

University of South Africa

Reg. No. 595-546-7

10 June 2002

Dear Colleague,

You are invited to take part in a research study that has been approved by the University of South Africa. I am currently studying towards the Master of Education (Educational Management). My dissertation topic is:

*The role of the principal in managing organisational work-related stress among secondary school educators.*

To be able complete this study, I need to conduct interviews with educators who teach in a secondary school.

The aims of this research project are:

- to investigate the role of the principal in managing organisational work- related stress among secondary school educators;
- to investigate the causes of work- related stress among secondary school educators;
- to investigate the type of leadership style of the principal that will motivate educators;
- to make recommendations with regard to improving organisational strategies designed to minimise work-related stress among secondary school educators.

I hope you will be interested in taking part in this important research study. A copy of the final report of the findings of this study will be available from the Unisa library by approximately November 2003. Your co-operation is appreciated.

Researcher: S. G. Naicker

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10 June 2002

The Human Resource Manager  
The Empangeni Regional Office  
Private Bag X20070  
Empangeni  
3880

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Request permission to conduct research interviews among secondary school educators

It would be greatly appreciated if the Department of Education and Culture Kwa-Zulu Natal grants me permission to conduct research interviews among secondary school educators. I am currently studying towards the Master of Education (Educational Management). My dissertation topic is: *The role of the principal in managing organisational work-related stress among secondary school educators.*

The aims of this research project are:

- to investigate the role of the principal in managing organisational work- related stress among secondary school educators;
- to investigate the causes of work-related stress among secondary school educators;
- to investigate how the leadership style of the principal will motivate the educators;
- to make recommendations to improve organisational strategies designed to minimise work-related stress among secondary school educators.

An interview schedule will be presented to the principal aimed at allowing educators to be interviewed without disrupting the running of the school. The information gathered will be held in confidence and used strictly for research purposes.

Yours faithfully

S.G.Naicker

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## **STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY**

*Topic: The role of the principal in managing organisational work-related stress among secondary school educators.*

### **A working definition of stress**

For the purpose of this research, stress will be defined as the unpleasant emotions experienced by educators such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and depression as a result of their interaction in the workplace (Smith & Bourke 1992:31). Prolonged experience of these unpleasant emotions could lead to physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle pain, colds, virus, chest pains or discomfort, back or neck pain, skin problems, gastrointestinal problems, breathing difficulties or feeling dizzy. According to Selye (1976:57) stress is an inherent element of every illness. For example, medical conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure), coronary heart disease, asthma and bronchial infection, rheumatoid arthritis, cirrhosis (liver problems), diabetes, thyroid disease and migraine can be caused as a result of prolonged stress. Excessive stress can also cause psychological problems such as depression and burnout. Where stress is used positively to motivate educators, the term eustress will be used.

### **Category A: Pupil discipline**

What are some of the serious discipline problems that you have experienced with your learners? What type of unpleasant emotions did you experience? How did you handle the situation? What structures are there in place to deal with learner discipline? What would you recommend to the principal of the school to improve the discipline of learners?

### **Category B: Standard of education**

In your opinion, do you think the standard of education at this institution is dropping? If your answer is “yes,” what are the causes and how do you feel about it? What would you recommend to the principal of the school?

**Category C: Workload**

Can you describe your curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular, disciplinary, organisational and administrative tasks at this institution? How do you feel about your workload? How often did you have to work on weekends and after school hours?

**Category D: Policy changes**

Which school policy has caused you much dissatisfaction: Outcomes Based Education, Rationalisation and Redeployment or Developmental Appraisal System? Why is this so and what would you recommend?

**Category E: Promotion: Rewards and recognition**

To what extent do you feel that the school has given you a fair opportunity for career advancement? How do you feel about the prospects of being promoted in the near future? What are your reasons for your response? What are your recommendations?

**Category F: Leadership style**

How would you describe the decision making process at this institution? Are members of staff adequately consulted on important decision? If your answer is “no” what decision or decisions would you have liked to be part of? What would you recommend to the principal of the school? What type of support have you received from the principal of the school? Would you consider this support to be adequate? What other support would you have appreciated from the principal?

**Category G: Organisation**

In your opinion how effective is your site committee/ union where staff complaints are concerned? Can you substantiate your answer with illustrative examples? What would you recommend to the union? What type of support have you received from the School Governing Body, school management team, Representative Council of Learners, parent or the Department of Education and Culture this year? Did you have any reasons to be

dissatisfied with any one or more of the role players in the organisation? Can you substantiate your answer with illustrative examples?

**Category H: Personal and other factors**

Have you considered the possibility of changing your career, going overseas, resigning or being medically boarded? What are your reasons? Did you suffer from any of the following physical symptoms recently (headaches, back/neck pain etc.) or medical conditions such as (high blood pressure, diabetes or migraine) that is stress related? Have you suffered from any form of depression? How do you cope with these problems? Is there anything else that you would like me to know that may have caused you personal discomfort and unpleasant emotions, even at home?

**Thank you very much for participating in this interview.**

## **ANNEXURE 1**

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- A letter inviting secondary school educators to participate in the study.

## **ANNEXURE 2**

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- Structured interview questions.

### **ANNEXURE 3**

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- A letter requesting permission from the Department of Education Kwa-Zulu Natal to conduct the research.



## **ANNEXURE 4**

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- A letter from the Department of Education Kwa-Zulu Natal granting permission to conduct the research.