmful, threatening or demanding. Individuals use coping strategies when they believe they can counteract the stressor in a positive manner (Gmelch & Torelli 1994:343).

3.5.4   Stage four

This stage of the stress process takes into account the effects of stress. The consequences can lead to headaches, ulcers, illness or disability if stress is not properly managed. Prolonged stress can even lead to burnout (Gmelch & Torelli 1994:343).

3.6   CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG PRINCIPALS

John and Lloyd (1987:109) found the four major factors of stress among high school principals are as follows:

3.6.1   Management of time

Time is a valuable resource and therefore time management is important for the secondary school principal. Principals experience stress when they are:

- being interrupted frequently by telephone calls;
- having work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk;
- having to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of personal time;
- feeling that work load is too heavy, and cannot possibly be finished during the day;
- feeling that meetings take too much time; and
- trying to complete reports, memos, letters and other paper work on time.

3.6.2   Relationship with superiors

The principal's relationship with superiors is often stressful. Principals find themselves in situations where they:

- try to resolve differences with superiors;
- not knowing how superiors evaluate principal's performance;

- feel that principals have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to them; and
- unclear about the scope and responsibilities of a principal.

3.6.3   Relationship with subordinates

Managing subordinates is an important task of the principal. Principals often experience stress from:

- supervising and co-ordinating the tasks of many people;
- having to make decisions that affect the lives of colleagues, staff and students;
- trying to resolve parent and school conflicts;
- handling student discipline problems;
- evaluating staff member's performance; and
- trying to resolve differences among staff members.

3.6.4 Matters of finance

In addition to the numerous challenges that principals encounter, managing school finances is important. Principals experience stress from:

- preparing and allocating budget resources; and
- trying to gain public approval or financial support for school programme.

According to John and Lloyd (1987:109) time management creates the most stress among principals. An explanation for this may be the increased responsibility and workload among principals in secondary schools. Relations with superiors and subordinates create a significant amount of stress for principals. Matters of finance are the least stressful factor for principals (John & Lloyd 1987:109). A possible explanation could be that the school governing body is responsible for financial management.

3.7 PRINCIPAL'S BURNOUT

The phenomenon of principal burnout is defined by Whitaker (1996:63) as:

- an extreme form of role-specific alienation;
- extensive emotional exhaustion;
- feelings of depersonalisation;
- low sense of personal accomplishment; and
- the presence of strain-making stressors that can overwhelm coping capacity.

After interviewing principals at schools in Colorado in the USA Whitaker (1996:60) described them as competent, hard-working professionals. However, these principals experienced frustration on the job and have second thoughts about remaining in their roles as principals. According to Whitaker (1996:60) many frustrations of principals at Colorado schools are related to role overload and incapacity to accomplish the many tasks and responsibilities assigned to them. Other causes of frustrations experienced by principals at these schools include site-based management, shared decision making, declining resources, increased paperwork and greater expectations from public and central administration for higher student standards.

Chronic stress can be emotionally debilitating, especially when the individual experiences inability to control or reduce stress to manageable levels (Talbot & Lumden 2001:420). As coping resources are depleted the principal experiences emotional exhaustion and develops a cynical attitude towards educators, teaching and students (depersonalisation). Depersonalised principals may treat learners and educators like objects or label them rather than use their names. In turn, staff members and learners describe their relationship with depersonalised principals as callous and cynical (Gmelch & Torelli 1994:344).

According to Talbot and Lumden (2001:420) feelings of exhaustion and ineffectiveness experienced by the principal may continue as mental and physical resources are depleted in pursuit of unreachable and sometimes unrealistic goals. For the principal a reduction in personal accomplishment translates into a loss of self-esteem and dissatisfaction with job accomplishments.

Gmelch and Torelli (1994:344) indicate that principals with a low sense of personal accomplishment evaluate themselves negatively and become dissatisfied with their accomplishment. According to the researcher principals who experience burnout syndrome will not be able to meet the demands of administration and the responsibilities of managing work- related stress among secondary school educators.

3.8   COPING STRATEGIES AMONG PRINCIPALS

This model proposed by the researcher explains how the principal of a school can manage conflict, ambiguity and his or her own stress process through appropriate leadership behaviour. In figure 3.1 the researcher has combined the effects of the sex-role, role-conflict and role-ambiguity as moderating variables of the principal's stress process. Gmelch and Chan (1995:280) show that if the leadership style of the principal reflects an androgynous behaviour, he or she will be more adaptable to the working situation and will manage one's level of stress easily. Androgyny is used to describe the flexibility of masculinity and femininity in leadership behaviours. This characteristic is described as the sex-role type of a principal.

It is the researcher's view that the level at which principals are able to cope with conflicting roles will determine their well-being. Gmelch and Chan (1995:348) found the following examples of role-conflict among principals:

- expectations from parents, learners or staff members that are incompatible;
- inability to resolve the incompatibility between one's own expectations and those expected of the position;
- the shift of being a support person for an educator to evaluating educator performance; and
- performing too many conflicting roles in a short a time period.

Role-ambiguity refers to the task of a principal where his or her role may not be clearly articulated in terms of behaviour or performance expectation. When expectations, goals and responsibilities of principals are clear, the principal will experience less stress (Gmelch & Torelli 1994:349). The researcher's view is that if stress becomes chronic among principals, it will inevitably have an

adverse effect on the principals' job performance as well as their mental and physical health. Principals must manage the role-conflict and ambiguity in order to filter some of the stress and emotional exhaustion from their occupations.

The degree to which principals can resolve these conflicting demands and develop clear goals and expectations will help them guard against stress and burnout. Prospective principals must recognise the nature of their tasks and prepare ways to deal with inherent ambiguities and conflicts. Skills in communications and managing confrontation are critical to clarify roles and expectations (Gmelch & Torelli 1994:349). To provide the best for educators and learners, secondary school principals must be allowed to do their jobs without unnecessary work-related stress (John & Lloyd 1987:112).

Principals of secondary schools can also use humour to cope with burnout syndrome. According to Talbot and Lumden (2001:420) humour provides a way of sharing common frustrations which in turn can promote cohesion among colleagues. Wooten (in Talbot and Lumden 2001:420) found humour can prevent burnout and create resilience to stress.

Whitaker (1996:69) made the following suggestions to reduce levels of burnout among principals in Colorado, USA.

They are as follows:

- Principals desire more support systems to be better able to handle conflict and increasing pressure associated with their jobs.
- Educational programmes need to prepare future principals for the realities of the job.
- Principals' command of leadership skills should be fully developed to be effective.
- School districts need to recognise the challenging and difficult role of the principals.
- Principal's role must be rewarding, fulfilling and challenging.

The researcher is of the view that the suggestions made by Whitaker (1996:69) could improve the well-being of South African school principals.

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a theoretical perspective on how the leadership style of the principal motivates educators. The effects of the different leadership styles on the well-being of educators, principal support, theories of motivation, the principal's stress process, causes of stress among principals, principal's burnout and coping strategies were discussed. Chapter four will focus on the qualitative research design and the methodology. It will also undertake to explain the manner in which the research is planned, data collected and analysed.