MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO ALLEVIATE THE EFFECTS OF STRESS AND BURNOUT ON SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WITHIN EKURHULENI DISTRICT IN GAUTENG PROVINCE

by

OJONLA LEKOMO

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DECLARATION

Name: Ojonla Lekomo
Student number: 50153315
Degree: Master of Education

I declare that the dissertation, **"Management strategies to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout on secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni district in Gauteng province"**, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted parameters for originality.

7 November 2018

SIGNATURE DATE

DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR ON ORIGINALITY REPORT

I, Prof HM van der Merwe, declare that I have considered the originality software checking report submitted by O. Lekomo. I confirm that the dissertation meets an acceptable standard of originality.

7 November 2018

Prof HM van der Merwe

Date

ABSTRACT

The researcher investigated ways of alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. In this regard, factors causing teacher stress and burnout, the effect of stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning, support structures offered by secondary schools, and coping strategies to deal with stress and burnout were relevant.

A total of 20 participants consisting of 12 teachers and 8 school management team members were interviewed using individual and focus group interviews, and participant observation. Findings revealed that teachers are experiencing a range of stressors of a consistent and prolonged nature leading to burnout. The allocation of unfamiliar subjects as a stressor appeared to be a new finding not noted in any of the previous literature. Stress and burnout constitute a threat to teacher retention and effective teaching and learning. Support structures offered to teachers are inadequate, resulting in teachers using ineffective stress coping strategies.

KEY TERMS

Burnout; coping strategies; depersonalisation; emotional exhaustion; reduced personal accomplishment; self-efficacy; stressor; stress management; teaching profession; support structures; management strategies; teacher stress; teacher burnout.

OPSOMMING

Die navorser het maniere ondersoek om spanning en uitbranding by hoërskoolonderwysers te verlig. In hierdie verband was faktore wat spanning en uitbranding tot gevolg het, die effek van spanning en uitbranding op die kwaliteit van onderrig en leer, ondersteuningstrukture wat deur skole aangebied word, en strategieë om spanning en uitbranding te hanteer van toepassing.

Onderhoude, individueel en fokusgroep, is met 20 deelnemers, 12 onderwysers en 8 lede van die skoolbeheerraad gevoer. Data is ook met deelnemerwaarneming ingesamel. Navorsingsbevindinge toon aan dat onderwysers volgehoue spanning ervaar wat tot uitbranding lei. Die toewysing van vakke waarmee onderwysers nie vertroud is nie is as ‘n bevinding geïdentifiseer wat nie algemeen in die literatuur opgeteken is nie. Spanning en uitbranding affekteer onderwyserbehoud vir die beroep en goeie kwaliteit onderrig en leer negatief. Ondersteuningstrukture vir onderwysers is onvoldoende met die gevolg dat onderwysers geneig is tot die oneffektiewe hantering van spanning.

I-ABSTRACT

Umcwaningi ucwaninge izindlela zokuciphisa ukucindezeleka nokushisa phakathi kwabafundisi besikole esiphakeme. Kulokhu, izici ezidala ukucindezeleka nokushisa kothisa, umphumela wokucindezeleka nokushiswa kumhangatho wokufundisa nokufunda, izakhiwo zokusekela ezininkezwa izikole zamabanga aphezulu, Kanye namaqhinga okubhekana nomphumela wokucindezeleka nokushisa kwakufanele.

Ingqikithi yabangu-20 yabahlanganyeli abangothisa abangu-12 kanye namalunga eqembu lesiphathimandla sabaphathi abangu-8 besikole babuzwe imibuzo ngokusebenzisa izingxoxo zanye ngabanye kange neqembu lokugxila, Kanye nokubonwa kwabahlangayeli, Kutholakale ukuthi othisha babona ububanzi bokucindezeleka kwendalo eqhubekayo okungaholela ekusheni. Ukwabiwa kwezihloko ezingajwayelekile njengoba ukucindezeleka kubonakala sengathi kuyinto entsha engatholakali ezincwadini zangaphambilini. Ukucindezeleka nokushisa kwakha umsongelo ekugcinweni kothisa Kanye nokufundisa nokufinda okuphumelelayo. Izakhiwo zokuseleka ezinekezwa othisha azanele, ziholela kothisa besenbenzisa amaqhinga okubhekana nokucindezeleka angasebenzi.

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ACRONYMS

ATP:	**Annual Teaching Plan**
EAP:	**Employee Assistance Programme**
ELRC:	**Education Labour Relation Council**
EMS:	**Economic and Management Science**
GAS:	**General Adaptation Syndrome**
HOD:	**Head of Department**
HSRC:	**Human Sciences Research Council**
IQMS:	**Integrated Quality Management System**
MBI:	**Maslach Burnout Inventory**
MBI-ES:	**Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educator's Survey**
MBI-GS:	**Maslach Burnout Inventory - General Survey**
MBI-HSS:	**Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey**
MTT:	**Mobile Task Team**
OBE:	**Outcomes Based Education**
OECD:	**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**
PLSS:	**Professional Life Stress Scale**
SACE:	**South African Council of Educators**
SBST:	**School Base Support Team**
SCT:	**Social Cognitive Theory**
SDT:	**Self-determination Theory**
STT:	**Stereotype Threat Theory**
TSI:	**Teacher Stress Inventory**
USA:	**United State of America**

CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION TO STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Regardless of the considerable challenges facing the South African educational system, teachers are crucial for learners' success. Teachers influence learners' learning more than any other school-based factor (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, & Hamilton, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). An effective teacher is one of the single most important factors responsible for learning (Schacter & Thum, 2004:413). This accentuates the fact that teachers do not only play a central role in fostering learners' academic learning and social-emotional well-being, but also that a sufficient number of competent teachers is required in order to improve the quality of educational processes. Conversely, many teachers find the demands of being a professional educator in today's school difficult, and at times stressful. Most teachers are exposed to prolonged stress, which eventually culminates in burnout. Studies have shown that teaching is a stressful career, and this can lead to teachers suffering from burnout (McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2009), resulting in a national epidemic of teacher departures. Stress experienced by teachers has become a subject of intense interest in recent years.

Teacher burnout resulting from acute stress is a global challenge. The rate at which teachers leave the profession, especially when reacting to stress and burnout, is significantly higher than the departure rate in other professions (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003). Reports on teacher fluctuation in the United States of America indicate that over 16% of public school teachers leave the profession or change schools each year (Cox, Parmer, Tourkin, Warner, & Lyter, 2007), and that the number of teachers in the USA who leave the profession within the first five years can range from one third to one half (Hanushek, 2007; Ingersoll, & Smith, 2003). Suell and Pintrowski (2007) confirm the same situation within the USA, namely that about a third of all teachers leave the profession, half of them within five years after they have started their teaching career. To suffice with examples of the tendency of teachers leaving the profession in developed societies, Mullock (2009) states that research shows that as many as 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first three

years of teaching in the USA, 40% leave the profession after five years in the United Kingdom, and in Australia, 56% of prospective teachers are planning to teach for only a short time, if at all. However, in many developed societies, teacher resignations represent the highest contribution to overall attrition (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, 2004).

With regards to developing societies, a Sudanese government official described teaching as a “waiting place” explaining the condition of teachers only choosing to teach when they have nothing else to do, but would leave when an opportunity comes (Sommers, 2205:23). In South Africa, 55% of the educators surveyed, in a study of teacher attrition commissioned by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) among school teachers in both public and private schools, stated that they intended to leave the profession (SACE:2010). Another study conducted on teacher attrition in South Africa shows that 49% of attrition is due to resignation as compared to other possible causes such as death, dismissal, medical issues, retirement, severance and transfer (SACE:2010).

With reference to the reasons teachers leave the profession, research shows that 55% of teachers in South Africa have considered leaving the profession due to reasons relating to inadequate remuneration, increased workload, lack of career development and professional recognition, dissatisfaction with work policies and job insecurity (Paulse, 2005). Despite the broader consensus among educational researchers that teacher quality has a larger impact on learner achievement than any other school-related factors, many teachers when reacting to stress and burnout leave their school and the profession (Coombe, 2008:11), resulting in the reduction of significant numbers of competent teachers available to teach the children. Research about teacher burnout further shows that burnout can reduce teaching quality (Ransdell, Grosshans & Trunnell, 2004), which may affect the education that learners receive.

Stress and burnout among secondary school teachers continue to be significant issues for all stakeholders involved, that is educators and education managers and also learners with their parents because of the negative effect of teacher stress on learner well-being. Reducing and managing teacher burnout in schools is one of the important challenges facing educators, school principals and second and third level education

managers. So, for quality teaching and learning to take place, strategies for mitigating and managing teacher burnout need to be accentuated.

With this study, the focus is on factors that cause secondary school teachers in South Africa to experience stress and burnout, and strategies to intervene in order to alleviate, or to prevent stress and burnout. Measures of prevention or alleviation can ensure that quality teaching and learning take place in schools, and that teachers experience job satisfaction, remain motivated and do not ultimately leave the profession.

1.2 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's climate of greater accountability for learner performance, effective stress and burnout management makes a difference in improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The purpose of this section is to critically review literature on factors that cause teachers' stress and burnout. It reviews the implications of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of education. It further provides a review on how schools can mitigate and manage teacher stress and burnout, as well as strategies that teachers use in coping with the syndrome of stress and burnout. The section starts with a discussion of the theoretical framework for this study.

1.2.1 Theoretical framework

A combination of four theories that informed teacher responses to stress and burnout, as well as the conditions within schools that influence teacher response to stress in certain situations will be used to interpret my research findings. They are social cognitive theory, stereotype threat theory, role theory, and self-determination theory.

1.2.1.1 Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory, which is based on the work begun by Albert Bandura in the 1950s at Stanford University, is a dynamic system that explains human adaptation, learning, and motivation (Woolfolk, 2014:361). It addresses how people develop social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural capabilities; how people regulate their

own lives; and what motivates them (Bandura, 2007; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Social cognitive theory is focused on the role of self-efficacy in human agency in which individuals are agents proactively engaged in their own development (Dweck, 2005).

Self-efficacy refers to a person's sense of being able to deal effectively with a particular task with no need for comparisons with others' ability. That is, it deals with judgments of personal competence rather than judgments of self-worth (Woolfolk, 2014:366-367). Self-efficacy describes people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1994:71).

With regards to the teaching profession, teachers' sense of efficacy refers to a teacher's belief that he or she can reach even the most difficult learners to help them learn (Woolfolk, 2014:370). However, greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence in the face of challenges or setbacks. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy work harder, persist longer, and are less likely to experience burnout (Woolfolk, 2014:387). Those with low sense of efficacy may avoid a task altogether or give up easily when problems arise (Woolfolk, 2014:386). Teachers' perceptions of their efficacy also influence the types of anticipatory scenarios they construct. Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy visualise successful scenarios, while those with a low sense of efficacy tend to distrust their positive experiences rather than to risk encounters with threats that they think they cannot adequately control (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy also influences motivation through goal setting. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy set higher goals, display confidence and optimism to succeed, and develop new strategies when old ones fail (Woolfolk, 2014:368). High self-efficacy helps to create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks. However, strong self-efficacy is one of the few personal attributes of teachers that predict learner achievement (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005; Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy, & Davis, 2009).

1.2.1.2 Stereotype threat theory

Stereotype threat is a situational predicament in which individuals are at risk of confirming negative stereotypes about their group (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012). Stereotype threat theory explains the psychological experience of a person who, while

engaged in a task, develops a perception of a stereotype about his or her identity group, speculating that he or she will not perform well on that task (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Stereotype threat results from the perception that one might be judged in terms of negative stereotypes about one's group instead of on personal merit. This perception places an additional burden on members of the stereotype groups (Roberson & Kulik, 2007), and yields many negative consequences, including underperformance, ill health, and reduced interest in work and life (Shapiro, 2011).

Two forms of stereotype threat can be experienced: self-concept and group concept threat (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). While group-concept threat conceptualizes the group as the target of a stereotype threat, self-concept threat is a self-as-source, self-as-target stereotype threat. Self-concept threat explains the fear of seeing oneself as having the negative stereo trait (Shapiro, 2011:465).

1.2.1.3 Role theory

Role theory is structural functionalist in that it seeks to explain human behaviour by looking at what social function is fulfilled by holding a given role. The role theory describes socially acceptable forms of behaviour within a given context, and argues that, in order to change behaviour, it is necessary to change roles.

In the teaching profession, role conflict may be experienced when teachers attempt to fulfil expectations that conflict with the realities of daily professional life (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2013:221). Another type of role conflict is role overload which occurs when teachers are unable to accomplish assigned tasks within available time. Role overload may also result from teachers' lack of qualifications to perform the task well, regardless of how much time they have. Role ambiguity may then follow when there is no clarity about the teachers' duties, objectives and responsibilities (Beehr & Glazer, 2005).

1.2.1.4 Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory specifies causes for human thriving (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006). The theory identifies competence, autonomy, and relatedness as important needs for optimal functioning (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006), and explains

that each need uniquely predicts positive outcomes with performance and psychological well-being (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Filak & Sheldon, 2003).

The theory argues that feeling competent is very important for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Elliot & Dweck, 2005), and that people must feel sufficiently competent to achieve their desired outcomes. The theory further maintains that social environment also needs to nurture individuals' need for autonomy which allows them to better regulate their thoughts, actions, and emotions. Furthermore, the theory argues that people seek supportive, caring relationships in which their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs are recognised and respected in order for them to function optimally (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006). The theory concludes that by considering and providing for human psychological needs such as competence, autonomy and relatedness, schools may strengthen teachers' functioning and well-being.

1.2.2 Teaching as a stressful occupation

There is ample evidence from the literature regarding the increasing pressure that teachers experience in the course of their daily work. Studies show that teaching is traditionally recognized as a highly stressful occupation, associated with high levels of burnout (Hastings & Bham, 2003). As a profession, it is plagued by significant turnover often attributable to burnout with documented rates of teacher turnover rising in public schools worldwide over the past decade (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlick, Kemp & Tahan, 2011). For centuries teaching has been characterized as a profession that is emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating (Lambert, O'Donnell, Kusherman & McCarthy, 2006:105).

An alarming number of teachers feel emotionally drained, stressed, and even burned out from their work (Kararas, 2010:71). Teaching is stressful because it is viewed as demanding and intensive and may cause physical and mental health problems (Verhoeven, Kraaij, Joekes, Maes, 2003), which in turn may lead to burnout. According to Randsdell et al. (2004), unrealistic ideals and expectations make teaching a stressful occupation.

1.2.3 The causes of teacher stress

Some of the causes of teachers' frustration arise from being saddled with increasing paperwork, large classes, undisciplined and unmotivated learners, increasing workload, and feeling unvalued (Kokkinos, 2007). In this regard, it is well documented that teachers generally experience considerable stress caused by factors inside and outside the classroom (Coombe, 2008; Mullock, 2009). Experienced and inexperienced teachers encounter stress on a daily basis and, apart from the stressors named already, some more stressors encountered on a daily basis relate to change in the working environment, and organisational climate (Griva & Joekes, 2003).

Research also indicates that poor learner behaviour is a main contributor to teacher stress, especially for teachers at secondary school level (Geving, 2007). In addition to that, significant learner-related behavioural factors leading to teacher stress are hostility towards the teacher, inattentiveness, noisiness, lack of effort in class, attending class unprepared, hyperactivity, school rules violation, improper handling of school property, hostility towards other learners, and lack of interest in learning (Geving, 2007). Other factors contributing to teacher stress include the lack of parental and administrative support (Blasé, Blasé, & Du, 2008; Lambert et al., 2006); lack of material support to perform their profession (Ozdemir, 2007); poor working conditions (Cox, Parmer, Tourkin, Warner & Lyter, 2007); time pressure, and poor relationships (Kinman & Jones, 2003:27); the prospect of job loss or redundancy, the possibility of demotion, and constant change associated with matters such as curricula and efforts to raise standards (Olivier & Venter, 2003:190); lack of autonomy and self-motivation (Olivier & William, 2005); and the excessive number of tasks that are required of new teachers, who have not acquired successful task management skills (Brown, 2005).

Yong and Yue (2007:80) agree with Griva and Joekes (2003) that the existence of stress among teachers and school principals is mainly associated with the pressures caused by the rate of change in society. This rate of change is considered with the demand for improved excellence juxtaposed against the added responsibilities related to school-based management, and teachers' intense involvement with learners and

parents on a day-to-day basis, causing serious stress for teachers (Yong & Yue, 2007:80).

1.2.4 Teacher stress resulting in burnout

The term ‘burnout’ was first introduced with Green’s novel “A Burn-Out Case” in 1961 (Senior, 2006). Later, Dr. Herbert Freudenberger, an American psychologist, coined the term ‘burnout’, and used it in the 1970s to describe the condition of emotionally, physically and mentally exhausted social workers who had spent long periods of time dealing with drug addicts (Freudenberger, 1974). The use of the term was eventually extended to cover all professions where people work under pressure, especially the helping professions such as nursing and teaching.

Burnout is the end result of long exposure to chronic stress (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). That is, prolonged stress results in burnout. Burnout, as defined by Maslach et al, 2001, is a three dimensional, psychological syndrome consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal achievement that results from chronic stress in interpersonal relationships. Maslach and Jackson (1981) define these three components as follows:

- Emotional exhaustion: This refers to a process in which an individual feels emotionally over-extended, becomes overwhelmed by the emotional demands of others, and feels drained and unable to continue. Its major sources are work overload and personal conflict at work. The emotional exhaustion component corresponds to the basic stress dimension of burnout.
- Depersonalisation: This term is used to describe a negative and cynical attitude towards other people, including a loss of idealism with the job. Depersonalisation is developed when an individual attempts to deal with emotional exhaustion, and tends to manifest as an emotional softener of detached concern which may develop into the dehumanization of others. The depersonalisation component represents the interpersonal facet of burnout.
- Reduced personal accomplishment: This refers to a process in which an individual feels that his or her competence and productivity at work is

declining, and possesses a low sense of self-efficacy which may be connected to depression and a consequent inability to cope with the demands of the job. The reduced personal accomplishment component, which may be aggravated by a lack of social support, opportunities for professional development, and participation in decision making, represents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout.

Christina Maslach (2008), one of the pioneering researchers of burnout, developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), an instrument designed to capture the three dimensions of burnout as defined by Maslach et al. (2001). Three different MBI measures were developed and designed for different groups (Maslach et al., 2001): the MBI-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) for those in the human and health care services; the MBI-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES) for those in the teaching professions; and the MBI-General Survey (MBI-GS) focused on other occupations that were not people oriented. The first symptom of burnout reported by most individuals is severe fatigue, or emotional exhaustion from one's job (Maslach et al., 2001). In response to this severe fatigue, an individual may begin to distance himself or herself emotionally from others and from his or her work. This distancing is the second symptom of burnout. After the severe fatigue, distancing, and feelings of ineptitude and discontent with the job, begins to manifest as stress-related symptoms that have no physiological basis, as well as problems concentrating, negative feelings, and irritability (Maslach et al., 2001).

Drawing from the above discussions, teacher burnout occurs when the demands of the profession become overwhelming or, rather, when exhaustion replaces feeling energised, cynicism replaces hope and ineffectiveness replaces feeling efficacious.

1.2.5 Stress and burnout effect

Continuous teacher stress resulting in burnout has several negative effects on all levels of schools as workplaces. The resultant effects of teacher stress and burnout on education are critical - decline in student learning, poor teaching, high rates of teacher absenteeism, high teacher turnover, and teachers' desire to leave the profession (Hasting & Bham, 2003). With regards to teachers leaving the profession,

statistics relating to the South African context show that 6000 teachers graduated in 2006 while 20000 left (DoE, 2007). Yong and Yue (2007) maintain that there is a steady increase in teacher attrition due to emotional and physical effects of burnout, which results in an instability in the learners' learning process. These researchers add that one of the damaging effects of burnout on the learners is the lack of individual emotional support the teacher is able to give learners. Teachers fall into three categories when reacting to stress and burnout: some teachers leave the profession, others 'downshift' by taking on less demanding roles such as working part-time or by relinquishing additional duties, and others redefine their sense of identity as educators which may involve developing interests outside of teaching, placing more emphasis on family life or relocating to a more favourable working environment (Coombe, 2008:11). High rate of turnover makes it difficult for schools to attract and develop effective teachers and consequently, learners who attend so-called "hard-to-staff schools" like South African rural schools are routinely taught by the least experienced, least effective teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2007; Hanushek et al., 2004).

Research further shows that burnout can reduce teaching quality (Ransdell et al., 2004), which may affect the education that the learners receive. Teacher's inability to perform at a consistently high level affects learner performance. Teachers who are absent are unable to provide their learners with proper instruction; therefore, the quality of education that students receive when the teacher is absent may be less than adequate (Ransdell et al., 2004).

1.2.6 Strategies for teachers to alleviate stress and burnout

Approaches to stress and burnout management and interventions may operate at different levels, targeting either the intensity of stress at work, perceptions or appraisals of stressful situations, or ways of coping with stress (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Kikkinos (2007) warns that designing and implementing intervention for burnout need to take into consideration the different variables in burnout (i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment), as well as the personal traits of the individual experiencing the burnout. For the sake of

teacher well-being and school effectiveness, it is important to intervene and manage stress and burnout at both organisational and individual levels.

Organisational interventions and techniques for reducing and managing stress and burnout in teachers may include improving the organisational structure to make the workplace more efficient, providing upper-level management training for school managers to provide teachers with more support, and offering support groups (Yong & Yue, 2007). Research reveals that a strong social support network can reduce the impact of stressors, and the incidence of burnout. A teacher's social support network should cover three areas which are emotional support or the provision of caring and nurturing, informational support which includes physical and material assistance, and instructional support which includes the provision of facts and advice (Zhang & Zhu, 2007). School principals' relationship with teachers plays a vital role in the prevention of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2006). Encouraging positive teacher-manager relationships as a supportive school climate is an important factor in avoiding and reducing teacher burnout (Mulluck, 2009). This assertion is in line with Manuel (2003) who advocates long-term pastoral care and mentoring programs for new teachers.

Coping skills can help teachers deal with the effect of stress and burnout, especially with emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment. At the individual level, Austin, Shah and Muncer (2005) recommend stress reduction techniques such as relaxation, aerobic exercise, visualisation, cognitive-behaviour skills, assertiveness, lifestyle changes, and social support programs. Coombe (2008) advises teachers experiencing stress to establish positive working relationships with learners, colleagues and managers; to try and focus on teaching rather than becoming overwhelmed by paperwork, and to create a balance between work and leisure time. He maintained that through conference attendance, mentoring, publishing and research, teachers become more involved in the profession. This assertion is in line with Olivier et al. (2003), who advocate teachers' taking responsibility for their own empowerment. In particular, a sense of self-efficacy and connectedness with learners and colleagues have been identified as important elements linked to teaching engagement and less emotional exhaustion and psychological distress (Klassen, Perry, & Frenzel, 2012).

Other stress coping strategies which teachers can use include planning and active problem solving, exercising self-control, confronting the problem and distancing oneself from the stressful situation (Austin et al., 2005). In addition, teachers should accurately label their emotional experiences, reflect on their emotions and identify ineffective patterns of judgment of classroom events (Chang, 2009).

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR STUDY

Since the impact of teacher burnout on education is critical because teacher burnout results in issues such as leaving the teaching profession, teacher absenteeism, and lower achievement for learners (Hastings et al., 2003), the need to be aware of the key stress and burnout factors in schools in order to develop functional strategies to alleviate the negative effect of stress is meaningful.

Stress and consequent burnout experienced by teachers have been an on-going challenge in education. In my experience as education manager for the past three years, I have realised that teachers increasingly have problems in alleviating and managing stress that may at some point lead to burnout. There are not enough efforts geared towards addressing stress and burnout among teachers and boosting teacher well-being. Most school-based programs that have been directed towards reducing and managing teacher stress and burnout are varied in scope and have been met with varying degrees of success (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). More needs to be done to address and support teachers in coping with the stress relating to the challenges of meeting the continuously shifting demands of the classroom.

So, there is a need to investigate the different coping strategies that teachers can use, how available support structures can be improved, and the burnout intervention and prevention programs that could be introduced in order to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place in schools, and that teachers experience job satisfaction, remain motivated and do not ultimately leave the profession.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers appear particularly vulnerable to the experience of burnout (Paton & Goddard, 2003). All teachers, regardless of class size or subject matter, face challenges, and one of the biggest challenges they all face is stress with possible resultant burnout. Stress and consequent burnout are risk factors for all teachers because schools are threatened to be held accountable for what seems to be unrealistic ideals and expectations which makes teaching a stressful occupation (Ransdell et al., 2004).

Furthermore, teachers work in susceptible occupation contexts with conditions that have the aptitude to be stressful, and which adversely affects their job performance and health (Beehr & Glazer, 2005; Ransdell et al., 2004). According to the literature, teachers are under much stress related to their ambiguous roles, increasing workload and paperwork, large classes, undisciplined learners, feeling unvalued, lack of autonomy and self-motivation, time pressure, lack of material, and lack of parental support and administrative support (Geving, 2007; Kinman & Jones, 2003; Kokkinos, 2007; Lambert et al., 2006; Olivier & William, 2005; Ozdemir, 2007). Stress, if prolonged and unchecked, can result to burnout. Without adequate coping strategies and strong organisational support, teachers experiencing high levels of stress over a long period of time are more prone to develop chronic burnout (McCarthy et al., 2009).

Teacher stress and burnout are therefore increasing and developing intervention strategies and supporting teachers in meeting the demands of the classroom, and addressing stress and burnout are important for effective teaching and learning to take place in schools.

The main research question which needs to be addressed is:

- How can stress and burnout among secondary school teachers be alleviated?

The sub-questions related to the main research question are:

- What factors cause stress and burnout among secondary school teachers?
- What is the effect of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning?
- What strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, do secondary schools offer teachers who experience stress and burnout?
- What coping strategies do teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout?
- What are the strategies on an organisational and individual level to alleviate teacher stress?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Aim

Based on the research questions and the qualitative problem statement, the overall aim of this research is:

To investigate ways of alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province.

1.5.2 Objectives

In order to effectively investigate the previously mentioned overall qualitative problem statement, and to achieve the aim of this study, the following research objectives have been identified:

- To identify factors that causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.
- To investigate the effects of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning.
- To identify strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, that secondary schools offer teachers who experience stress and burnout.

- To identify coping strategies that teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout.
- To develop strategies on organisational and individual levels to alleviate teacher stress.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to understand and solve this research problem on teacher stress and burnout, data was collected by both a literature study and an empirical investigation. The literature (e.g. dissertations, theses, journals, and other sources) which is relevant to the topic was consulted to obtain information and knowledge on the phenomenon of teacher stress and burnout and existing strategies to reduce and manage stress and burnout in schools. Since a qualitative literature review introduces the purpose of the study and the initial broad questions that will be reformulated during data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:108), a literature study was used to document the relevance of the topic. In Mouton (2008:87) it is stated that a review of the existing literature or available body of knowledge must be done to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem and to determine what is already known about the topic. In line with this statement, both primary and secondary literature was studied in order to establish what other scholars have already gathered with regard to the main purpose of this research – the investigation of the causes and consequences of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers within the South African context.

The preliminary literature review presented in the previous section provides a clarification of the phenomenon of teacher stress and burnout in general, which paved the way for the study. Therefore, the purpose of this section, particularly, is to discuss how the empirical investigation was conducted and the methodology followed to collect and analyses data for the purpose of providing answers to the research questions.

1.6.1 Research paradigm and research approach

In this study, the interpretivist research paradigm was used, in which no objective reality can be discovered and replicated by others. That is, in-depth understanding,

the use of multiple validities instead of a single validity, and a commitment to dialogue were sought in this study (Denzin, 2010:271). Efforts were directed towards revealing multiple realities as opposed to searching for one objective reality.

In line with the adoption of an interpretivist paradigm, a qualitative research approach was chosen for this study (Parkinson & Drislane, 2011). The reason for the choice of this approach is my interest in understanding the meaning teachers have constructed. That is, how teachers make sense of their world and the experience they have in the world (Merriam, 2009:13), with particular reference to teacher stress and ways of coping with this stress. The research approach was concerned with understanding social phenomena from the participants' perspectives, as stated in Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

In order to understand and solve this research problem, I generated participants' perceptions about the problem and how it can be solved by engaging in a wealth of rich descriptive data, collected by means of semi-structured individual and focus group interviews and document analysis. I personally visited selected schools to collect data through observation and to interact face-to-face with selected teachers and education managers in their natural settings as supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2014:345).

Qualitative research is inter-active, face-to-face research, which requires a relatively extensive amount of time to systematically observe, interview, and record processes as they occur naturally. In this sense, I relied on the natural and subjective contributions of my research participants to explore the behaviour, belief, perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding the topic of the study, namely teacher stress. The use of a qualitative research approach for this study is justified to be appropriate since the study focuses on an understanding of the topic by means of the contributions of a number of individuals, as opposed to a quantitative research approach where the focus is more on confirmation through a large number of people.

1.6.2 Selection of sites and participants

In an attempt to best answer the research questions, purposively selective sampling which provides a wide range of non-probability sampling techniques to draw on was used in this study. Two out of sixteen public secondary schools within the Boksburg area in Ekurhuleni District were purposively selected for this investigation. From the total population of 213 male and 387 female public secondary school teachers in this area, two focus group interviews consisting of six teacher participants per focus group were conducted. For a more comprehensive perspective on the level of stress encountered by teachers at the two selected schools, four individual interviews with members of the management team of each school were also conducted. This implies that eight individual interviews and two focus group interviews were conducted with a total of 20 participants.

The participants in this study were qualified male and female public secondary school teachers who had been in the profession for more than a year and school management team members who had served in this management position for at least three years. With regards to the age of the participants, the procedure recommended by Lau, Yuen, and Chan (2005) was used. Young teachers of age 30 and below, middle age teachers who are 31 to 40 and older teachers who are 41 and above were the study participants.

The selection of teachers and schools within Boksburg area in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng Province as the research site for this study was based on the statistical records which show that the largest number of teachers quitting was in Gauteng, with 5614 teachers leaving the schools and the profession between 2005 and 2008 (Department of Education, 2012). In view of this, the viewpoint that many teachers when reacting to stress and burnout leave their school and the profession (Coombe, 2008:11) is likely to be present in the selected study area. Since the research is investigating the strategies for alleviating the effect of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, the selection of teachers with varying age and experience as study participants fits into the aims and objectives of the study. The teachers are the ones who have in-depth knowledge about teacher stress and burnout and are experiencing the symptoms on a daily basis in the course of performing their work.

1.6.3 Data collection

Since a qualitative approach to research is not only concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviours, but also allows for the use of a variety of qualitative research methods for gathering information, I used individual and focus group interviews in this study.

1.6.3.1 Individual interview

In-depth individual interviewing is a qualitative research technique that uses open-response questions to obtain data on participants' meanings, namely how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:381). It involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. In this study, in-depth individual interviews were conducted with the two school principals and three school management team members of each of the two schools selected as research sites. These participants were selected for individual interviewing to understand their life experiences and thoughts on the phenomenon of stress and burnout as managers of their schools, and ways of reducing and managing this phenomenon, as expressed in their own words. Since the study aimed to capture feedbacks on participants' experiences that occur in an isolated way, individual interviews allowed the participants to feel much more comfortable sharing sensitive information and confidentially talking only with the researcher and not in front of other participants, as in the case of a focus group interview.

1.6.3.2 Focus group interview

A focus group interview is a strategy for obtaining a better understanding of a problem by interviewing a purposefully selected group of people rather than each person individually (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389). I used focus group interviewing to obtain a better understanding of the research problem because the quality and richness of data increases through the creating of a social environment in which group members are stimulated by one another's perceptions and ideas (McMillan &

Schumacher, 20014:389). In each focus group, the six teacher participants discussed how stress and consequent burnout is managed in their school. They also discussed ways which they find helpful in reducing and managing teacher stress and burnout.

For each focus group, participants were selected because they have certain common interests and characteristics that relate to the topic and purpose of the research (Greeff, 2003:305) which, for this study, relates to teachers being exposed to work stress with related possibilities of burnout. I created a permissive and nurturing environment that encourages different perceptions and points of view, without pressurising participants to reach consensus. The participants, who are familiar with each other, interacted with each other rather than with the interviewer, and in such a way that the views of the participants emerged and the interaction with the group led to the collection of meaningful data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008:376). I, as the facilitator of the focus group interviews, was alert to group dynamics to guide me in ensuring that the ideas, feelings, and experiences of each participant in the specific focus group was accommodated (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:177). During the focus group interviewing, I watched the group dynamics constantly and was alerted to participation dialogue and non-verbal cues.

1.6.3.3 Observations

Observation is a way for the researcher to see what participants cannot see. It allows the researcher to see and hear what is occurring naturally in the research site (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:376). In this research, I observed naturally occurring behaviour to facilitate a deep understanding of the culture, setting and the context in which the phenomenon of stress and burnout occurs from the perspective of the participants.

The participants may find it difficult to provide detailed descriptions of some significant features of the environment and behaviour. In this regard, I directly recorded information about the school's physical environment and human behaviour through observation, without having to rely on the retrospective or anticipatory accounts of the participants (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006:59). Such significant behaviour, as well as patterns and regularities in the environment viz-a-viz support structures available for

teachers in alleviating teacher stress and burnout, may only be revealed by careful, planned observation over a period of time.

As a qualified and experienced teacher, I played the role of a participant observer by taking part at some level in the settings that were being studied. During and immediately after observation, I took field notes to record what was seen and heard, as well as reflect on what had occurred (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:376-377). I then used the field notes as data that was analysed.

1.6.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 20014:395). Since there is a great amount of data to be analysed, summarised and interpreted from the transcribed interviews in qualitative studies, I identified and listed the categories that emerged through coding and reduced them into manageable themes, trends and relationships pertaining to teacher stress and the management of this stress. I analysed data during data collection as well as after all the data had been gathered. The basic data collected through interviewing was systematically coded, categorized, and interpreted from the electronically recorded interview transcripts (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395) to the best of my ability to represent research findings on teacher stress.

1.6.5 Trustworthiness/transferability

The purpose of trustworthiness in this research is to support the argument that the results on my inquiry are “worth paying attention to”. To judge the soundness of this research, I considered that dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability were trustworthiness criteria to ensure the rigour of my research findings (Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007).

1.6.5.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence that can be placed in the truthfulness of research findings (Macnee & McCabe, 2008). I adopted the following credibility strategies to establish the rigour of my findings:

- *Prolonged and varied field experience*: During data collection, I immersed myself in the participants' world (Bitsch, 2005). I did this to gain insights into the content of the study, namely teacher stress, and reduce the distortions of information as well as to improve the trust of the participants which provided a greater understanding of participants' context (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), as this context relates to teacher stress. This helped me to understand the core issues that may affect the quality of the data.
- *Peer debriefing*: When writing my report, I presented my research findings to peers to obtain their comments and perceptions in developing the conclusion of my study (Bitsch, 2005). I also sought support from other professionals who were willing to provide scholarly guidance.
- *Triangulation*: I used different methods, namely individual and focus group interviewing and observation, and I considered literature to obtain corroborating evidence (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:239), in order to reduce bias and to cross-examine the integrity of participants' responses.
- *Member checks*: To establish referential adequacy and avoid inconsistencies, I included the voices of participants in the presentation of findings based on the analysis and interpretation of the data. I sent the analysed and interpreted data to the participants for them to evaluate the interpretation made, and to suggest changes if they have been misreported before producing the final document.
- *Persistent observation*: Extended interaction with the context and participants was carried out in order to discover participants' qualities as these qualities relate to teaching competently due to effective stress management. Extended interaction also contributed to gaining a detailed understanding of the essential characteristics of the setting pertaining to the causes of teacher stress and the management of this stress.

1.6.5.2 Transferability

Transferability is the interpretative equivalent of generalisability (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). It involves establishing that the findings have applicability in other contexts. In this study, I carried out purposive sampling, and provided thick descriptions to facilitate transferability judgement by a potential user. To ensure transferability of my inquiry, I collected data of a thick descriptive nature to allow comparison of this research content to other possible contexts to which transfer might be contemplated. In this regard, I provided a thick description of the content in order to make a judgement about it fitting in with other possible contexts. The purposive sampling technique allowed me to focus on key informants, who were particularly knowledgeable on the issues under investigation (Schutt, 2006) which allowed for thick descriptions and greater in-depth findings (Cohen et al., 2011).

1.6.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of findings over time (Bitsch, 2005:86). It involves establishing that findings are consistent and could be repeated. In this study, I established dependability using an audit trial, which involves an examination of the inquiry process and product to validate the data, and in which all the research decisions and activities were accounted for to show how the data was collected, recorded and analysed (Bowen, 2009). I kept raw data such as recorded and transcribed interviews and observation notes for an auditor to conduct a thorough audit trial.

1.6.5.4 Confirmability

I established that data and interpretations of my findings are not figments of my imagination but are derived from the data as explained by Tobin and Begley (2004:392). This was achieved through an audit trail, the triangulation of methods and reflexive journal writing (Bowen, 2009; Koch, 2006). By achieving confirmability through reflexive journal writing, all events that happened in the field, and personal reflections in relation to the study, were kept in order to reflect on, tentatively interpret, and plan data collection.

1.6.6 Ethical considerations

With regards to the protection of the rights and interests of the research participants, I considered ethical issues throughout the study to ensure that the planned research was ethically accountable. I ensured the protection of the rights and interests of the participants by adhering to the following issues:

1.6.6.1 Consent/Permission

I obtained permission to conduct the research from the research ethics committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa. This was followed by obtaining permission for the research from the Department of Education at district level and from the participants. I designed a consent form and participants were requested to sign the consent forms. The purpose of the research, the intended use of the data, the potential adverse effects of their participation if any, and who will have access to the findings, was communicated to the participants to enable them to decide whether to participate or not.

1.6.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

I ensured that any identifying information was not made available to anyone. That is, I ensured that the information provided by participants does not reveal their identity. I also ensured that such identifying information was excluded from any reports. I gave participants an assurance that their identity would remain unknown.

1.6.6.3 Voluntary participation

Participants in this research were free from coercion. They were free to withdraw their participation at any time without explanation. I informed participants of their right to withdraw, should they choose not to continue. Participant's right to privacy was protected and respected through the promise of confidentiality. I ensured that the research process did not, in any way, harm participants by informing them that they had the right to refuse to take part in the research; to limit time needed for participation; to refuse to answer any question or questions; and not to be interviewed during a time

which was not convenient to them, such as, for example, during school hours, mealtimes or at night.

1.7 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The concepts pertinent to this study on teacher stress are clarified next.

1.7.1 Stress

Stress and burnout are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same. In understanding the phenomenon and nature of stress and burnout (see below), it is important to first understand the meaning of both concepts. According to Blonna (2005:4), stress can be described as a holistic transaction between the individual, a stressor, and the environment, resulting in a response. Stress occurs when the demands placed on the individual exceed the coping ability of the person (Slochum & Hellriegel, 2007:448). An individual's experience of stress is contingent on his or her specific appraisal of a situation, which is closely related to self-efficacy as a job-specific disposition (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008:153). It describes negative feelings resulting from work that may include anger, frustration, tension and depression that threaten an individual's sense of well-being (Howard & Johnson, 2004).

1.7.2 Stressor

Friedman (in Mathias, 2003a:5) states that a stressor can be defined as any sort of external or internal challenge, either visual, tactile, olfactory, or emotional, that disrupts the physiological equilibrium, or homeostasis, of an individual. It describes any stimulus appraised by the individual as threatening or capable of causing harm or loss (Blonna, 2005:4). Stressors relate to a person's perception of risk factors in the environment and his or her assessment of whether personal resources will enable him or her to meet the environmental challenges or whether, on the other hand, he or she will become overwhelmed (Van der Merwe, 2013:82).

1.7.3 Burnout

Burnout is defined as the response to chronic emotional stress caused by intense involvement with people in the work environment which manifests in exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 2004:93; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008:154). The burnout syndrome is described as emotional exhaustion which is the result of chronic stress and particularly occurs in people who are in contact with other people professionally. Teacher burnout is a well-defined concept consisting of three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008:155). Emotional exhaustion (i.e. fatigue) refers to a depletion of teachers' emotional and physical resources and is reflected in low levels of energy. Depersonalisation (emotionally withdrawing) is when an individual has a tendency to isolate him or herself from others. It refers to the development of negative or indifferent attitudes to cope with emotional exhaustion. Personal accomplishment (lessening of self-efficacy) is an individual's self-evaluation of his or her own work. It is brought about by feelings of incompetence and reduced achievement and productivity and leads to low morale. Burnout is caused by prolonged stress. It most often occurs when stressors occur, and coping strategies are absent. That is, teachers' perceptions of stress and their ability to cope with demands are implicated in burnout (McCormick & Barnett, 2011).

1.7.4 Stress management

This refers to the process of harnessing the energy of healthy stress while simultaneously minimising unhealthy outcomes (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008:153). It is the action taken to deal with an existing stressor (Blonna, 2005). With regards to this study on teacher stress, and on intervention strategies to alleviate this stress, the concept of stress management intervention refers to any activity or program initiated by a school, as an organisation, that focuses on reducing the presence of work-related stressors, or on assisting individual teachers to minimise the negative outcomes of exposure to these stressors.

1.7.5 Secondary school

A secondary school refers to a school for learners who have completed their primary education. Within the South African context, primary education ends with the successful completion of Grade 7. A secondary school provides for learners in Grades 8 to 12. In this study, the concept ‘secondary school’ is used to distinguish a school accommodating learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

1.7.6 Coping strategies

Within the context of this study on teacher stress, and with reference to Blonna (2005) on stress alleviation, the concept ‘coping strategies’ refers to any method or technique used to reduce or cope with stress. Coping strategies consist of both direct action and palliative techniques (Austin et al., 2005; Kyriacou, 2001). Direct action refers to strategies teachers can use to eliminate sources of stress. On the other hand, palliative techniques focus on reducing the feelings of stress from those sources rather than dealing with the source of stress itself (Kyriacou, 2001:30).

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISIONS AS ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This study on teacher stress and burnout consisted of five chapters.

Chapter 1
This chapter provides an orientation to the study. It contains the background and motivation of the study, the problem statement, aim and objectives of the study, explanation of the main concepts, demarcation of the field of investigation and method of study.

Chapter 2
This chapter provides a literature review on teacher stress and burnout, and the reduction and management of teacher stress and burnout in secondary schools. It outlines what literature reveals about prevention and management of stress and burnout, and its impact on teacher effectiveness and quality of education in general.

This chapter is introduced by a discussion on the theoretical framework used for this study on teacher stress.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is used to describe the research methodology and research design for the empirical investigation on teacher stress. The research methodology and research design as it pertains to the selection of participants, data collection and data analysis procedures are dealt with in detail. Ethical considerations, as discussed here, were adhered to throughout the study, especially on issues relating to the selection of participants, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4

This chapter provides the results and the findings of the empirical investigation. A discussion of the research findings is preceded by information on the research sites and research participants. Chapter 4 is also used for comments on data analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 5

In this chapter, a summary of the literature review findings and findings from the empirical investigation is followed by conclusions and recommendations with an outline of the limitations experienced during the conducting of the research.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Teacher stress with relating burnout is an increasing problem in schools. Its impact is critical on the quality of teaching and learning, and education in general. Burnout takes away the creative energy of teachers and consequently their effectiveness. Thus, providing resources to increase teachers' sense of personal efficacy and ability to manage stress may reduce burnout. This study analysed how the combination of factors that cause stress and burnout are playing out in secondary schools within Boksburg area in the Ekurhuleni District of Gauteng. It focuses on exploring strategies for reducing and managing teacher stress and consequent burnout as part of a guiding formula for promoting a healthy classroom environment for quality teaching and learning to take place.

CHAPTER 2
A LITERATURE REVIEW ON TEACHER STRESS AND BURNOUT: THEORIES, CAUSES AND REMEDIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a vital role in helping learners' growing process (Evers, Tomic, & Brouwers, 2004). Regardless, thousands of teachers leave their positions each year (Kelly, 2004). Consequently, studies on teacher stress and burnout are a cause for concern and justify the need for continuing research (Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munoz, & Carrasco-Ortiz, 2005:130). The main purpose of this study was to explore ways of alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, and coping strategies that can be used by teachers to reduce and manage the incidence of stress and burnout. Furthermore, this study attempted to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of stress and the dynamics of teacher burnout by considering various definitions that have been put forward by researchers; to investigate the causes of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, and to establish how stress and burnout affect secondary school teachers and schools as organisations.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, this literature review provides definitions and explanations of the phenomenon of teacher stress and burnout, as well as a brief history of and a discussion about the nature of stress. It looks at the prevalence of stress and burnout in the teaching profession and considers available research findings on the reduction and management of stress and burnout, and its impact on teacher effectiveness and quality of education in general. It also touches on the sources and the manifestation of stress and burnout, as well as factors leading to teacher burnout, including strategies that can be used to deal with it. This review of literature begins with a description of the theories used to form the theoretical framework for this study on teacher stress and burnout, in order to serve as a basis and framework for interpreting the research findings.

2.2 STRESS AND BURNOUT RELATED THEORIES

In order to explore theoretical bases that inform the experience of teacher stress and burnout, and the intervention strategies used to reduce and manage stress, as opined by Kegan and Lahey (2009), the literature review in this study combined four theoretical frameworks, namely, social cognitive theory, stereotype threat theory, role theory, and self-determination theory. The combination of these theories provide a method to understand how individual teachers experience stress and burnout. They also informed intervention and coping strategies utilised to alleviate and manage stress and burnout.

2.2.1 Social cognitive theory

Most of what is known today as social cognitive theory is based on the work of Albert Bandura in the 1950s at Stanford University (Woolfolk, 2014:360). Bandura's perspective of social cognitive theory retains an emphasis on the role of other people serving as models and teachers which make up the social part of social cognitive theory, but includes thinking, believing, expecting, anticipating, self-regulating, and making comparisons and judgments which make up the cognitive part of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Woolfolk, 2014:361). Bandura's theory stands in contrast to theories of human functioning that over emphasise the role that environmental factors play in the development of human behaviour. Bandura's theory explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioural patterns through personal, behavioural and environmental influences (Bandura, 1997). It addresses how people develop social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural capabilities; how people regulate their own lives; and what motivates them (Bandura & Locke, 2003). As a dynamic system, social cognitive theory explains human adaptation, learning, and motivation (Woolfolk, 2014:361). A discussion of the key tenets of Bandura's social cognitive theory follows, namely the theory of human agency, the causal model of triadic reciprocal causation, and the construct of self-efficacy.

2.2.1.1 The theory of human agency

Social cognitive theory subscribes to a model of emergent interactive agency (Bandura, 1986, 1997). It is rooted in a view of human agency in which individuals are agents proactively engaged in their own development and can make things happen by their action. In other words, social cognitive theory adopts an agentic perspective towards human development, adaptation, and change (Bandura, 1986). Human agency involves the ability to make intentional choices and actions, design appropriate courses of action, and then motivate and regulate the execution of these plans and actions (Woolfolk, 2014:367). In this regard, to be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances and events. Key to this sense of agency is the fact that individuals possess self-beliefs that enable them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions; and that what people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave (Bandura, 1986:25).

Social cognitive theory focuses on humans as self-organising, pro-active, self-regulating, and self-reflecting agents who make choices and marshal resources to reach goals (Bandura, 1986). Humans are not merely spectators of their behaviour, rather they are contributors to their life circumstances, and operate as thinkers of the thoughts that serve determinative functions (Bandura, 1986). They construct thoughts about future courses of action to suit ever-changing situations, assess their likely functional value, organise and deploy strategically the selected options, evaluate the adequacy of their thinking based on the effects which their actions produce and make whatever changes that may be necessary. Furthermore, human agency is of the view that people do not act as autonomous agents, and neither is their behaviour wholly determined by situational influences; rather human functioning is a product of a reciprocal interplay of intrapersonal, behavioural, and environmental determinants (Bandura, 1986).

According to Bandura (1986), there are four core properties of human agency. The first property of human agency is intentionality, which suggests that humans form intentions that include action plans and strategies for realizing them. The second agentic property is forethought, which goes beyond future-directed plans to include the temporal extension of agency. The ability to bring expected outcomes to bear on

current events promotes purposeful and foresight behaviour. The human forethought capability manifests itself in many different ways. People anticipate the likely consequences of their prospective actions, they set goals for themselves, and they otherwise plan courses of action that are likely to produce desired outcomes. Through exercise of forethought, people motivate themselves and guide their actions anticipatorily. Foresight is translated into incentives and action through the aid of self-regulatory mechanism (Bandura, 1986).

The third property of human agency is self-reactiveness in which agency is said to involve not only the deliberative ability to make choices and action plans, but also the ability to construct appropriate courses of action, and to motivate and regulate their execution (Searle, 2003). The fourth agentic property is self-reflectiveness, which asserts that humans are not only agents of action, but are also self-examiners of their own functioning. If there is any characteristic that is distinctively human, it is the metacognitive capability to reflect upon oneself and the adequacy of one's thoughts and actions. The capability for reflective self-consciousness enables people to analyse their experiences and to think about their own thought processes. By reflecting on their varied experiences and what they know, they can derive generic knowledge about themselves and the world around them. People not only gain understanding through reflection, they evaluate and alter their own thinking by this means. In verifying thought through self-reflective means, they monitor their ideas, act on them or predict occurrences from them, judge from the results the adequacy of their thoughts, and change them accordingly (Bandura, 1986).

2.2.1.2 Triadic reciprocal causation

Social cognitive theory describes a system of psychosocial functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1986). This model is an explanation of behaviour that emphasises the mutual effects of the individual and the environment on each other (Woolfolk, 2014:361). In this model of reciprocal causality, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events (beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and knowledge), behavioural patterns (individual actions, choices, and verbal statements), and the physical and social environmental events (resources, consequences of actions, other people, models and teachers, and physical settings)

all operate as interactive determinants that influence one another bidirectionally (Bandura, 1986). Because of the bidirectionality of influence between behaviour and environmental circumstances, people are both products and producers of their environment. Reciprocal causation does not mean that the different sources of influence are equal in strength. Some may be stronger than others. It also does not mean that the reciprocal influences all occur simultaneously. It takes time for a causal factor to exert its influence and activate reciprocal influences (Bandura, 1986).

2.2.1.3 The self-efficacy theory

The pursuit of control, the cooperation with others, and man being a cognitive creature are the most important starting points of the social cognitive theory, part of which is formed by the self-efficacy theory. Standing at the very core of social cognitive theory are self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy is people's judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1997:391). Self-efficacy theory describes a person's sense of being able to deal effectively with a particular task with no need for comparisons with others' ability. The theory is concerned with judgements of personal competence rather than judgements of self-worth (Woolfolk, 2014:366-367). Self-efficacy beliefs are strong predictors of behaviour (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is content specific, meaning that it varies, depending on the subject or task (Woolfolk, 2014:367). The basic contentions regarding the role of self-efficacy beliefs in human functioning is that people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true (Bandura, 1997:2). This definition clearly shows that how people behave can often be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their capabilities than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing.

Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. There is a growing body of evidence that human attainments and positive well-being require an optimistic sense of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1986). This is due to the fact that ordinary social realities are strewn with difficulties, and full of impediments, failures, adversities, setbacks, frustrations and inequities. In this regard, people must have an optimistic sense of persona efficacy to sustain the perseverant effort needed to succeed. The cognitive effect of self-efficacy

may be many and various, and is concerned with someone's resilience to cope with misfortunes or to become aware of thought patterns and emotional reactions that may be self-aiding or self-hindering (Bandura, 1989).

Self-efficacy also highly decides the degree of stress and depressive feelings someone experiences when dealing with taxing environmental demands. Self-efficacy determines how individuals think, feel and act with regard to stressors (Van der Merwe, 2013:83). In this instance, a strong sense of self-efficacy helps create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities (Bandura, 1989), and enhances cognitive processes and performance in a variety of ways (Bandura, 1997; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008:153). Cognitive processes generate two actions: sustained attention, which is required for qualitative decision making, and response inhibition, which ensures healthy work relationships (Van der Linden, Keijsers, Eling & Van Schaijk, 2005:24). Conversely, people with a low sense of self-efficacy may believe that things are tougher than they really are – a belief that fosters anxiety, stress, depression, a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem (Bandura, 1989), and the harbouring of pessimistic thoughts about accomplishment (Van der Merwe, 2013:84). Furthermore, the higher the sense of self-efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence and resilience (Bandura, 1986). People who believe strongly in their personal competence, approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than as threats to be avoided.

2.2.1.4 Teacher self-efficacy

The implications of the self-efficacy theory can be applied to the domain of teaching. The way a teacher works is influenced by his or her self-efficacy in a particular domain of the teaching job. Teacher efficacy is the overall reaction and attitude of the teacher about the many factors related to the job (Hongying, 2007). Teacher self-efficacy relates to a teacher's belief in what he or she can do, it does not relate to an outside judgement being made on his or her actual ability (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Teachers' sense of efficacy can be defined as a teacher's belief that he or she can reach even the most difficult learners to help them learn (Woolfolk, 2014:370). Ware and Kitsantas (2007) agree with Woolfolk (2014:370) that teacher self-efficacy is how a teacher feels about the extent of his or her ability to succeed in teaching children to learn. This confident belief appears to be one of the few personal characteristics of

teachers that predict learner achievement (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005; Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy, & Davis, 2009).

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs vary along three dimensions (Bandura, 1997). Firstly, they differ in level. Sometimes an individual teacher believes he or she is able to tackle difficult tasks, but other tasks can, however be performed only on a simple level. For example, a teacher may believe he or she is capable of instructing unruly classes, but may shun complex administrative school problems. Secondly, efficacy beliefs differ in strength. Strong efficacy beliefs will cause a teacher to persevere in his or her attempts to finish a task successfully, and difficult tasks are considered to be challenges instead of obstacles to be evaded. For example, a teacher with strong self-efficacy beliefs will do anything to influence learners' motivations to do their best at school. Thirdly, the generality of the efficacy beliefs is the judgement of a teacher in how many domains he or she will be efficacious. Some teachers have strong efficacy beliefs in many domains, whereas others judge themselves to be efficacious in only a few domains.

The research on teachers' sense of efficacy points to many positive outcomes related to higher efficacy (Woolfolk, 2014:371). Teachers with higher efficacy judgements tend to be more open to new ideas; more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their learners; more likely to use powerful but potentially difficult-to-manage methods such as inquiry and small-group work; and are less likely to use easy-to-adopt but weaker methods such as lectures (Woolfolk, 2014:371). In addition, teachers who report a higher sense of efficacy tend to be more active in monitoring seatwork and maintaining academic focus, and they respond quickly to learners' misbehaviour by redirecting attention without showing anger or becoming threatened (Wollfolk, 2014:371). Teachers who doubt their abilities or do not believe in themselves will, in turn, struggle with burnout (Maslach, 1982).

2.2.2 The theory of stereotype threat

Stereotype threat predicts that group members will perform poorly on tasks associated with negative societal stereotypes about their abilities. Stereotype threat refers to being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group (Steele & Aronson, 1995, 2004). The term 'stereotype threat' was first used by

Steele and Aronson (1995, 2004) who showed in several experiments that performance in academic contexts can be harmed by the awareness that one's behaviour might be viewed through the lens of racial stereotype. When a negative stereotype about a group that one is part of becomes relevant, usually as an interpretation of one's behaviour or an experience one is having, stereotype threat is the resulting sense that one can then be judged or treated in terms of the stereotype or that one might do something that would inadvertently confirm it (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002:389).

Teaching, like every other occupation, involves being judged by other people. However, anxieties may be heightened for those teachers who are members of a negatively stereotyped group (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Stereotype threat refers to a distracting concern about the fear of being seen through the lens of a negative stereotype which yields many negative consequences, including underperformance, ill health, and reduced interest in life (Shapiro, 2011). Stereotype threat places an additional burden on members of stereotype groups (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). They feel "in the spotlight", where their failure would reflect negatively not only on themselves as individuals but also on the larger group (Roberson & Kulik, 2007:26). Stereotype threat is a psychological condition that can affect anyone who is a member of a negatively stereotyped group (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

In general, the conditions that produce stereotype threat are one in which a highlighted stereotype implicates the person though association with a relevant social category (Marx & Stapel, 2006). However, experience of stereotype threat considers two forms of stereotype threat: self-concept and group concept threat (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). To experience group-concept threat which conceptualizes the group as target of stereotype threat, one must identify with one's group. However, recognizing that individuals belong to a group or that others label them as belonging to a group is not the same as psychologically "identifying" with that group (Shapiro, 2011:465). On the other hand, self-concept threat conceptualizes fear of stereotype characterization in "one's own eyes", the fear of seeing oneself as possessing the negative stereo trait (Shapiro, 2011:465). To experience self-concept threat, individuals must believe that the stereotype might be true. Group-concept threat is similar to self-concept-threat in that individuals in the group also need to believe that the stereotyped group could be

true to the stereotyped individual in that group (Shapiro, 2011). Stereotype threat produces numerous consequences, most of which are negative in nature.

Research shows that stereotype threat can decrease or harm performance on any task where a stereotype is invoked suggesting that members of some groups will perform more poorly than others, due to factors such as anxiety and reduced cognitive capacity (Marx & Staple, 2006; Schmader & Johns, 2003; Steele & Aronson, 1995, 2004). Stereotype threat can cause behavioural consequences that are opposite to the intention of the individual (Goff, Steele & Davies, 2008). Individuals under stereotype threat might reduce preparation, display less effort, or invoke factors to create attribution ambiguity for potential failure (Steele & Aronson, 1995, 2004). Stereotype threat can also affect the degree that people enjoy and identity with activities associated with their social group that bears the burden of the negative stereotype (Steele & Aronson, 1995, 2004).

Stereotype threat can lead to what is called “disengagement”, which occurs when individuals distance themselves from a threatening domain, or suggest that performance in a domain is unrelated to self-worth (Smith, Sansone, & White, 2007). In addition, disengagement can produce “disidentification”, which occurs when stereotype threat leads individuals to avoid the threatened domain, or detach their identity from a domain and redirect their aspirations and career paths (Osborne & Walker, 2006). Until there are changes in the society, people will continue to hold stereotypes about different groups (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). However, for these changes to commence, stereotypical attitudes from managers and employees need to be addressed in order to reduce the impact of stereotype threat on affected employees (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

2.2.3 Role theory

Role theory was first introduced in 1970 by Kaleri Holsti in his seminal article “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy” (Holsti, 1970). Holsti relies on Mead (1934) and his study of the impact of the behaviour of “others” on an individual’s self-conceptions and his conceptual distinctions between the “self” and the “other” (Holsti, 1970:237). Symbolic interactionism remains the most important source of inspiration

for role theorists until today (Harnisch, 2011). The original paper by Holsti draws heavily on Mead's symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934). Mead's symbolic interactionism accentuates the need for understanding others' perspectives (role taking) as a requisite for effective social interaction, and roles as the coping strategies that individuals evolve as they interact with other persons (Mead, 1934). A role, defined as a position in an organization, is a socially acceptable form of behaviour.

Role theory can be used to explain occupational stress (Barling, Kelloway & Frone, 2005). People basically learn how to act in their roles through communication by supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates (Barling et al., 2005:10). Role theory describes socio-psychological stressors related to the characteristics and expectations of others who have a stake in one's activities. People who have a stake in another's work role (the role senders, namely, supervisors, managers, co-workers, subordinates) interact with the role receivers regarding a specific task (Jex & Beehr, 1991). The person's work role or activities, either by itself or in conjunction with other roles, may produce stress. Role stressors are usually considered to be characteristics of the social system (Jex & Beehr, 1991). Members of a social system consist of those who have a stake in the incumbent's role and communicate demands, constraints, or opportunities that may or may not be achievable to individuals attempting to perform the role (Jex & Beehr, 1991). Stressors emanating from one's role often require individuals to cope with the expectations or lack of expectations communicated (Jex & Beehr, 1991). In the teaching profession, role-based stress arises when teachers are not clear about their responsibilities, expectations and work objectives (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:221). These circumstances cause role conflict and role ambiguity, which are considered the most frequently measured causes of work stress (Cooper & Dewe, 2004), thus leading to increased symptoms of burnout.

2.2.3.1 Role conflict

Role conflict results when an individual encounter tensions as a result of incompatible roles. A commonly studied type of role conflict concerns work and family roles. Increased demands at home or work tend to exacerbate work-family conflict (Frone, 2003). Family dissatisfaction, absence of workers from their families' lives, and poor performance in one's family role occur when work problems transition to the family

domain (Frone, 2003). Some of the factors contributing to work and family demands include hours spent at work, job stress, family stress, number and age of children, elder care, spousal employment, and marital status (Frone, 2003).

2.2.3.2 Role ambiguity

Increased demands with no clear instructions produce role ambiguity. In the teaching profession, role ambiguity occurs when teachers' duties and responsibilities are ambiguous and unclear, and when teachers have to fulfil too many roles. (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:221). Role ambiguity is defined as the lack of clarity about duties, objectives, and responsibilities concerning an employee's job (Beehr & Glazer, 2005).

2.2.3.3 Role overload

Role overload develops when individuals either feel that they lack the skills or workplace resources to complete a task or perceive that the task cannot be done in the required amount of time. A combination of the three job characteristics, namely role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, causes stress. This stress produces bad feelings coupled with physical and behavioural consequences (Jex & Beehr, 1991). These consequences require individual motivation for maintaining work responsibilities.

2.2.4 Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory, which has been underdeveloped for more than 30 years, serves as a broad-based theory, and specifies causes for human thriving (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006). To comprehend self-determination theory, Deci (1995:31) maintains that self-determination is to feel a sense of personal determination; people need to feel that their behaviour is truly chosen by them rather than imposed by some external source. Self-determination theory, as a macro theory of human motivation, addresses basic issues such as personality development, self-regulation, energy and vitality, non-conscious processes, the relations of culture to motivation, and the impact of social environment on motivation, affect, behaviour, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In human action, although the source of individual

behaviour may be social, relational, or located outside the person, in most accounts of motivation, it is an inside entity, which includes feelings of interest or enthusiasm (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). Self-determination theory proposes that individuals have three innate, psychological needs. These needs are the need for autonomy, which concerns experiencing choice and feeling like the initiator of one's own actions; the need for competence, which concerns succeeding at optimally challenging tasks and being able to attain desired outcomes; and the need for relatedness, which concerns establishing a sense of mutual respect and reliance with others.

Firstly, self-determination theory maintains that individuals have a need for autonomy. However, the most central distinction in self-determination theory is between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Autonomous motivation comprises both intrinsic motivation and the types of extrinsic motivation in which people have identified with an activity's value, and ideally will have integrated it into their sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The need for autonomous motivation provides many advantages, including the ability to better regulate one's thoughts, actions, and emotions. When people are autonomously motivated, they experience volition or a self-endorsement of their action with a sense of choice, flexibility and personal freedom (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Autonomous motivation has been associated with greater persistence; more positive affect; enhanced performance, especially on heuristic activities; and greater psychological well-being. Research shows that autonomous motivation promotes positive outcomes, such as greater involvement and better outcomes from psychotherapy (Zuroff , Koestner, Moskowitz, McBride, Bagby, & Marshall, 2007); more control over prejudice (Legault, Green-Demers, Grant & Chang, 2007); better productivity and less burnout at work (Fernet, Guay & Senecal, 2004); and healthier lifestyles and behaviours (Pelletier, Dion, Slovenic-D'Angelo, & Reid, 2004), to name just a few. In contrast, controlled motivation consists of both external regulations, in which one's behaviour is a function of external contingencies of reward or punishment, and introjected regulations, in which the regulation of action has been partially internalized and is energised by factors such as an approval motive, avoidance of shame, contingent self-esteem, and ego-involvements (Deci & Ryan, 2008). When people are controlled, they experience pressure to think, feel or behave in particular

ways (Deci & Ryan, 2008). To the extent that behaviour is not autonomous, it is controlled. There are two types of controlled behaviour: compliance and defiance. Compliance, which involves doing what you are told to do because you are told to do it, and defiance which involves doing the opposite of what you are expected to do just because you are expected to do it, exist as complementary responses to control (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Secondly, self-determination theory maintains that people also have a need to feel competent. With regards to individuals' psychological needs to feel competent, Elliot and Dweck (2005) describe feeling competent as important for both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Whether behaviour is instrumental for extrinsic outcomes, such as employment bonuses and promotions, or for intrinsic outcomes, such as enjoyment of the task and feelings of personal accomplishment, people must feel sufficiently competent at the instrumental activities to achieve their desired outcomes.

Thirdly, self-determination theory maintains a need for relatedness. The theory argues that people try to achieve a sense of belongingness with other people and, consequently, seek close, supportive, and caring relationships in which their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs are recognized and respected (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006). Humans engage in mutually supportive relationships to help them through times of hardship (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The definition of needs for relatedness leads not to the assessment of need strength, rather, it leads to the assessment of need satisfaction.

Everyone is assumed to have these innate needs, regardless of the strength of their reported desires for those outcomes. In this regard, the degree of a person's need satisfaction is hypothesised to predict positive work-related outcomes. Recent studies have shown that each need uniquely predicts positive outcomes with performance and psychological well-being (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Filak & Sheldon, 2003). Research has also shown that feelings of autonomy, like competence and relatedness, are essential for optimal functioning in a broad range of highly varied cultures (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006). By considering and providing for human psychological needs such as competency, autonomy and relatedness, schools may strengthen teachers' functioning and well-being. According to self-determination theory, opportunities to satisfy the three psychological needs will facilitate self-

motivation and effective functioning because these needs facilitate internalisation of extant values and regulatory processes, and they facilitate adjustment because needs satisfaction provides the necessary nutrients for human growth and development (Ryan, 1995).

2.3 THE PREVALENCE OF STRESS AND BURNOUT IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Teachers play a central role in creating a school climate that fosters learner learning and social emotional well-being. This supports Evers et al. (2004) who state that teachers play a very important role in helping learners' growing process. The work of teaching comprises a complex mix of various activities that include teaching, learning new information and skills; keeping abreast of technological innovations; and dealing with learners, parents, and the community. Teachers are expected to multi-task and perform several roles at once. New teachers are expected to develop teaching techniques, create their own lesson plans, and develop classroom management strategies while assuming a full schedule of classes (Graziano, 2005). These are demanding roles and there are growing concerns about teachers' well-being and burnout levels (Pillay, Goddard, & Wilss, 2005). With regards to the role of teachers in learners' success, research also shows that teachers impact learners learning more than any other school-based factor (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, & Hamilton, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). This assertion supports Schacter and Thum (2004:413) who maintain that an effective teacher is one of the single most important factors responsible for learning. However, to successfully connect with their learners and help learners connect with the subject matter, teachers need a variety of intellectual and emotional resources on which they can draw (Woolfolk Hay & Davies, 2005).

Despite the crucial role of teachers in learners' success and developing processes, teaching can be stressful and managing classroom dynamics taxing. Though within any occupation, employees may experience stress, research points to some of the professions and tasks more vulnerable to work stress and burnout. In this regard, Blonna (2005) states that employees most vulnerable to work stress are those in the

medical profession and teachers. Employees in the helping professions, especially those characterised by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations and engagement in extensive face-to-face contact with people and their problems, appear particularly vulnerable to the experience of burnout (Paton & Goddard, 2003). In addition, professionals in the helping professions feel overwhelmed by working constantly with troubled individuals which results in conditions of exceeding their personal resources, becoming emotionally exhausted and disengaging from individuals they serve by labelling them, using depersonalisation language, and treating them as dehumanised objects (Maslach, 1982). Role stress may apply to employees in the helping professions (Kirk-Brown & Wallace, 2004). Employees in the helping professions usually work as advocates and sources of support for people who are unable to negotiate a system of resources for themselves (Layne, Hohenshil, & Singh, 2004). Considering these helping professionals, people who are dedicated and committed are the ones prone to burnout (Frendenberger, 1974).

With particular emphasis on the teaching profession, several studies have identified teachers' high susceptibility to stressful and burnout conditions (Kokkinos, 2006). This vulnerability can be attributed to their transition from being a learner to being a teacher and this can define who they are as educators (Conroy, 2004). Throughout the history of literature, it has been suggested that teachers experience greater levels of stress compared to other professions (Brown & Nagel, 2004). In particular, it is teachers who, more than any other human service occupation, are most likely to fall victim of the burnout syndrome as their job requires much which seldom gives back; and teachers often encounter complex and frustrating challenges which may lead to devastating results if not tackled early (Luckner & Hanks, 2003). Teaching is a profession characterised by high levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufelli, 2006; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). In the light of this, studies have shown that teaching is a stressful career and this can lead to teachers suffering from burnout (McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2009), resulting in a national epidemic of teacher departures.

Teachers' work is both demanding and challenging. It draws upon their physical, emotional and intellectual resources (Croom, 2003:1). For many years, teaching has been characterised as a profession that is emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating

(Lambert, O'Donnell, Kusherman, & McCarthy, 2006:105). This supports Hastings and Bham (2003) who maintain that teaching is traditionally recognized as a highly stressful occupation, associated with high levels of burnout. An alarming number of teachers feel emotionally drained, stressed, and even burned out from their work (Karavas, 2010:71). Survey data indicates that teaching is one of the high stress professions, with the majority of teachers reporting above average levels of occupational stress and burnout (Kyriacou, 2001).

Considering the prevalence of stress and burnout in the teaching profession, Manuel (2003) opines that teaching has the highest attrition rate of any profession, and refers to teaching as "the profession that eats its young". Most teachers see teaching as a stepping stone to careers that they feel are more respected and are better paying than teaching (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Thus, a number of new recruits to the teaching profession lack the passion to teach and view teaching as a means to an end, before they have even entered the classroom. With reference to developing countries, a Sudanese government official maintained that teaching is not a profession, rather, it is a "waiting place" explaining the condition of teachers only venturing into teaching when they have nothing else to do, but would leave when an opportunity comes (Sommers, 2005:23).

Furthermore, in a study of teacher attrition among secondary school teachers in sub-Saharan Africa, research shows that some teachers deliberately enter the teaching profession with a view to moving out of the profession as quickly as possible (International Task Force on Teachers for EFA:2010). This finding supports the assertion that the rate at which teachers leave their profession is significantly higher than the departure rate in other professions (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003). In addition, research shows that teaching, as a profession, is plagued by significant turnover often attributable to burnout with documented rates of teacher turnover rising in public schools worldwide over the past decade (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlich, Kemp & Tahan, 2011). With regards to the rate of teacher attrition in the United States of America, as one of the largest and most sophisticated countries in the world, reports show that over 16% of public school teachers leave the profession or change school each year (Cox, Parmer, Tourkin, Warner, & Lyter, 2007). Studies also show that between one third and one half of teachers in the USA leave the

profession within the first five years (Hanushek, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This supports Mullock (2009) who states that as many as 50% of teachers teaching in the USA leave the profession within the first three years of their teaching career. Research has shown that attrition amongst teachers is higher at the beginning and the end of teachers' careers (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

Also, with regard to the USA as an indicator of qualitative life expectancy, the number of new teachers leaving, either during training or within five years of taking up their first post, is significantly increasing (Bachrkirova, 2005:340). If the new teacher's first year experience is not a satisfying one, if it is fraught with difficulty and disappointment, then there is a good chance that the teacher will not return (Heller, 2004:32). Most teachers who leave the teaching profession have fewer than ten years of experience (Inman & Marlow, 2004). In another study, it was found that 25% of beginning teachers in the USA leave the teaching field before their third year, and almost 40% leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

With regard to the South African context, many recent studies found that teachers experience high levels of stress and burnout in South Africa (Emsley, Emsley & Seedat, 2009; Kamper & Steyn, 2006). In a study conducted in South Africa by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) for the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) in 2005, it was found that, due to reasons relating to workload stress, low salaries, lack of discipline in schools and lack of career advancement, 55% of teachers would leave teaching if they could (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2008:299). Another study involving 200 South African teachers revealed that 58% of the teachers took sick leave for the period 1 July 2003 to 30 November 2003, and 40% indicated an intention to leave the profession due to stress (Oosthuizen & Van der Bijl, 2007).

Furthermore, a study of teacher attrition involving South African teachers in both public and private schools revealed that 55% of the teachers surveyed also indicated an intention to leave the profession (SACE, 2010). Research also revealed that 55% of teachers in South Africa have considered leaving the profession due to inadequate salaries, increased workload and lack of career development, dissatisfaction with work policies, job insecurity, and lack of professional recognition (Paulse, 2005). Another

study further showed that 49% of teacher attrition in South Africa is due to resignation as compared to other possible causes such as death, dismissal, medical issues, retirement, severance and transfer (SACE, 2010). This is, however, aligned to societies worldwide including developed societies in that in many developed countries teacher resignation represents the highest contribution to overall attrition (Boyd, Lankford, Loed, & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). The Mobile Task Team (MTT) study (2005) and Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) study (2005) done for the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) confirm similar results in South Africa as for the rest of the world, namely that a significant amount of teacher attrition is due to resignation.

Teaching was an attractive profession in the past as it offered a degree of professional freedom and a certain status in society (Mullock, 2009). However, studies of teacher satisfaction show that teachers globally now complain about administrative overloading, low salaries, poor promotional prospects and learners' behavioural problems (Mullock, 2009). To this end, teaching is a stressful occupation because teaching is viewed as demanding and intensive and may cause physical and mental problems which may in turn lead to burnout (Verhoeven, Kraaij, Joekes, & Maes, 2003). The unrealistic ideals and high expectations placed on teachers makes teaching a stress occupation (Randsdell, Grosshans, & Trunnell, 2004). Furthermore, teachers often feel drained intellectually and emotionally when dealing with learner misbehaviours (Chang & Davis, 2009). Those teachers who do not feel satisfied with their jobs are more likely to intend to leave their jobs (Spector, 2008). The main reason for teachers' prone to stress is the fact that teaching involves daily interactions with learners and co-workers coupled with the incessant and fragmented demands of teaching which often result in overwhelming pressures and challenges which lead to stress, and which can in turn lead to physiological, psychological and behavioural consequences such as burnout, if the work stress becomes unrelenting.

2.4 BRIEF HISTORY AND NATURE OF STRESS

Selye (1936) conducted early research on the biology of stress by conducting studies in a laboratory with rats and mice as the subjects of his research and published his theory of stress in 1956. Owing to his many years of research in the field, Selye is

known as the father of stress (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:218). Selye (1956:74) differentiates between the term ‘eustress’ (positive stress) and ‘distress’ (negative stress). The term ‘eustress’ is used to describe a positive response to the environment and facilitated growth. The term involves aspects such as opportunity and challenge, and refers to positive stress such success, love and achievement, including the feelings that one gets when facing a challenging, yet positive situation, like getting married, receiving an award or acting as the guest of honour (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:218). Eustress is viewed as a motivator; without it, the person lacks the drive necessary for optimum performance. Eustress have therefore positive consequences for teachers and education managers (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:218).

Conversely, ‘distress’ is a term used to describe a negative response to the environment resulting in dysfunctional physical and psychological features. Distress refers to the adverse psychological, physical, behavioural or organisational consequences that may arise as a result of stressful events (Nelson & Quick, 2006:214). Distress is the kind of stress that causes harm, and can damage people’s lives and lead to stress-related diseases which may even prove fatal (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:218). The term ‘distress’ describes negative feelings or unhealthy stress resulting from work that may include feelings of anger, worry, frustration, tension and depression that threatens an individual’s sense of well-being, and causes discomfort (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Excessive pressure can be distressing, leading to loss of effectiveness and, ultimately, to ill health and a total breakdown (Van der Merwe, 2013:83). Thus, Selye argues that regardless of whether stress reactions are beneficial (eustress) or produce harmful (distress) outcomes, the bodily stimulus still undergoes its general metabolic processes for the purposes of either preparing reactive secretions to combat, accommodate or remove stressful circumstances. However, Selye (1956) warns that being completely free from stress means death (Olivier & Venter, 2003). To this end, Sorenson (2007) describes stress as an unavoidable consequence of life.

Similarly, Berndt and Oosthuizen (2008:94) describe stress as functional or dysfunctional. While excessive stress can have negative consequences and can be considered as dysfunctional stress, functional stress can increase performance by motivating people to reach a certain objective. Negative emotions, which are

characterised by stress and depression, contribute to disease and death through immune dysfunction associated with negative emotions such as divorce, final exam, sleeps deprivation, loneliness, anger and anxiety. Conversely, positive emotions can result in immune enhancement associated with positive emotions such as laughter and positive family relations (Mathias, 2003:5-35). Although stress is usually seen as negative, it can also be stimulating if experienced in balanced amounts. In this regard, healthy tension, as the optimum level of stress, is vital for happiness and improved performance (Van der Merwe, 2013:83). Although, some people criticised Selye for his over-simplistic portrayal of stress as a mainly physiological response to a stimulant, nevertheless, his ground-breaking work established the first correlation between physiology and psychology in stress response (Cooper & Dewe, 2004).

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF STRESS

Stress is a complex phenomenon. It is a difficult term to define because it has different implications for each individual (Smith, 2004). In addition, the diverse nature and perception of stress experiences encountered within the workplace makes it difficult to find a unitary definition of stress in a swathe of studies and reports on the impact of stress on organisational well-being and productivity (Dewe & Trenberth, 2004). In this regard, many definitions of stress exist in literature, creating confusion as to whether the term ‘stress’, ‘stressor’ or ‘strain’ should be used in defining various aspects of stress (Khoza & Milner, 2008). However, many studies involving workplace stress adopt the theoretical approach, which accentuates that stress is inherent in a particular situation (Khoza & Milner, 2008). A theoretical approach to stress assists in identifying work-related factors that place the individual’s physical and psychological health in danger (Khoza & Milner, 2008). Many theoretical approaches to stress exist and influences how the term is used (Khoza & Milner, 2008).

2.5.1 Definitions of stress

In order to gain a clear understanding of the impacts of stress on teacher effectiveness and quality of education in general, as well as the coping strategies that can be used to deal with it, it is important to ascertain what is meant by the concept of stress as this stress applies to the teaching profession. Newell (2004) maintains that all stress

definitions include three basic elements, namely, external, psychological and physical reactions to stressful events. This implies literally that all stress definitions involve three aspects, namely, the sources of stress that is experienced in the working environment, the perception and appraisal of the stressor, and the emotional reactions that occur when the stressor is viewed as threatening by the individual. The word 'stress' originated from the Latin words *strictus* or *strictere* meaning strict, which literally means to draw tight (Younghusband, 2003:4). As a term, stress became widely used in the social sciences in the 1950s after Selye's (1956) pioneering work that defined it as a non-specific response of the body to any demand upon it, and which has a high tendency of disrupting normal homeostatic regulatory physiological functioning of the individual concerned. Stress is the individual's response to a threatening or disturbing stimulus (Kamper & Steyn, 2006:117). This definition shows that stress, as a biological term, refers to the consequences of individual failure to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats to the individual, whether actual or imagined.

Another preferable approach to defining stress is one that argues that stress is relational in nature, involving some sort of transaction between the individual and the environment. Going by this approach, stress is used to describe the response of an individual to the self-perceived imbalances between the demands of the situation, and the resources one has at one's disposal to respond to the demand successfully (Rothmann & Viljoen, 2009:1-2). Looker and Gregson (2003) agree with Rothmann and Viljoen (2009) by describing stress as the mismatch perceived between demands and the abilities to cope with these demands. In addition, stress is considered as a condition of the environment that is external to the individual and influences him or her in a disruptive manner (Kamper & Steyn, 2006:117). This implies that stress is an autonomic response to environmental stimuli and can occur if there is a mismatch between the reality of the work environment and an individual's perceptions of the work environment (Brewer & McMahan-Landers (2003:126). This supports the opinion of Khoza and Milner (2008:157) who define stress as a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding their resources and endangering their well-being. These definitions considered stress to be a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the environment and the person, where stress is only experienced when situations are viewed as taxing one's

resources. In this sense, appraisals are determined by the values, goals, individual commitment, personal resources (e.g. income, family, self-esteem), and coping strategies that individuals bring to the situation. This notion was extended by Brown and Harvey (2006:251) who viewed stress as an interaction between individuals and any source of demand (stressor) within their environment, which affects physical and mental health. A stressor is the object or event that the individual perceives to be disruptive. In addition, Khoza and Milner (2008:157) note that the term 'stress' illustrates the psychological and physiological response of an organism to an external threat.

Stress can be defined as a holistic transaction between the individual, a stressor, and the environment, resulting in a response (Blonna, 2005:4). In this instance, a stressor is the stimulus that provokes the reaction (Blonna, 2005). A stressor is a person or an event that triggers a stress response (Nelson & Quick, 2006:214). A stressor describes any stimulus appraised by the individual as threatening or capable of causing harm or loss (Blonna, 2005:4), and relates to a person's perception of risk factors in the environment and his or her assessment of whether personal resources will enable him or her to meet the environmental challenges or whether, on the other hand, he or she will become overwhelmed (Van der Merwe, 2013:82). This supports Schwarzer and Hallum (2008:153) who maintain that an individual's experience of stress is contingent on his or her specific appraisal of a situation, which is closely related to self-efficacy as a job-specific disposition. Frequent exposure to stressors, however, can have far-reaching physical, emotional and psychological consequences (Van der Merwe, 2013:82).

Stress is the unconscious preparation to fight or flee that a person experiences when faced with a demand (Nelson & Quick, 2006:214). Stress can also be defined as the body's biochemical response to a threatening situation, and is intended to ensure self-survival (Van der Merwe, 2013:82). With regards to using the term 'stress' to refer to the level of pressure and demands made on the individual, stress is defined as the agitation, feeling of anxiety, and/or physical tension that occurs when the demands placed on the individual are believed to exceed that person's ability to cope (Slocum & Hellriegel, 2007:448). Stress is also considered as an adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands, generally understood as a pattern

of negative symptoms that relates to all areas of functioning (Cooper & Dewe, 2004). Stress explains anything that causes a fight-flight or alarm response that can cause blood sugar levels to raise, faster heartbeat, more rapid breathing, eyes dilating and blood being sent to organs such as the brain and muscles that are essential for fight or flight (Mathias, 2003:31). Emotions such as resentment, retaliation, anger, hatred, violence, guilt, sham, sorrow, regret, loneliness, fears, grief, performance, self-hatred, rejection, fear of rejection, jealousy, an unforgiving mind-set, and envy, are involved when an individual experiences stress as an alarm reaction in his or her body (Mathias, 2003:53).

However, the difficulty of finding a universal definition of the term 'stress' was understood by Selye (1956:494-495), who thus defined stress succinctly as the body's "alarm reaction" to demands made upon it. After nearly 40 years of research, Selye (1956:694) summarised the difficulty in defining stress, saying, "everybody knows what stress is and nobody knows what it is". In his pioneering work on stress, Selye (1956) argued that the response the body exhibits to stress is nonspecific, implying that the body reacts to stress in the same way regardless of the stressor, and developed a model for describing the body's nonspecific response to stress and the adaptations it forces the body to make. He indicates that the way stress affects us individually depends upon the strength of our individual bodies, and on our personal ability to cope (Selye, 1956; Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:217). This supports Barling et al. (2005) who state that individuals respond differently to stress based on their individual responses to stress and management of stress. Some display symptoms of strain and will be at risk of developing health problems, while others avoid this reaction.

2.5.2 Seyle's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

Selye (1956) indicates that everyone under prolonged stress follows the same general pattern of response which he calls the General Adaptation Syndrome (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:217). A key component of Selye's theory is the identification of the long-term negative effects of stress (Khoza & Milner, 2008). The concept provides insight into individuals' reactions to stress. According to Selye, stress affects our bodies through the endocrine system and the sympathetic nervous system (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:217). The General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) has three sequential

stages, namely, the alarm reaction stage which is the fight-flight response of the body; the stage of resistance when our bodies begin to work overtime to combat emotional, physical or disease stressors; and the stages of exhaustion in which our bodies simply wear out and give up, and we lose the ability to resist (Mathias, 2003:33-34). The body can elicit a stress response based merely on emotions. The body does not need an immediate threat to the well-being in order to proceed through the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) model (Blonna, 2005). Selye describes these three stages as follows:

- *Alarm Reaction Stage*: - The alarm response is acute, intense, and necessary for survival (Blonna, 2005:117). The fight-or-flight phenomenon refers to the state of the body during the alarm phase (Blonna, 2005), as well as coping options available to the body at this point. The alarm stage is triggered by the hypothalamus and regulated by the sympathetic autonomic nervous system and the 22 endocrine systems (Khoza & Milner, 2008). This means that the perception of a stimulus as a stressor is what triggered the alarm reaction. At this stage, the body mobilises energy to meet the demands of the stress (Selye, 1956). Firstly, the body prepares for action which can either be a “fight or flight” reaction. In this regard, some individuals might perceive a stressor as threatening and opt to “flight”. This could include attempts to leave the profession or take extended sick leave, or even commit suicide. Others might perceive a stressor as challenging and opt to “fight”. This could include attempts to influence the environment positively or negatively. Secondly, the initial shock phase occurs, where the body responds by a drop in blood pressure and muscle tension, i.e. the cardiovascular system increases the amount of blood being pumped through the body to increase oxygen and other resources needed for action while the respiratory system increases breathing rate and depth. The adrenal glands are stimulated to release adrenaline and noradrenaline, which enhance and sustain the stress response. Thirdly, a counter shock phase exists, which involves a response to a threat or injury. At this stage the body is alerted and stress levels are at its highest (Paulse, 2005). The effects of the fight-or-flight reaction can last into the next stage of resistance, but are not as intense.

Once the stressor is dealt with or removed, the fight-or-flight response shuts down (Blonna, 2005).

- *The Resistance Stage:* - The body moves into the resistance phase when it is confronted with a chronic, non-life-threatening stressor (Blonna, 2005). This stage is characterised by an adaptation response of the body which involves “fight or flight” responses (Steenkamp, 2003). At this stage, the body is beginning to cope. Though, during this phase, the body still requires the mobilisation of resources, its intensity differs from those associated with the alarm reaction stage. The body starts to draw energy from all available sources including calories from food and from reserves in the skeletal system. The body secretes hormones in order to maintain the increases in metabolism functioning. The body cannot accommodate the effects associated with the resistance phase for long periods of time without showing harm. Eventually, the body moves into the exhaustion phase if it continues to remain in the resistance stage for a long period of time (Blonna, 2005).
- *The Exhaustion Stage:* - This stage occurs as a result of physiological causes including the loss of potassium ions, loss of adrenal glucocorticoids, and the weakening of vital organs (Blonna, 2005).

If the stressor was removed during the resistance stage, blood sugar will steadily return to normal. If the stressor is extreme and there is no end in sight, the person may simply give up (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:218). According to Selye (1956) the body has a finite amount of energy and once that energy is depleted, the body dies. However, the stages of the General Adaption Syndrome are successive. This means that when the stress is removed or coped with effectively, a person exhibiting the stress response may not proceed through all of the stages because the response stops when the stress is removed or coped with effectively, hence recovery becomes an alternative to the final state of exhaustion (Blonna, 2005).

2.6 TEACHER STRESS

Teachers can be viewed as the passive recipients of stimuli, who experience stress when under pressure (Schulze & Steyn, 2007). However, considering the various

definitions of teacher stress could provide a better understanding of the concept. The term ‘teacher stress’ has the same characteristics as the term ‘occupational stress’, since teacher stress occurs within the parameter of the working environment. Occupational stress is a complicated scientific construct that requires an initial understanding of the “parent construct” known as stress (Colligan & Higgins, 2005:90). However, there are many issues involved when attempting to define the term ‘teacher stress’. The first relates to whether the term should be used to describe the level of demands made on teachers, or the emotional state provided by the demands. The second issue relates to whether the term should include positive and negative demands as stress factors, or both the positive and negative emotional states should be considered. The third issue involves an individual’s perception, as well as ability to deal with a situation.

The first references to teacher stress began to appear in the mid-1970s. Kyriacou (2001), stimulated by his personal experiences as a teacher in the United Kingdom, pioneered the examination of teacher stress. Being employed in a disadvantaged community, Kyriacou and his colleagues received a salary enhancement allowance to prevent them from leaving the profession. This enhancement, called a stress allowance, intrigued Kyriacou to research stress among school teachers. Based on the research of that time, Kyriacou (2001:28) adopted a most widely used definition which viewed teacher stress as a negative emotional experience triggered by the teacher’s perception that their work constitutes a threat to their well-being or self-esteem. Stress among teachers is said to have been recognized as a widespread problem in different educational settings (Kyriacou, 2001).

Teacher stress is most commonly regarded as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, nervousness or depression, resulting from a certain aspect of their work as teachers (Moomaw & Pearson, 2005:39). To this end, teacher stress can be defined as the personal reaction of teachers to extreme demands or other types of work pressure placed on them, resulting in unpleasant and negative emotions (Kyriacou & Chien, 2004:86).

Physical or psychological stressors in the school environment create stress or the potential for teacher stress when a teacher perceives these stressors as representing a demand that exceeds his or her ability to respond. In this regard, teacher stress can be defined as teacher-related nervousness and anxiety, which affects the teacher's physical and/or emotional health (Netemeyer, Maxham & Pulig, 2005). Teacher stress can also imply teachers' inability to handle work-related demands such as workloads, role conflict and poor working conditions (Rothmann & Viljoen, 2009).

Teaching was an attractive profession in the past as it offered a degree of professional freedom and a certain status in society (Mullock, 2009). Today, in the classroom, it can become easy for a teacher to get overstressed and want to leave the teaching profession (Botwinik, 2007). It is known that teacher stress has become a growing hazard of the teaching profession. As the challenges of teachers increase, so does their experience of stress (Schulze & Steyn, 2007). Research on the prevalence of stress-related problems in the teaching profession shows that teachers worldwide now complain about administrative overloading, low salaries, poor promotional prospects, and students' behavioural problems (Mullock, 2009). Mullock (2009) adds that the declining status of teachers, the pace of educational change and the increase in workloads have been exacerbated by the negative portrayal of teachers and teaching in the media. A study by Chang (2009) highlights the link between challenging classroom situations and teachers' emotional states, showing that work pressure and student misbehaviour are the most important sources of teacher stress. Another study reveals that stress among teachers in mainland China was on the increase due to increasingly competitive university entrance examinations and the tendency to assess teachers' performance on the basis of their students' examination scores (Zhang & Zhu, 2007). In addition, these researchers stated that it was common for secondary school teachers in China to work six or seven days a week, coach students in the early mornings and evenings and teach over the summer and winter breaks.

With regard to the prevalence of stress-related problems in the South African teaching context, Peltzer, Shisana, Zuma, Van Wyk and Zungu-Dirwayi (2009) investigated the relationship between self-reported job stress and job satisfaction, and the prevalence of stress-related illnesses and risk factors among 21307 South African teachers working at state schools. They used a questionnaire which included demographic

variables such as age, gender, socio-economic status and rank in the teaching profession and behavioural items such as alcohol use, sexual behaviour, absenteeism and mobility. Peltzer et al. (2009) reported that teachers felt that performing tasks not in their job descriptions, lack of peer support, job insecurity and a lack of career advancement were major sources of stress. They also discovered that confusion about teaching methodology and the implementation of new curricula, pass requirements and reporting systems were major sources of stress for teachers.

Furthermore, a study conducted in rural KwaZulu-Natal, in which Monareng (2006) used the Professional Life Stress Scale (PLSS: Fontana, 1989) to determine the stress levels among 102 secondary school teachers working in nine public schools, showed that 87% of the teachers surveyed felt stresses with 31% reporting high levels of stress (Monareng, 2006). In addition, a Western Cape study involving a sample of 132 secondary school teachers in the George area, using the Fimian Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI, 1984) to determine their stress levels, showed that more than 20% of the teachers surveyed indicated high levels of psychological stress with 74% of those indicating that learner discipline problems and learner lack of motivation were the main sources of their teaching-related stress. Furthermore, two studies of secondary school teachers in Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape show that teachers experience considerable stress due to time pressures, poor working conditions, curriculum changes, an overload of administrative duties and student misbehaviour (Olivier & Venter, 2003).

Drastic changes in education policies, legislation and education programmes in South Africa have made teachers the targets of criticism, causing increased levels of stress and creating general dissatisfaction among teachers (Badenhorst, George & Louw, 2008). With regards to changes in education policies and programmes, South Africa has experienced significant curriculum changes, and the demands made on teachers due to radical curriculum changes such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) have had a devastating effect on teachers' attitudes and morale (Kiggundu, 2007). However, not every teacher experiences stress under the same conditions. Some thrive where others shrink; but, regardless of individual differences, higher levels of prolonged stress lead to teacher dissatisfaction, withdrawal from work, burnout, health problems, and attrition (Billingsley, 2005:171).

2.7 BURNOUT: BACKGROUND AND DEFINITION

Burnout first emerged as a social problem grounded in the realities of people's experiences in the workplace, and not as a scholarly construct. The term 'burnout' was first introduced with Greene's novel, "A Burn-Out Case", in 1961 (Senior, 2006). However, the first few articles about burnout appeared in the mid-1970s in the United States, providing the initial description of the burnout phenomenon, and showing that the psychological syndrome of burnout was relatively common among human service professionals (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1976). The psychological construct of burnout originated from the writings of Freudenberger (1974), a clinical psychologist who worked in an alternative health care centre, and who first used the term to describe the condition of emotional, physical and mentally drained social workers who had spent extended periods of time working with drug addicts. Freudenberger (1974) coined the term 'burnout' as he watched a group of volunteers enter a helping field, give totally of themselves, and eventually over-extended themselves to the point of emotional exhaustion. He was the first to note that many of the volunteers with whom he was working experienced a gradual emotional depletion and loss of motivation and commitment. Freudenberger (1974:160) ultimately defined the term 'burnout' as the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions of work.

At about the same time, Maslach (1976), a social psychologist, was studying emotions in the workplace to determine the way people cope with emotional arousal on the job. Maslach (1976) was also particularly interested in cognitive strategies such as 'detached concern' (the medical profession's ideal of blending compassion with emotional distance) and 'dehumanisation in self-defence' (the process of protecting oneself from overwhelming emotional feelings by responding to other people more as objects than persons in the medical profession). However, both the emotional arousal and the cognitive strategies had important implications for people's professional identity, job and coping behaviour. The realisation of the harmful and debilitating effects of emotional stress inherent in human service professionals emerged from interviews conducted among these professionals. The findings, based on the clinical perspective of Freudenberge (1974) and the empirical approach of Maslach (1976), complement each other well, and have generated a wealth of data and understanding of the phenomenon of burnout (Farber, 1983:8).

Since the work by Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976), the construct of burnout has been studied across several professions where people work under pressure, especially the human service professions such as teaching, nursing and law enforcement. The term 'burnout' is used when people are not happy about what they have been doing and when they feel depressed about their job. Initially, at some point, the term was looked upon as pseudoscientific jargon without substance and was denigrated by journal editors as a "pop psychology" phenomenon (Maslach et al., 2001:398), until research conceptualised the syndrome with empirical studies. As a result, the definition of burnout has been shaped by pragmatic rather than academic concerns and has been the subject of intense debates about its viability as a measurable construct (Friberg, 2009; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). However, since the term was first coined, operationally defining burnout has been a complex and controversial task and has resulted in a variety of definitions being put forward by researchers. To this end, it is possibly easier to agree on a common description of burnout than a common definition of it (Starrin, Larsson & Styrborne, 1990:84). This supports Maslach (1982:31) who stated that some burnout definitions are limited while others are more wide-ranging. Some are precise while others are global. Some refer to a purely psychological condition while others include actual behaviours. Some describe a state or a syndrome while others talk of a process. Some make references to causes, others to effects; some emphasise the person variables and others environment variables.

Burnout has been identified as one type of response to the long-term negative impact of work stress (Osbom, 2004). Research shows that long exposure to chronic stress ultimately results in burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). For many researchers, in particular, burnout is seen as a response to chronic stress (Dorman, 2003; Kokkinos, 2005). Burnout, the human response to excessive pressure or a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, describes the response to chronic stress (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout is the end result of long exposure to chronic stress (Maslach et al., 2001). This shows that burnout is caused by stress, but it has the added dimension of not having an outlet for the stress. Therefore, burnout can be defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do people-work of some kind (Maslach & Jackson, 1981:99). Similarly, burnout can be defined as the response to chronic emotional

stress caused by intense involvement with people in the work environment which manifests in exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 2004:93; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008:154). Assumed in the above definitions is the view that when service-oriented professionals experience chronic work stress, they feel emotionally drained, perceive their services as not being beneficial to either themselves or those whom they intended to assist, and eventually begin to blame their customers (e.g. learners, clients, patients) for failing to achieve or improve.

Burnout describes negative reactions of stress experienced under four different symptom realms: physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Burnout is defined as a work-related state of mind (Maslach et al., 2001). It is known that many have been affected by the so-called burnout effect which means the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions of work, and the striving to reach some unrealistic expectations imposed by oneself or by the values of society (Freudenberger, 1974). A similar definition is put forward by Maslach (2003), who states that burnout is the physical, mental and emotional exhaustion resulting from chronic job attrition. Maslach and Leiter (1997:17) describe burnout as a dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. This supports Maslach and Jackson (as cited in Lau, Yuen & Chan, 2005:492) who describe the construct as a condition in which human service workers lose all concerns and emotional feeling for the person they work with and come to treat them in detached and dehumanised ways. According to Dworkin (2001:69), Frendenberger postulated that the phenomenon of burnout represented a malaise of human service professionals, such as social workers, mental health workers, nurses and teachers, which is characterised by feelings of “wearing out.” Burnout is an erosion of human values, dignity, spirit and will. In this regard, Maslach and Leiter (1997:17) viewed burnout as an erosion of engagement with what started out as important, meaningful and challenging work that becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling and meaningless. Burnout occurs when an individual feels overwhelmed and unable to meet daily demands (Zhang & Zhu, 2007:490).

Research on burnout focuses on three main areas: exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout syndrome is described as emotional exhaustion which is the result of chronic stress and particularly occurs in people who are in contact with other people professionally (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). In another

definition by Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996) burnout is a syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. In the above definitions, exhaustion or emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of strain, particularly chronic fatigue mainly resulting from overtaxing work. It refers to a state of depletion and fatigue which is characterised by symptoms of physical and emotional depletion. The latter two elements of burnout, cynicism and inefficacy, represent the key reactions to the experience of exhaustion. Cynicism refers to an indifferent or a distant attitude towards work and mainly towards the people, with whom one works, losing one's interest in work and evaluating work as something that has lost its meaning. Here, individuals detach and withdraw from others as a response to stress and burnout. Lastly, lack of professional efficacy refers to reduced feelings of competence, successful achievement, and accomplishment both in one's job and the organisation. This involves the feeling of performing tasks inadequately and being incompetent in the workplace (Hakanen et al., 2006). Thus, burnout occurs when exhaustion replaces feeling energised, cynicism replaces hope, and ineffectiveness replaces efficacious.

Despite the variety of definitions for burnout being put forward by researchers, the different definitions have certain key characteristics of the burnout construct in common. According to Maslach (1982) and Freudenberger (1974:3), there is a general agreement that burnout:

- Occurs at an individual or agency level.
- Is an internal psychological experience involving feelings, attitudes, motives and expectations?
- Concerns problems, distress, discomfort and dysfunction.
- Is perceived by the individual as a negative experience.
- Symptoms manifest themselves in normal people who did not suffer from psychopathology before.
- Results in negative consequences.
- Leads to decreased effectiveness and work performance.

Finally, burnout can be defined as a three-dimensional syndrome consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal achievement that

results from chronic stress in interpersonal relationships (Maslach et al., 2001). This supports Montgomery and Rupp (2005) who asserted that burnout syndrome comprises three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of personal accomplishment/achievement. This tripartite definition of burnout is accepted across the literature as the most comprehensive definition of the burnout construct. Maslach and Jackson (1981:99), who developed a conceptual model of burnout which defines burnout as a long-term response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, include emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation/cynicism and reduced personal accomplishment as the three dimensions of this burnout model.

2.7.1 Emotional exhaustion

Research indicates that the first symptom of burnout is severe fatigue, or an emotional exhaustion from one's job (Maslach et al., 2001). This dimension of burnout has been the most extensively studied factor in the burnout literature. It is the core element of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complicated and complex syndrome. Emotional exhaustion refers to the feelings of being emotionally over-extended, and having depleted one's emotional resources (Evers et al., 2004). The emotional exhaustion dimension corresponds to the basic stress element of burnout, and it is depicted by feelings of frustration, anger, depression and dissatisfaction (Maslach, 1982, 2003). Maslach et al. (2001) maintain that when people describe themselves or others as experiencing burnout, they most often refer to the experience of emotional exhaustion, in which the person feels emotionally over-extended, becomes overwhelmed by the emotional demands of others, and feels drained and unable to carry on (Maslach and Jackson, 1981:99). Also implied in this dimension is that one's job requires high levels of involvement and arousal. In this regard, burnout is different from the tedium experienced by individuals engaged in boring or monotonous jobs. Emotional exhaustion's primary sources are work overload and personal conflict at work.

2.7.2 Depersonalisation/Cynicism

As an individual begins to experience the exhaustion, in an instinctive reaction to cope with the overload, the second symptom of burnout, depersonalisation, may begin to

manifest by the person distancing himself or herself emotionally from others and from his or her work (Maslach et al., 2001). Depersonalisation means a dehumanised and impersonal view of others and treating them like ordinary things rather than people (Maslach, 1982, 2003). Depersonalisation is developed when an individual attempts to deal with emotional exhaustion, and tends to manifest as an emotional softener of detached concern which may develop into the dehumanisation of others. In educational settings, the act of depersonalisation, a detached attitude towards learners, works as a defence mechanism because a teacher does not have the emotional resources to cope with continued stress (Kokkinos, 2007). The depersonalisation component represents the interpersonal facet of burnout and is used to describe a negative and cynical attitude towards other people, including a loss of idealism with the job. A cynical attitude, in this sense, refers to an attitude of scornful or jaded negativity, especially a general distrust of the integrity or professed motives of others. Evers et al. (2004:132) define depersonalisation as a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to others, who are usually the recipients of one's service or care. Depersonalisation is to actively ignore the service recipients in an attempt to put distance between them and oneself (Maslach et al., 2001). Depersonalisation towards colleagues or the recipients of service or care can be considered as a psychological withdrawal as well as coping behaviour (Taris, Van Horn, Schaufeli & Schreurs, 2004). This supports Maslach and Jackson (1981) who maintain that helping professionals often exceed their personal resources and may disengage themselves from the individuals they serve as a coping strategy. In addition, they may use depersonalising language and treat their clients as dehumanised objects, reducing the emotional demands of their practice (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

2.7.3 Reduced personal accomplishment

The third symptom, reduced personal accomplishment, is viewed as more complex (Maslach et al., 2001). Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a loss of self-efficacy on the job, and the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regards to one's work with recipients (Maslach & Jackson, 1981:99). Reduced personal accomplishment represents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout, and refers to a process in which an individual feels that his or her competence and productivity at work are declining, resulting in a low sense of self-efficacy which may

be connected to depression and a consequent inability to cope with the demands of the job. This supports Evers et al. (2004) who define reduced personal accomplishment as a decline in an individual's feelings of competence and successful achievement in the workplace. Some work conditions with persistent unrealistic demands that lead to exhaustion and cynicism may also reduce the efficacy of the worker. Research shows that this inefficiency seems to develop parallel to the exhaustion and depersonalisation. The findings of Maslash et al. (2001) show that, when there is emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation co-occurring with work overload and social conflict, the lack of efficacy is more likely related to a lack of relevant resources, such as social support, opportunities for professional development, support of one's supervisor, feedback, and participation in decision making.

There are several instruments used to measure teacher stress and teacher burnout. While some of the instruments are centred on the teaching profession, others are used to assess basic occupational stress or stress coping skills. Prominent among these instruments is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which was developed by Christina Maslach (2008) to measure burnout. The Maslach Burnout Inventory is an instrument designed to capture the three dimensions of burnout, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment mentioned above and as defined by Maslach et al. (2001). The MBI is a 22-item inventory measuring elements of job and occupational burnout across various occupational dimensions, which include providing testing for emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment. The MBI, an instrument that is considered as the first well-validated burnout inventory, is designed for application to three different groups of occupations, namely, the MBI-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) which focuses on those in the human and health care services; the MBI-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES) which centres on those in the teaching professions; and the MBI-General Survey (MBI-GS) which focuses on other occupations that are not people oriented.

2.8 MANIFESTATIONS OF STRESS AND BURNOUT

The issue of burnout among people-oriented professionals has become a major health problem. The phenomenon of burnout is pervasive as it affects not only the individuals

experiencing burnout, but also their co-workers, clients and the larger institution within which they work. Burnout in the workplace may manifest itself in a number of ways. It has been noted that, during the cycle of burnout, individuals experience specific physiological and emotional responses. What begins to manifest after the emotional exhaustion, distancing, and feelings of ineptitude and discontent with the job are stress-related symptoms that have no physiological basis, and which relate to problems with concentrating, having negative feelings, and being irritable (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout appears to be a factor in job turnover, absenteeism, and low morale. In addition, burnout seems to be correlated with insomnia, an increased use of alcohol and drugs, and marital and family problems (Maslach & Jackson, 1981:100).

With regard to work environment, two types of symptoms that are related to stress experienced by people-oriented professionals can be grouped into the categories of individual and organisational stress symptoms (Van der Merwe, 2013:85). Organisational stress symptoms relate to increased absenteeism; lack of focus and motivation; high levels of complaint; lack of communication, trust and positive feedback; increases in conflict with greater difficulty in resolving it; difficulties in motivating staff; lack of cooperation; and an unwillingness to accept change and innovations. These symptoms manifest as organisational symptoms when individual members of staff experience high levels of stress in the working environment (Tucker, 2010; Yong & Yue, 2007).

With regards to the symptoms of the individual, Van der Linden, Keijsers, Eling and Van Schaijk (2005) maintain that, while the symptoms of too little stress are manifested in boredom, frustration and dissatisfaction, excessive stress and burnout are more prevalent and have a variety of symptoms which are categorised as psychosocial, physical and behavioural. Berndt and Oosthuizen (2008) agree with Van der Linden et al. (2005) and provide a breakdown of these symptoms as follows:

- Psychosocial symptoms are visible in the negative emotions experienced by individuals, namely, depression, frustration, anger, guilt, resentment, tension, fear, anxiety, hopelessness, apathy, boredom and job-related dissatisfaction.

- Physical symptoms include hyperventilation, light-headedness, unstable gait, appetite and sleep disturbances, profuse sweating, increased urination and pounding of the heart. In addition, heart disease, changes in metabolic and breathing rates, blood pressure problems, headaches, heart attacks, muscle pains, asthma, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, skin diseases, diabetes and cardiovascular problems are common disorders resulting from stress-related physical symptoms.
- Behavioural symptoms include the inability to concentrate, to remember and to think logically, which all impact negatively on decision making. Behavioural symptoms are visible in the way workers act when they think that they are under stress. Some people smoke more, others suffer insomnia and other people drink more. Behavioural symptoms are also visible in an inability to control one's emotions and a tendency to withdraw rather than be in the company of others, which influences interpersonal relationship negatively.

The above assertions support Pickering (2008) who notes that the physical effects of stress can be felt in many ways, including increased heart rate, headaches, dizziness, palpitations, skin rashes, aching neck and shoulders and lower resistance to infection. Over a long period, stress may contribute to chronic health problems such as heart disease and stomach ulcers. In addition, many psychological and behavioural changes affecting work performance and interpersonal relationships, including inability to concentrate, overworking, irritability or aggression, becoming withdrawn or unsociable or reluctant to accept constructive criticism and advice, may be noticed by the stressed individuals' colleagues (Pickering, 2008).

The degrees to which the symptoms of stress are visible in individuals vary and often a combination of these symptoms can be seen in individuals, with severe consequences. However, teachers can exhibit stress as an isolated temporary instance or the stress can be exhibited as burnout symptoms (Griva & Joekes, 2003). While stress may indicate a health risk to stress related disease, prolonged exposure to stress may cause the teacher to experience symptoms of burnout. Burnout symptoms include fatigue, emotional exhaustion, apathy, cynicism, irritability, anger, avoidance, indecency and inefficiency (Oosthuizen & Van der Bijl, 2007).

Schaufeli and Buunk (2005) categorise burnout symptoms into five categories, namely affective, cognitive, physical, behavioural and motivational manifestations. Affective manifestations include gloomy depressed mood, aggression and anxiety. Cognitive burnout symptoms are characterised by emotions which include feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and powerlessness, a sense of failure, poor job-related esteem, impotence, and impaired cognitive skills such as memory and attention, negativism, pessimism, reduced empathy, distrust, and an exceptionally critical attitude towards management, peers and supervisors. Physical manifestations include regular bouts of flu, somatic complaints, higher levels of cortisol and cholesterol, and coronary heart disease. Behavioural manifestations include substance abuse, absenteeism, staff turnover and impaired work performance. Motivational manifestations include a decline in and/or loss of enthusiasm, interest, idealism and zest, disillusionment, disappointment, resignation and submission, interpersonal conflicts and physical and mental withdrawal. According to Maslach (2003), teachers in general are particularly susceptible to burnout and typical teacher burnout symptoms include consistent late coming, high absenteeism, poor job performance and a lack of interest and commitment.

2.9 TEACHER BURNOUT

Researchers have consistently indicated that teacher stress is a major factor in the incidence of teacher burnout (Maslach, 1982). In this regard, the notion of teacher burnout has been closely related to teacher stress, and is defined as a state of emotional, physical and attitudinal exhaustion that may develop in teachers who have been unsuccessful in coping effectively with stress over a long period of time (Austin et al., 2005:64). This shows that teachers' perceptions of stress and their ability to cope with demands are implicated in teacher burnout (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). Therefore, measuring teacher stress can play an instrumental role in understanding the processes that lead to teacher burnout (Lamber et al., 2003). Friedman (2003) also defined teacher burnout as the discrepancy between the teachers' expectations as impeccable professionals and the actual results in their performance. This supports Conley, Pintrich, Vekiri, and Harrison (2004) who found that teachers with symptoms of burnout felt that their work did not match their original reasons for becoming teachers.

Research on teacher burnout has become more prominent than research on any other human service occupation. This may be primarily because the teaching profession is increasingly being perceived as the most stressful one (Brown & Nagel, 2004; Hasting & Bham, 2003; Kyriacou, 2001; McCarthy et al., 2009). In addition, burnout among teachers has received considerable research attention due to its negative effects on the mental and physical health of teachers (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). Given the demands of the job, the teaching profession became a target audience for symptoms of burnout (Maslach, 1982). Teacher burnout occurs when the demands of the profession are overwhelming. It is the result of stressors such as learner discipline problems, learner apathy, overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of available support staff, excessive paperwork, excessive testing, involuntary transfer, inadequate salaries, lack of promotional opportunities, demanding parents, lack of administrative support, role conflict, role ambiguity, and public criticism of teachers (Cammilli, 2004). A study undertaken in Germany involving school teachers that revealed that 33% suffered from burnout and 18% from severe strain also revealed that these teachers regarded huge classes and destructive and aggressive behaviour of learners as primary stressors (Emsley et al., 2009).

2.10 SOURCES OF TEACHER STRESS

Sources of stress, understood as stressors, can be short-term or long-term in nature. Common acute stressors include noise, high technology effects as well as thoughts about a threat or unsafe event, while chronic stressors involve ongoing stressful situations that are long-term and where the urge to act is suppressed (Isaacs, 2008). Furthermore, stressors can be general or work-related (Van der Merwe, 2013:86). Before reviewing literature on the school as a source for work-related stressors, it is important to first consider the general causes of stress that affect people in general as teachers are also influenced by these causes of stress (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:219). In this regard, Van der Linden et al. (2005) highlight five stressors that can be considered as general sources of stress, namely:

- the real threat of death or physical injury as experienced with violent crime and natural disasters.

- invasive medical procedures, such as surgical operations and certain dental procedures.
- changes in a person's personal and social relationships, such as the death of a close family member, the emigration of close friends or divorce.
- threats to a person's sense of worth, certainty and autonomy, and a person's pride, as in the case of examination failure, loss of a job, arrest or imprisonment.
- a threat to fairness as, although there is agreement on the fact that life is not always fair, the perception of fair exchange between people remains a pertinent need.

In addition to the general causes of stress already highlighted, other examples of stressors, all of which can be categorised in various ways, include the following (Huxley Consulting, 2005:25):

- emotional: fears, anxieties, worries, phobia.
- familial: marital problems, death and illness in the family, difficult teenagers.
- social: feeling of having no status, asking a person on a date, having to make a speech.
- financial: having to make ends meet, debt, financial over-commitment.
- change: having to take difficult decisions, moving, taking on a second job, new relationships, adopting new personal habits.
- chemical: caffeine abuse, medicine, pollution.
- environmental: odours, noise, untidy office, bright lights.
- biological: eating habits, drinking habits, lack of sufficient sleep, pains, strain from over-extension of the body, diet, short-term or long-term disorders, disease.
- travel: commuting long distances to work and thus having to spend long hours in a bus, car or train, heavy traffic.
- conflict: lack of assertiveness, aggression, submissiveness.
- negative thought pattern: sulking, victim mentality, running oneself down, external locus of control.

- personality type: type A personality traits, perfectionism, the need to control, success driven.
- time utilization: having to use your prime time for routine tasks, interruptions, trying to do too much at once.

With regards to work related stressors, Jackson and Rothmann (2006) identify seven stressors that can be considered as associated with the work environment, namely:

- work relationships (poor or unsupportive relationships with colleagues and or superiors, isolation and unfair treatment).
- work-life imbalance (when work interferes with the personal and home life of workers).
- overload (unmanageable work-loads and time pressures).
- job security (fear of job loss or obsolescence).
- control (lack of influence in the way work is organized and performed).
- resources and communication (having the appropriate training and equipment and resources).
- pay and benefits (financial rewards for work).
- aspects of the job (sources of stress related to the fundamental nature of the job itself).

In addition, Antoniou, Polychroni and Vlachakis (2006) categorise the major sources of teachers' occupational stress into factors that are directly linked to the teaching profession, to administrative factors related to school organisation and administration, and to teachers' individual differences in coping with stress. Furthermore, research shows that teachers generally experience considerable stress caused by factors inside and outside the classroom (Coombe, 2008; Mullock, 2009). With respect to school stressors, Bachkirova (2005:344) and Otero-Lopez, Castro, Villardefranco and Santiago (2009:105) highlight the following:

- large class sizes.
- physical facility-related problems in the specific work environment, such as poor maintenance of classrooms and school grounds; inadequate heating,

air conditioning and lighting; lack of teaching and learning resources; lack of enough space for large learner numbers, and inadequate staff facilities (e.g. no proper staff room).

- psychosocial conditions, such as a lack of proper support services.
- poor management and an unconstructive work structure, resulting in fruitless meetings, mounting paperwork arising from ineffective bureaucratic procedures, job ambiguity and role conflict.
- external demands from parents and the broader society.
- continuous work overload, resulting in a need to work at home in the evenings and over weekends.
- excessive administration for those teachers with pastoral care responsibilities.
- a decline in the standard of discipline due to learner attitudes, e.g. learners' indifference towards their school work as well as homework, and their frequent tardiness which negatively impact learners' academic achievement and hampers their progress, and for which teachers are held accountable.
- a lack of support with discipline problems, exacerbated by meetings with the parents of these undisciplined learners who, in many instances, defend the wrongdoings of their children.
- a lack of proper direction from the Department of Education in the face of continuous change, which causes uncertainty and conflict when dealing with important curriculum-related decisions.

In addition to the sources of teacher stress named already, other stressors encountered by teachers on a daily basis include teachers' level of job satisfaction, job control, pressures of the teachers' role, lack of professional recognition, low remuneration, lack of decision-making and effective communication, staff conflict as well as learner misbehaviour (Bertoret, 2006). Research further shows that major occupational stressors in the teaching environment that are inherent to teaching stem from learners who lack motivation, lack of effort in class, learner inattentiveness and noisiness, attending class unprepared, hyperactivity, maintaining discipline in the classroom, and poor learner behaviour such as hostility towards teachers and other learners (Geving, 2007; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Other major sources of teacher

stress extrinsic to teaching stem from general time pressures, workload and work demands, large amounts of change, assessments, challenging relationships with colleagues and superiors, feeling unvalued, lack of autonomy and self-motivation, lack of material support to perform their job, unsatisfactory school management and administration, and being exposed to generally poor working conditions (Kinman & Jones, 2003:27; Kokkinos, 2007; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Olivier & William, 2005; Ozdemir, 2007; Van Tonder & Williams, 2009).

Van Tonder and Williams (2009) also reported that among the most important sources of teacher stress and burnout are form and content of school cultures, school structure and communication, leadership practices, and a lack of promotional prospects. Other important sources include resources available to schools, the size of classes, educational policies and procedures, school reputation, relationships with the community and with parents as well as learner attitudes (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). In addition to the stressors already mentioned, other factors causing teacher stress and burnout, especially for teachers at secondary school level, include poor learner behaviour such as hostility towards the teacher and other learners, learners inattentiveness and noisiness, lack of effort in class, attending class unprepared, hyperactivities, school rules violation, improper handling of school property, and lack of interest in learning (Geving, 2007); lack of autonomy and self-motivation (Olivier & Willian, 2005); lack of parental and administrative support (Blasé, Blasé, & Du, 2008; Lambert et al., 2006); and lack of material support to perform their job (Ozdemir, 2007).

Some of the stressors experienced by teachers on a daily basis, regardless of their level of experience, relate to change in the working environment and organisational climate (Griva & Joekes, 2003). Research shows that new teachers experience a dramatic range of intense emotions caused by fear of not being liked or respected; an awareness of being judged by others; the anxiety of not being familiar with the subject matter; and the discomfort that comes from having to make quick decisions in the classroom (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). In today's global, technology-driven economic environment, many South African schools are still ill-equipped to meet the workload demands of 21st century teaching and learning (Khoza & Milner, 2008). This contributes to teachers' negative perceptions of the climate of their schools, and thus

they struggle to cope with workload and work pressure which may increase their experience of stress.

Considering the major politically and socially motivated transformations in education within the South African teaching context, research shows that the demands and expectations placed on teachers and education managers to contribute to social reconstruction carried out in an environment characterised by extreme poverty, high levels of family disintegration, substance abuse and violent crime (Bloch, 2009:24), results in exceptionally stressful environments in which teachers must cope in order to ensure that effective teaching and successful learning are sustained (Van der Merwe, 2013:81). In line with this assertion, Yong and Yue (2007:80) maintain that the existence of stress among teachers and school managers is mainly associated with the pressures caused by the rate of change in society, as well as the demand for improved excellence juxtaposed against the added responsibilities related to school-based management, and teachers' intense involvement with learners and parents on a daily basis.

Furthermore, South African educator school surveys indicate that teachers are overwhelmed by all the reforms that have been introduced since 1994. According to these surveys, it was reported that approximately 71% of teachers claim to experience stress with Outcome Base Education (OBE), and approximately 62% claim to have high workloads (Stofile & Green, 2007:59). Role-based stress may apply to employees in the helping professions such as teachers (Kirk-Brown & Wallace, 2004). Role-based stress arises when teachers are unclear about their responsibilities, expectations and work objectives (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:221). In this regard, Cooper and Dewe (2004) argue that the main stressors dominating the early study of teacher stress and burnout involved role conflict and role ambiguity.

Based on the above highlights, it is evident that teachers encounter considerable stress and burnout caused by factors inside and outside the classroom (Coombe, 2008; Mullock, 2009).

2.11 FACTORS LEADING TO TEACHER BURNOUT

Employees in the teaching profession, like any other helping profession, appear particularly vulnerable to the experience of burnout (Paton & Goddard, 2003). Burnout, a well-known stress-related syndrome among people in the teaching profession, does not emerge suddenly, but develops over a long period of stressful working conditions (Austin, Shah, & Muncer, 2005; Jordan, Spangenberg, Watson, & Fouche, 2007). Maslach (1982) suggested three categories of factors as potential contributors to employee burnout. These factors can be discussed as follows:

- Involvement with people: This factor pertains to relations with one's co-workers, supervisors, and even social support on the job, which may influence the extent to which individuals experience burnout.
- One's personal characteristics: People's personal characteristics are concerned with variables such as their ages, gender and family status, and encompasses personality factors like one's commitment to values, locus of control, hardiness and personal health.
- The job setting or organisational climate: The variables involved in this category relate to characteristics of one's job setting like workload, time and position in work, as well as agency policies.

The sources of teacher burnout are believed to have multifaceted factors (Maslach et al., 2001). In view of the above categories of factors contributing to employee burnout, the factors leading to teacher burnout can be divided into those arising from individual, organisational and transactional origins (Chang, 2009). According to Chang (2009), individual or biographical factors are those factors that are unique to each teacher, and include the influence of age, gender, marital status, years of teaching experience, number of children, ethnic group, social support and personality characteristics. Organisational or work-related factors are features that are unique to the school system in which each teacher works, and include organisational climate, school climate, school performance, work demands, career development, job overload, job control, role-based stress (role ambiguity and role conflict), interpersonal relationships, pay and benefits, job security and home-work interface. Transactional or

environmental factors are the result of the intersection of personal and work-related factors, and include teachers' judgements of learner misbehaviour, school violence, perceptions of organisational leadership style, norms of learner-teacher interactions, teacher self-esteem and self-efficacy, internal rewards and job satisfaction. Although it is important to consider each set of factors, research shows that adverse organisational and work-related factors have greater influence on the aetiology of burnout than individual and personal factors (Chang, 2009). Nevertheless, the individual and personal factors leading to teacher burnout will be considered next before proceeding to discuss the organisational and work-related factors.

2.11.1 Individual or biographic factors leading to burnout

In terms of individual or biographic factors, a review of the literature on the factors influencing teacher burnout are discussed by considering age, gender, marital status, self-esteem and self-efficacy, and personality characteristics.

2.11.1.1 Age and burnout

Research reveals that significant differences exist between age groups with regards to their reaction to stressors (Schulze & Steyn, 2007). Studies have concluded that younger teachers tend to experience higher emotional exhaustion and fatigue than older teachers. An experience of a mid-life crisis can increase an individual's sensitivity to emotional exhaustion (Kamper & Steyn, 2006). Younger teachers between twenty and thirty years old are more prone to burnout, particularly the emotional exhaustion component, than teachers between the ages of thirty and forty. This supports Lackritz (2004:725) who maintains that younger teachers may experience additional pressures due to the early stages of career-building. Barkhuizen and Rothman (2008) found that younger teachers are more prone to burnout as a result of work politics, work conditions and job significance than older teachers. In addition, Watts and Robertson (2010) opine that younger teachers struggle to cope with emotional exhaustion and therefore experience higher psychological and interpersonal strain than older teachers because older, more experienced staff members have developed more efficient coping and protective strategies. A study among 81 disabled Cape Town teachers revealed

that younger disabled teachers experienced unfavourable working conditions and job overload which was the main predictor of their burnout (Emsley et al., 2009).

However, findings regarding age as a predictor of teacher burnout are not consistent across the literature with some studies showing no evidence of age as a predictor of burnout. In this regard, Monareng (2006) found no evidence of age predicting burnout. Furthermore, conflicting results have been reported for the relationship between age and level of depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. In this regard, Maslach and Leiter (1999) conclude that younger teachers are more dehumanising and experienced lower levels of personal accomplishment when compared to their older colleagues. Another study revealed that increased age was related to increased work demands (Kamper & Steyn, 2006), which increased the likelihood of their experience of burnout. In contrast, Barkhuizen and Rothman (2008) believe that experience of burnout usually declines with chronological age.

Similarly, in a study of teachers from Hong Kong, results show that teachers at the age of 30 or younger are more burnt out than those at the age of more than 31, and teachers at the age of 31 to 41 also show more burnout syndrome than those at the age of more than 41.

2.11.1.2 Gender and burnout

Though studies reveal mixed results, relationships have been found between gender and level of teacher burnout (Frone, 2003; Kamper & Steyn, 2006; Purvanova & Muros, 2010; Sari, 2004). Gender and gender roles have been identified as predictor variables in a number of empirical studies (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Though there have not yet been any research studies which investigate the relationship between gender and burnout among African teachers in general and South African teachers in particular, studies indicate that female teachers are more likely to experience burnout in the form of emotional exhaustion, whereas burnout in males tends to be manifested in the form of depersonalisation (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Female teachers experience higher levels of burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion (Antoniou, Polychroni & Valachakis, 2006) and lack of personal achievement, but less depersonalisation than male teachers (Lau, Yuen & Chan, 2005). Moreover, Yavuz

(2009) found that male teachers experience higher depersonalisation. This supports findings by Sari (2004) in an empirical study in which a combination of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI: Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS: Hackman and Oldham, 1974) were used to measure job satisfaction and burnout among secondary school teachers in Turkey. Sari (2004) found that the female teachers experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion and the male teachers' higher levels of depersonalisation and inefficacy.

The gender differences can be explained by social theory, which refers to women's sensitivity and empathic abilities as a result of which women's self is a self in relation with others (Pines & Ronen, 2011). Furthermore, the gender difference and mixed result might be due to females being prescribed as having nurturing and caring roles (Maslach & Jackson, 1985). Consequently, it is more likely that women would respond to others in a sensitive and caring way, and thus score lower on depersonalisation when compared to their male colleagues. Furthermore, in a meta-analysis burnout study of 183 American and European Union's male and female employees, Purvanova and Muros (2010) state that women in the USA and various countries in the European Union reported higher emotional exhaustion than men because they juggle multiple roles at work and at home which deplete their emotional strength. It was also discovered that the female emotional exhaustion link was stronger in a country like the USA where labour policies are conservative, and weaker in countries like Australia and Canada as well as countries of the European Union where labour policies are more progressive (Purvanova & Muros, 2010). This finding supports Schulze and Steyn (2007) who affirmed that the roles of females as teachers, parents and house-keepers increase their susceptibility to emotional exhaustion. Women who are expected to meet domestic commitments and conflicting work and family demands may experience added fatigue and emotional exhaustion (Kamper & Steyn 2006).

Female teachers have also been found to be more susceptible to burnout in general, and also tend to experience significantly higher levels of burnout than their male counterparts (Kamper & Steyn, 2006). This finding might be attributed to increased levels of work-life conflict in women (Frone, 2003). Cope (2003) maintained that, although males are four times as likely to die of heart disease, five times more likely to die of alcohol-associated disease and have a life expectancy of eight years less

than females, studies indicate that more females tend to have health related behaviours, such as visits to doctors and psychologists. In this regard, some studies find no significant differences in teacher burnout in terms of gender (Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins-Henkelman & Moyle, 2006; Monareng, 2006). In addition, Zhao and Bi (2003) found no difference in the three burnout syndromes between women and men teachers in secondary education.

2.11.1.3 Marital status and burnout

Marital status has been hypothesised as a factor contributing to the level of burnout in teachers (Kamper & Steyn, 2003). Research shows that single teachers tend to be more prone to burnout than married teachers (Bauer, Stamm, Virnich, Wissing, Muller, Wirsching & Schaarschmidt, 2006). These researchers, in a burnout study of 408 secondary school teachers in Germany, found that teachers who were in a relationship or married showed a significantly lower rate of burnout than those who were single or divorced. However, role conflict is a significant predictor of burnout in women and thus women with occupational and familial roles are more likely to suffer from burnout than those who are unmarried and do not have children (Kamper & Steyn, 2003). Many married women with young children enter the labour market with an unfair share of household duties, which could contribute to their experience of burnout. Their partners may have egalitarian attitudes towards work and family responsibilities, but the division of labour at home is still considered unequal (Kamper & Steyn, 2003).

2.11.1.4 Self-esteem and self-efficacy

A major personal attribute that can act as a potential burnout predictor variable is teacher self-esteem and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to exercise control over situations deemed as challenging, and personal functioning within those situations. Teacher self-efficacy refers to a teacher's belief that he or she can reach even the most difficult learners to help them learn (Woolfolk, 2014:370). Self-efficacy is used to describe a teacher's sense of being able to deal effectively with a particular task (Woolfolk, 2014:366), and how a teacher feels about the extent of his or her ability to succeed in teaching to learn (Ware and Kitsantas, 2007).

Studies have shown that teachers with low levels of self-efficacy are emotionally weak and exhibit poor organisational skills and low ego strength (Dorman, 2003). Teachers who doubt their abilities or do not believe in themselves will struggle with burnout (Maslach, 1982). The result is that teachers who report higher levels of stress have low perceptions of self-efficacy (Betoret, 2006), and in turn have higher rates of burnout. Research further shows that teacher with high self-efficacy have more confidence in their job-related abilities and personal resources, while teachers with low self-efficacy tend to feel ineffective at work (Nelson & Quick, 2005). Hence, those with high self-efficacy are argued to deal with stress more effectively, believing in their ability to cope (Nelson & Quick, 2005). As a teacher believes less in his or her abilities in the classroom, emotional exhaustion is heightened, leading to feelings of depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Schwarzer and Schmitz (2004) emphasise that not only is self-efficacy a predictor of teacher burnout over a long period of time, but it also strongly correlates with the depersonalisation component of burnout. Exposure to chronic occupational stressors with a low sense of efficacy to manage job demands and to enlist social support in times of difficulty increases vulnerability to burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2006).

Self-esteem, on the other hand, refers to the way individuals perceive themselves (Kamper & Steyn, 2006). Teacher self-esteem is used to explain a teacher's general feeling of self-worth (Nelson & Quick, 2006:87). Research reveals that individuals with high self-esteem are less prone to environmental events than individuals with low self-esteem (Kamper & Steyn, 2006). In a study of teachers' self-esteem, research shows that teachers with low self-esteem are more susceptible to burnout than teachers with high self-esteem (Paulse, 2005). While self-esteem is concerned with judgment of self-worth, self-efficacy is concerned with judgment of personal competence (Woolfolk, 2014:367). In this regard, there is no direct relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy. Therefore, it is possible to feel highly efficacious in one area and still not have a high level of self-esteem, or vice versa (Valentine, DuBois & Cooper, 2004).

2.11.1.5 Personality characteristics

Personality factors feature prominently in an individual's experience of burnout. Personality characteristics can include anxiety, negative attitudes and tolerance of individuals (Kamper & Steyn, 2006). Personality factors that have been found to predict burnout include the following:

- *Type A personality*: - Personality type is defined as the dominant and conscious predisposition to either act or react in a characteristic manner when observing one's outer world and assigning meaning to each experience (Coetzee, 2005; Myers et al., 2003). Two distinct personality types exist, namely, type A and type B personalities. The differences between these two personalities will be delineated in order to understand why type A personalities are more prone to burnout. Type A behaviour or coronary-prone behaviour is a complex personality that is characterised by attitudes such as competitiveness, time urgency, social status insecurity, an excessive need for control, a quest for achievement, low self-esteem and high expectation of self, and a preoccupation with time and deadlines. In addition, people with type A personality often get aggressive, hostile, ambitious, impatient, and irritable if people interfere with their work. (Maslach et al., 2001). Type A personalities are hard driving competitive people who have a strong drive to achieve more in less time (Kemper & Steyn, 2006:125), and are more likely to experience burnout. Type-A personalities are more at risk of developing health disorders and illnesses that are related to burnout, since they struggle to deal with their work demands (Nelson & Quick, 2006). Type A personalities, for example, are not happy unless they are busy, they are performance oriented, concerned with schedules, are compulsive, and would consider themselves to be perfectionists. In contrast, individuals with type B personalities are relatively free of type A behaviour and are less prone to coronary illnesses. Type B personalities take things in their stride, tend to be more relaxed and are less concerned with schedules. Thus, type A personalities are found to be more prone to burnout than type B personalities, since individual factors can influence how burnout is experienced in the workplace (Nelson & Quick, 2006).

- *Feeling types rather than thinking types*: - Individuals who are “feeling types” instead of “thinking types” represent personality characteristics that have been found to predict burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Feeling types tend to be subjective, make decisions based on their principles and values, dislike conflict and are gentle and easily hurt. They tend to be sympathetic and friendly. They tend to hide their emotions which can create feelings of emotional exhaustion and make them more susceptible to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). In contrast, thinking types tend to be objective, make decisions based on facts, and are rational and impersonal. Seeking personal counselling or social support in times of stress is not a natural way of solving problems for thinking types who focus on logically assessing the facts of their decisions.
- *Personality traits*: - Maslach et al. (2001) suggest that the emotion-work components such as being required to be emotionally empathic and/or to show or suppress emotions on the job, predict teacher burnout. Personality traits or emotional components such as cautiousness, conscientiousness, a tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others, compassion, cooperativeness, and neuroticism which include the traits of anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, and vulnerability have been found to predict burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Zellars, Hochwarter, Perrewe, Hoffman & Ford, 2004). In addition, neurotic individuals are emotionally unstable and prone to psychological distress (Maslach et al., 2001).
- *Social support*: - Studies reveal that people who lack support from others are more prone to physical and psychological symptoms of burnout than those with support (Kamper & Steyn, 2006). Teachers who lack social support from colleagues are more likely to experience feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation whereas a lack of support from school principals is a consistent predictor of depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment (Mede, 2009). In other words, a lack of school principal support may lead to teacher burnout because it strongly promotes the experience of job dissatisfaction (Kamper & Steyn, 2006; Schulze & Steyn, 2007). Social support refers to the assistance provided by the social network (Zhang & Zhu, 2007:490). Kamper and Steyn (2006:125) add that social

support, including administrative and collegial support, refers to help from other people. Support can be in the form of emotional (love and care), instrumental (material assistance) and informational support (facts and advice).

- Additional factors such as ethnic group, type of community taught in, grade taught, years of teaching experience, level of education and unrealistic high expectations as a result of lack of exposure to the job, have also been hypothesised as contributing to the level of burnout in teachers (Badenhorst et al., 2008; Kamper & Steyn, 2003, 2006; Polychroni & Antoniou, 2006).

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, Freudenberger (1974:161) adds that the dedicated and the committed were the ones most prone to suffering burnout because they work too much, too long, and too intensely. This supports Zhang and Zhu (2007) whose research study indicated that Chinese teachers, due to their hardworking character, suffered from stress and burnout. However, Chang (2009) warns that the results of studies on individual factors leading to burnout should be treated with caution as personalities are not fixed variables and people may respond differently to stressors.

2.11.2 Organisational factors leading to burnout

Organisational factors leading to burnout in the teaching profession relate to organisational and school climate, work demands, job overload, role ambiguity and role conflict, low salaries, and poor interpersonal relationships. These factors will be discussed next.

2.11.2.1 Organisational climate

An organisational climate refers to a set of measurable properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by people who live and work in this environment, and is assumed to influence their motivational behaviour (Khoza, 2004:27). It determines and influences the behaviour of people within the organisation. Various dimensions of organisational climate that have been identified in previous research include autonomy, work pressure, support, trust, recognition and innovation

(Khoza, 2004). When these dimensions of organisational climate do not function positively, they lead to higher levels of stress, and thus predict burnout (Griva & Joekes, 2003; Khoza, 2004; Khoza & Milner, 2008). In this regard, a study on the effect of organisational climate on teachers' levels of burnout found that secondary school teachers in South Africa consider inadequate autonomy, inadequate recognition as well as limited opportunities for professional development to be most prominent in South African schools (Khoza, 2004).

2.11.2.2 School climate

School climate refers to a set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences individuals' behaviour (Lui, Rovai & Wighting, 2005). It describes the observable effects of all aspects of the school, such as the nature of the work and the people, all of which have an effect on the attitude, motivation and achievement of the people who work in the school. Various dimensions of school climate that have been identified include environmental press, which describes the relationship between the school and the community; collegial leadership, which depicts the openness of the principal's leadership behaviour; teacher professionalism, which describes openness of the relationships between teachers; and academic press, which addresses the relationship between the school, the learners and the achievement motivation within the school (Khoza & Milner, 2008). In research done internationally and in South Africa, it has been found that school climate is an important factor that influences teacher attributes and school performance (Khoza & Milner, 2008; Khosa, 2004), and is thus a predictor of teacher burnout (Griva & Joekes, 2003).

2.11.2.3 Work demands

Work demands refer to tasks that have to be performed by an employee. Classroom teaching has been characterised as an occupation where many demands are present (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:220). Teachers experience several major types of job demands that can be stressful, such as decision-making responsibilities, excessive complexity, repetitiveness, simplicity, boredom and lack of personal safety, excessive time urgency, employer's management style, and interpersonal relationships (Blonna,

2005). Thus, classroom teaching poses many demands, and requires an extensive degree of emotional work and understanding which can lead to feelings of emotional exhaustion (Sutton, 2007). Heavy workloads and too little time for teachers to achieve the standard of teaching are well-researched causes of teacher burnout (Kamper & Steyn, 2006; Kinman & Jones, 2003:27; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

2.11.2.4 Job overload

Quantitative job overload occurs when an employee is given too much work to do, while qualitative job overload occurs when the job is too difficult for the person to do (Crafford, Moerdyk, Nel, O'Neil & Southey, 2006). Increasingly, teachers worldwide have been expected to take on additional responsibilities besides that of teaching. Research on job overload performed in various countries illustrates that teachers have become overloaded by external tasks (Cottrell, Graham & Timms, 2007).

Teachers may need to provide bus monitoring, lunch supervision, sports coaching, and other extra-curricular activities, which often result in a need to work at home, in the evenings and over weekends. An accumulation of such duties adds more stress to the job and leaves teachers exhausted and demoralised, thus causing psychological changes and contributing to subsequent burnout (Bachkirova, 2005:344; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005).

2.11.2.5 Role ambiguity and role conflict

Role ambiguity and role conflict have been found to correlate with teacher burnout (Chang, 2009; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996). The impact of changes in the workplace can affect the nature of job roles, causing role ambiguity or role conflict or added demands (Kamper & Steyn, 2006:122; Paulse, 2005). Whereas role conflict refers to the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of inconsistent expected role behaviours (Paulse, 2005), role ambiguity entails lack of clear, consistent information regarding the rights, duties and responsibilities of the job and how these rights or responsibilities can best be performed (Berndt & Oosthuizen, 2008:94; Nelson & Quick, 2006:219). Role ambiguity also refers to the confusion a person experiences regarding the expectations of others (Berndt & Oosthuizen, 2008:94).

Role conflict occurs when an employee experiences incompatible demands or incompatible goals surrounding tasks connected with their job which can induce negative emotional reactions due to their perceived inability (Paulse, 2005:36).

Consequently, teachers who perform tasks that are not related to their work role are likely to experience burnout (Paulse, 2005). Yong and Yue (2007) state that the conflict between the teachers' expectations and reality is the main cause of teacher burnout. In addition, studies show that role conflict and role ambiguity contribute to teacher burnout (Chang, 2009; Cooper & Dewe, 2004). This supports Maslach and Leiter (1997:9) who state that the greater the mismatch between individuals and their jobs, the greater the likelihood of burnout. Maslach and Leiter (1997:9) identified six areas where a mismatch between individuals and their jobs may occur:

- work overload with little opportunity for rest and recovery.
- breakdown of community in the form of workplace conflicts, isolation, lack of shared praise, happiness and humour.
- lack of control with little opportunity to make decisions, improve one's situation or innovate.
- lack of recognition and insufficient rewards in the form of money and benefits.
- unfairness, inequalities and bias, including a lack of mutual respect.
- discrepancies between an organisation's public persona and the reality of the workplace.

2.11.2.6 Low salaries

Relationships have been found between remunerations and level of teacher burnout (Johnson, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). In a longitudinal study of fifty new teachers consisting of first-career and mid-career entrants in the USA, it was reported that at least half of the teachers worried that they could not remain in the profession because of their low salaries (Johnson, 2004). Furthermore, a study conducted on the origins of burnout among fifty-nine secondary school teachers in three public schools in Gauteng Province, South Africa, it was found

that poor remuneration is a known stressor that predicts teacher burnout (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009:11-12).

2.11.2.7 Poor interpersonal relationship

Paulse (2005) maintains that negative interpersonal relations with others is a predictor of employee burnout. The learner-teacher relationship is central in enhancing teacher satisfaction and when that relationship breaks down emotional exhaustion and a sense of futility and reduced personal accomplishment becomes prevalent in teachers' working lives (Karavas, 2010:71). Teaching offers many opportunities to experience positive relationships with learners and colleagues. However, due to the complexity of teacher-learner and collegial relationships, teaching also leads to a multitude of opportunities to feel worried, frustrated, guilty, angry, powerless, vulnerable and disappointed (Kinman & Jones, 2003:23). Intrator and Kunzman (2006) state that new teachers experience a dramatic range of intense emotions caused by fear of not being liked or respected, an awareness of being judged by others, fear of making mistakes in the classroom, fear of not founding relationships with colleagues and learners, the anxiety of not being familiar with the subject matter and the discomfort that comes from having to make quick decisions in the classroom.

Other organisational factors that can lead to burnout include the following:

- Lack of social support from colleagues and school managers (Maslach & Leiter, 2006).
- Quality of school facilities and lack of teaching resources (Buckley, Schneider & Yi, 2004).
- lack of job satisfaction (Moomaw & Pearson, 2005).
- Insufficient teacher preparation or training (Olivier & Venter, 2003; Kamper & Steyn, 2006).
- Little or lack of control or autonomy over work environment (Brown & Harvey, 2006).
- Physical variables such as overcrowded classrooms and unpleasant working conditions (Carson, 2006).

2.11.3 Transactional factors leading to burnout

A review of the literature on burnout reveals that learner misbehaviour and school violence are transactional factors that lead to teacher burnout.

2.11.3.1 Learner misbehaviour

Discipline is a serious issue for all schools and negatively affects teachers (Younghusband, 2005). Studies on burnout reveal that disruptive learner behaviour is the main factor that contributes to teacher burnout (Chang, 2009; Geving, 2007; Kokkinos, 2007). South African studies reveal that poor learner discipline is a main predictor of teacher burnout (Olivier & Venter, 2003). In this regard, Haberman (2005) maintains that a review of the studies on teacher stress in South Africa indicates beyond doubt that classroom management and lack of learner discipline are the most pervasive factors responsible for teacher burnout. Oosthuizen and Van der Bijl (2007) note that South African teachers perceive learners as unruly, rude and ill mannered, and stress that no adequate measures are in place to enforce discipline. This makes teachers feel disempowered, frustrated and even abused. Chang (2009) highlights the link between challenging classroom situations and teachers' emotional states, and argues that teachers form habitual patterns in their judgement of learner behaviour, and this coupled with other challenging teaching tasks may contribute to teachers' repeated experience of unpleasant emotions associated with teaching which may lead to burnout. In a burnout study conducted among forty-one teachers working with learners in their teens and twenties at a regional training centre in the Netherlands, and in which the Maslach Burnout Inventory was used as the main survey instrument, results shows that teachers' ability to cope with disruptive classroom behaviour is significantly related to each dimension of burnout (Evers et al., 2004).

The management of discipline in schools is central to effective teaching and learning. However, the use of corporal punishment is against the law (Department of Education, 2000). Since the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995 in South Africa, teachers are constrained by law to administer corporal punishment in schools. In addition, the promulgation in section 10 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 prohibits the administration of corporal punishment. Due to the

banning of all forms of corporal punishment, many teachers in South African schools struggle to implement classroom discipline. This banning has left a gap which cannot be filled (Naong, 2007:283). Naong (2007:283) added that the abolition of corporal punishment has led to all kinds of disciplinary problems in South African schools. To this end, the lack of replacing corporal punishment with effective, constructive disciplinary measures causes disorder and thus contributing to teacher stress and burnout. Pickering (2008) points out that classroom discipline and managing disruptive students demand time and energy from teachers and are linked to their burnout. Younghusband (2003) agrees that teachers require stronger measures to deal with disruptive learners, which predict their burnout.

2.11.3.2 School violence

Violence in schools is a phenomenon occurring worldwide, especially in developing countries such as South Africa, where school children are vulnerable, due to challenges such as racism and poverty (Themane & Osher, 2014). In recent years, many incidents of violence have been reported in South African schools. Incidents of crime and violence at schools worldwide include teacher attacks leading to deaths, death threats from learners, disruption of classrooms, shootings, school break-ins and drug abuse (Becker & Reckson, 2005; Ewen & Steffgen, 2007). With particular reference to South African schools, incidents of crime and violence include initiation, gangsterism, robberies, rape, sexual harassment, intimidation, bullying, stabling, theft of property and vandalism, racially motivated violence and learner protests that turn violent (SACE, 2011). A survey of the South African Human Rights Commission in 2007 found that drugs and gangs are a major concern for 66% of the schools located in high crime areas such as Cape Town's Cape Flats and Johannesburg's Westbury and Eldorado Park and assaults are of a concern for 10% of these schools (The Democratic Alliance, 2007). This supports Becker and Reckson's (2005) findings that between 40% and 60% of serious violent crimes in the Western Cape can be attributed to gang activity.

2.12 THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER STRESS AND BURNOUT

Teacher stress and burnout is a costly economic issue with several negative effects on all levels of schools as workplaces (Kelly & Colquhoun, 2005). Negative effects of stress and burnout of teachers not only have an impact on the individual, but also on the organisation as a whole (Yong & Yue, 2007). Everyone at the school site is affected by the burnout of teachers, namely the school managers, parents, support staff, other teachers, and especially the learners (Yong & Yue, 2007). Considering the fact that an effective teacher is the single most important school-related factor responsible for learning (Schacter & Thum, 2004:413), the effects of stress and burnout on education are critical and extremely damaging for teachers, learners, and the quality of education in general (Hasting & Bham, 2003).

Studies indicate that stress and burnout are becoming endemic, affecting both the physical and mental health of teachers (Olivier & Venter, 2003). Olivier and Venter (2003) add that long-term stress and anxiety inevitably deplete teachers' enthusiasm, lower their physical fitness, affect their mental health, and result in work burnout. To comprehend the negative effects of teacher stress and burnout, Mathias (2003) as cited in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2012:216-217) states that stress contributes to disease and death through immune dysfunction. In a stress-related instance, teachers exhibit emotions such as an unforgiving mind-set, resentment, retaliation, anger, hatred, violence, guilt, shame, sorrow, regret, loneliness, fear, grief, self-hatred, rejection, fear of rejection and jealousy (Mathias, 2003:53).

Job performance has been the most widely studied effect of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). In summing up the debilitating effects of stress and burnout on teacher effectiveness, research indicates that, when teachers experience stress conditions, their work suffers to the point that they cannot think as clearly as they are supposed to think; they cannot take in information as fully as they are supposed to take it in; cannot understand the information as deeply as they are supposed to understand it; and cannot respond adaptively as they are supposed to respond (Goleman, 2008:187-188). In a series of preliminary research on burnout, Maslach and colleagues (Jackson & Maslach, 1980; Pines & Maslach, 1980), as well as Freudenberger (1974) all indicate that teacher stress and burnout can result in a decline in quality of care or

service that is provided. This supports Yong and Yue (2007) who maintain that one of the damaging effects of burnout on the learners is the lack of individual emotional support the teacher is expected to give learners.

With regards to the rate of change in the working environment, teachers in South Africa are experiencing stress-related problems in response to the demands made on teachers and education managers due to radical curriculum changes and transformation in the education system that has left teachers confused over their role in the schools, resulting in a negative effect on teachers' attitudes and morale (Griva & Joekes, 2003; Yong & Yue, 2007:80). Stress leads teachers to significantly express the typical characteristics of burnout such as problems in personal achievement, emotional exhaustion, tendency to depersonalise others, and lowered self-esteem (Austin et al., 2005:64; Jordaan et al., 2007), which in turn affect their effectiveness and performance. Furthermore, teacher turnover, absenteeism, and the intention to leave the teaching job coupled with an infectious quality that touches other teachers, especially with teachers' negativity and personal conflicts, have been found to impact teachers' efficiency and effectiveness, resulting in dissatisfaction and a lessening of commitment to the job (Maslach et al., 2001). These disorders make teachers more susceptible to developing apathy towards their employment. Teacher's inability to perform at a consistently high level, in turn affects learner performance.

According to Hasting and Bham (2003), decline in student learning, poor teaching, high rates of teacher absenteeism, high teacher turnover, and teachers' desire to leave the profession are resultant effects of teacher stress and burnout. This supports Maslach (2003) who also cites constant late coming, high absenteeism, poor job performance, intention to leave the job, job turnover, and a lack of interest and commitment as typical effects of teacher stress and burnout. With regards to absenteeism, a study conducted among 3895 industrial employees in Helsinki, Finland shows that absenteeism was higher for the high burnout groups because of mental and behavioural ailments that led to mental health problems such as depression and a decreased mental functioning (Toppinen-Tanner, Ojajrvi, Vaananen, Kalimo & Jappinen, 2005). These researchers therefore reported a direct correlation between levels of burnout and sick leave absences among industrial employees in Finland. Another study conducted in Cape Town comparing doctors and teachers revealed that

more teachers (79%) visited their doctors than doctors (15%) do (Oosthuizen & Van der Bijl, 2007). Teachers who lack coping mechanisms against stress and burnout tend to turn to alcohol and drugs to relieve stress (Olivier & Venter, 2003). Another study undertaken by Oosthuizen and Van der Bijl (2007) indicated that both doctors and teachers were equally likely to use alcohol to relieve their anxiety and depression.

Ransdell et al. (2004) agree with Hasting and Bham (2003) that teacher burnout can reduce teaching quality, which may affect the education that the learners receive because more days of teachers absenteeism from work may result in their inability to provide their learners with proper instruction. To this end, the quality of education that the learners receive when the teacher is absent may be less than adequate. In addition, Yong and Yue (2007) state that quality of education is compromised when teachers have reached the stage of burnout and are no longer able to devote themselves to the profession. Teachers' stress and burnout affect the schools' study climate, lower morale, prevent the attainment of educational objectives, and increase the probability of teachers leaving their post (Yong & Yue, 2007).

Burnout has been identified as an important determinant of teacher attrition (Martin, Sass & Schmit, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). With regards to teacher attrition, Yong and Yue (2007) maintain that there is a steady increase in teacher attrition due to emotional and physical effects of burnout, which results in a hampering of learners' process of proper learning. Xaba (2003:288) notes that teacher attrition disrupts schooling. This supports Bauer, Stamm, Virnich, Wissing, Muller, Wirsching and Schaarschmidt (2006) who point out that teacher with burnout symptoms show increasing rate of early retirement because of psychiatric and psychosomatic diagnosis. Studies in Europe, Asia and Canada have shown burnout relates to teachers' premature retirement (Bauer et al., 2006). Xaba (2003) blames an aging teacher workforce, low salaries and demands for even more complex teaching abilities as reasons for withdrawal from teaching. Mostert, Mostert, Nell and Rothmann (2008) found that limited resources cause failure and frustration and therefore may lead to withdrawal from work.

The vulnerable time wasted as a result of the increasing tendency of teachers leaving, either during training or within five years of their career, is an opportunity lost for the

health of the teaching profession (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2008:3). In the South African context, research reveals that 6000 teachers graduated in 2006 while 20000 left (Department of Education, 2007). Teacher attrition has always been a problem in the education systems around the world, because there have never been enough teachers to meet the demands of the ever increasing number of learners (Hannah, 2011:108). This assertion supports Jepson and Forrest (2006) who state that teaching is viewed as a highly stressful occupation, which, in turn, can affect the ability to recruit qualified individuals for teaching positions. Nieto (2003:18) states that current reforms that focus on accountability may be driving some of the teachers who are effective with the learners out of the profession.

One negative consequence of high turnover in teaching is its link to the teacher shortages that seem to annually plaque many schools (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). Many schools scramble each year to fill the positions left vacant by departing teachers (Utah Foundation, 2007). Teacher attrition also makes it difficult for schools to attract and develop effective teachers, only for learners to be taught by least experienced, least effective teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor & Wheeler, 2007; Hanushek et al., 2004). Learner achievement suffers when learners are continually faced with a parade of inexperience teachers (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood & Hamilton, 2004; Rivkin et al., 2005). The Utah Foundation (2007) notes that by contributing to teacher shortages and the number of inexperienced teachers in classrooms, teacher attrition negatively impacts teacher quality and limits learners' access to an effective, high quality education. Research on teacher attrition and retention shows that conditions in the work environment affect teachers' job satisfaction, and subsequent career decisions (Billings-Ley, 2003). A study by Oosthuizen and Van der Bijl (2007) in Cape Town schools revealed that a huge proportion of teachers intended to leave the profession, 35% males and 42% females, due to anxiety and depression which can be linked to workplace factors. However, burnout can lead not only to teachers leaving the profession, but can also lead to higher learner dropout rate (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008).

Teacher burnout affects the teacher workforce externally as well as internally. Externally, the harm to the teacher workforce is traceable and measurable through

teacher attrition and teacher shortages. Internally, for teachers who remain in the profession, fatigue may lead to ineffectiveness and burnout that inadvertently harms classrooms and the school (Oliver & Venter, 2003). This supports Maslach et al. (2001) who posit that in cases where teachers decide to remain in the job, the outcomes include low productivity or effectiveness that may, in turn, lead to reduced job satisfaction or commitment to the organisation.

2.13 REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER STRESS AND BURNOUT

Teachers' stress levels may affect their job performance which could in turn have a negative impact on the school system as a whole. Considering the critical effects of stress and burnout, reducing and managing stress in schools should be a priority (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:226), particularly in today's climate of greater accountability for student learning outcomes. Stress management refers to the process of harnessing the energy of healthy stress while simultaneously minimizing unhealthy outcomes (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008:153). Blonna (2005) simply describes stress management as the action taken to deal with an existing stressor. Because of the need for school and teacher effectiveness, it is important that both management and individual attention is given to stress and burnout reduction in the schools (Van der Merwe, 2013:88). As such, stress reduction and management should be part of every teacher's everyday routine as well as every school's operational planning (Van der Merwe, 2013:88).

Positive management of teacher stress and burnout may reduce the physiological effects of stress and burnout and may improve school and teacher effectiveness (Nagel & Brown, 2003). This supports Kelly and Colquhoun (2005), who state that the health and well-being of teachers is related to the effectiveness and quality of education in general. However, when designing and implementing intervention for burnout, Kikkinos (2007) warns that the different variables in burnout, namely, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, as well as the personal traits of the individual experiencing the burnout must be taken into consideration. Maslach and Jackson (1981) agree with Kikkinos (2007) that the focus of support and coping strategies should be on changing the job situation rather than

the more traditional focus of trying to change the person by making it the individual's responsibility to lower their stress levels. Maslach et al. (2001) also state that because burnout can manifest itself as any one or more of its components (i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment), intervention needs to address the specific component that is presenting itself, either as prevention or as treatment, and that looking at burnout as a public health issue instead of as a medical issue would be beneficial. Similarly, Slocum and Hellriegel (2007:449) maintain that there are four primary factors that influence an individual's experience of stress, namely, the person's perception of the situation; the person's past experiences; the presence or absence of social support; and individual differences (such as motivation, attitudes, personality and abilities) in reacting to stress.

Approaches to stress and burnout management and intervention may operate at different levels, targeting either the intensity of stress at work, perceptions or appraisals of stressful situations, or ways of coping with stress (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Olivier and Venter (2003) maintain that the management of schools and the various education departments in South Africa must acknowledge that the emotional and physical health of teachers is vital for effective job functioning and thus provision should be made for balance in their work programmes and for support in coping with stress. It is also suggested that stress management should form part of the curriculum for potential teachers (Olivier & Venter, 2003). Creating a more engaging workplace which provides teachers with a realistic workload, a degree of control over their work, acceptable working conditions, fair treatment, the resources to do their jobs, a strong social support network and market-related salaries are pro-active strategies representing a more constructively viable approach to coping with burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Reducing stress and burnout is mostly about changing one's attitudes and views about the stressful situation and becoming more self-aware of one's symptoms of stress and burnout (Sorenson, 2007). Individual and organisational interventions and techniques for reducing and managing stress and burnout in teachers, especially for teachers at secondary school levels, relate to coping strategies and support structures.

2.13.1 Coping strategies

High levels of teacher stress and burnout are associated with psychological distress, which may be mediated by means of different coping strategies and personality traits (Austin et al., 2005; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Coping strategies refer to behaviours occurring after the appearance of the stressor or in response to chronic stressors. Blonna (2005) defines coping strategies as any method or technique used to reduce or cope with stress. Just as the stress experience can vary, so can the type of coping strategy that a person uses. There are several types of coping mechanisms an individual can use to deal with stress. Teachers' coping strategies are classified as direct-action strategies and palliative strategies (Austin et al., 2005; Kyriacou, 2001). Direct-action techniques refer to the things a teacher can do to eliminate the source of stress which may involve, for example, managing or organizing oneself more effectively, or developing new knowledge, skills and working practices. Palliative techniques are aimed at lessening the feeling of stress that occurs and may be mental (e.g. attempting to change one's appraisal of the stressful situation) or physical, which may involve, for example, activities that help the teacher to retain or regain a sense of being relaxed by relieving any built-up tension and anxiety (Kyriacou, 2001:30). Researchers allude that palliative coping is generally maladaptive because it includes strategies such as failure avoidance and self-handicapping in which the individual is attempting to avoid the negative outcomes through excessive drinking, smoking, and avoidance behaviour (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Parker & Martin, 2009).

With regards to positive coping strategies that a teacher can use to deal with stress, Austin et al. (2005) recommend physical strategies such as relaxation, aerobic exercise, visualisation, cognitive behaviour skills, assertiveness, lifestyle changes, and social support programs. Van der Merwe (2013:91) agrees with Austin et al. (2005), stating that the fostering of a wholesome discipline of constructive routines to assist with the reduction and management of stress and burnout includes physical exercise, healthy eating habits, healthy interpersonal relationships, effective time management, serene introspection, and being alert to the aesthetics of nature. Physical exercise combats feelings of depression, anxiety, sadness, and dejection (Jaffe-Gill & Larson, 2007).

In addition, Coombe (2008) advises stressed teachers to establish positive working relationships with their learners, colleagues and managers; to try and focus on teaching rather than becoming overwhelmed by paperwork; and to create a balance between work and leisure time. Maintaining and nurturing healthy connections with family, friends, and social groups is also important (Cummins, Masey & Jones, 2007:43). As a positive relationship exists between hardiness and physical and mental health, hardiness reduces the negative outcomes of stress (Oosthuizen, 2005). Hardiness refers to a personality resistant to distress, and is characterised by commitment, control and challenge (Nelson & Quick, 2006:227). It involves the degree to which an individual has a sense and ability to control the pace of events (Nelson & Quick, 2006:227).

Professional development refers to a variety of activities that can foster career growth and refinement of the skills of the practitioner. Professional development includes activities such as in-service training in the form of weekly staff meetings, further education, reading books and journal articles to stay up-to-date with the field, joining professional associations, attending professional conferences, and participating in regular workshops and seminars. Though professional development is a long-term strategy which requires hard work and commitment, it constitutes a viable stress coping strategy because it builds a critical stance towards professional work, and encourages professional interactions with colleagues which leads to personal growth, reflective attitudes, and a new self-understanding (Khan, 2008). Professional development offers more opportunity for teachers to strengthen their teaching skills and can result in stronger job satisfaction, thereby increasing retention in the profession (Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004). Through mentoring, attending professional conferences, publishing and research, teachers become more involved in the teaching career (Coombe, 2008). Similarly, Klassen, Perry and Frenzel (2012) identify a sense of self-efficacy and connectedness with learners and colleagues as important factors that reduce emotional exhaustion and psychological distress, and foster teaching engagement. To this end, making use of opportunities for professional development enhances self-efficacy. This supports Olivier and Venter (2003) who advocate teachers' taking responsibility for their own empowerment.

Howard and Johnson (2004) conducted a qualitative study of teachers who did not burn-out in order to determine the strategies they used as protective factors. In this research, the following findings were reported as major protective factors:

- All the teachers had a sense of agency. These teachers had a strong moral purpose in their profession, and a strong belief in their own ability to control the situations they were in.
- All the teachers had a strong support system, including a competent and caring leadership team. They all had been coached and mentored by more experienced colleagues, and received social support from the family, friends, colleagues and school management.
- These teachers were competent in all areas of personal importance, and felt a sense of achievement.
- All the teachers were found to be resilient and creative.

In another study conducted by Austin et al (2005) to determine ways of coping with stress among 38 American and British secondary school teachers, activities which helped teachers to alleviate work stress included being active in a social club, spending time alone, exercising, listening to music and talking to friends. Furthermore, the research findings of Austin et al. (2005) showed that the five most popular ways of coping with stress were planning and active problem solving, exercising self-control, seeking social support, confronting the problem, and distancing oneself from the stressful situation.

Teachers need to be aware of passive coping strategies such as choosing to avoid the problems or issues causing the stress (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Austin et al. (2005) emphasise that the least popular way of coping with stress is escape-avoidance, which allows individual teachers to minimize exposure to the stressor and ultimately, withdraw from the stressful situation. Blonna (2005), however, recommends the use of ‘abolish’, ‘avoid’ or ‘alter’ as coping strategies in conjunction with other coping strategies in dealing with stress. By abolishing the stressor, one removes the stressor from one’s life. Changing the stressor or one’s exposure to the stressor is termed ‘altering’ (Blonna, 2005). Abolishing or altering the stressor may include

downscaling one's life by reducing material possessions as well as commitments to work, family, and friends (Blonna, 2005). By abolishing or altering the stressor, communicating effectively can help to prevent stress in interpersonal relationships (Blonna, 2005). The avoidance-coping strategy may help protect teachers from an intense emotional encounter by detaching themselves emotionally from the learners in an attempt to avoid the stress (Blonna, 2005). However, excessive emotional detachment from one's learners may lead the teacher to respond to their colleagues and other staff, as well as learners, in negative or unsympathetic ways (Maslach et al., 2001). In line with this warning, Austin et al. (2005) emphasise that using an escape-avoidance coping strategy has a negative effect on reducing stress because avoidance coping contributes to an increase in physical stress-related symptoms predicting more burnout in teachers (Griva & Joekes, 2003).

Teachers experiencing stress can also use cognitive and behavioural strategies of adaptation to deal with a given stressful event (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005:461). Personal therapy allows for self-reflection and insight, and ultimately improves teachers' resilience and sense of well-being (Cummins, Masey & Jones, 2007). Accurately labelling their emotional experiences, reflecting on their emotions and identifying ineffective patterns of judgement of classroom and school events alleviates stress (Chang, 2009). Olivier and Venter (2003) suggest keeping a daily teaching journal as a record of classroom experiences and as a means of reflecting on one's emotions. Teachers are also warned against attempting to neglect, suppress or hide their emotions, as this can lead to greater overall burnout (Chang, 2009). Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to reflect on and talk about their emotions to their colleagues and principals rather than suppress them (Liljestrom, Roulston & deMarrais, 2007). Cowie (2011:238-240) suggests that teachers should use professional networks, which include joining professional organizations, email discussion groups and researching joint academic projects, as a way of overcoming vulnerability and a lack of career structure.

2.13.2 Support structures

Social support is viewed as a resource which enables individual to deal with stressful circumstances. An effective social support network can reduce the impact of stressors,

and the incidence of burnout (Black, 2004). A teacher's social support network should cover three areas, namely, emotional support which includes the provision of caring and nurturing support, informational support which include physical and material assistance, and instructional support which includes the provision of facts and advice (Zhang & Zhu, 2007). Helgeson (2005:25) defines each of the components of social support as follows:

- Emotional support refers to having people available to listen, to care, to sympathise, to provide assurance, and to make one feel valued, loved and cared for.
- Informational support, sometimes referred to as tangible support, involves providing concrete assistance, such as helping with household chores, lending money or running errands.
- Instructional support refers to providing facts or guidance.

Though these three components of social support have been separately delineated, they would function in conjunction with each other in any given natural setting (Zhang & Zhu, 2007).

Some stressors can be reduced or prevented with the assistance of school managers (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). An effective support structure provides practical and emotional support for teachers who experience stress in the school as a workplace. In a school environment, intense involvement exists between the different stakeholders and, as such, healthy social relationships are important to counteract stress and to ensure optimal functioning (Yong & Yue, 2007:80). A resulting benefit of such relationships is the existence of social support. Creating a supportive working environment can help to reduce the stress levels of teachers (Bindhu & Sudheeshkumar, 2006). The more supportive and understanding school managers are with teachers, the less likely teachers will experience stress (Black, 2004). Pearson and Moomaw (2006) state that teachers should be valued and empowered as professionals and assume great autonomy. Providing support for teachers in a very collegial manner whereby their values, opinions and voices are respected and heard will relieve stress, eliminate emotional exhaustion, and prevent burnout from becoming

a factor (Black, 2004; Dipaola & Hoy, 2008). Dipaola & Hoy (2008) emphasise that the more genuine the support provided is, the more likely teachers will benefit in coping with stress. Teachers' perceptions of social support have a strong link with teacher burnout in the sense that positive social support provides opportunities for the re-appraisal of a current stressful situation and may provide new ideas for adaptive responses to work stress (Chang, 2009; Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins-Henkelman & Moyle, 2006).

At organisational level, general stress reduction and management programmes, such as in-house Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and counselling services, are effective in reducing subjective distress (anxiety) and some psycho-physiological indicators of stress such as hypertension and heart disease (Athanasiades, Winthrop & Gough, 2008). Psychological counselling for employees and Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) provides solutions to work-related and personal problems, which results in improvement in absenteeism, a significant increase in countering anxiety and depression, and a significant increase in self-esteem (Athanasiades et al., 2008). As main ways for managing health and well-being in an organisation and addressing work stress, the goals of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) are to focus on existing problems and to promote healthy living among employees as well as to assist employees in preventing health-related problems from occurring in the future (Kirk & Brown, 2003).

Crafford, Moerdyk, Nel, O'Niel, Schlechter and Southey (2006) provide a breakdown of the support services relating to an Employee Assistance Programme. These services include:

- A referral system, which is a way for employees to be referred to the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Marketing of the Employee Assistance Programme which involves the marketing of the service offered by the EAP to families and staff.
- Stress management programs which assist employees to manage their stress could include teaching them relaxation and meditation techniques.

- Health promotion which includes programmes that focus on the prevention of illness and distress.
- Consultation and training which assists supervisors and managers by presenting them with programmes that focus on solving problems at work.
- Outreach programmes which are designed for employees who are involved with transition in their lives. These programmes are applied when employees are promoted, join a new organisation, relocate within the same organisation or retire.
- Assessment, short-term counselling and referrals to health practitioners.

In addition, improving the organisational structure to make the workplace more efficient, providing upper-level management training for school managers to provide teachers with more support, and offering support groups have been suggested as techniques for reducing stress and burnout in teachers (Yong & Yue, 2007). Another important technique for reducing and managing teacher stress and burnout, which may result in teacher motivation and performance improvement, involves encouraging positive teacher-manager relationships as a supportive school climate (Mullock, 2009).

Providing opportunities for teachers' personal and professional achievement and success is another factor that can reduce teacher stress and burnout and make them stay in the profession. In this regard, Manuel (2003) advocates long-term pastoral and mentoring programs for new teachers. When teachers observe their colleagues managing different aspects of teaching, this may increase individual teachers' self-efficacy, particularly when teachers work in teams and have ample opportunity to observe each other (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007:621). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) mention a comprehensive induction programme, which includes basic induction, participation in an external network of teachers and being assigned a teacher's mentor. In addition and as already pointed out in section 13.1, regular in-service training and continuous professional development for updating and upgrading teachers' understanding of the teaching profession reduce teacher stress and burnout and encourage them to remain in the teaching profession (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008).

If professional development needs are met, emotional exhaustion and stress are less likely to be experienced (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006).

Including teachers in decision-making processes at school reduces their stress due to an increased sense of control, and a healthy school climate that foster collegiality and a team spirit amongst teachers. (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008; Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2012:231). In addition, involving teachers in decision-making and delegating power and responsibilities to them can greatly decrease stressors as this creates opportunities to establish themselves as productive team members who can take the burden off the school managers, thus increasing their self-efficacy and sense of belonging (Nagy, 2006). Other stress intervention techniques for teachers experiencing burnout include talk and music therapy (Cheek, Bradley, Parr & Lan, 2003) and poetry writing (Leggo, 2005). Making changes in the organisation can also assist with alleviating stress (Yong & Yue, 2007). Organisational and environmental changes that have been found to be effective in stress relief include support from school managers, especially with respect to discipline and learner attitudes, as well as relief from increasing workload and excessive paperwork (Maslach et al., 2001). Constructive and pro-active conflict management can reduce the sources of stress that exist in the workplace. In this regard, pro-active role conflict resolution is achieved by clarifying the task-role expectations communicated to teachers (Nelson & Quick, 2006). If organisations are further able to identify the individual teachers who are more prone to stress, then those teachers can be better supported to help work on developing effective strategies for coping with the pressures and demands of teaching (Jepson & Forrest, 2006).

2.14 SUMMARY

In view of the above literature review, one can rightly conclude that a combination of all the highlighted sources of stress can lead to an intolerable situation in which teachers decide that the stress experienced is not worth the low rewards. To this end, the chronic stress caused by numerous school-related stressors demands effective stress management in order to sustain acceptable levels of school performance and achieve positive, internationally recognised academic results. Though an individual's

personality traits influence the degree to which he or she seeks social support when confronted by a stressful event, seeking social support and engaging in successful coping strategies render a stressful situation less demanding, less threatening, and less harmful. It became clear that coping strategies, personality traits and the environment can interactively influence the degree to which stressful situations are being perceived to influence the teacher's emotional and cognitive well-being.

In addition, the management of schools, especially secondary schools, and the various education departments in South Africa, must acknowledge that the emotional and physical health of teachers is vital for effective job functioning, and thus provision should be made for balance in their work programs, and for support in coping with stress. Therefore, in view of the statement made by Cano-Garcia et al. (2005:930) that studies of teacher stress and burnout are a cause for concern, and therefore justified for continuous research, the findings of this research may prove to be useful for secondary school teachers and school managers in South Africa in understanding characteristics innate in individual teachers that enable them to deal with stress in the school environment more effectively; to experience fewer or less intense symptoms upon exposure to a stressor; to recover faster from exposure to stress; and to ultimately help schools in designing interventions aimed at helping teachers to manage stress and burnout, and reduce its harmful effects.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology and design adopted in this study in order to collect information on the phenomenon under study, namely teacher stress and burnout. In this regard, methodology is portrayed as a coherent group of methods that harmonizes one another, and that have the capability to fit, to deliver and to provide findings that will reflect the research questions and suit the research purpose (Creswell, 2003; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:36). Methodology is used to describe how we gain knowledge about the world or an articulated, theoretically informed approach to the production of data (Ellen, 1984:9). Methodology refers to ways of obtaining, systematizing and analysing data (Polit & Bech, 2004). It includes the design, setting, sample, and data collection and analysis techniques in a study (Burn & Grove, 2003:488).

In view of the above preambles, the nature of this research problem and the questions emanating from the research problem precipitate the methodology and the design used in this research study. This supports the assertion that an empirical study about applied social services requires choosing a research methodology and design that corresponds with the research question (Merriam, 2009).

This chapter on research methodology outlines the research aims and problems underpinning the empirical investigation on teacher stress and burnout. It provides a discussion of the research paradigm and the research approach used in order to explain the choice of research process for the study. It also describes the research sample and the data collection methods used for this research study. The chapter addresses the issues of validity and reliability, interpreted as trustworthiness and transferability with qualitative research, and concludes by outlining the ethical considerations during the course of the empirical investigation.

3.2 RESEARCH AIMS

In order to maintain consistency, the aims and objectives of this research study are repeated in this methodology chapter.

The aim of this research was to investigate and discover ways of alleviating and managing stress and burnout among secondary school teachers by exploring conditions within schools, and using stress and burnout-related theories, namely social cognitive theory, stereotype threat theory, role theory and self-determination theory, to explain the research findings.

This research study further aimed to address, by means of individual and focus group interviews and document analysis, the research questions. For consistency, the major and specific issues are captured in the following set of research questions, as earlier highlighted in section 1.4.

- What factors cause stress and burnout among secondary school teachers?
- What strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, are accessible to teachers who encounter stress and burnout?
- What coping strategies are employed by teachers to reduce and manage stress and burnout?
- How does stress and burnout impact the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools?
- What strategies on an organisational and individual level alleviate teacher stress?

The exploration of the above-mentioned research questions was intended to enable an assessment and understanding of the prospects for alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to explain the choice of research process followed in exploring ways of alleviating and managing stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, this section addresses the research paradigm and the research approach adopted in this study.

3.3.1 Research paradigm

While research methodology relates to a framework of theories and principles on which research methods and procedures are based, the term ‘paradigm’ is widely used to describe the ultimate framework within which a piece of research is located (Brand, 2009; Holloway, 2005:293). Research paradigm refers to models or frameworks that are derived from a worldview or belief system about the nature of knowledge and existence. Paradigms are shared by a scientific community and guide how a community of researchers acts with regard to inquiry (Ellen, 1984:9). Research paradigm indicates the nature of the research according to ontology, epistemology and methodology (Blanche & Durrheim, 2006; Brand, 2009). In other words, descriptions of paradigms invariably rely, to a greater or lesser extent, upon what might be referred to as their components, namely contrasting ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs (Brand, 2009).

Ontology concerns the philosophy or the question of the nature of reality and existence. It relates to assumptions which concern the very essence of the phenomena under investigation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Ellen, 1984:9). Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and the assumptions and beliefs that we have about the nature of knowledge, and how we can understand the world and communicate this knowledge to fellow human beings (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Ellen, 1984:9). In the epistemological assumption, the aim of the researcher is to try and lessen the distance between what is being researched and oneself (Creswell, 2003). Methodology relates to how we gain knowledge about the world or an articulated, theoretically informed approach to the production of data (Ellen, 1984:9). It refers to the application of ontological and epistemological beliefs to the carrying out of a piece of research (Crotty, 1998).

With reference to this theory on paradigms and ontological conceptions, this research study adopts the interpretivist paradigm which is concerned with understanding the world as it is, from subjective experiences of individuals, and which emphasises the need to put analysis in context (Reeves & Hedberg, 2003:32). Interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors, and that this applies equally to the researcher. Thus, there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science (Walsham, 1993:5). An interpretive perspective is based on the idea that the objective reality will never be captured. Rather, an in-depth understanding, the use of multiple validity as oppose to a single validity, and a commitment to dialogue are sought in any interpretive study (Denzin, 2010:271). Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

Therefore, the interpretivism's ontological stance is to assume that all meanings are contextual, and that reality is subjective and multiple as seen by the participants in the study (Brand, 2009; Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In this regard, the researcher used quotes and themes in words of secondary school teachers to provide evidence on different perspectives relating to the phenomenon under study. To achieve this, the research participants' voices, concerns and practices were articulated, appreciated, and made visible. Furthermore, the researcher achieved truth by seeking to understand the shared meaning and embedded meaning of both the participants and the researcher. To accomplish this, the researcher established a researcher-participant interaction in the natural setting, rather than in a controlled setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

The epistemological stance of the interpretivist paradigm assumes that we cannot study the world of human affairs in the way that the hard scientists pursue their investigations (Brand, 2009; Burrell & Mogan, 1979). It is also argued that the epistemological premise of interpretive researchers is that knowledge or access to reality, whether given or socially constructed, is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meaning, tools and documents (Myers, 1997; Walsham, 1993). For the interpretivist, the social process is

not captured in hypothetical deductions, covariance and degree of freedom. Instead, understanding the social process in interpretive research involves getting inside the specific world, within context, negating the understanding of reality as hard and unchanging (Brand, 2009; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).Therefore, acknowledging that the researcher's account of the reality of stress and burnout as a teacher may serve to enhance the description of stress and burnout as phenomenon of life, his role in this study is to be actively engaged with the specific research process. In this regard, the researcher takes an emic position to enable him build data, which is generated rather than collected.

Interpretivism's methodology is concerned with understanding, often on an individual level (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In this regard, reality and truth are negotiated through dialogue. The researcher relied heavily on naturalistic methods such as interviewing, observation and analysis of existing texts. The use of these methods ensured an adequate dialogue with the research participants in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality. In other words, findings emerged through dialogue in which conflicting interpretations are negotiated among the research participants. All interpretations were located in a particular context or situation and time and were open to re-interpretation and negotiation through conversation.

3.3.2 Research approach and research design

Research approach is the strategy, the plan, and the structure of conducting a research project. In order to understand the choice of a research approach that can result in drawing the most valid and credible conclusions from the answers provided to researcher questions, it is important to consider the various meanings and definitions that had been put forward by researchers. A research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:28). In other words, a research design is a general plan that describes how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, what methods of data collection are used, and how, when and where data is to be collected and analysed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:28; Parahoo, 2006). Burns and Grove (2009) define a research design as a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere

with the validity of the findings. It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. Research design can also be defined as the researcher's overall plan and strategy for answering the research question or testing the research hypothesis (Polit & Beck, 2012).

The purpose of a research design is to specify a plan for generating empirical evidence that will be used to answer the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:28). In other words, the role of the research design is to confirm that the evidence obtained allowed the researcher to respond to the initial research questions as unequivocally as possible. In this study, the research questions were used to determine the appropriate research design (Durrheim, 2006:36) in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the design of the study. In this regard, this research study required the adoption of the interpretivist paradigm matched with a qualitative research approach to address the various research questions, as this paradigm and approach was better suited to social inquiry (Pakinson & Drislane, 2011). Qualitative research design and phenomenology as the approach adopted within qualitative research is discussed in the next section.

3.3.3 Qualitative research

Most qualitative research studies emerge from an interpretivist research paradigm. Qualitative research refers to inductive, emic, subjective and process-oriented methods used to comprehend, interpret and describe a phenomenon or setting. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter, and attempts to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people accord to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3). This study used a general qualitative research process, which is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among categories (Burnard, 2004). In order to reach the overall purpose of this study, a qualitative descriptive research approach was used to identify, analyse and describe the nature of the phenomenon under investigation, namely teacher stress and burnout, and to explore ways of alleviating and managing stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.

A qualitative research approach is a systemic, subjective research approach used to describe meaning (Burns & Grove, 2003:356). To this end, Maxwell (2005:22) defines the term 'meaning' to include cognition, affect, intentions, and anything else that can be encompassed as the participant perspective. Chapelle and Duff (2003) agree with Burns and Grove (2003:356) stating that it is important for qualitative studies to explore, to a great extent, the details and meanings of experience rather than attempt to test a hypothesis. In a qualitative research study, emphasis on the meaning of the events or phenomena, or how they are perceived by the participants, is central. In other words, the researcher is interested not only in the physical events and behaviour taking place, but also in how the participants in the study make sense of these and how their understanding influences their behaviour (Maxwell, 2005:9). To this end, qualitative research is more associated with words, language and experiences rather than measurements, statistics and numerical figures, and, in general, the researcher is required to search and explore with a variety of methods until a deep understanding is achieved (McMilan & Schumacher, 2014:31).

With regard to how knowledge is generated, qualitative research is characterised as developmental and dynamic, and does not use formal structured instruments. The general qualitative research approach is about a process of data collected from participants and informants who have experience and people who are knowledgeable. It is a way of examining people's lived experiences to ascertain critical truth about reality (Carter & Little, 2007). In other words, the characteristics and significance of human experiences are identified through systemic collection and analysis of subjective narrative data in an organized and intuitive fashion (Holloway, 2005). The original context of the experience is unique, and rich knowledge and insight can be generated in depth to present a lively picture of participants' reality and social context (Holloway, 2005). To this end, qualitative research aims to understand how individuals make meaning of their social context which is not independent of their perceptions but created through the social interactions of individuals with the world around them (Hesse-Biber, 2010:455). In addition, Domegan and Fleming (2007:24) state that qualitative research aims to explore and to discover issues about the problem on hand, because very little is known about the problem and there is usually uncertainty about dimensions and characteristics of problems. Qualitative research uses 'soft' data and gets 'rich' data.

In qualitative research, different claims, enquiry strategies, and data collection methods and analysis are employed (Creswell, 2003). Thus, it is committed to generating multiple views of social reality whereby the participants become the experts, as the researcher interprets their views of reality. To this end, the researcher concluded that a descriptive qualitative research approach would gather a more in-depth contextual understanding of the phenomenon of stress and burnout with regards to the perceptions and experiences of public secondary school teachers.

3.3.3.1 Characteristics of qualitative research

The three basic characteristics that distinguish qualitative research are as follows:

- The researcher serves as the primary instrument for collecting and analysing data (Merriam, 2009).
- The research process is inductive, which allows researchers to gather data, and to build concepts, insights, hypothesis, or theories rather than deductively testing hypotheses as in positivist research (Merriam, 2009).
- The product of a qualitative research study is richly descriptive (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam, 2009). This implies that words, quotes from documents, transcripts and pictures, rather than numbers, are used to analyse and convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon. In this regard, the researcher is required to be a good listener, non-judgmental, friendly, honest and flexible.

According to Burns and Grove (2003:357), other characteristics of qualitative research are that it:

- uses the emic perspective of inquiry, thus deriving reality or meaning from the participants' perspective.
- regards reality as subjective.
- is ideographic, i.e. it aims to understand the meaning that people attach to everyday life.

- captures and discovers meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data.
- uses concepts in the form of themes, motifs and categories;
- seeks to understand phenomena rather than confirming matter.
- determines observations by information-richness of settings and modifies types of observations to enrich understanding.
- analyses data by extracting themes.
- uses a holistic unit of analysis, concentrating on the relationships between elements and concepts.
- considers that the whole is always more than the sum of the parts.

In view of the above, the researcher used a qualitative research approach as a tool for examining the context of existing sediment views about the phenomenon of stress and burnout with the aim of forming new gestalts in order to contribute to theory on teacher stress and burnout. Considering the uncertainty surrounding the dimensions and characteristics of this research problem, the fact that more knowledge about the experiences of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, as this pertains to the South African context, contributes to the global understanding of teacher stress and burnout.

The researcher was concerned with an emic perspective, namely to explore the ideas and perceptions of the participants by examining the experiences from the participants' point of view in order to interpret and understand their worlds. In order to be familiar with teacher stress and burnout, the researcher was involved by immersing himself in the phenomenon of study and by building a researcher-participants trusting relationship through basic interviewing and interpersonal skills.

3.3.3.2 Rationale for choosing a qualitative research approach

This study is about human experiences, and researchers argue that human learning and experiences are best researched by using qualitative data (Domegan & Fleming, 2007; Henning, et al., 2003). However, the choice of a qualitative research approach

for this study was justified to be the most appropriate, considering the following rationale:

- qualitative research is particularly useful to study educational settings and processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003);
- a qualitative study proves useful by exploring ways to understand experience where theories fail to explain a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009);
- strong theories are generated with rich data, often from gathering several kinds of data, including field notes, interviews, and information in records and reports (Charmaz, 2006);
- the approach promotes a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008); and
- qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people, and the social and cultural contexts within which they live (Myers, 1997). This is in line with the researcher's interest to understand the meaning that participants have constructed with reference to teacher stress and ways of coping with this stress.

In addition, the following argument that was put forward by Johnson et al. (2004:20) and Burns and Grove (2003:374) with regards to the advantages of qualitative research, further explains the rationale for choosing a qualitative research approach for this study:

- qualitative research focuses on understanding the whole, which is consistent with educational philosophy;
- qualitative research appears to be a more effective method of investigating emotional responses than quantitative research, considering that human emotions such as anger, pain, rejection and efforts are difficult to quantify in numerical terms;
- since data are collected in naturalistic settings, qualitative research can describe phenomena as situated and embedded in local and situational context in rich detail;

- it provides a description and understanding of an insider's perspective and experience of phenomena;
- the research design is flexible and unique, and evolves throughout the research process;
- It is useful for studying a limited number of cases in depth and provides individual case study information;
- it allows for cross-case comparison and analysis, and can be used to describe complex phenomena;
- it is used to justify current practices and identify factors that hinder or enhance practices as researchers get a whole picture from respondents;
- it is the most appropriate method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired; and
- it offers the opportunity to probe into responses or observations as needed in order to obtain more detailed descriptions and explanation of experiences, behaviours, and beliefs. Thus, information that is not anticipated can be obtained in the process.

However, all research approaches have their shortcomings, and qualitative research is not an exception. Richards (2003) states that the emergence of qualitative inquiry in the field of education has led to a concern about the quality of the research produced. With the researcher serving as the primary instrument for collecting and analysing data, it may be impossible to eliminate bias. Thus, identifying and monitoring bias may shape the collection and analysis of data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:20). However, Merriam (2009) opines that in qualitative research rigour is derived from the researcher's presence, the nature of the interpretation of perceptions and the rich, thick descriptions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:20) add that, in qualitative research, data collection can be time consuming, and that findings or the knowledge produced may be unique to the participants in the research study and not be generalisable to other people or other settings, and which tend to affect the credibility of the research study.

3.3.4 Phenomenology

This study used phenomenology as a primary approach within the interactive qualitative research design to explore, discover and describe the lived experiences of teachers on stress and burnout, as well as ways of alleviating and managing this phenomenon among secondary school teachers (Creswell, 2003; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Phenomenology is the philosophical tradition that seeks to understand the world through directly experiencing the phenomena. Phenomenological study describes the meanings of lived experiences without making previous assumptions about the objective reality of those experiences (Holloway, 2005:47; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:32). Phenomenology can be defined as the study of people's conscious experience of their life-world, and their everyday and social action (Schram, 2003:71). It focuses on the experiences and perceptions of individuals, and how experiencing something is transformed into consciousness (Merriam, 2009:24). Phenomenological research further examines the particular experiences of unique individuals in a given situation, thus exploring what is preconceived to be reality, and not what is reality (Burns & Grove, 2003:360).

Phenomenology aims to transform a person's lived experiences or phenomena into a description of its essence in an attempt to enrich lived experience by drawing out its meaning, and allowing for reflection and analysis (Holloway, 2005:47; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:32). In other words, it aims to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the meaning of our everyday experiences. A variety of methods to gather data, namely interviews, conversations, participant observation, action research, and focus groups, may be used in phenomenology. However, a typical technique is for the researcher to conduct long interviews with the research participants in order to understand their perspectives of their everyday lived experience with the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:32).

The use of a qualitative phenomenological approach for this study on teacher stress and burnout is considered appropriate because it is a more effective approach to researching human experience. Furthermore, it is a rigorous, critical and systematic investigation of phenomena (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:53). When using a phenomenology approach, the researcher concentrates on interpreting the meaning

in the phenomenon that is concealed, and thus not immediately revealed to direct investigation, analysis and description (Holloway, 2005:128). In addition, the researcher concentrates on the need to study human consciousness by focusing on the world that the study participants subjectively experience.

3.4 RESEARCH POPULATION, SAMPLING AND RESEARCH SAMPLE

An overview of issues relating to the research subjects, the sampling design and process used, and the criteria for both inclusion and exclusion in this study are discussed in this section.

3.4.1 Research population

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, artifacts, objects, events, or organisations, from which a sample is drawn, and to which the results of the research can be generalised. Population can be defined as the total number of units from which data is collected (Parahoo, 2006). It describes all elements that conform to specific criteria for eligibility and inclusion in a study (Burns & Grove, 2003:43). The population for this study consisted of all registered public secondary school teachers working within the Boksburg area in the Ekurhuleni District of Gauteng Province, South Africa. According to the statistics obtained from the Department of Education, the population in this study consists of a total of 16 public secondary schools with a total of 600 teachers, i.e. 213 male and 387 female teachers (section 1.6.2).

3.4.2 Sampling and research sample

The research sample is drawn from the study population which is commonly referred to as the target or accessible population (Burns & Grove, 2003:233; Polit & Hungler, 2004:290). Sample can be defined as a group of subjects, selected from a larger group of people, from whom data is collected, often representative of a specific population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:143). It refers to a subset or proportion of a population selected to participate in a research study (Polit & Beck, 2004). A carefully selected sample can offer data representative of the target population from which it is drawn.

In this regard, the sample used in this study was drawn from the target population according to the eligibility criteria discussed in section 3.4.3 below.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, a purposive sampling technique which offers several types of non-probability purposeful sampling procedures for qualitative investigations was used in this study. Purposeful sampling is a deliberate and non-random sampling method, which aims to select subjects or participants with certain characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:152). Purposeful sampling involves conscious selection by the researcher of certain objects or elements to include in a study by following rigorously the study inclusion criteria (Burns & Grove, 2003). In purposeful sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. In this regard, the main characteristic of the selected participants in this study was being knowledgeable on the topic or issue of teacher stress and burnout, due to their involvement and experience of the symptoms on a daily basis in the course of carrying out their assigned duties (Polit & Hungler, 2004:294).

A small sample can be selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particulars rather than what is generally true for many (Merriam, 2009). To avoid repetition and the occurrence of confirmation of previously collected data (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2005:25), the size of the sample was controlled and restricted to a total of 20 participants, drawn from a total population of 600 secondary school teachers. These 20 participants, consisting of twelve teacher participants and eight school management team participants were drawn from two out of a total of 16 public secondary schools within Boksburg area in Ekurhuleni District (section 1.6.2). Streubert-Speziale and Carpenter (2003:25) maintain that purposeful sampling is a preferred method when conducting qualitative investigations, as it provides cases rich in information for in-depth study. In this regard, the researcher opted to use this sampling method in order to develop a rich description of experiences relating to teacher stress and burnout, rather than using sampling techniques that support general data.

3.4.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion or eligibility criteria refer to the yardstick for selecting the sample from the study population (Polit & Hungler, 2004:290). Believing that the aim of qualitative research is to gain insight into a phenomenon rather than assume representativeness, the inclusion criteria of this study required the registered public secondary school teachers that were described in the study population in section 3.4.1 above to:

- be professionally qualified;
- have been teaching for more than a year;
- be young teachers of age 30 and below; middle age teachers of between 30 and 40 years old; and older teachers of age 41 and above;
- school managers with proved teaching and school management experience for at least three years; and
- be teaching in a public secondary school that provides for learners in Grades 8 to 12.

All registered, professionally qualified teachers not working in Boksburg area in Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province were excluded from this research. Also excluded were qualified teachers working in private schools, and all registered professionally qualified teachers with less than one year of teaching experience in public secondary schools described in the study population. In explaining their exclusion, the researcher concluded that young teachers with less than one year of teaching experience may not have gained enough experience of the phenomenon that was being investigated in this study. In addition, teachers who provided for learners in grades R to 7 were excluded from this study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection and other aspects of methodology follow from the research question (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:369). Data collection is the precise, systematic gathering of information relevant to the research problem, using methods such as interviews, participant observations, focus group discussions, narratives and case

histories (Burns & Grove, 2003:373). Qualitative data is usually in the form of text such as interviews, transcriptions or organisational documents. It may also include non-textual data such as audio recordings (Kakulu, Byrne & Viitanen, 2009). The most utilised data collection technique in qualitative research is in-depth interviews (individual or focus group), consisting of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, and allowing the interviewer and interviewee to divulge, to pursue an idea or respond in more detail (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). This supports Neergaard, Olesen, Anderson and Sondergaard (2009) who maintain that data collection techniques in qualitative research usually include minimal to moderate structured individual and/or focus group interviews.

To this end, the gathering of data from participants in this study on teacher stress and burnout was done in two stages. Based on a phenomenology perspective, stage one included data collection by means of in-depth individual interviews that permitted an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under investigation with members of the school management teams of the two research sites as participants. Concurring with Charmaz (2006:25) on participant selection, the members of the school management teams as participants had the relevant expertise and experience to contribute meaningfully to the obtaining of relevant data in order to answer the postulated research questions adequately. Stage two of the data collection process included two in-depth focus group interviews with teacher participants of the two research sites. These focus group interviews were aimed at identifying specific issues relating to the phenomenon under investigation and adding quality to the data obtained from the individual interviews.

3.5.1 Interviews

Data collection was obtained through the application of in-depth individual and focus group interviews. Interviews are methods of gathering information through oral dialogue, using a set of pre-planned core questions. Qualitative interviews offer the researcher an opening to understand the phenomenon under investigation from the perspective of the interviewee (Kvale, 1996). Interviews have long been used as a method in applied social services such as education (Bailey, Froggatt, Field & Krishnasamy, 2002; Talmy & Richards, 2011:1). Interviews have featured in qualitative

research designs such as phenomenological studies, covering a diverse range of topics including investigations into teacher identities, experiences, beliefs and life histories (Talmy & Richards, 2011:1).

Interviewing refers to structured or unstructured verbal communication between the researcher and the participants in which information is presented to the researcher. In other words, interviewing can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured and may be individual or focus group interviews, depending on the need and design. In structured interviews, the interviewer uses a set of predetermined questions which, in most cases, are closed and require precise answers in the form of a set of options read out or presented on paper. The data in a structured interview consists of respondents' answers to the same series of specific questions with a high degree of standardisation, which gives the researcher a high level of control (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Structured interviews are most appropriate when the goals of the study are clearly understood and specific questions can be identified (Preece, Rogers & Sharp, 2002).

Unstructured interviewing allows the researcher to pose some open-ended questions, and the participants to freely express their opinions. The data produced is non-standardised and the researcher has the least control (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). In unstructured interviews, the researcher has a particular topic for the study but not tied to asking a specific set of questions, which allows the conversation to develop with participants having to naturally touch on or bring up the topics of importance (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Because the level of questioning can be varied to suit the context, and the interviewer can quiz the interviewee more deeply on specific issues as they arise, it is possible to generate rich data, information and ideas using unstructured interviewing, but it can be very time-consuming and difficult to analyse the data (Hesse-Biber et al., 2011).

Interviewing in phenomenological studies is intended to be in-depth (Burns & Grove, 2003:284). To this end, interviews can be very productive since the interviewer can pursue specific issues of concern that may lead to focused and constructive suggestions (Shneiderman & Plaisant, 2005). In this study on teacher stress and burnout, interviews were conducted based upon a phenomenology perspective,

stimulating responses from the interviewees (Merriam, 2009), using semi-structured individual and focus group interview approaches.

3.5.1.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

The semi-structured individual interview method has features of both structured and unstructured arrangements, and therefore uses both closed and open questions. In semi-structured individual interviews, there are specific core questions determined in advance from which the interviewer branches off to explore in-depth information, probing according to the way the interview proceeds, and allowing elaboration within limits (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:167). In other words, the researcher has a set of pre-planned core questions for consistency and guidance, such that the same areas are covered with each interviewee. As the individual interview progresses, the interviewee is given the opportunity to elaborate or provide more relevant information if he or she opts to do so. This supports Polit and Beck (2004) who explain that when conducting semi-structured individual interviews, the researcher has to prepare in advance a written topic guide, which is a list of questions to be covered by the participants.

The researcher's role is to encourage participants to talk freely about all topics on the list, and to provide as much detail as they wish and offer illustrations and explanations (Polit & Beck, 2004). The format of semi-structured individual interviews, therefore, allows the participants some latitude and freedom to talk about what is of interest or importance to them. It is argued that semi-structured individual interviewing is one of the best means of discovering information as it allows the researcher to focus on topics and issues and guide the conversation rather than focusing on a list of specific questions which may result in limited responses (Nunan, 1992). Seliger and Shohamy (1989) agree with Nunan (1992), maintaining that qualitative researchers are more likely to use semi-structured individual interviews, which allows the words of the participants and their experiences to shine through. In this regard, the researcher planned a set of semi-structured interview questions (Appendix D), designed as an open framework, which allowed for a focused, conversational, two-way communication (Merriam, 2009). The researcher was the main data collection instrument in this phenomenological research.

3.5.1.2 Advantages of semi-structured individual interviewing

In this study, face-to-face, individual semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate as this method is particularly effective in collecting data, which involves opinions and perceptions. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011:95) and Burns and Grove (2003:285), semi-structured individual interviews have the following advantages:

- Semi-structured individual interviews allow for in-depth information gathering; that is, individual interviewing is a flexible technique that allows the researcher to explore in greater depth of meaning than can be obtained with other techniques.
- There is a higher response rate to interview questions than other techniques, leading to a complete description of the phenomenon under study by the participants.
- The interviewer has a degree of power and control over the interview, which allows for a measure of flexibility.
- The researcher can probe fully for responses, and clarify ambiguous answers during the interview, thus minimising incomplete answers as may occur in the case of questionnaires or surveys.
- It allows the interviewer to gather specific data from all the participants as the format can be designed to elicit the information required. In addition, interpersonal skills can be used to facilitate co-operation in order to elicit more information.
- It offers the interviewer a privileged access into the lives of the participants, thus providing contextual knowledge, and rich spoken and written data.
- It enables researchers to find patterns or themes in thick descriptions of social phenomena.
- It yields large amounts of data in the form of interview transcripts, which are later reduced in the analytical and interpretative process.
- It can be conducted in a pre-arranged setting that is comfortable and convenient for the participants.

- Researchers can check misinterpretations and inconsistencies, and provide rich quotable materials which enliven research reports.

Despite the many advantages of individual semi-structured interviews, there are some limitations with regards to this method of data collection. The main disadvantages of semi-structured individual interview are that they can be costly, time consuming and difficult to administer, and tend to be restricted geographically. In addition, elements of bias and subjectivity may be introduced, and establishing a rapport with the interviewees may lead them to respond in a certain way to please the interviewer. However, techniques for reducing interview bias include good interview training and managing to establish rapport with the participants by putting them at ease, and appearing non-judgmental (Bowling, 2002).

By means of semi-structured individual interviews, the researcher gathered rich, thick descriptive data based on the members of the school management teams' perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon of stress and burnout. The data gathered also included the coping strategies used by members of the school management team to reduce and cope with their own stress, and the support structures that were available to them (Appendix D).

3.5.1.3 Focus group interviews

Another method of data collection that was used in this study was focus group interviewing. Focus group interviewing is an interaction between one or more researchers and more than one participant for the purpose of collecting data (Parahoo, 2006). In focus group discussion, the researcher interviews more than one participant with common characteristics or experiences for the purpose of eliciting ideas, thoughts and perceptions about a specific topic or certain issues linked to the area of interest (Holloway, 2005). Because of the difficulty in bringing structure to a group, focus group interviewing is less structured, allowing for rich data to emerge through interaction with the group. A focus group interview is a variation of an interview that is used to obtain a better understanding of a problem or an assessment of a problem regarding new ideas (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389). Focus group interviewing involves a small,

homogeneous and qualitative sampled group of people who are gathered in order to study or assess a problem (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389).

In this study on teacher stress and burnout, focus group interviewing was used as a supplementary technique to interpret, elaborate and corroborate data, and the initial findings obtained from the semi-structured individual interviews with school management team member participants, as well as to raise further questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:288). In other words, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with research participants after a series of individual interviews were conducted to further explore the general nature of the comments and findings from different individuals (Sheiderman & Plaisant, 2005). By creating a social environment in which group members are stimulated by one another's perceptions and ideas, the researcher can increase the quality and richness of data through a more efficient strategy than one-on-one interviewing (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389). This supports Neergaard et al. (2009) who recommend the use of focus group interviewing when using qualitative description, as focus group interviewing seems appropriate to get a broad insight into a subject. In other words, the researcher used focus group interviewing as a confirmation technique designed to triangulate data from other sources (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389).

Membership of a focus group typically consists of eight to twelve subjects who are relatively homogenous. However, for complex topics, it is recommended that membership of an ideal focus group should range from six to twelve subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389). In line with this recommendation, the researcher purposively selected six teacher participants in each group of the two selected schools to discuss their experience of the phenomenon of stress and burnout; how the phenomenon is managed in their school; what support structures are available at their school; and ways they find helpful in reducing and managing teacher stress and burnout (Appendix E).

Skilled in both interviewing and group dynamics, the researcher facilitates the discussion by posing initial and periodic questions, with a typical session lasting for about one and a half to two hours (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389). The researcher avoids the use of leading questions or jargon, and chooses a neutral,

confidential and non-judgmental environment to conduct the interviews. With this study on teacher stress and burnout, focus group interviewing was conducted in the schools' staff room after school hours. The interviews were audio recorded and wholly transcribed to preserve accuracy, minimise disruption of data collection, and maintain researcher focus (Oberle & Allen, 2005). With common traits, members of each group are in a better position to question each other in order to arrive at a group result. To this end, participants of this study on teachers stress and burnout were encouraged to think more deeply about the topic.

3.5.1.4 Advantages of focus group interviewing

Focus group interviewing offers several advantages in obtaining qualitative data. Parahoo (2006) and Holloway (2005) highlight the following advantages of a focus group interview:

- focus group interviews are cheaper compared to one-on-one interviews, and are quicker in obtaining valuable data;
- participants in a focus group interview are provided with an opportunity to reflect on and react to others' opinions with which they may disagree or of which they are unaware;
- focus group interviewing gives both the researcher and the participants the opportunity to ask questions and informants can build answers on their responses; and
- it makes use of group dynamics which stimulates group discussion to gain insight and generate ideas in order to pursue a topic in greater depth.

In spite of its many advantages, it is argued that focus group interviews may be disadvantageous due to some participants being introvert while others may dominate the discussion and influence the outcome, or perhaps introduce bias (Holloway, 2005). To avert this problem, the researcher must create a good climate to stimulate all informants to participate, thus keeping a balance between participants. Holloway (2005) further argued that the researcher may find difficulties in managing debates and controlling the interview. In addition, recordings can present problems when using

a focus group interview to collect data. In this regard, Parahoo (2006) maintains that taking notes during focus group discussions is not feasible, since participants may be talking at the same time, and that tape recordings may only record those that are nearer to the recording, thus making transcription a problem. Regardless of the disadvantages of focus group interviewing, the virtues are of such a kind that focus group interviewing was deemed appropriate for this study on teacher stress and burnout.

3.5.2 Observations

The value of face-to-face interviewing is improved when the researcher adds observations and interpretations of the events which increase the rigour of the research (Bird, 2005:235). This suggests that observation poses the question as to whether the researcher has done an in-depth study to gain detailed understanding (Bitsch, 2005:83). This support Guba (1981) who maintains that extended interaction with the context and participants are of advantage because it helps the inquirer to gain an understanding of the essential characteristics of the setting. However, the degree of participation and observation is a participant observation continuum and where the researcher is placed depends on practical, theoretical and ethical issues (O'Reilly, 2009:161). In this regard, participant observation helps researchers to appreciate motivations and rationalisations of participants within their environment and context. In addition, it allows the researcher to experience the intimacies of daily life and relations (Burnham, Gilland, Grant & Layton-Henry, 2004).

In view of the above, the researcher played the role of a participant observer by spending long periods of direct and sustained contact with the two selected schools and its members. The use of observation as a data collection instrument takes the form of field notes that enable the researcher to acquire direct eyewitness accounts of everyday social actions of members of the two selected schools and the settings of these schools (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:388). To this end, the researcher observed and acquired the particular linguistic patterns and language variations of the members of the two selected schools. The researcher engaged in an active process of field observation that included nonverbal cues, namely facial expressions, gestures,

tone of voice, body movements, and other unverbalised social interactions that suggest the subtle meaning of language and why an activity or social scene occurred, particularly during the individual and focus group interviewing (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:378).

The researcher became involved in the social situation in order to understand behaviour and context (Burnham et al, 2004). Since participants may find it difficult to provide detailed descriptions of some significant characteristics of the context and human behaviour, participant observation helps discover participants' qualities and unusual characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:376; Sapsford & Jupp, 2006:59). Therefore, to minimise the effects of his presence during fieldwork, the researcher observed and recorded naturally occurring behaviour in the research sites in order to gain a deep understanding of participants' world view with regard to the phenomenon of stress and burnout, as well as the coping strategies used and the support structures offered to teachers in alleviating their stress and burnout. The naturally occurring behaviours that were observed in the research sites were recorded by means of a checklist of behaviour manifestations and environment circumstances. The researcher selectively used observation as a data collection instrument to help interpret, elaborate, and corroborate data obtained from in-depth individual and focus group interviews. In addition, the researcher used the observation technique as a generalist to corroborate initial findings and to raise additional questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:388).

McMillan and Shumacher (2014:376-377) maintain that observations must be documented using multiple means such as written notes and audio recordings that are based on a relevantly developed checklist of behaviours and contextual environment conditions relating to the occurrence of stress, such as depression, boredom, aggression, fatigue, anger, anxiety, consistent late coming, lack of commitment and absenteeism to mention just a few (Appendix F). In this regard, the researcher took field notes of significant characteristics of the environment and human behaviour through observations and used the field notes as data that was analysed. The researcher put aside his own thoughts and sought those of the participants in order to elicit perceptions of things, people, events, and processes that appear real to the participants.

The significant characteristics of the participant behaviour that were observed relate to the logic about the content of the participants' perceptions with regards to their beliefs, values, feelings, and thoughts on the phenomenon under investigation. Other characteristics of the participant's behaviour that was observed related to the participants' use of space and its relationship to culture, i.e. how participants reacted to space and invasion of privacy and personal territory (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:389). With regards to the characteristics of the environment, the researcher observed the school settings as they related to discipline, workloads, leadership style, collegiality, team spirit, safety of the school environment, as well as available support structures.

Data collection and analysis inform and drive each other. In other words, the qualitative phases of data collection and analysis are interwoven and occur in overlapping cycles. To this end, data was analysed during data collection, as well as after all data had been collected.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a mechanism for reducing and organising data to produce findings as interpretations by the researcher (Burns & Grove, 2003). In this regard, qualitative data analysis is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorising, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). Qualitative data analysis can be described as working with the data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, coding it, synthesising it, and searching for patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In other words, qualitative data analysis aims to discover patterns, concepts, themes and meanings. Analysis of data using the inductive approach is particularly evident in many qualitative data analyses. The inductive approach is a systematic procedure for analysing qualitative data, and guided by specific objectives (Marshall, 1999).

In this study on teacher stress and burnout, data was analysed by means of qualitative content analysis, which considers how language structures participants' thoughts in ways that reflect a particular social system, hence attempting to work out from what people say the underlying system of ideas, that is, structuring their thoughts, words,

and experiences. Qualitative content analysis is a data analysis method of choice in qualitative studies representing a realist method, which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants. Qualitative content analysis is also a constructionist method, which examines the way in which events, realities, meanings and experiences are the effect of a range of discourses operating within a society (Braun & Clarke, 2006:9). Therefore, content analysis involves searching across a set of data such as a number of interviews to find repeated patterns of meaning or themes. It is a dynamic form of analysing verbal and visual data that is oriented towards summarising the informational content of the data (Polit & Beck, 2004)

Qualitative content or discourse analysis was carried out for the analysis of data from both the individual and focus group interviews whereby the researcher synthesised and made meaning from the data, starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). In other words, the key themes and concepts were identified in the transcripts and were categorised. Categorisation helps the researcher to make comparisons and contrasts between patterns, to reflect on certain patterns and complex threads of the data deeply, and make sense of them. This supports Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) who explain that, in order to carry out discourse analysis, the researcher needs to organise the data in a systematic way.

To achieve this, the researcher had to become familiar with the data by reading and re-reading each transcribed interview several times, as well as with identifying themes and coding the data in such a way that it could be categorised according to the different themes. Furthermore, the researcher explored the themes more closely in the process of elaboration, providing an opportunity for the themes to be revised, and for the researcher to capture nuances of meaning. Lastly, the process involved making interpretations, and providing a written account of the phenomenon (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

In this study, interpretations of data collected from the electronically recorded interview transcripts were systematically coded by categorising segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarised and accounted for each piece of data (Charmaz, 2006:43). After conducting interviews, the researcher carefully reviewed

transcripts and identified codes, categories and themes likely related to the causes of stress, and individual responses to this experience, namely psychological, physical and behavioural responses to stress (Merriam, 2009). The researcher used participants' responses to identify and describe the major themes within the study.

The data collected from observation was converted into a format that facilitates analysis, and was triangulated with data gathered from other sources, namely individual and focus group interviews. In other words, the researcher reviewed the main theme in the field notes, and used triangulation to find regularities in the data, and to see whether the same patterns kept recurring. In this regard, a theme of institutional collaboration was cross-checked by comparing data gathered from the individual and focus group interviews with data collected by observations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:407).

The researcher used memo writing which involves the pivotal immediate step between data collection and writing drafts of paper to identify degrees, causes, and outcomes of individual stress and burnout experienced by the study participants (Charmaz, 2006:72; Maxwell, 2005). Furthermore, the researcher used stress and burnout related theories, namely social cognitive theory, stereotype threat theory, role theory and self-determination theory to analyse and describe the research findings in Chapter 4. These theories contributed to understanding the reasons for stress as well as the coping strategies used to reduce stress. The process of data collection and analysis carefully answered to validity and reliability measures and ethical standards for qualitative studies.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY (TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSFERABILITY)

Merriam (1998:99) cautions researchers that a debate is raging because the constructs of reliability and validity are quantitative and positivist, and not necessarily that applicable to qualitative research. However, qualitative researchers have adopted other criteria and strategies that can be used to enhance the rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research findings (Shenton, 2004) such as Guba's model of

trustworthiness that is used to ensure validity and reliability of a qualitative research studies (Krefting, 1991:215-217).

Trustworthiness and transferability are the corresponding terms used in qualitative research as a measure of the quality of research as well as the credibility of the research data. Trustworthiness establishes the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:364). It is the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy. A qualitative research study demonstrates trustworthiness when the researcher accurately represents the reality of the situation and ideas, and experiences of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:38). Guba and Lincoln (1998) add that trustworthiness of research depends on the extent to which it delves into participants' experiences apart from their theoretical knowledge.

In this study on teacher stress and burnout, trustworthiness was guaranteed by the researcher by putting aside preconceived ideas about the phenomenon under study, and returned to the informants to ascertain that the description was a true reflection of their opinions and perceptions. To achieve this, the constructs proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985:112) and Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba (2007), which identify four strategies for establishing rigour and trustworthiness, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, were used in this study. These strategies, which in turn use criteria like reflexivity, triangulation and dense descriptions, are constructed parallel to the analogous quantitative criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality.

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is similar to the criterion of internal validity in quantitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Polit & Beck, 2004). Credibility refers to whether the researcher accurately represented participants' thoughts, feelings and actions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Holloway, 2005:8). It is the truth of how the participants know and experience the phenomenon, and which is demonstrated when they recognize the reported research findings as their own experiences (Streubert-Speziale

& Carpenter, 2003:38). To ensure that credible findings were produced, the researcher applied the following credibility strategies:

3.7.1.1 Prolonged engagement

This refers to the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes, namely learning the culture, testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the participants, and building trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:302). In this regard, the researcher immersed himself in the participants' world by showing familiarity with the school culture of the selected schools and spending enough time with the participants in order to develop a trusting relationship with them during the interviews and member checks (Bitsch, 2005; Holloway, 2005:175), and to become orientated to their situation. Since the researcher is a teacher who works in a setting similar to the ones that were studied, gave the researcher a good understanding of the school culture of the participants and reflected the researcher's prolonged engagement with participants of the phenomenon under study. The researcher also spent enough time with the research sites by visiting the sites a few hours before interviewing and leaving the sites a few hours after interviewing to detect and take into account distortions that might otherwise creep into data.

3.7.1.2 Persistent observation

The purpose of this criterion is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem and issues which relate to the phenomenon under study. It also aimed at sorting out irrelevances (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:304). Therefore, the researcher interacted extensively with the contexts and participants in order to identify relevant qualities of the participants, and to gain a detailed understanding of the essential characteristics of the settings.

3.7.1.3 Member check

Member checking into the findings is considered the most critical technique for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:314). The inclusion of member checking

into the findings relates to gaining feedback on the data, interpretations and conclusions from the participants themselves. In this study, the researcher checked data during collection through dialogues with participants. Participants were also asked to read transcripts in which they had participated for verification. The research participants were given the opportunity to react to them in order for the researcher to be able to purport that his reconstructions were recognisable to audience members as adequate representations of their own realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Hungler, 2004:433). The participants checked categories that emerged from the data and, after the themes were finalised, the researcher discussed the interpretations and conclusions with them.

3.7.1.4 Peer and participant debriefing sessions

Peer debriefing is a process of exposing oneself to the searching questions of others who are experienced in the methods of enquiry and/or the phenomenon under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:308; Polit & Hungler, 2004:432). In this study, the researcher carried out debriefing sessions with peers and colleagues for scrutiny and constructive criticism in order to help identify the development of new ideas and interpretations which may assist the researcher to refine the research methods and strengthen arguments brought up from data collected, as well as to recognize any bias. In addition, the researcher exposed the research work to participant debriefing by returning to the participants to check the findings with them so as to confirm their experiences as true (Holloway, 2005:277; Polit & Hungler, 2004:432).

3.7.1.5 Triangulation

This refers to the use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis. The researcher, as the main research tool, used different qualitative research methods, namely semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and observation to explore personal feelings and experiences that might influence the study, and integrated this understanding into the study to promote objectivity, and to avoid bias (Burns & Grove, 2003:380). In addition, a purposive selection technique was carried out in this study in order to give the researcher control in choosing participants with different levels of experience, namely years of working experience as a teacher and/or a manager

serving on the school management team, with the aim to reduce bias and guarantee credibility (Shenton, 2004).

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is analogous to external validity which describes the extent to which research findings can be generalised (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Transferability refers to the probability that the study findings have meaning to others in similar situations, or are transferable to other settings or contexts (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:39). It is a matter of judgment of the context and phenomena found which allows others to assess the transferability of the findings to another setting (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:268). Transferability is achieved by providing the reader with sufficient information to be able to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings that they know (Holloway, 2005:277; Seale, 1999:45). Tracy (2010:845) adds that transferability can be achieved when readers feel as though the story of the research overlaps with their own situation and they intuitively transfer the findings of the research to their own actions and lives. Therefore, in order to ensure transferability of the findings of this research on teacher stress and burnout, the researcher ensured that sufficient contextual information about teacher stress and burnout was provided to allow readers to have a proper understanding of it.

In this regard, transferability was ensured in this study through the use of a purposeful sample which allows the researcher to select participants who have expert knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under study, namely teacher stress and burnout (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Hungler, 2004:435). With the use of purposive sampling, the researcher provided a rich, thick description of the study in such a way that the data and descriptions speaks for themselves, to enable the readers to appraise the significance of the meanings attached to the findings and make their own judgment regarding the transferability of the research outcomes.

The potential users, not the researcher, determine whether or not a research finding is transferable (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:29). To this end, this research study offers transferability through the provision of thick description of the research context and sufficient descriptive data that the readers can assess and evaluate to

determine the applicability or transferability of the data to another context. Thick description served as a vehicle for communicating a holistic and realistic picture (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Therefore, the researcher provided a thick description of the participants' experiences and thoughts regarding their perceptions and interpretations of the phenomenon under study. This was done in order to provide rigour, and a clear and comprehensive audit trail so that the reader can consider whether the research finding is transferable to other situations or not (Holloway, 2005:277).

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to whether one can track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). It is the stability of data over time, and is obtained with a stepwise replication and inquiry audit (Bitsch, 2005:86; Polit & Hungler, 2004:435), with the aim of securing credibility of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:3116; Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:38). Dependability is related to consistency of findings, that is, establishing that findings would be consistent if the study were repeated in a similar context with the same participants (Holloway, 2005:143).

The instruments to be assessed for consistency in qualitative research are the researcher and the participants. Therefore, for the findings of a research project to be dependable, they should be checked and audited by means of external checks. In this regard, the activities that were carried out as a means of establishing dependability in this research study on teacher stress and burnout included explaining the assumptions and theory behind the study such as social cognitive theory, self-determination theory, role theory, and stereotype threat theory; using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, namely individual and focus group interviewing and observations; and explaining in detail how data was collected to allow for an audit trail.

Furthermore, dependability can also be achieved through auditing, which consists of the researcher's documentation of data, methods, and decisions made during the inquiry process, as well as end products. Auditing for dependability requires that the data and the descriptions of the research should be elaborate and rich. To this end,

the researcher established dependability by using Guba's inquiry audit, in which the inquiry auditor (the supervisor of this study) examines the research process and product, namely the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations, in order to attest that the research product is supported by data, and that it is internally coherent so that outcomes may be accepted (Bowen, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:332).

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is a means of evaluating data quality. It refers to the neutrality or objectivity of the data by an agreement between two or more dependent persons that the data is similar (Polit & Hungler, 2004:435). A study is said to possess confirmability if it demonstrate credibility, transferability and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:331; Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:38). Confirmability is analogous to objectivity, and refers to the extent to which the research data and findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others. The purpose of confirmability is to illustrate that the evidence and thought processes will give the same conclusions as in the research context to other researchers (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:38).

In this study, the researcher also used the audit trail as a means of establishing that the research data and interpretations, and conclusions of the study findings are derived from the raw data and are not a figment of his imagination (Tobin & Begley, 2004:392). The researcher achieved this by providing a methodological self-critical account of how the research was done (Bowen, 2009; Koch, 2006). The researcher archived all collected data in a well-organised, retrievable form so as to make it available for an audit trail if the findings are challenged.

The use of an audit trail is a systematic collection of materials and documents that enables end users or external auditors to arrive at comparable conclusions about the data. In this regard, the researcher applied auditing criteria that were recommended by Holloway and Wheeler (1996:169) for establishing confirmability. These criteria are:

- collected the raw data from tape recorder and field notes;
- analysed the raw data and findings of the study through de-contextualisation;

- made a synthesis of the analysed data through re-contexualisation;
- carefully planned each stage of the research process, research design, sampling design and the collection process; and
- made sure that the conclusions of the study's findings are supported by analysed data.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Every researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants (Creswell, 2003). According to Streubert-Speziale and Carpenter (2003:314), the researcher has a moral obligation to strictly consider the rights of the participants who were expected to provide information. Considering the sensitive nature of this study on teacher stress and burnout, ethical and legal considerations were an important aspect of this study. Research has many ethical implications and participants have important rights, such as the right to refuse to participate in the study; the right to refuse to answer certain questions; the right to confidentiality; and the right to informed consent, which should at all times take precedence over research objectives (Parahoo, 2006). To this end, researchers should be aware of these rights and other issues before, during and after the research has been concluded (Creswell, 2003; Parahoo, 2006). Ethically conducting a research on human subjects minimises harms and risks, maximises benefits, and has respect for human dignity, privacy, and autonomy (Resnik, 2011).

In this study, the researcher considered ethical issues throughout all the stages of the research process and ensured that ethical principles and guidelines were put in place in order to uphold participants' privacy, confidentiality, dignity, rights, interests and anonymity, as recommended by Parahoo (2006) and Creswell (2003). In this regard, the researcher adopted and adhered to a series of ethical measures, namely informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, privacy, and voluntary participation.

3.8.1 Informed consent/permission

Informed consent is an individual's overtly expressed willingness to participate in a study, founded on a clear understanding of the nature of the research, the effects of not participating, and all factors which might be expected to influence that person's readiness to participate (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister & Zechmeister, 2003). The researcher informed all participants of the goals and purpose of the research, as well as the extent of the research by means of the participant consent form (Appendix B). Each participant's consent to take part in the individual or focus group interviews was sought (Polit & Hungler, 2004:151). Prior to the commencement of the study, all participants received and signed the participant consent form, which allowed the researcher to gather data based on the semi-structured individual and focus group interviews. In the consent form, participants were informed about the confidentiality of their responses, and their rights to withdraw from the research study at any time, if they wished to do so (Appendix C).

The researcher also sought permission from all relevant authorities to carry out this research, namely the Gauteng Department of Education, the school principal of each selected school (Appendix A), and the Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa (Appendix G).

3.8.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality needs to be accentuated when information identifying participants can be linked to their specific answers (Nardi, 2006). Confidentiality implies that no information that the participant divulges is made public or available to anyone (Polit & Hungler, 2004). The anonymity of a person or an institution is protected by making it impossible to link aspects of the research data to a specific person or institution.

In this study, the researcher ensured that data obtained was used in such a way that no one other than the researcher knows the source, and the researcher does not reveal the participants' identities and names. The researcher maintained the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants by removing any identifying characteristics before widespread dissemination of information. With this study on

teacher stress and burnout, findings are disseminated as they appear in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

3.8.3 Privacy

Privacy refers to the freedom an individual has to determine the time, extent and general circumstances under which private information will be withheld or shared with others (Burns & Grove, 2003:171). In this study, privacy was achieved by providing participants with pseudonyms. Therefore, pseudonyms replaced participants' names, and their schools' identities were also kept confidential.

The use of pseudonyms becomes necessary in order to protect the participants as people who know certain facts about the phenomenon of investigation. In other words, private information such as participants' designation, area of residence or ethnic background may be used to deduce damaging information about the participants, based on the data (Tracy, 2010:847).

3.8.4 Voluntary participation

In this research study, the right, dignity and wellbeing of the participants were protected at all times. To this end, no participant was coerced or forced to take part in this research study. Prior to their engagement in the study, the participants were informed that the research was only for academic purpose, and that their participation was voluntary.

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research study at any time if they chose to do so (Holloway, 2005:292), and to refuse to answer any question or questions should they feel uncomfortable answering a question or discussing any issue relating to the causes of stress at their respective schools or their personal experience of burnout that they may feel uncomfortable to share.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the theoretical and philosophical assumptions underpinning the research methodology in investigating the phenomenon of teacher stress and burnout and exploring ways of alleviating this phenomenon among secondary school teachers in South Africa. In addition, a succinct discussion of the research paradigm and research design for this study was made. In this regard, a major decision that was made in order to conduct this study was the adoption of the interpretative paradigm, which assumes that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. The interpretivist assumptions rest on the belief that socially ascribed meaning is the actual reality, and that the subjective experience of a participant is real and holds the key to understanding phenomena.

With regard to the research design, this study adopted a qualitative research design to address the research questions which has to do with how secondary school teachers experience and make meaning of stress and burnout in order to develop functional strategies to alleviate the negative impact of this dreaded phenomenon. This methodology chapter also described the reasons for adopting qualitative research, and the selection of phenomenology within qualitative research to gain knowledge of the participants' experience of the phenomenon of stress and burnout. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the methods of data collection as well as the methods used in the analysis of the collected data. Data credibility issues and issues relating to trustworthiness and transferability, as well as ethical consideration in the study, were also discussed.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher empirically conducted a phenomenological study of stress and burnout as experienced by secondary school teachers in order to identify ways to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Specifically, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the empirical investigation, based on the results of the data analysis.

This chapter highlights the findings of the research in terms of what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers; what effects do teacher stress and burnout have on the quality of teaching and learning; what coping strategies do teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout; and what support structures and strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, do secondary schools offer teachers who experience stress and burnout. Beginning with a portrait of the research participants, interview settings, and research sites, the analysed data includes a detailed description of the findings with evidence presented in the form of quotes taken from the semi-structured interviews.

In this chapter, key themes and concepts that emerged from the five broad research questions (section 1.4) and which were identified in the transcripts are discussed, according to the different themes and subthemes. Analysis of data drawn from observation, and specific examples from participants' face-to-face, individual interviews and focus group interviews are also provided to further enhance the participants' lived experiences. The researcher summarises all of the findings and combines all of the emerging themes based upon the five broad research questions into a rich textual description of the phenomenon of stress and burnout.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW SETTINGS

Individual interviews with eight members of the school management team (SMT) (section 3.4.2) were conducted in their respective offices. The SMT members' offices

were fairly big and moderately furnished, depicting a place of storage for books and files, and providing privacy and safety, especially important documents. The focus group interviews, consisting of six teachers per group (section 3.4.2), were conducted in schools' staff rooms, providing ample space with a round conference table and moderately comfortable chairs around the table. The room atmosphere was quiet and conducive, enabling the interview sessions to progress smoothly without any disruptions.

The participants were asked open-ended questions that yielded valuable results. While the individual interviews with the SMT members lasted for about 30 to 45 minutes, focus group interviews with teacher participants lasted for about 45 to 60 minutes. The SMT members and teachers who participated in the interviews were all assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITES

The empirical investigation was conducted in two different urban public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province (section 3.4.2). The average number of registered learners in these two schools was 1400, with about 40 classrooms and 38 teachers, on the average. Thus, the average teacher-learner ratio in these two selected research sites was 36.8:1. These two public secondary schools are categorised as no-fee schools, implying that these two schools are situated in environments serving the poor.

One of the public secondary schools is located in a coloured dominated community and falls under Section 21 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 in which the school is responsible for managing its own finances (school allocation) granted on an annual basis by the district department of education. In line with Section 21 status, the school is responsible for financing non-personnel and non-capital expenditure items such as ordering stationery and textbooks, paying water and lights accounts, and undertaking their own maintenance. The other public secondary school is a non-section 21 school, located in a black dominated community. In this regard, the school receives an allocation of textbooks and stationery from the district department of education. The school also has their lights and water accounts paid directly by the department.

The surrounding environment conditions of the two selected research sites reflect a measurable degree of poverty, indicating a concentration of low socio-economic status parents with inadequate living conditions as well as higher funding demands for these two public secondary schools (Watson & Ryan, 2010). According to the socio-economic status of the community around the schools, one of the schools is categorised quintile 2 and the other quintile 1, which represent the second-poorest and poorest quintiles based on income, employment and literacy levels of the school's external environment. In these two public secondary schools, the active involvement of parents in their children's learning and the disciplining of their children is not clearly evident.

4.4 PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Twenty participants consisting of eight SMT members and twelve post level one teachers from the two public secondary schools selected for this research study volunteered and participated in this study on teacher stress and burnout. Data was collected from all the participants. The SMT members' participants were Kgatliso, Kabelo, Drew, Leah, Lanine, Zavier, Davidson and Sipho (all pseudonyms). The teacher participants were Jojo, John, Siswe, Tina, Teekay, Jaykay, Bernhardt, Rebeccah, Juan-Pierre, Cassidy, Ngcobo, and Nondalo (all pseudonyms).

Participants' demographic information, namely, age, ethnicity, gender, qualifications, years of experience as a school manager, years of experience as a teacher, and years in present position was collected during the interviews. Additional information about what year they teach and why they decided to become a teacher was also collected during the interviews. A brief description of the demographic information of each of the school management team members and teacher participants follows.

4.4.1 Demography of SMT members

The following is a brief rundown of each of the eight SMT member participant's demographic information.

*Rahmon***:** Rahmon is a school principal with over 30 years of teaching experience. He started teaching at the school in 1988 and moved up the ranks within the school. Rahmon is a black person, and he is between 50 and 55 years old. He became the HOD of the school in 1994, the deputy principal in 2011 and then the school principal in 2014. He holds a master's degree in Education Management. Rahmon is from Mpumalanga.

When asked why he decided to become a teacher, Rahmon said*, "I wanted to become an electronic technician or electrical engineer but I ended up becoming a teacher because we did not have money at home to study in a university or college. So teaching was the only available course that I could do because then teaching was having bursary. Fortunately, however, I fell in love with the teaching profession and I decided to develop myself along that career path."*

When asked about his roles and responsibilities as a school principal, Rahmon replied, *"I am representing and looking after the interest of the department and the parents. I am taking the leading role as the head of the teachers."*

Kabelo: Kabelo is a black male deputy principal with over 20 years of teaching experience. He is between 40 and 45 years old, and holds an Honours degree in education, specialising in sciences. He grew up in a rural area in Limpopo where he started teaching, before moving to Gauteng on the advice of his friends. He teaches Grade 12 learners in Mathematics and Science. Kabelo describes how he became a teacher like this: *"My first choice of career was to become a civil engineer and my second choice was to become a teacher. So, from onset teaching was one of my priorities. It happens that the university where I applied for admission could not take me for my first choice, which was civil engineering. So then, I changed my course to teaching."*

Leah: Leah is between the ages of 50 and 55. She holds a Bachelor of Education degree, specialising in Education Management, and has been teaching for over 24 years. She is a black female deputy principal and teaches Life Orientation and Life Sciences.

When asked why she decided to become a teacher, she said, *"I did not want to be a teacher. Accidentally, I landed up in teaching because of the problem of money at home. Long time ago, people were going into teaching because they don't have money to study through the university without a bursary. Fortunately, I was in the right profession because of my love for children, training and impacting knowledge to young minds."*

When asked about her roles and responsibilities as a deputy principal, she said, *"I am the hand and eyes of the principal. I monitor the teachers and develop them in terms of their subject specialty. Also, when the principal is not there, I take over the leadership of the school. I also look into curriculum itself."*

Drew: Drew is a black female Accounting teacher. She is between 50 and 55 years of age, with 25 years of teaching experience. She started teaching in Mpumalanga in 1993 and moved to Gauteng in 2008. After teaching for a year in her present school, she became head of department in 2009, and completed her ACE Accounting course in 2014.

When describing how she became a teacher, Drew said, *"Actually, I wanted to become a police officer. But while growing seeing the incessant riots and killings in South Africa, I realised that police career was not good for me because I don't want to die at an early age. Moreover, there was no money at home to take me to any university where I can study other courses better than what am doing now. Teaching was accommodative to us. I opted for teaching because there was bursary for teaching. Teaching was the only thing that I could do, considering that my mother was a single parent who wanted the best for me and my siblings but could not afford to send us to university to study a course of our choice. However, as time goes by, I started enjoying the teaching profession."*

Lanine: Lanine is a coloured woman who has a passion for teaching. She came from the cooperate world to join teaching due to her passion for teaching. She is between 45 and 55 years of age, with nine years of teaching experience. She has been the HOD of Business and Accounting Department for over three years. She holds an Honours degree in Accounting, and teaches grade 12 Accounting and Economics.

When asked about her experience that led her to the position of HOD, Lanine said, *"I think coming from the cooperate world, I have a lot of exposure to management. So, that helps me to becoming a better manager, and helping other teachers to do better in their work by training them to acquire management skills like time management, which is important in teaching."*

When asked about her roles and responsibilities as a member of the School Management Team, Lanine said, *"I have a responsibility to watch the teachers in the sense that they actually excel in the subject that they teach. So, to ensure that they excel in the subject that they teach, I have to identify whether they understand the subject and if they don't, whether I can assist them, and how I can assist them."* Lanine added, *"It's also my responsibility to help them manage their work better in order to make it more effective for them to teach because if they don't know what to teach, then obviously they are going to fall behind and they won't be able to execute their work and stress will develop."*

Zaiver: Zaiver is a black male head of department with over 25 years of teaching experience. He is between 55 and 60 years of age. He taught for 19 years before becoming the head of the Science Department at his school. Zaiver holds an Honours degree in Mathematics. He is from Durban in KwaZulu Natal. When asked about why he decided to become a teacher, Zaiver said, *"During my time, there was a shortage of teachers at school. So, I decided to become a teacher to help uplift the community where I was staying."*

Davidson: Davidson is a deputy principal of a school with over 24 years of teaching experience, and eight years of school management experience. He is a coloured, male teacher who is between 45 and 50 years of age. Davidson holds a master's degree in Education Management. He first taught English for 24 years and was an HOD for 5 years before becoming a deputy principal. Davidson is from Limpopo.

When asked why he decided to become a teacher, Davidson said, *"Teaching had always been my passion. Though I wanted to study Law, but I ended up studying Education Management, and thus become a teacher and then a school manager."*

Sipho: Sipho is a head of department in charge of Social Science and History. She is a black female teacher who is about 45 years old. She holds an Honours degree in Education Management and has been teaching History for over 30 years. She became head of department in 2012. She is a very quiet and soft-spoken kind of person.

When asked why she decided to become a teacher, Sipho said, *"I found teaching, even it is challenging, to be interesting. Team work, relationship with others, classroom management and dealing with learners made me to further enrol for education management in order to gain more knowledge about teaching and leadership."*

4.4.2 Demography of teacher participants

The following is a brief snapshot of each of the 12 teacher participants interviewed in this research study.

Bernhardt: Bernhardt is a black post level one teacher with over 25 years of teaching experience. He is from Cameroon, and he holds a master's degree. He is between 45 and 50 years of age. Bernhardt chose to become a teacher out of the love he has for teaching.

Rebeccah: Rebeccah is a coloured, female teacher who is about 35 years old. She has been teaching for the past ten years and holds an Honour's degree in Psychology. She is from the Eastern Cape. She is a post level one teacher. When asked why she decided to become a teacher, she stated, *"I would say that I became a teacher by chance. When studying, I needed a bit of money to help me pay my school fees. So, I was asking around, and the principal asked me to come and help around the school. Yes, that was it and the rest is history."*

Cassidy: Cassidy is a post level one teacher, and a coloured woman with 15 years of teaching experience. She is between 40 and 45 years of age, and holds a Diploma in Higher Education. According to Cassidy, *"I love teaching. I love children. They are actually close to me."*

Juan-Pierre: Juan-Pierre is a coloured, male post level one teacher. He is between the ages of 40 and 50, and holds a degree in Education. He is a Geography teacher and teaches Grade 10 to 12 learners.

When asked why he became a teacher, Juan-Pierre said, *"Actually, I didn't want to become a teacher. I registered very late at the university, so the Law Faculty was full. So, I thought I should give teaching a chance with the belief that I am not going to stay too long in the teaching profession. Well, I am still here. But I don't see myself working for more than twenty years in this profession. At first, I did enjoy it very much but for the last four years, it's not nice anymore. We have bad factors at school like overcrowding. Learners are giving you stress. There is a lot of stress. I don't mind pursuing another career but am still in the process of thinking about that or to work for myself."*

Ngcobo: Ngcobo is a post level one teacher, and a black male teacher with over five years of teaching experience. He is between 30 and 35 years of age. He holds a Bachelor's degree along with a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, and teaches Creative Art to the Grade 8 and 9 learners. Ngcobo is from Limpopo Province. Ngcobo became a teacher because of the love he has for teaching and children in particular. According to Ngcobo, *"I love helping children to learn and grow."*

Nondalo: Nondalo is between 25 and 30 years of age. She is a novice teacher with less than four years of teaching experience. She is black, and holds a bachelor's degree in Education. She teaches Geography to the Grade 8 and 9 learners.

Teekay: Teekay is a black male teacher who completed his degree in Education from the University of Limpopo. He is between 40 and 45 years of age. Teekay is an Economics and English teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience. When asked why he decided to become a teacher, Teekay said, *"I choose teaching because I found it very interesting to work with children and impact knowledge to them. So far, I am still happy with what I do though I have few challenges."*

Jojo: Jojo is a novice post level one teacher with three years of teaching experience. He is black, and he is between 25 and 35 years of age. Jojo is a graduate of North

West University where he studied Economics. Jojo became a teacher because of the love he has for teaching. He teaches Economics and Management Science to the Grade 8 and 9 learners. He is from Mpumalanga.

Tina: Tina is black female teacher with over four years of teaching experience. She is between 25 and 35 years of age and holds a first degree in Education from the University of Pretoria. She teaches Mathematics to the grade 8 and 9 learners. Tina became a teacher because she finds teaching very interesting. According to Tina, *"Teaching gives me the opportunity to change young people's perspectives. For me, it is a way of building the country because I believe that the young ones are the future of tomorrow."*

Jaykay: Jaykay is a male post level one teacher with over eight years of teaching experience. He is black, and he is between 30 and 40 years of age, and hails from KwaZulu Natal. He is a Mathematics and Science teacher and graduated from Tshwane University of Technology. When asked why he decided to become a teacher, Jaykay said, *"I developed love for teaching when I see children in my community where I grew up, and seeing shortages of teachers, especially in Mathematics and Science."*

Siswe: Siswe is a black post level one teacher with three years of teaching experience. He is between 25 and 30 years of age. He completed his first degree in Accounting at the University of Johannesburg and proceeded to the University of Pretoria to obtain his Post Graduate Certificate in Education. He decided to become a teacher because of his love for children.

John: John is a black male teacher with over eight years of teaching experience. He is between 40 and 45 years of age and holds an Honours Bachelor of Education degree in Inclusive Education from the University of Johannesburg. When asked why he became a teacher, John said, *"At first, I wanted to do Financial Management at Tshwane University of Technology, but I discovered that it was not for me. Then, I changed to teaching because success is like a dream to everyone in the community that I come from. So, I don't call myself a teacher. I call myself an eye opener because I think it takes one to teach another person."*

4.5 INTERVIEW FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Using the qualitative content analysis method, the analysis of data collected through semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, verified with literature review findings, produced themes with regards to what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers; what effects teacher stress and burnout have on the quality of teaching and learning; what coping strategies teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout; and what support structures and strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, schools offer to teachers who experience stress and burnout.

4.5.1 Causes of teacher stress and burnout

When all the interviews were completed, transcribed and analysed, using the qualitative content analysis method, the following are the major themes regarding causes of teacher stress and burnout that emerged.

4.5.1.1 Theme one: Work overload

Work overload was identified as one of the major sources of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). When asked about the causes of stress and burnout, participants claimed that the severity of teaching is compounded by work overload. Nearly all the interviewees expressed their experience of stress due to their workload, resulting in symptoms associated with burnout. By work overload, participants specifically identified the large amount of lesson planning, huge administrative work, excessive filing and assessment procedures, and extensive reporting that is added to their already strenuous classroom demands.

Drew was very animated when expressing her concerns about her workload. She stated, *"The work itself is just too much. The demands from the district department are too much. We have to perform a lot of administrative work and fill in a lot of forms. We need to write reports for virtually every situation. So when do we get to do the actual teaching?"* Bernhardt felt that workload demands and the multitude of extra duties that needed to be accomplished have made the teaching job extremely stressful to him. He expressed concerns that are similar to those made by Drew. According to

Bernhardt, *"We are supposed to teach in class and do what we are required to do, but we are also stressed out about other things. In teaching, there is a lot of paperwork and documentation. There are different kinds of forms to fill and various reports to write. This is very frustrating, and it is stress on its own."*

Juan-Pierre shared the same feelings about work overload. According to Juan-Pierre, *"There is too much paper work. We are being asked to do so much more. Sometimes, we are being forced to do things that we don't want to do. We have to arrange extra classes for learners during weekends. So, during weekends, we have to come to work. We have holiday classes as well."* As a Grade 12 teacher, Juan-Pierre emphasised that he teaches almost the year round, which is too much and severely tiring. Juan-Pierre explained, *"I have paper work to do, I have teaching to do, I have this and that to do. I can't anymore, honestly. It's overwhelming. The department is demanding certain things from us and it's too much. These are the factors causing stress for me."*

Rahmon, a school principal, agrees with Juan-Pierre saying, *"Secondary school teachers work even in December. There is no time for your family, and then you end up having problems back home because you are spending most of your time working."* Drew added, *"Marking and assessment is so stressful, especially when you have lots of learners in your class. Sometimes, we have to take our work home because we have to meet deadlines, and we end up ignoring our family due to the huge load of work."* Tina felt that workload demands are increasing. According to Tina, *"There are five files that I have to manage and it's just too much."* Rahmon added, *"We are expected to keep files for so many things, which prevent us from focusing on teaching proper. In my opinion, the HODs should be in a position to deal with the files, and teachers should focus on teaching. This is one of the ways to prevent teacher stress and burnout."*

Furthermore, Cassidy stated, *"The fact that teachers play administrative roles is stressful."* Sipho agreed with Cassidy and stated that, *"We have multiple duties and an overwhelming number of responsibilities. This is a major source of our stress."* Sipho emphasised that the most stressful time for him is the examination period, when he needs to come up with learners' assessment, generate and analyse learners' results. To this end, Sipho explained, *"During this time, I develop stress due to work*

pressure of having to mark and submit on time, and then write reports." Sipho added, *"When analysing the results, we have to write reports to explain what causes a particular learner or group of learners to fail. We must answer to why learners are failing. So, this period become stressful for us. We also have to write reports for learners who frequently come late or absent from school. This administrative work is just too much."*

Kabelo, a deputy principal, stated, *"Teachers gets frustrated because they have deadlines to meet, as given by the senior management, and thus picks up a fight with learners when learners do not submit their work for assessment. Also, the relationship between us and the teachers becomes bitter because we need something that must be submitted to us by the teachers on due date. The teachers start to avoid us and you can see that they are stressed when they look at you."* To this end, Kabelo emphasised that this is one of the contextual factors that causes stress for teachers. Kabelo further expressed that, *"Teaching job has got too much paperwork. Teachers spend sleepless nights because they want to meet deadlines, and should they not meet such deadlines, they must write a report explaining why they failed to meet deadlines. This can be stressful."* With regards to paper work, Zaiver, who is an HOD cum teacher, stated that, *"Teachers don't feel like teachers anymore. They feel like they do administrative work and do not get to work with the learners and their problems. Teachers have become a glorified clerk, instead of being a teacher."* Zaiver added saying, *"Teachers are overloaded with work which builds up to a big problem here at school, causing stress."*

Lanine emphasised the poor learning culture in the school, and teachers being held accountable for learner achievement. According to her, *"We are accountable for learners' success and learning. So, teachers try everything to help the learners. They planned the learning, but the learners don't see the need to do their homework, and if the learners don't perform, it reflects on the teachers. The parents and the Department of Education will come asking questions and demanding explanations for the poor pass rate in the subject."* In this regard, Lanine concluded that the learning culture is breaking down in many public schools, and this causes additional stress for teachers.

Drew agrees with Lanine on the issue of poor leaning culture in public secondary schools. She stated that, *"I have stress since I started teaching."* She emphasised that the stress of having to push learners to work is often overwhelming. Lanine added, *"Even if you organise extra classes for them, learners will not come if they don't want to come, and when learners are not performing, the district officials come to visit the school to check on what teachers are doing. Often, they don't want to listen to any excuses for learners' poor performance. To the district officials, you did not do your job, finish and klaar."*

4.5.1.2 Theme two: Wrong subject allocation

The second theme was like an outlier theme, as it is related to theme one: work overload. One of the issues raised by the participants was that teachers are expected to be competent to teach any subject allocated to them. Many participants claimed that teaching becomes stressful when one is asked to teach a subject that one does not know or is not qualified to teach.

Bernhardt stated, *"The foundation upon which all other stress factors are based is when you are not qualified to teach what you are teaching."* Drew narrated an incident pointing to the assertion that teaching a 'monster subject' can be very stressful. According to Drew, *"A teacher was literally crying yesterday in my office because she had been having sleepless nights. The management wants her to teach a subject that she does not know, and being a good teacher, who delivers in class, now have to deal with a 'monster subject' that she does not know. The teacher threatened to resign if forced to teach the 'monster subject'."*

Lanine stated, *"What I found out in teaching a subject that you are not familiar with is that it happens a lot in public secondary schools that I see. For instance, school management will ask a teacher who doesn't know Life Orientation to teach Life Orientation because management don't see Life Orientation as a major subject, but just to balance out the workload. Yet, such teacher will have to do curriculum work in that subject with the learners. This causes a lot of stress."* Bernhardt describes this problem of teaching a 'monster subject' thus, *"If a teacher is asked to teach a subject which he is not qualified to teach, he will find it difficult to manage the classroom which*

may lead to a low self-esteem and a sense that one lacks competence in the classroom." For such teachers, Bernhardt emphasised that their personal self is strongly connected to their teaching role, and poor performance in the classroom due to inability to teach those subjects leads to feelings of stress and, in the long-term, to burnout.

Leah, a deputy principal, agreed saying, *"When the school is experiencing shortages of teachers, we normally ask teachers to bridge the gap regardless whether the teacher can teach the subject or not. This is a challenge for the teachers."* She admitted that wrong allocation of subjects to teachers is a source of teacher stress and burnout. According to Leah, *"Teachers feel frustrated and often threaten to resign when they are allocated a subject they cannot teach."*

4.5.1.3 Theme three: Time allocation and pressure

Teachers in public secondary schools experience a mismatch between the stated aims of the curriculum and the realities of teaching the prescribed material in a limited time period. There is an expectation that teachers complete the prescribed syllabus within a period of time, which according to many participants is unrealistic due to the limited time period. This causes stress and burnout for most of the participants interviewed in this research study.

Participants identified time pressure as a source of stress. Kabelo claimed that the teaching job itself is stressful due to time pressure and deadlines. Lanine emphasised that the whole problem comes from the top. She claimed that the syllabus is so packed, but the district department wants miracles to happen. She explained further saying, *"The teachers need to complete the syllabus without taking the learners' learning capability into consideration. They want teachers to execute activities that will include every learner, both the weak and the top learners, but it's not possible in a normal day with thirty minutes per lesson period."* Lanine claimed that what teachers are expected to accomplish is not realistic within the given time line, which is also very stressful.

As an Accounting teacher and HOD, Lanine claimed that the allocated instruction time for certain subjects is not enough to develop a good learning foundation. Lanine

explained, *"For instance, four periods of thirty minutes in a week is dedicated for Economic and Management Science (EMS), but EMS is having Business Studies, Economics, and Accounting. Two out of the four periods go for Accounting, and one period per week for learners offering Business Studies and Economic."* According to Lanine, this accounts for a drop in the pass rate in Accounting nationally because teachers cannot give proper attention to Accounting learners. To this end, Lanine said, *"This is one of our biggest problems, since teachers are held accountable for learners' performance. We are under a lot of time pressure, and this is just too stressful for us all because it adds a level of frustration."* Teekay said, *"Covering the curriculum content is a big issue to me. Some of the learners are ahead of the others. So, I am sometimes confused on how to bridge the learning gap. This causes stress for me."*

Juan-Pierre also commented saying, *"There is less teaching time for learners. During examination, marking becomes very stressful because we have deadlines for submissions."* Rahmon, who is a school principal, corroborates Juan-Pierre's comments saying, *"Teachers are stressed during the time of learners' assessment and when they start analysing learners' results because during this time we are having the pressure of marking and submitting on time."* Rahmon added, *"When analysing learners' results, teachers are asked to provide explanations for learners' failure, should there be many failures. Teachers develop headaches during this time and try to come up with excuses not to be at work because the management need that information at a given time. So, this period becomes stressful for them."*

Kabelo, who is a deputy principal and a Mathematics and Science teacher, agreed with Rahmon saying, *"The most stressful time for teachers is examination periods when they need to produce learners results on due dates. At this period, relationships between teachers and senior management becomes bitter because we, the senior management, need something that must be submitted to us by the teachers on due date."*

4.5.1.4 Theme four: Learner behaviour

In this research study, empirical investigations revealed that learners' behaviour is a major source of stress and consequent burnout for teachers in public secondary

schools. Public secondary school teachers experience stress attributed to negative learner discipline issues in the classroom. The view that there are disruptive learners in the school was a major theme that resonated strongly throughout the individual and focus group interviews. Learners' disruptive behaviour and lack of interest in their learning was a theme with which many of the study participants identified. Participants felt that learners could be surprisingly disruptive, with some learners going out of their way to disturb other learners and the teacher and thus ruin the lesson.

To this end, Lanine provided a rich, detailed account of how learner behaviour and discipline issues can cause enormous emotional, mental, and physical stress for teachers to the point that showing up for work is a difficult challenge for them. Lanine confessed, *"We have a lot of disruptive learners in our school who sit here and just make noise. Noisy and disruptive learners are very stressful for me. You see learners make funny noise like squeaking when a teacher is teaching and making a big mockery out of teachers."* Lanine emphasised that a lot of instructional time is wasted in the classroom while teachers attempt to manage disruptive learners and regain control. Lanine explained, *"The loss of instructional time resulting from disruptive behaviour leads to learners missing important instruction given by their teacher. This adds to a level of frustration and causes considerable stress for me."*

There is a sense of powerlessness on the part of the teachers with regards to maintaining control in the classroom and in the school in general. Lanine added, *"Discipline is the greatest problem and a major source of stress for teachers. There are no consequences for learners' actions."* She gave an example thus: *"For example, learners are not supposed to come late to school. It is our responsibility to curb lateness, but you can't lock them out because it's against the school policy. So, you let the learner into the school, and you write a report saying that the learner is constantly coming late to school. You get the parent in, but the learner still continues to come late and there is nothing you can do."* Lanine emphasised that teachers have to walk a thin line between maintaining discipline in the school and not alienating any of the learners to the point where a complaint is lodged with the provincial department. She added, *"At the end, the learner loses a lot of instructional time; the learner is expected to catch up with the lost time. But you, as the teacher, must ensure that the*

learner catches up. Otherwise, you will get into trouble. So, this is one of our biggest problems, and it's very stressful."

When asked if any teacher had ever been injured, attacked or assaulted, Lanine said, *"Not that I know of here in this school, but I know that it happened in my previous school. A teacher being injured or assaulted by learners happens a lot because violence had now become a norm in many public secondary schools."* Zaiver, who agreed with Lanine, maintained that, *"80% of the learners in his school are disruptive."* He added, *"Like now, I have lost my temper because there seems to be no learning culture in the school. When you ask learners to take out their books, only about three out of about fifty learners have books. Having disruptive learners is so frustrating and stressful."* Drew also agreed with Lanine saying, *"In this school, learners sometimes do confront teachers and talk back at teachers but will never touch you."* Kabelo further corroborated Lanine's statements. According to Kabelo, *"I find the constant reminding and reprimanding of disruptive learners to be aggravating and stressful because much time is wasted trying to maintain order even in Grade 12 classes where most of the learners are old enough to know better."*

Juan-Pierre felt that the main discipline problems are defiant learners who are rowdy and bully other learners, especially in grade 8 and 9. According to Juan-Pierre, this includes learners who distract others and those who come to class unprepared or late. Juan-Pierre explained, *"Sometimes, they fight with us and abuse us verbally, and which we cannot do anything about. And this happens on a daily basis which means that you spend the whole lesson reprimanding learners instead of teaching. All come down to self-discipline and disciplinary problems."* Juan-Pierre recounted, *"Recently, we heard that a learner was stabbed by another learner here in this school. Though, I have never been injured by a learner, but I have experienced a situation where learners were rude towards me. They were backchatting me. This affects my relationship with the learners, and it's very stressful for me, especially seeing the learner every day at school. This adds to my stress and burnout level."*

Teekay stated, *"As a novice teacher, discipline is an issue for me. I struggle a lot with getting learners to obey me, and to follow my instructions. They disrespect me a lot. This affects my teaching because I am not able to execute my duties to my satisfaction,*

and this contributes to my stress level." Drew described how her physical, mental, and emotional stress is increased by learners' disruptive behaviour. She said, *"Learners' disruptive behaviour results in stress for teachers. Sometimes, teachers find it very difficult to control learners and once learners see the weak point of the teacher, the teacher is 'dead'. He will be stressed for the rest of his teaching career in the school."* When asked if there are disruptive learners in the school, Drew answered*, "Yes, there are so many of them."* Drew explained, *"Though, there was no record of any assault to a teacher by a learner in this school, at least not that I know of, but there are many incidences that we see and hear of learners assaulting teachers in this district. In the previous schools where I taught, there was a female teacher who was slapped by a learner. This teacher got sick and began to avoid classes. This is frustrating."*

Siswe explained, *"I feel troubled and stressed when learners do not succeed or pass their subjects, or when learners are given assignments or activities but come to class not submitting the activity."* When asked if he has ever been tempted to leave teaching, Siswe, a novice post level one teacher, described an incident that happened which almost made him leave the teaching career. Siswe said, *"A Grade 8 learner was disruptive in my class, and when I reprimanded the learner for his behaviour, the learner picked up a fight with me, calling me names. I had to call another teacher who is more experienced to help solve the problem. I was stressed and felt frustrated to the point that showing up for work the next day was a difficult challenge for me, and I almost quit teaching."*

With regards to learner behaviour, Tina explained, *"I feel stressed when learners don't do their work but come with lot of excuses or when learners do not understand the concept that is being taught."* Tina also recalled an incident that happened with regards to a learner's disruptive behaviour that almost resulted in her leaving the teaching profession. Tina recalled, *"I had this experience where a learner in my class stole my phone. I was so freaked out. The thought that my learners could do such a thing to me, freaked me out, and I began to wonder how my learners could hate me so much."* Jojo, a post level one teacher, had a similar experience. According to Jojo, *"I had a problem with a Grade 8 learner. It happens that more than half of the class did not submit their assignment for assessment. My HOD mandated me to produce results of the assessment or write a report for failing to submit the assessment result*

on the due date. I thought of quitting teaching, but I changed my decision because of the love I have for teaching."

4.5.1.5 Theme five: Lack of autonomy and empowerment

Empirical investigation further reveals that a lack of autonomy and empowerment causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Participants in this research study felt that they have no power. They merely act on instructions of school management and the department which has led to increasingly dependent behaviour on the part of the teachers, and a growing sense of frustration and stress. They claimed that they have no say on issues that affect teaching and learning in the school, and this creates stress for them. This supports McGrail (2005) who states that a sense of powerlessness can lead to feelings of stress and burnout. In addition, Maslach and Leiter (1997:17) maintain that a lack of control in the workplace, few opportunities to make decisions, inability to improve one's situation at work or be innovative can lead to stress and burnout. In this regard, Drew stated, *"Senior management don't like to listen to teachers. They just tell you what to do."* Kabelo said, *"Feeling like I have no say as a teacher in matters that affects learners causes stress and possible burnout for me."*

Bernhardt shared his thoughts on the level of autonomy and empowerment he experienced as a teacher. He felt that his exclusion from the decision-making process causes stress for him, leading to a considerable disillusion with teaching. Bernhardt stated, *"I felt great frustration by the limited decision making with which I was empowered in the school."* Juan-Pierre, a post level one teacher, expressed his frustration with the fact that senior management take decisions without consulting them. *"I get frustrated by this,"* Juan-Pierre said. John blames the district for teachers' lack of autonomy and empowerment. He stated, *"The district is the one who causes more problems for us. They set the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) according to their understanding without any regard to what is happening inside the classrooms. This causes stress for us."*

Zaiver shared the views of other participants saying, *"Here in this school, we have an autocratic principal who would not listen to teachers. Decisions are made from top*

downward. The principal forces his opinions and decisions on to you. Problems like this contribute to teacher stress." According to Bernhardt, "*When teachers are not given the opportunity to express themselves and are merely expected to follow directives from the management, they feel unimportant, frustrated and stressed."* However, participants' comments support that of Motha (2004:363) who maintained that teachers' voices are marginalised, excluded and left out.

4.5.1.6 Theme six: Unpleasant working relationships

The most intensive, hostile and deeply disturbing feelings experienced by teachers tend to arise not only from their encounters with the learners but also from encounters with colleagues. The participants interviewed in this research study identified unpleasant relationships with colleagues as a cause of stress and burnout. They find some colleagues more difficult than others. Unpleasant working relationships are interrelated with other stress factors such as paper work and other job demands. Participants claimed that there was a basic lack of trust between individual teachers and their colleagues, head of departments and other senior management of the school, leading to a dreaded state of mind and a toxic working environment characterised by anxiety, competitiveness, insecurity and gossip. This view supports that of Hancock and Scherff (2010:335) who maintain that teacher apathy is rife and manifest as a loss of enthusiasm and interest, excessive stress, and a sense of disappointment and high levels of dissatisfaction in the workplace. In addition, Maslach and Leiter (1997:17) mention a breakdown of communication and consequent isolation as one of the main sources of stress and burnout. For many of the teachers, unpleasant working relationships were directly linked to the intensification of work, as teachers had less time to socialise and interact with colleagues. They claimed that excessive workload proved detrimental to building relationships with colleagues due to the limited time available to get to know each other.

Many of the teachers interviewed in this research study felt socially isolated from their colleagues, and that colleagues were apathetic towards one another. In this regard, Drew, an HOD, described how isolation from colleagues causes stress for her. She stated, *"Stress comes in many ways. It can come through colleagues, senior management, or through the learners. It is difficult to deal with stress coming from*

colleagues." Drew added, *"A sense of isolation among secondary school teachers was due to the nature of the job."* She shared her experience thus: *"I had stress when I first came to this school. I found a situation here that was not conducive for me to work. I had stress dealing with colleagues who do not like me, which resulted in me being alone in the class. I did not have friends, because they were just isolating me."* Drew maintained, *"Those kinds of situations create stress for teachers; teachers then become lonely persons. You start to develop sleepless nights, thinking of the working conditions of where you are working."* Drew continued, *"I wanted to leave the school because of this situation but I had to deal with this stress considering that I have a family that I have to feed."*

During the focus group interview, Tina, a post level one teacher, felt that the radical teacher culture in which gossiping is a norm among teachers is a source of stress for her. She stated, *"Not knowing who to trust is a source of stress for me."* Tina's statement is in line with that of Farrell (2006:212) who maintains that much of a teacher's energy is transferred away from the job of teaching and towards *"learning how to survive in the dominant school culture."* To buttress her point, Tina described how her relationship with a colleague gradually wears away due to lack of trust. Tina said, *"It happened that there was a mistake in a particular mark sheet of a learner, and I brought it to the attention of the teacher concerned. Instead of the teacher to appreciate my gesture, she reported the matter to the management, accusing me of bad mouthing her in front of the learners. I felt so frustrated that I wanted to leave the school but for the intervention of the senior management. So, I don't know who to trust."*

Teekay commented on the relationship issue when asked if he had ever been tempted to leave teaching. Teekay said, *"Six years down the line, I had this feeling that I needed to quit teaching because of stress that come from the job, especially relationship with management and colleagues."*

John made a similar comment with regards to relationship issues when asked if he had ever been tempted to leave teaching. John said, *"For me, I had lots of reasons to want to quit teaching. I have been feeling angry for being blamed for something I did not do. I was wrongly accused by one of my colleagues, and the matter ended up at*

the district level." John also commented saying, *"I think we are divided in this school because we are having different clicks or groups. If I am having a problem, I have a certain group of colleagues whom I can approach for solution. But this is not working for me because rather it adds to my stress in that we end up gossiping about the issue. This worries me a lot and causes stress for me."*

Besides unpleasant relationships with colleagues, some of the teacher participants also identified unpleasant working relationships with senior management and department officials as a source of stress and burnout for them. This research study reveals that the pervasiveness of workplace bullying and abuse of teachers by members of the school management team as well as officials of the Department of Education also causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Participants felt that persistent bullying and abuse of teachers by senior management is extremely stressful and can lead to anger, anxiety, depression, and consequent burnout. This supports Blase, Blase and Du (2008: 266-267) who opine that very little attention has been given to the ugly, dark side of organisational life which consists of a wide range of verbal, non-verbal, and physical behaviours such as scapegoating, threats of job loss or job evaluation, angry outbursts, gossiping, excessive monitoring and micro-managing, ignoring, snubbing, dirty looks, foot stomping, finger pointing, throwing and slamming objects and violations of physical space.

Some of the teachers interviewed in this research study claimed that they had been victims of workplace bullying by the management of their school. John, who is a post level one teacher, commented saying, *"I almost quit the teaching job when my HOD ridicules and humiliated me in front of the learners, commanding and giving me instructions in such a derogatory manner, and addressing me as a young educator. He forgot that respect is reciprocal. My feeling then was that, if I cannot be respected, what am I doing here?"* Drew, a member of the school management team, affirmed the comments made by John. She said, *"The way some senior management talk to teachers do stress them. Sometimes, senior management comes to a briefing with teachers, and shout and shout and go. Senior management like to talk to teachers harshly, thinking that they can get teachers to respect them by so doing. They threaten teachers when they talk."* Drew explained further saying, *"Senior management sometimes go to the extent of shouting at teachers in front of the learners to show that*

they are the boss. I don't like threats. Senior management must not talk to people harshly. Situation like this can be frustrating, creating stress for the teachers." Zaiver also commented saying, *"When the district officials visit the school unannounced, they usually come on a fault-finding mission. They expect us to deliver the same results as the Model C schools, but the playing fields are not levelled. These are the imminent factors contributing to teachers stress and burnout."*

One of the participants identified communication problems and unsupportive relationships between senior management and teaching tiers as a cause of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Ngcobo, who is a novice teacher with the least experience, felt that the working conditions in the school were not conducive for the creation of supportive relationships. He said, *"What causes stress for me outside the classroom is the school management team. I have not been given proper guidance on how to organise things like files, the Annual Teaching Plan, etc."* He expressed that such working conditions frustrates him and causes stress for him. According to Ngcobo, there must be a smooth flow of information from the senior management to HODs to teachers, and down to learners.

4.5.1.7 Theme seven: Salaries and benefits

Participants in this research study also identified low salaries and inadequate employment benefits as an important cause of stress among secondary school teachers. Juan-Pierre, a post level one teacher, described the difficulties in making ends meet. He emphasised that a teachers' salary is incomparable to what is obtainable in the corporate world. Juan-Pierre explained, *"The money is just not enough for me to live a decent and comfortable life considering the amount of workload and time I put into my work, especially with me teaching Grade 10 to 12 learners. I am not happy, and this creates a fair amount of stress for me. We are sometimes underpaid, and this places a heavy financial burden and stress on us."* Rebeccah, another post level one teacher, agreed with Juan-Pierre saying, *"I think government does not really consider the importance of teachers and as a result they don't take care of the teachers the way they should, and this causes stress."* Rebeccah added, *"Salaries and benefits allocated to teachers do not equate the amount of challenges and stress that teachers have compared to workers employed in the cooperate world."*

Some of the participant interviewed in this research study felt that it is not fair that highly qualified and experienced teachers earned the same salary as those who had basic entry-level qualifications and little or no teaching experience. Bernhardt, another post level one teacher who holds a master's degree in education and is currently pursuing his Doctoral degree, agreed with Juan-Pierre that low and inconsistent salary is one of several sources of stress. Bernhardt informed that all post level one teachers are on the same salary level, regardless of their qualifications and experience. Bernhardt explained, *"A Master's degree holder like me earns a similar salary to a novice teacher who had just recently completed his first degree. Having spent so much money and efforts to obtain my qualifications, it is very frustrating feeling that there is no regard or advantage in improving my qualifications and seeing less qualified teachers with little or no experience earning the same salary as me. This issue is particularly stressful for me."*

Rebeccah agreed with Bernhardt on the issue of teacher qualifications and lack of career prospects and growth in the teaching profession. She found lack of opportunity for growth in the teaching profession particularly stressful. Rebeccah explained, *"There is no opportunity to grow in the teaching job. It is very difficult and sometimes impossible to advance from one position to another higher position."* Rebeccah claimed that it is a common practice for post level one teachers to work for ten or more years and not receive a promotion simply because there are no available positions to promote teachers to. She expressed, *"God forbid, as a post level one teacher, I must either wait for someone to die or resign for me to move up. This is frustrating and stressful for me. I sometimes feel like leaving the teaching profession to take up another career."* Rebeccah opined that, in education, there should be more opportunities and benefits for teachers for things to balance out, and teachers should be given benefits in terms of reward for performance.

4.5.1.8 Theme eight: Lack of teaching resources

Most of the teachers interviewed identified work-related stress due to lack of teaching resources. They felt that their work is not exemplary working without proper materials, and this result in a sense of decreased accomplishment and stress. This claim reflects Mullock's (2009) findings that some of the major sources of teacher dissatisfaction and

frustration lie in factors extrinsic to teaching which are difficult to control, and that such prolonged dissatisfaction can lead to stress and burnout.

One of the teachers interviewed expressed concern over the lack of teaching resources when asked what makes them feel stressed outside the classroom. Teekay explained saying, *"Anything that matters to a teacher that he or she cannot even provide a solution to or a problem that one finds difficult to solve becomes a stress."* Teekay further explained using an example, *"In a subject that learners could have easily passed but failed due to some circumstances like learners not having the required materials is frustrating. Obviously, learners won't make it as a result of lack of materials, and this becomes a stress for teachers. Learners don't do their work due to lack of materials, and most times I cannot even handle it, it becomes stressful for me."*

Another participant claimed that working in an environment that is not conducive for teaching and learning is stressful for him. Jojo explained saying, *"The senior management must make me feel at home. They should provide a teaching and learning environment that is conducive, making me feel at home, and that will appreciate and compliment my effort in the process of executing my teaching job."* Jojo further expressed, *"It becomes stressful when I woke up in the morning to go to work and I don't feel like being welcomed. To feel being welcomed, I mean in terms of the school management providing the required teaching and learning materials and resources. Everything that is needed must be provided."*

Teekay agreed with Jojo saying, *"I feel stressed working in an environment that is not conducive to teaching and learning. We have a shortage of furniture and learners have to run up and down looking for chairs to sit on. It is quite stressful for me because a lot of instruction time is lost in this process."* Teekay added, *"Socio-economic problems causing a lack of workbooks for learners hampers me in my work. When I try to facilitate knowledge and do my job, I cannot do so effectively because of the challenges I have with a lack of workbooks causing stress for me."*

4.5.1.9 Theme nine: Overcrowding of classrooms

In this study, some of the teachers interviewed also identified overcrowding of classrooms as an importance source of stress and burnout. Some of the participants felt that learners' disruptive behaviour has so much to do with overcrowding of classrooms. With regard to class size, Bernhardt commented and said, *"Overcrowding of classrooms is almost becoming a natural problem. In the lower grades like the Grade 8s and 9s which I teach, we have over sixty learners in a classroom. This is overwhelming. It makes me feel stressed and tired."* John also commented saying, *"We have a problem with the number of learners in our classes. The teacher-learner ratio according to the department and school policy is 35 to 1 but currently we are faced with more than 50 in most classes. This is frustrating, and it causes a lot of stress for me because I struggle to control the class, and to enforce discipline in the classroom. I find it unbearable because the noise level is too much for me."*

Lanine remarked, *"Ooh! Class size is a big problem in this school. Learners are up to 60 in Grade 8 and 9. These classes are overcrowded."* Leah, a member of the School Management Team, affirmed Lanine's statement. She said, *"Overcrowding of classroomd is a major challenge which frustrates teachers. But unfortunately, we cannot do anything about it."* Drew, another member of the SMT, also remarked that overcrowding or rather large classes is one of the most important sources of stress for teachers. She said*, "Most teachers in the school cannot handle large classes."* Zaiver agreed with Drew saying, *"Overcrowding is particularly stressful for me. I cannot teach 50 to 60 learners. It is like you are having two classes in one. I cannot get to all the learners. The ideal class size is 30 to 40. This is why Model C schools outperform us because they adhere to the class size policy of 30 to 40 learners."* One of the participants claimed that the classrooms were too small and cramped. To this end, Juan-Pierre said, *"The class size is too big and I find it very stressful teaching over sixty learners in a classroom that is built for twenty to thirty learners."*

4.5.1.10 Theme ten: Administrative problems

Ideally, administrative support to teachers should be complementary in the sense of adequate administrative materials and equipment. One of the teachers interviewed felt

that this is not the case in her school. Nondalo felt that administrative problems in the school have a tendency to make an already stressful working environment even more stressful. The administrative support role in the school is to ensure that facilities, equipment and teaching and learning materials are in place so that teachers can focus on teaching their learners.

With regard to administrative problems, Tina commented saying, *"Here in this school, we often have shortages of stationeries such as ink for printing copies of examination question papers. We experience an inability of the school to provide copies of past examination question papers as and when needed due to lack of inks. This situation is stressful for me, it affects the execution of my job."*

Other contextual factors that cause teacher stress and burnout as identified by the participants include communication problems, financial problems, parenting and marital relations. However, it is important to note that the causes of teacher stress and burnout that were identified by the participants in this research study corroborate that of Bruce (2009:59). According to Bruce (2009:59), top performing teachers who leave the profession within the first five years feel unable to cope with the multiple dimensions of teaching and cite their reasons for leaving as difficult responsibilities coupled with very high expectations, the effects of constant multitasking and the lack of a boundary between home and work. Other reasons cited by these teachers include high stress leading to self-doubt and low self-esteem, inability to meet day-to-day work demands, frustration associated with inadequate time to prepare for classes, learner behavioural issues, lack of respect, low salaries and a lack of administrative support.

The above empirical findings on the causes of teacher stress and burnout corroborated, to a large extent, the stress and burnout theories employed in this research study. The role theory explained why work overload and conflicting roles arising from wrong subject allocation causes teacher stress and burnout. With regards to thoughts and emotions, the social cognitive theory explained stress and burnout derived from research participant's inability to take control of processes, namely time allocation, teaching resources, learner behaviour and class size. Also, the self-determination theory explained why unpleasant working relationships and participant's lack of autonomy and empowerment causes teacher stress and burnout.

4.5.2 Description of the concept of stress

Teachers and school management team members who were interviewed in this research study described their perceptions of the concept of stress. When asked to define or describe stress with regard to teaching, many of the participants agreed that stress is a very difficult concept to define and that stress comes in many ways. Rahmon said, *"Stress is something like when you find yourself in a situation where you should be coping, and you are not coping."* Lanine viewed stress as uncertainties or unknown things that suddenly appear. Lanine added saying, *"Stress arises when you planned things, but the day doesn't work out the way it supposes to be. You planned for something and suddenly another thing you didn't planned for just jump out, and suddenly becomes an urgent thing."*

"Stress is when you are having problems that cannot be solved at that particular moment, and that are really irritating to you and your mind is not relaxed but continued working day-in-day-out. These are the ways I can define stress according to my understanding," Kabelo said. Leah defines stress as the feeling of not being yourself, especially in the negative sense. Bernhardt said, *"Stress is a lot of things that are not up to date. Stress is when you are not able to do what you really want to do."* Rebeccah said, "*Stress is simply teacher's inability to cope, whether financially or emotionally. Stress is about not being able to cope holistically."* John viewed stress as challenges which teachers' face every day in the course of teaching the learners. John added saying, *"Teachers face challenges every day and it takes a process to overcome these challenges. When one worries to overcome these challenges, it leads to stress."*

4.5.3 Experiences of teacher stress and burnout

Participants in this research study described their professional and personal experiences of stress and burnout. Participants claimed that these experiences affected various areas of their lives, particularly their ability to focus on immediate and future tasks. Participants felt that their experiences of stress in the teaching profession had led to negative emotions namely, anger, guilt, frustration, boredom, and emotional exhaustion. Other participants maintained that their experiences of stress and burnout

had resulted in physical implications such as physical illness and exhaustion, and mental or cognitive impairment. These experiences were grouped and analysed under major themes, namely, emotional, physical and mental effects of stress and burnout.

4.5.3.1 Theme eleven: Emotional effects of stress and burnout

Most of the teacher participants experienced negative emotions as a result of stress. They relayed how a bad class, a bad day or a negative comment or conflict between colleagues or with senior management left many of them feeling low, doubtful and unappreciated. They seemed genuinely disillusioned and expressed their frustration in terms of the overwhelming responsibilities and endless tasks which they were expected to complete by due dates. The harshness of negative emotions took their toll on the participants, causing excessive distress, anger, irritation, withdrawal, worry, boredom, impatient, intolerance, and interfering with the completion of routine tasks and impeding effective teaching and learning from taking place in the schools.

When asked how stress and burnout affects teachers and the quality of teaching and learning, Rebeccah commented saying, *"Stress definitely affects teachers and the quality of teaching and learning because teachers are tired as a result of stress. They are exhausted, physically and emotionally because stress has psychological and physiological effects on them."* Rebeccah continued by discussing her experience with regards to negative emotion and exhaustion. *She said, "When I'm stressed out by all these stressors, I usually experiences sleepless nights, for example. I don't get enough sleep. So, when I come to class, I'm a bit sluggish and not completely myself when teaching the learners. This condition is not ideal for effective teaching and learning."* Bernhardt also responded saying, *"There is nobody who is stressing that is happy. Stress can make you to be very nervous and unhappy. When you are nervous and unhappy, your blood level can be high, and as a result you will always feel tensed in front of the learners."* Bernhardt added, *"It is not easy to concentrate on the task at hand when you are stressed."*

Rahmon maintained, *"Teachers are not only expected to teach the syllabus content but are also expected to teach learners skills and how to cope in life."* Rahmon explained, "*When a teacher is stressed, unhappiness sets in, resulting in the inability*

of the teacher to deliver or to go the extra mile but only go as far as the syllabus covers as prescribed by the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). So, if a teacher is stressed, and he is no longer going the extra mile to help learners, the learners are losing." Rahmon also emphasised that when teachers are stressed, absenteeism becomes a pattern in which the teacher begins to avoid certain classes. He explained, *"In the course of performing my duties as a principal, I have seen teachers coming to school and not going to classes. I have also seen teachers going to classes and just doing nothing. They are merely complying with the instruction that they must be in class but nothing meaningful is taking place in the class."* According to Rahmon, this happens because teachers feel tired and no longer interested in the learners, which is not encouraging to the learners. Thus, learners are the ones losing.

Furthermore, Rahmon narrated a story about his experience of stress and burnout with regards to emotional exhaustion. Rahmon recalled, *"Last year, I had a teacher who recently retired. This teacher was very much effective, always achieving a 100% pass rate in his Grade 12 subjects. But all of a sudden, the teacher is no longer performing and shows no interest in learners. He sometimes avoids going to classes. He was coming late to school only to complete his retirement age (60 years) and then move out of the school system."* Rahmon continued, *"The teacher became disinterested and no longer care about what is happening in classes. In this regard, I knew that the teacher was experiencing stress and burnout but would not divulge the cause of his sudden lack of interest in teaching."*

What Maslach and Leiter (1997) described as depersonalisation, some of the teachers felt that the overload of work had led to a sense of boredom, causing them to withdraw from their learners. When asked if he ever felt like avoiding classes and absenting from school, Juan-Pierre discussed his experience of emotional exhaustion. He said, *"Yes! Sometimes, I don't feel like coming to school, but to sleep the whole day and rest. I simply go to the doctor, whether I'm feeling sick or not, just to have a proof that I have been to a doctor and not to come to school."* Juan-Pierre also described his frustration saying, *"Stress touches my body physically and mentally. My soul is not on teaching anymore. Honestly, I'm not enjoying it these days. My endurance and patience for teaching is dying slowly but surely, and this reflects on learner's achievement. It reflects on me as well because I can't perform optimally."*

4.5.3.2 Theme twelve: Emotional exhaustion and burnout

Most of the teachers interviewed in this research study expressed their inability to carry on with the job of teaching in a passionate way but tend to carry on mechanically due the fact that they have to earn a living. They felt that teaching has become like 'just-to-come-and-earn-a-salary.' To this end, Lanine, an HOD, said, *"I think teachers don't care anymore. They don't have the passion for teaching anymore. They are only there for the salary. A lot of teachers are still in teaching because they can't find something else to do."* Lanine added, *"It is really amazing how teachers get away with things that affect the learners at the end. If they get absent from school, then it is fine by them because the learners are unruly. So, they couldn't care less."*

Juan-Pierre expressed a strong desire to leave the teaching profession three years ago. Even currently he felt that he is still being tempted to leave teaching due to emotional exhaustion. When asked to describe any critical incident that may warrant his decision to leave teaching, Juan-Pierre said, *"Not really, I'm just tired. I need a break now, and I hope to get another job in six months or there about."*

4.5.3.3 Theme thirteen: Physical exhaustion and illness

Many of the participants in this research study identified exhaustion and physical health issues when asked to describe their experience of stress and burnout. Juan-Pierre described his stress and burnout as a phenomenon that is taking its toll on his physical and mental health. Juan-Pierre said*, "I am very tired. I have vitamin tablets that I take on a regular basis. I drink energy drinks just to boost my body as well. I have been to the doctor several times because I have these excruciating pains on my chest and my back, which the doctor diagnosed as stress-related pains."*

Zaiver also described his experience of stress saying, *"Last year, I was booked off for the entire first term because I was suffering from stress. I went for a medical check-up, and the doctor picked it up and disclosed that my blood pressure was very high, and it was suicidal. I wasn't myself. I was feeling down, and lacking energy and concentration. I usually don't look forward to the day. It was a terrible feeling."*

All the participants felt that stress and burnout affect the quality of teaching and learning, as well as teachers' general well-being. Rahmon, a school principal, commented that, *"I have a teacher who is having a stress-related illness which affects his thinking abilities and the way he operates because the teacher tends to stay away from school and is not able to address issues as he should. As a result, he is not coping and there is a backlog of work to the detriment of the learners."*

With regards to the physical effects of stress and burnout on teachers, Drew, an HOD, agreed with Rahmon saying, *"Teachers develop sickness as a result of the stress they are experiencing, which emanates from the excessive workload associated with the teaching profession. Teachers become like 'zombies' as a result of fatigue."* Drew described how a teacher suffered a stroke in the school. Drew said, *"A teacher who recently retired from teaching in our school, was attacked by a stroke here in the school. The teacher was initially very good, but later his performance became very poor. He will not mark learner's books; he would not go to classes; he would stay at the school gate. He lost total interest in teaching."* With regard to the effects of stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning, Drew also described how a Grade 12 teacher was downgraded to a lower grade due to stress, causing his inability to cope. Drew explained, *"The teacher was replaced by another teacher who was not a specialist in the subject, thus placing undue stress on the new teacher."*

Kabelo, a deputy principal, also commented saying, *"Teachers suddenly fell sick when being stressed by the learners. Week-in-week-out, teachers come to ask for permission to visit a doctor, especially towards the end of the school term. Other teachers show anger and frustration and pick up fights with learners. The feeling of being sick, absenting from work, coming late to school and classes, and fighting with learners in class, is all an indication that teachers are stressed."* When asked how stress and burnout affect the quality of teaching and learning, Kabelo said, *"A teacher who regularly fall sick or absent himself from school will not be able to properly and effectively attain curriculum delivery, thus learners suffer. Such teachers only tend to preach to learners and tell stories about their absence and sickness."*

Leah, another deputy principal, agreed with Kabelo saying, *"Often teachers come to me to report that they are sick, and asking for permission to go home. They absent*

themselves and withdraw themselves from other school activities." When asked how stress and burnout affects the quality of teaching and learning, Kabelo said, *"When teachers absent themselves from school, they miss out on important workshops meant for their professional development. Thus, inadequate training can lead to low self-esteem."* Kabelo added, *"Teachers are unable to catch up with the syllabus as a result of frequent absence and sickness. This affects the learners because the teacher tends to overload the learners by squeezing time to cover the syllabus as prescribed."*

Lanine also commented saying*, "Absenteeism in the school is high among teachers, causing them to fall behind in the syllabus and becoming ineffective in the discharge of their duties."* Kabelo, who agreed with Lanine, maintained, *"Teachers always report that they are sick. When they do, they will not be able to come to work."* He added saying, *"It is a common thing that teachers come late to class because they arrive late at school. When teachers arrive late at class and learners are already in class waiting, controlling the learners will become difficult for the teacher."*

4.6 TEACHER COPING STRATEGIES

In this research study, one of the participants described stress as a necessary part of life. According to Raymond, stress has both positive and negative effects, but teachers have to balance it in a positive way. In other words, when teachers focus their attention greatly on the needs of others, the boundary between helping their learners and taking care of themselves tends to become unclear and the self-care element rubs away. Thus, the key to successful coping or taking personal responsibility for stress reduction and burnout prevention is finding a balance between addressing the needs of others and the needs of oneself.

Participants in this research study claimed that they coped with stress differently in terms of the variety of coping strategies available. This supports Mearns and Cain (2003:72) who state that people have different coping strategies and the way people cope with stress will affect the outcomes of that stress. When asked about the coping strategies used in dealing with their stress, participants claimed that self-care is basic to stress management. They all recognised that they had a personal responsibility when it comes to managing their stress in order to prevent burnout. They described

their responses to stress as well as a variety of preventative and coping strategies that they use in mitigating and managing their stress, in order to balance the effects of stress in a positive way. Types of preventative and coping strategies that were described by participants include relaxation and meditation techniques, regular physical exercise and good nutrition, getting enough sleep, maintaining a work-life balance, staying organised, doing self-reflection, spirituality or reading the Bible, and listening to music. Other coping strategies that were mentioned by the participants which are maladaptive in nature include socialising, drinking lots of water, taking stress medication, taking alcohol, smoking, talking to someone (friends, family members, etc.), and withdrawal.

Juan-Pierre described how he copes with stress. He said, *"I don't do physical exercise. I drink and party a lot just to forget and relief my frustration, and to sleep at night as well. In a way, drinking and socialising are helpful in dealing with my stress but then, I'm having a hangover the next day. Drinking for long hours in some weekends makes it difficult for me to come to work the following morning."* Bernhardt described his coping mechanism as self-care and self-retrospection. Bernhardt stated that he exercises a lot in the gym. He commented saying, *"Stress medication is not really helpful for me because it loses its potency after some time. So, I try to sweat it out as much as I can by exercising. When I'm stressed, I can't sleep because my mind keeps working. But when I exercise, I can have a good, deep sleep because I am now tired."* Bernhardt claimed that a psychologist advised that we drink lots of water whenever we are stressed or facing difficulties, and that in so doing we will urinate a lot which is also a good way of taking out the things so that we can feel good and become a better person. Bernhardt also claimed that taking stress medication is not an ideal way of dealing with stress and burnout for him. He added, *"It can only liberate you for a moment but not permanently."*

Ngcobo described the coping strategy that he uses in dealing with his stress as self-retrospection. He said, *"I do self-recapitulation by speaking to myself in order to identify the root cause of my problem or source of my stress. This helps me to see what I am doing wrong. Finding a solution to the problem in order to alleviate my stress becomes imminent the moment I realised what I have done wrong."* Rebeccah describes her coping strategies as *"doing one thing at a time".*

She maintained that she likes doing one thing at a time. She said*, "With regards to school work, there are always a thousand things to do. So, I always tell myself one thing at a time until I work through it all. This actually helps me through my stress times."* Simeon also admitted that she sleeps a lot in order to manage her stress. She recalled*, "I like sleeping a lot. But this morning, I decided to join my husband in the gym to try out exercising. I did some physical exercise this morning, and I must say that I feel refreshed and physically better this morning."*

Cassidy identified multiple self-care strategies that she employs in coping with her stress. She describes her coping mechanism as debriefing. She feels that listening to her favourite music alleviates her stress and enables her to forget about work temporarily. She stated, *"I like listening to old music and then I sing to my music to kind of debrief. This gives me relief from my stress. Also, I like exercising and eating healthily. I like reading the Bible and meditating on the scriptures. This gives me inner joy and relief."* Cassidy's coping strategy of eating healthily supports Horn (2009:161) who states that a common component of stress intervention programmes is a healthy diet with fruit and vegetables, high fibre and freshly cooked food.

Jaykay described his coping strategies as therapeutic consultations. Jaykay said, *"I do make consultations. I usually consult my closest friends, siblings and family, and I always feel relieved after discussing what is bothering me."* Jaykay' statement supports Brannan and Bleistein (2012:532) who state that family and friends provide support by caring to ask questions and listen to stories and experiences. Kabelo also identified relaxation, listening to music and talking to someone as ways of dealing with his stress. Kabelo explained, *"When I am stressed, I like taking a walk with someone, especially my wife, to places where there is peace of mind like malls or restaurants, and we can sit and talk about something other than things that is stressing me."* Jojo also described how he deals with stress. He said, *"I go to soccer training, socialise with people, discuss my problem with others and seek for solutions."* John also tries to exercise. He said, *"I drink lots of water and gym four times a week to distress. I also like sitting alone to refresh my mind."* Tina commented, *"Being alone and playing music cools me down."*

Participants described how staying organised helped managed their stress by setting daily goals and priorities, managing time and schedules. They felt that organisation and time management were important strategies in coping with a stressful work environment. To this end, Cassidy and Kabelo identified staying organised as a way of dealing with stress and burnout. Cassidy emphasised time management. She said, "*You have to be able to organise yourself in order to alleviate the effect of stress. Being organised and managing my time effectively makes a big difference in helping me deal with stress."* Kabelo, who agreed with Cassidy, said, *"Staying organised is the biggest stress reduction strategy for me. Teachers must be hands on in everything. I think that when teachers go to classes prepared and learners are well engaged with work activities, teachers will not be stressed and there will be no problem with teaching and learning."* Bernhardt concurred and said, *"When teachers go to classes prepared, the learning atmosphere is different."*

Agreeably, all the coping strategies mentioned by the participants in this research study supports Bruce's (2009:61) opinion that putting one's health first by means of regular exercise, good nutrition, getting enough sleep, maintaining a work-life balance, reserving time to focus on personal growth and development, and establishing boundaries at work are ways of coping with stress and burnout. Bruce's (2009:61) opinion of ways of coping with stress and burnout also include obtaining a clear description of work duties so as to avoid work overload and role ambiguity, identifying mentors and starting a support network, learning to be more assertive and recognising the value of solitude which gives one space and time to reflect. In view of the stress and burnout related theories employed in this study, the self-determination theory revealed the motivation and action taken by the participants in this research study to meet their need for relief and renewal. While the self-efficacy theory explained how much effort the participants in this research study exerted to stay organised and persevere in the face of stressors, the application of the self-determination theory allowed them to cope with stressors. In addition, the role theory explained how participants in this research study established boundaries at work.

The stress and burnout coping strategies and preventive mechanisms identified by participants in this research study were used as a way of alleviating the effects of stress and burnout on a temporary basis, and to enable them to feel a sense of relief

and renewal. This is in line with Maslach and Jackson (1981) who maintain that it is very difficult for the individual to cope with stress and burnout on his or her own, as coping strategies place the responsibility of managing stress and burnout on the individual. To this end, Maslach and Jackson (1981) added that the actual responsibility should be on the employer to change the stressful situation.

4.7 SCHOOL SUPPORT STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES

In this research study, participants identified a number of contextual factors that causes teacher stress and burnout, and which manifest in their everyday life, namely, having too much to do, and not having enough time and energy to do it or being pressured to do more work than is feasible, having few resources with which to do it, receiving low rewards and little or no recognition, and being wrongly accused, or at the receiving end of criticism. Considering the negative effects of stress and burnout on teachers as well as the quality of teaching and learning, it is important that public secondary schools provide their teachers with a supportive environment and strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, to help teachers who experience stress and burnout to deal with their stress. The actual support that schools provide may take a variety of forms including assistance with understanding and identifying ways to cope with stress, assistance with achieving work outcomes, the provision of information and resources, emotional support, mentorship and collaboration, professional development, administrative support and other stress management resources.

In this research study, data analysis of individual and focus group interviews as well as literature revealed some information about the support structures and strategies at preventive and intervention levels that schools offered to teachers who experience stress and burnout. To this end, a number of teachers interviewed claimed that their schools do not have an adequate support structure in place for them. When asked to describe the support structure and resources that the school offers teachers in dealing with their stress, Bernhardt maintained that *"the management of my school offers support to teachers in the management of their stress but in a limited way or rather in a wrong way".* Jojo, who agreed with Bernhardt, said, *"I will like to be fair on this one. There are no specific resources or programmes that are designed to help us manage*

our stress, but somehow they do help in a way." Jojo described some of the methods used by the senior management thus: *"For example, the principal comforts us in a manner that one can see that he is trying to make us feel better or to help us manage some of our stress. In a friendly manner, the principal asks us if we are okay and how we are feeling during the course of our daily work. So, I can say that somewhere, somehow the school is trying in that sense."*

John corroborated Bernhardt and Jojo's claim saying, *"We have not yet received any proper mechanism or school programme to deal with stress. I think for now we are divided because we are having different groups."* Juan-Pierre noted, *"Though we do not have any proper support structure in the school to help us deal with our stress, there is a stress awareness program which the district department of education is offering to teachers. The stress awareness programme is not a face-to-face session. It is done telephonically, through a toll-free line."* Juan-Pierre added, *"I rarely avail myself to this program because I do not see how helpful it is in alleviating stress and burnout. I rather speak to a psychologist at my own expense than to avail myself to this stress awareness program. Though I tried it out once, but it wasn't too fruitful for me. So, I stopped being part of the awareness program."*

When asked to describe how the school supports their teachers with regards to stress reduction and burnout prevention, many of the senior management team members who were interviewed in this research study corroborated the claims made by teachers that schools do not have adequate support structures in place for teachers. To this end, Kabelo, who is a deputy principal, stated, *"I cannot say that the school have specific programs or resources when it comes to stress deduction and burnout prevention for teachers, but the support that I personally offers my teachers is in the form of appropriate social support like inviting teachers to a social gathering, giving praises and recognitions to deserving teachers, offering talk therapy, and counselling, which I think can serve to reduce uncertainty and stress."* While describing the appropriate social support, Kabelo said, *"Last week, I noticed that the Mathematics and Science teachers who are in my department seemed tired, and out of the blue I said to them let's have a braai. When we were having a braai, these teachers were talking from their heart and begin to jokingly recount their feelings and experiences inside and outside classroom, and those unpleasant experiences were moving out of*

them." Kabelo noticed that the teachers felt relieved and better by talking and laughing over what happened to them in their classes that was not pleasant to them. Kabelo added, *"By way of praise and recognition, I reward teachers who have done something good in the school and who work very hard. I reward them by giving them one thing or another."*

Kabelo narrated how he helped a teacher who experienced stress and was always feeling sick, especially during assessment when teachers have to submit their reports. He said, *"There was this teacher who always absents herself during assessment periods due to illness. After thorough investigation, I found out that the teacher is an alcoholic. Then, I made a deal with the teacher that if she can submit her assessment on time, I will buy her whatever she wants."* Kabelo continued, *"The teacher asked for 'Amarula' and I promised to buy it for her only if she can submit her report on time. Surprisingly, she was the first teacher to submit her report. After this, I counselled her about the danger of drinking, especially while working. Today, she is one of the best teachers in the school."*

Lanine, who is an HOD, also uses a social support mechanism in helping teachers in her department to deal with their stress. Lanine said*, "With regards to stress reduction and burnout prevention strategies, we do not have an adequate support structure in this school. What I did in my previous school was to take teachers who are in my department out for a treat. I tried to motivate my teachers as much as possible to help them feel better."* Lanine added that she also supports her teachers in her capacity as the HOD. She said, *"I also support my teachers by providing them with necessary resources to reduce stress and help to prevent burnout. I ensure that they have materials accessible to them all year round so that they don't have to waste time and energy looking for those resources. I make myself available to them if they have questions or concerns."* Davies, who agreed with Kabelo, said, *"I cannot say that we have a proper support structure to help teachers deal with their stress, but we do help one another particularly in areas of learners' discipline, and how to complete and submit assessment reports."* Drew also commented saying, *"We don't have any support structure or resources in the school that is designed to help teachers deal with their stress. Such resources only exist in the district department of education because*

the district comes to counsel the teachers if there is anything that stresses the teachers."

With regards to training, workshops and professional development programs directed towards helping teachers in dealing with their stress, many of the teachers interviewed admitted that there is professional development programmes organised via the school by the district department of education. Professional development programs in the form of training and workshops was one of the main support structures that emerged as a stress reduction and burnout prevention strategy schools adopted in helping teachers deal with their stress. Drew said, *"Yes, we do have professional development and training programs directed towards helping teachers in dealing with their stress. We have facilitators training for teachers who have difficulties in teaching their subjects. We also have meetings and consultations every Tuesdays and Thursdays with teachers to find out how they are coping and what the school can do to help them."* Zaiver agreed with Drew saying, *"Though we organise on-the-job training for novice and unqualified teachers especially in classroom management, we do not have a proper support structure to help teachers deal with their stress."*

Juan-Pierre mentioned that *"the district department of education organises training programmes for us because we are working for the department via the school. They do give us notice of such workshops."* Jojo added, *"The district department via the school do organise workshops which focuses on classroom management for teachers. As a novice teacher, these workshops help me to deal with some of my frustrations and stress that I experienced in the classroom."*

With regards to processes and procedures which are currently in place to assist teachers in dealing with stress and burnout in their teaching job, some of the senior management team members interviewed in this research study indicated that they have a School Base Support Team (SBST) as well as other processes and procedures like the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) offered to teachers for professional development purposes, and directed towards stress management. To this end, Rahmon, who is a school principal, was quick to say, "*We have policies which are detailed as to how and what to follow in assisting teachers in their teaching job. The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is one of the tools that we use to*

determine issues and contextual factors affecting teachers". Rahmon explained, *"The procedure entails encouraging teachers to indicate what they think is their shortcomings and what help they need in addressing the problem. This is then reported to the district office, which will then develop a developmental plan for a year to help the concerned teachers."* Rahmon added, *"We also have lay counsellors in the school which are provided by the Gauteng Department of Education. The lay counsellors are non-teaching staff who specialises in listening to teachers because some of the teachers' problems are beyond the school scope."*

Leah corroborated Rahmon's comments and emphasised collegial support. She said, *"Generally, we normally have meetings and collegiality which are meant to develop teachers. For example, if a teacher is having a problem with classroom management, we normally call a meeting or organise a workshop to discuss classroom management. We are also in contact with facilitators at the district level. So, if a teacher is having a problem with his or her subject, we involve the facilitators and invite them to come and help."* Leah mentioned that the school has a committee called the School Based Support Team (SBST) that is set up to help both the learners and teachers with their problems, especially with regards to stress reduction burnout prevention. She explained, *"The SBST is a counselling team. If there is a problem with a teacher, especially where the teacher always arrives late to school or absenting him from school, we invite the SBST to intervene by organising a counselling session with the teacher."*

One of the teachers interviewed also corroborated what the School Management Team members said on professional development programs offered by the school. Tina said, *"In a way, we do have professional development programs directed towards stress management. We have IQMS, where our head of department (HOD) visits our classrooms to check how we teach the learners and how well we are coping, and to find out what they can help us with. They do this in order to help us to proffer solutions that will help us to cope with the pressure of the work."*

However, some of the teachers interviewed in this research study claimed that the School Based Support Team is not properly managed, and that they did not recognise it as an effective resource for alleviating or managing teacher stress. John commented

on the School Based Support Team saying, *"The idea of the SBST which is the only program that I know that could provide the much-required support structure for alleviating teacher stress and burnout is not feasible. It is not working in our school. But if the SBST can be properly managed, then I think the stress management program can work smoothly, and everyone can be happy."*

4.8 FUNCTIONAL STRESS AND BURNOUT ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES

In view of the inadequacy of the support structure and resources offered by public secondary schools to teachers, some of the participants interviewed in this research study described organisational factors and resources that may help to alleviate stress and prevent burnout when asked to do so. The teacher participants in the focus group interviews acknowledged that they all have similar challenges, after listening to one another's experiences of stress and burnout. They claimed that viable and reliable ways of alleviating stress and burnout in public secondary schools may emerge if there can be collaborative efforts to solve problems as a group and a type of team building program where they can share their thoughts on issues of stress and burnout. Some felt that the formation of a teacher support group within the school will help. Others are of the opinion that teacher empowerment and parental involvement will help in alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.

Some of the teacher participants felt that accepting what cannot be changed by way of developing perseverance, patience and love for the teaching job will help in reducing stress and burnout. To this end, Teekay said, *"In education, teachers need to develop perseverance and love for the job. I have learnt from this focus group discussion that perseverance is a key factor in this profession because every teacher is having both negative and positive issues with regards to teaching. It is not just smooth for everyone."* Siswe agreed with Teekay saying, *"This discussion taught me that I am not the only one facing challenges in this profession. Teachers need to exercise patience when performing their job."* Kabelo, a deputy principal, expressed a similar sentiment. He said, *"Teachers need to love the teaching profession, and not just see teaching as an easy way to earn money. Those who are called to become teachers do not have stress because they do love the job, regardless."*

In alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, Kabelo further suggested that the government should bring back the idea of 'would be teachers' writing aptitude tests to determine their interest, fitness and willingness to become a good teacher. Kabelo reckoned that there must be some kind of requirements for someone who wants to become a teacher because some people are in teaching because there is nothing else that they can do. Kabelo explained, *"Some people opt for teaching when they discovered that there is no other career path that they can follow. Others are just cheque collectors, and we know them by their performance and the way they conduct themselves and how they go about their job. So, if government can bring back this measure, it will help in alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers."*

With regards to the formation of teacher support groups, participants felt that teaching would not be stressful if teachers worked in a nurturing and supportive environment. To this end, John said, *"For learners to benefit from teachers, and for effective teaching and learning to take place, teachers need to work as a team. A forum or platform where teachers can discuss issues confronting them will also help."* He added, *"I think a committee should be set up to look after our needs and to report our needs at the district level. Also, since teachers come from different backgrounds, there is a need for teachers to understand, accommodate and tolerate one another."* John's comment supports that of De Wert, Babinski and Jones (2003) who report on a number of studies in the United State of America that show that the formation of teacher support groups helped to reduce stress, decreased feelings of isolation and led to an increase in competence and enthusiasm. Furthermore, Hancock and Scherff (2010:335) state that peer support is a statistically significant predictor of attrition risk. Leah expressed a different view on this matter saying, *"Teachers should meet to talk about general problems having bearing on stress and burnout, but teachers are unable to meet regularly because of lack of time."*

Jojo emphasised parental involvement and learners' poor socio-economic background. He said, *"Parents should actively involve themselves in the learning of their children to reduce our stress because most times learners don't do their work and parents are not even aware; and if the learners fail they come to fight with us."* Jojo added, *"We have learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds in public*

secondary schools, but the government is not taking that into consideration. Teachers are expected to do their job regardless of this condition." Cassidy agreed with Jojo saying, *"Learners come from different backgrounds. So, the socio-economic situation of learners must be considered and addressed because it affects learners' academic performance, which also causes stress for teachers."*

When asked to describe ways that teacher stress and burnout can be alleviated, some of participants emphasised the need for stress management courses and workshops for both teachers and school management team members. Drew emphasised that the school management team members must know how to handle teachers with care. She explained, *"Sometimes, if you treat teachers nicely, they do their work nicely. Senior management do not have to place an undue stress on teachers to perform. So, school management team members should be given training and workshopping on how to handle teachers. Also, as people, we have to look after one another."* Leah emphasised external support. She said, *"If we can get external people to come and conduct workshops, this will help a lot."* She further said, *"I think teachers need to be aware of the coping mechanisms, and how to manage their stress. This could be done through workshops."*

Rahmon also commented saying, *"Teaching is a continuous thing because issues changes as they come every year, and the type of learners changes as well. Every year we have different learners and we develop different issues. Consequently, teachers do need stress management courses every year. Such courses must not be a once-off thing. It must be continuous as things develop every year. Teachers need to be up-to-date so as to be able to handle situations."* Rahmon added, *"We need to have, on a quarterly basis, distressing sessions where teachers are invited to talk about team building and collegial efforts. We need such sessions so that teachers can realise that we are not here as individuals."*

With regards to learners' behaviour, Juan-Pierre maintained that one of the ways that teacher stress and burnout can be alleviated is to bring back the cane. He said, *"I'm sorry to say, but when we were in school, we were caned, and we were forced to be disciplined and to respect the teachers. But these days, learners will be in school premises smoking. What must we do?"* Juan-Pierre's comment supports that of

Buchanan (2009:9) who states that gone are the days when teachers commanded respect from learners simply by virtue of their position.

In applying relevant theory to the above empirical findings on functional stress and burnout alleviation strategies, the self-determination theory provided explanation with regards to managing human psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The theory corroborates the empirical findings about the satisfaction which public secondary school teachers need for competence, autonomy and relatedness to exert positive effects on job satisfaction, and thus necessary alleviate stress and burnout among public secondary school teachers.

4.9 SUMMARY

The empirical investigation conducted in this research study revealed valuable information regarding what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, how teacher stress and burnout effect the quality of teaching and learning, how secondary school teachers cope with stress and burnout, what support structures at preventive and intervention levels are offered to teachers, and how stress and burnout can be alleviated among secondary school teachers. Information regarding the experience and personal description of the concept of teacher stress was also obtained from the participants. The researcher described the interview settings and the research sites and presented the demographic information of all the research participants for easy analysis.

With regards to the causes of teacher stress and burnout, data analysis revealed ten main themes, namely, work overload, time pressure, ‘monster subject’ allocation, learner behaviour, lack of autonomy, poor working relationships, poor salaries and benefits, lack of teaching resources, overcrowding of classrooms, and administrative problems. This research study revealed that stress and burnout significantly affect teachers. To this end, three main themes emerged from the analysis of data on the effects of stress and burnout. Participants recognised the effects of stress and burnout on their physical and emotional health, and identified negative emotions such fear, anxiety, exhaustion, frustrations, self-doubt, inadequacy, and low self-esteem as negative effects of stress. In addition, participants identified the poor pass rate of

learners, and poor quality of teaching and learning in general as some of the negative effects of teacher stress and burnout.

With regards to how teachers cope with stress and burnout, participants described various coping strategies, many of which were directed towards unstructured, temporal self-care rather than a structured, permanent program of stress management. In terms of the support structure offered to teachers by the school, this research study revealed that there were inadequate support structures available to teachers. Emphasis was more on the use of social support, and professional training and development which many participants described as ineffective and inadequate. Thus, participants described what stress and burnout alleviation strategies they considered could be helpful in mitigating their stress and burnout.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the purpose of this research study and critically summarises the literature review findings and the empirical study findings with regards to the phenomenon of teacher stress and burnout and ways of alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.

In this chapter, the researcher draws conclusions from the critical discussion of the findings of this research study, providing answers to the research questions. From the conclusion, the researcher offers recommendations for professional practice, and makes suggestions for further study on teacher stress and burnout.

Outlines of the limitations experienced with the carrying out of this research study are also provided in this chapter, ending with concluding remarks that summarise the general sense of this research study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The primary aim and objectives of this research study were to investigate and discover stress and burnout alleviation and management strategies on an organisational and individual level that could result in higher level of job satisfaction and school effectiveness, and lead to general fulfilment and better retention among secondary school teachers. This research study further aimed to determine what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers and then to investigate the implications of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools. Furthermore, it sought to identify the support structures and strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, that secondary schools offer teachers who experienced stress and burnout, as well as the coping strategies that teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout (sections 1.5 and 3.2).

The data collected in this research study, which included face-to-face individual and focus group interviews, participant observation, and other field notes such as research journals and dairies that were kept for the purpose of including the researcher's thoughts and feelings as another research text (Dunne, Pryor & Yates, 2005; Merriam, 2009), was reduced and analysed as discussed in Chapter 4.

5.2.1 Teaching as a stressful occupation

With regard to the prevalence of stress and burnout in the teaching profession, the findings indicate that teachers are more susceptible to stressful and burnout conditions and experience greater levels of stress compared to other professions. Literature and numerous studies such as those conducted by Emsley, Emsley and Seedat (2009), Hastings and Bham (2003), Kamper and Steyn (2006), Kokkinos (2006), and Kyriacou (2001) have all validated and uncovered the prevalence and realities of stress and burnout in the teaching profession. With particular emphasis to the South African context, studies that validated the prevalence of stress and burnout related problems include Monareng (2006) and Peltzer, Shisana, Zuma, Van Wyk and Zungu-Dirwayi (2009). Similarly, it was discovered during this research process that teachers at the two selected public secondary schools are experiencing stress while expectations, demands, and requirements escalate to an extent that emotional exhaustion, as part of the continuum of burnout, has set in. This results in a chain of reaction that will leave teachers being emotionally, mentally and physically drained (section 1.2.2; section 2.3; section 2.6).

According to the research findings of this study, teachers' vulnerability to stressful and burnout conditions are attributable to a number of factors, which include the following (section 2.3):

- Teaching profession is characterised by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations and engagement in extensive face-to-face contact with learners and their problems.

- Teachers feel overwhelmed and often exceed their personal resources while working constantly with troubled learners and colleagues who treat them as dehumanised objects and use depersonalisation language to label them.
- Teachers usually work as advocates and sources of support for learners who are unable to negotiate a system of resources for themselves.
- Teachers transition from being a learner to being a teacher.
- The teaching job requires much, drawing upon the physical, emotional and intellectual resources of teachers, and seldom gives back.
- Teaching involves daily interactions with learners and co-workers coupled with the incessant and fragmented demands of teaching, and the unrealistic ideals and high expectations placed on teachers.

From the above, the high susceptibility of teachers to stress and burnout conditions explains why teachers see teaching as a stepping stone or a 'waiting place', only venturing into teaching when they have nothing else to do or another career path that they can follow, but would leave to pursue careers that they feel are respected and are better paying than teaching when an opportunity comes (section 2.3; section 4.8).

5.2.2 The concept of stress and burnout

From literature review findings, there are many approaches to defining the concept of stress. Research findings indicated that stress occurs when the demands placed on the individual exceed the coping ability of the person, and it is used to describe negative feelings resulting from work that may include anger, frustration, tension, and depression that threatens an individual's sense of well-being. While some researchers viewed stress as an unconscious preparation to fight or flee that a person experiences when faced with a demand, others viewed stress as a holistic transaction between the individual, a stressor, and the environment resulting in a response. To this end, research findings indicated that teacher stress is the personal reaction of teachers to extreme demands or other types of work pressure placed on them or emanates from certain aspects of their work as teachers, resulting in unpleasant and negative emotions such as anger, tension, frustration, nervousness, and depression (section 1.7.2; section 2.6).

With regard to the definition of stress, the empirical study revealed how participants at the two selected research sites personally viewed the construct of teacher stress. Though participants expressed that stress is a very difficult concept to define, they viewed stress as the feeling of not being oneself, especially in a negative sense. They also viewed teacher stress as challenges which teachers face every day in the course of teaching the learners, or the teachers' inability to cope holistically (section 4.5.2).

However, there is relative consensus in the literature review findings and the empirical study findings regarding the difficulty of finding a universal definition of the term 'stress'. From the empirical study finding, it is apparent that stress is a complex phenomenon that is very difficult to define, and which comes in many ways (section 4.5.2). To this end, literature summarised the difficulty in defining stress thus: "Everybody knows what stress is and nobody knows what it is.", and succinctly defined stress as the body's 'alarm reaction' to demands made upon it. In this research study, it was discovered that the complexity and difficulty of finding a universal definition of the term 'stress', stems from the different implications stress has for each individual. In this regard, the way stress affects us individually depends upon the strength of our individual bodies, and on our personal ability to cope (section 2.5.1; section 4.5.2).

Similarly, operationally defining the construct of burnout has been a complex and controversial task, becoming a subject of intense debates about its viability as a measurable construct resulting in a variety of definitions being put forward. Literature indicated that long exposure to chronic stress ultimately results in burnout, and defined burnout as a three-dimensional syndrome consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal achievement that results from chronic stress in interpersonal relationships (section 1.2.4; section 2.7).

However, the individual and focus group interviews yielded valuable information on participants' experience of stress and burnout with regards to what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, what kind of support structure and resources are offered to teachers, what coping mechanisms teachers use to reduce and manage their stress and burnout and what functional stress and burnout alleviation strategies they use.

5.2.3 Causes of teacher stress and burnout

On the one hand, the literature review findings reveal that a stressor can be short-term or long-term in nature. While those considered as short-term in nature include noise and a threat or unsafe events, stressors involving ongoing stressful situations are considered as long-term stressors. On the other hand, a stressor can be general or work related. General causes of stress that were found in the literature include threat of death or injury, death of a close family member, threat of a person's sense of worth, and threat to fairness. Causes of teacher stress and burnout found in the literature that were considered as work related include the fundamental nature of the teaching job itself, pay and benefits, job security, work-life imbalance, unsupportive relationships with colleagues and superiors, isolation, resources, and communication. Others include large class size, job ambiguity and role conflict, lack of parental support, continuous work overload and excessive paperwork, learner misbehaviour, feeling unvalued, lack of autonomy, poor working conditions, time pressure, and unsatisfactory school management and administration (section 2.10).

For teachers at secondary school level, literature findings indicated that poor learner behaviour such as hostility towards teachers, lack of interest in learning, school rule violation, and the anxiety of not being familiar with the subject matter are main predictors of teacher stress and burnout. To this end, literature categorised teacher stress and burnout into factors directly linked to the teaching profession, to administrative factors related to school organisation and administration, and to teachers' individual differences in coping with stress (section 2.10).

In the South African context, the literature review findings and surveys such as those conducted by Stofile and Green (2007) emphasised the pressure caused by the rate of change in society and the reforms that have been introduced since 1994, and the demand for improved excellence juxtaposed against the ill-equip schools in meeting the workload demands of a 21st century teaching and learning as causes of teacher stress and burnout. It was found in the literature that teachers generally experience considerable stress caused by factors inside and outside the classroom. Literature also reveals that both experienced and inexperienced teachers generally experience

considerable stress on a basis caused by factors inside and outside the classroom (section 1.2.3; section 2.10).

With particular emphasis on factors leading to teacher stress and burnout, the literature review findings revealed factors arising from individual, organisational and transactional origins. Individual or biographical factors, which include the influence of age, gender, marital status, self-esteem and self-efficacy, years of experience, number of children, ethnic group, and personality characteristics, namely anxiety, negative attitudes and tolerance of individuals, are those factors that are unique to each teacher (section 2.11.1). Organisational factors are features that are unique to the school system in which each teacher works, and include organisational climate, school climate, school performance, work demands, career development, job overload, job control, role ambiguity and role conflict, poor interpersonal relationships, low salaries, job insecurity and home-work interface (par 2.11.2). Other organisational factors include insufficient teacher preparation or training, unpleasant working conditions, lack of job satisfaction, lack of social support, poor quality of school facilities, and lack of control or autonomy over work environment (section 2.11.2). Transactional or environmental factors are the result of the intersection of personal and work-related factors, and include teachers' judgments of learner misbehaviour, school violence, perceptions of organisational leadership style, norms of learner-teacher interactions, teacher self-esteem and self-efficacy, internal rewards and job satisfaction (section 2.11).

With the exception of wrong subject allocation which appears to be a new finding not noted in any of the previous literature, many of the literature review findings regarding causes of teacher stress and burnout are consistent with the empirical study findings. The empirical study findings revealed ten major themes, as contextual factors, that cause stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. The ten contextual factors that cause great stress among secondary school teachers are work overload, time pressure, wrong subject allocation, learner behaviour, lack of autonomy, poor working relationships, poor salaries and benefits, lack of teaching resources, overcrowding of classrooms, and administrative problems (section 4.5.1). To this end, the empirical study findings regarding the causes of teacher stress and burnout are consistent across the literature with some studies showing evidence of these findings

as predictors of stress, and consequent burnout, and adding a level of depth and validation to the literature review findings. The findings in respect of the contextual factors that cause stress and burnout among secondary school teachers are summarised as follows:

The first theme that emerged in this research study in relation to what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers was that teachers were experiencing work overload. This particular theme resonated in all of the interview data, proving that teacher workloads are indeed a factor associated with the development of stress and burnout. Teachers were asked not only to do their actual job of teaching in the classroom, but they were also assigned a multitude of extra duties and an overwhelming number of responsibilities, including the large amount of lesson planning, huge administrative work, excessive filing and paperwork, and documentations. Teachers are saddled with extensive report writing, including reports explaining what causes a particular learner or group of learners to fail, reports for learners who frequently come late or are absent from school, and reports explaining why they fail to meet submission deadlines should they not. This is a finding that was not noted in any of the literature review findings. In addition, teachers are responsible for marking, assessing, generating and analysing learners' results; arranging extra classes for learners during weekends and holidays, meeting with parents and providing feedback to parents on learners' performance. Despite the breakdown of learning culture in public secondary schools, interestingly teachers are held accountable for learners' success and achievement (section 4.5.1.1).

The anxiety of not being familiar with the subject content was a major cause of teachers' stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Teachers expressed that this particular factor formed the foundation upon which all other stress factors are based. Participants highlighted the stressful nature of teaching a subject that they do not know or which they are not qualified to teach, but which the school management often asked them to do in order to balance the school workload, especially when experiencing a shortage of teachers. Time pressure and deadlines were perceived to be a major contributor to stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Participants felt that the teaching job itself is stressful due to time pressure and deadlines. They expressed concern about the existing imbalance between the stated

aims of the curriculum and the absoluteness of teaching the prescribed syllabus within a period of time. To this end, teachers felt that the syllabus is so packed and the instruction time for teaching certain subjects is meagre for effective teaching and learning to take place (section 4.5.1.2; section 4.5.1.3).

Learners' disruptive behaviour and lack of interest in their learning were also major factors contributing to stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Teachers felt that indiscipline among learners is the greatest problem and a major source of stress for them. They highlighted the stressful nature of coping with learners who refused to follow instructions in the classroom and those who were argumentative, confrontational and disruptive. Furthermore, teachers expressed concern about the defiant and criminal tendencies of learners, resulting in teachers being assaulted and verbally abused by disgruntled learners. In addition, teachers felt stressed by their perceived sense of powerlessness with regards to maintaining discipline and control in the classroom and in the school in general, causing the teachers to walk a thin line between maintaining discipline in the school and not estranging any of the learners to the point where a complaint is lodged with the provincial department against them. Similarly, teachers felt that their maginalisation and exclusion from the decision making process, especially on matters that concern teaching and learning, causes stress and burnout for them. They expressed their dissatisfaction about their inability to express themselves, but merely have to follow directives issued by the school management (section 4.5.1.4; section 4.5.1.5).

Poor communication and unpleasant working relationships between senior management and others at work were also perceived to be a major contributor to stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Participants felt that the working conditions in the school, which is characterised by lack of trust and respect, gossip, isolation, hostility, hatred, apathy, anxiety, competitiveness insecurity, and a toxic working environment, are not conducive for the creation of supportive relationships, thus causing stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. Generally, they felt that their collegial relationships were negative and unsatisfactory. Teachers also expressed concern about the persistence workplace bullying and abuse of teachers by senior management as well as by officials of the Department of Education. They expressed that many of them had been victims of workplace bullying

or had witnessed bullying incidents targeted at fellow teachers. Participants felt that their salary is far from being market-related, and thus inimitable to what is obtainable in the corporate world. They also expressed that their salaries and benefits do not match the magnitude of challenges and stress that they experience compared to workers employed in the corporate world. In addition, teachers expressed that there was no incentive to improve qualifications because highly qualified and experienced teachers earned the same salary as novice teachers with little or no teaching experience. All of the teachers expressed discontent regarding their lack of career prospects and growth in the teaching profession (section 4.5.1.6; section5.1.7).

Teachers also mentioned the lack of adequate teaching resources and the problems surrounding teaching in an environment that is not conducive for teaching and learning viz-a-viz lack of workbooks for learners to work with, overcrowding of classrooms, and shortage of furniture, causing learners to scramble for chairs to sit on, thus resulting in a sense of decreased accomplishment and stress. Teachers also felt that their classrooms were too small and cramped, and that learners' disruptive behaviour has so much to do with overcrowding of classrooms. The administrative staff, whose function was to complement and work cooperatively through the provision of administrative materials and equipment, were generally viewed as unsupportive, thus making an already stressful working environment even more stressful. Teachers also felt stressed by financial problems, family issues, and marital relations (section 4.5.1.8; section 4.5.1.9; section 4.5.1.10).

5.2.4 Effects of teacher stress and burnout

Literature review findings revealed that the implications of stress and burnout on education are critical and extremely damaging for teachers, learners, and the quality of education in general. Studies conducted by Olivier and Venter (2003) indicated that stress and burnout are becoming endemic, affecting the emotional, physical and mental health of teachers, which results in a hampering of learners' process of proper learning. Literature findings show that teacher stress and burnout affects the teacher workplace externally which can be measured through teacher attrition and shortages, and, internally, for teachers who remain in the profession, fatigue may lead to ineffectiveness and burnout that inadvertently harms classrooms and the schools,

which are measurable through teachers' reduced job satisfaction and commitment to the teaching profession.

Literature and studies such as those conducted by Ransdell, Grosshan and Trunnell (2004), Hasting and Bham (2003), Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001), Goleman (2008), Freudenberger (1974), Oosthuizen and van der Bijil (2007), Bauer, Stamm, Virnich, Wissing, Muller, Wirsching, and Schaarschmidt (2006), and Toppinen-Tanner, Ojajrvi, Vaananen, Kalimo and Jappinen (2005) revealed the following effects of teacher stress and burnout (section 1.2.5; section 2.12).

- Decline in student learning and teaching quality, constant late coming and high rates of teacher absenteeism, high teacher turnover, and teachers' desire to leave the profession.
- Increasing rate of early or premature retirement due to psychiatric and psychosomatic diagnosis, resulting in an opportunity lost for the health of the teaching profession as well as teacher shortages that seem to annually plague many schools.
- Increase in teacher attrition, resulting in instability in the learners' learning process and a disruption in schooling as well as the inability to recruit qualified individuals for teaching positions.
- Problems in teachers' personal achievement, emotional exhaustion, tendency to depersonalize others, and lowered self-esteem, resulting in dissatisfaction and a lessening of interest and commitment to the job which in turn affects learner performance.
- Mental and behavioural ailments, resulting in mental health problems such as depression and a decreased mental functioning.
- Lowered teachers' moral, resulting in teachers' increased use of alcohol and drugs, a poor and negative school study climate, and failing to attain educational objectives.
- Increase in learner dropout rates.

Many of the above literature review findings regarding the effects of stress and burnout are consistent with the empirical study findings. Empirical study findings revealed that

stress and burnout affect the quality of teaching and learning as well as the teachers themselves. Teachers expressed that their experience of stress and burnout brings about negative emotions and physical health issues such as anger, frustration, withdrawal, irritation, impatience, worry, emotional and physical exhaustion, physical illness, and cognitive impairment, which affects various aspects of teachers' lives, particularly the way they think and operate and their ability to focus on immediate and future tasks at hand (section 4.5.3). Teachers felt that nervousness and unhappiness sets in when they are stressed, resulting in them being tense in front of learners and causing them not to be able to deliver or to go the extra mile in helping the learners with their learning, thus the learners are losing.

Teachers also expressed that absenteeism becomes a pattern in which teachers begin to withdraw from their learners or avoid classes and participation in school activities, and no longer care about what is happening in classes when experiencing stress and burnout. Teachers also felt that the feeling of being sick, coming late to school and classes, and fighting with learners in classes as well as the inability to properly attain curriculum delivery are all resulting effects of stress and burnout, thus learners suffer. Teachers also expressed their intention to leave the teaching profession due to emotional exhaustion but are still in teaching because they cannot find something else to do, and that they have to earn a living (section 4.5.3).

5.2.5 Reduction and management strategies for teacher stress and burnout

Literature review findings revealed that the alleviation and management of teacher stress and burnout should occur at both organisation and individual level in order to achieve school effectiveness and quality of education in general, and equally maintain teacher well-being. While reducing and managing teacher stress and burnout at individual level relates to the coping strategies that teachers use, reducing and managing teacher stress and burnout at organisational level relates to the support structure that secondary schools offers teachers.

Literature review findings and research studies such as those conducted by Zhang and Zhu (2007), Maslach and Jackson (1981), Maslach and Leiter (1997) suggested the following support structure or pro-active organisational interventions and

techniques which represent a more constructively viable approach for alleviating and managing teacher stress and burnout among secondary school teachers (sections 1.2.6; 2.13.2):

- Improving the organisational structure to make the workplace more efficient and clarifying the task-role expectations communicated to teachers.
- Offering support groups and providing upper-level management training for school management team members to provide teachers with more support.
- Providing a strong social support network for teachers, viz-a-viz the provision of a caring and nurturing environment and making teachers feel valued and cared for; providing a concrete physical and material assistance for teachers; and the provision of facts, advice and guidance.
- Encouraging positive teacher-school manager relationships as part of a supportive school climate.
- Providing long-term pastoral care and comprehensive induction and mentoring programs for new teachers to increase their self-efficacy and get them to stay in the profession.
- Providing regular in-service training and continuous professional development for updating and upgrading teachers' understanding of the teaching profession to help them to stay in the teaching profession.
- Creating a more engaging workplace which provides teachers with a realistic workload, a degree of autonomy and control over their work, acceptable working conditions, fair treatment, the resources to do their jobs, and market-related salaries.
- Creating a supportive working environment in a very collegial manner whereby teachers' values, opinions and voices are respected and heard, and in which teachers assume great autonomy and empowerment as professionals.
- Providing psychological counselling services and in-house employee assistance programs (EAPs) which focus on helping teachers to solve work-related problems, prevention of illness and distress, teaching teachers' relaxation and meditation techniques, and helping teachers to deal with transitions that may occur in their lives.

- Providing opportunities for teachers' personal and professional achievement and success.
- Organisational and environmental changes that foster support from school managers, especially with respect to learner discipline.

In light of the above literature review findings with regard to support structures, teachers felt overwhelmingly unsupported, expressing that their school management are more interested in micro-managing them than in being supportive. Teachers also expressed that their schools do not have adequate support structures or proper mechanisms in place for them, resulting in most of the teachers seeking support outside their workplace. Teachers expressed that there are no specific resources or programs that are designed to help them deal with stress and burnout (section 4.7). However, many of the teachers admitted that stress awareness and professional development programs in the form of training and workshops organised via the school by the district department of education was the main support structure that their schools adopted in helping teachers deal with their stress and burnout. In addition, the participants' schools also adopted on-the-job training which focused on classroom management for novice teachers, and facilitators' training for teachers who have difficulties in teaching their subjects (section 4.7).

Furthermore, teachers admitted that their schools have School Based Support Team (SBST) as well as the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which schools offer to teachers for professional development purposes and directed towards stress reduction and burnout prevention. The SBST provides an intervention program by organising counselling sessions for teachers who are not coping or experiencing stress and burnout (section 4.7). Another support structure offered to teachers in this research study included collegial support which is also meant to develop teachers. The teachers expressed that the IQMS and the SBST are not effective resources for alleviating or managing their stress and burnout. Empirical study findings further revealed that individual school managers, in their personal capacity, use appropriate social support mechanisms to help teachers in their department in dealing with stress and burnout. The appropriate social support offered to teachers by individual school managers include inviting teachers to a social gathering, giving praises and

recognition to deserving teachers, offering counselling and talk therapy, taking teachers out for a treat, providing necessary stress reduction resources, providing accessible materials, making themselves available, and providing help in areas like learner discipline and completion of report for submission (section 4.7).

At the individual level, the type of coping strategies that teachers can use to deal with stress and burnout varies with individual experience of stress and burnout. However, literature review findings and studies such as those conducted by Howard and Johnson (2004) and Austin, Shah and Muncer (2005) revealed the following coping strategies which teachers may employ in dealing with their stress and burnout (section 1.2.6; section 2.13.1):

- Creating a balance between work and leisure time;
- Showing resilience and creativity, and developing a strong moral purpose in the teaching profession as well as a strong belief in one's ability to control a given situation;
- Becoming more involved in the teaching profession and taking responsibility for their own empowerment through conference attendance, regular workshops and seminar participation, book and journal article reading, mentoring, publishing and research, and furthering education to stay up-to-date within the field;
- Establishing a positive working relationship and connectedness with learners, colleagues and school managers, and maintaining nurturing healthy connections with family, friends, and social groups;
- Exercising self-control, planning and active problem solving, seeking social support, confronting the problem and minimising exposure or distancing oneself from stressful situations;
- Reflecting upon and accurately labelling their emotional experiences, identifying inappropriate patterns of judgment of classroom and school events as well as keeping a daily teaching journal as a means of reflecting on one's experiences and emotions;
- Engaging in a wholesome discipline of constructive routines which include physical strategies such as relaxation, listening to music and talking to

friends, spending time alone, physical and aerobic exercise, healthy eating habits, healthy interpersonal relationships, effective time management, being alert to the aesthetics of nature, cognitive behaviour skills, assertiveness, life-style changes, and social support programs.

In light of the above literature review findings, participants in this research study expressed that they cope with stress and burnout differently, but all admitted that self-care and self-retrospection or self-recapitulation as well as finding a balance between addressing the needs of others and the needs of oneself are basic to mitigating and coping with the experienced stress and burnout. It is important to say that many of the literature review findings with regards to the coping strategies that teachers employed in dealing with stress and burnout are consistent with the empirical study findings. However, participants in this research study added spirituality or reading the Bible and meditating on the scripture to draw hope and joy from the world of God, staying organised and going to classes prepared, establishing boundaries at work, getting enough sleep, drinking a lot of water, drinking alcohol and smoking as some of the coping strategies they use in dealing with stress and burnout (section 4.6). Furthermore, participants felt that obtaining a clear description of work duties so as to avoid work overload and role ambiguity is another way of coping with stress and burnout. Some of the participants felt that taking stress medication is not an ideal way dealing with stress and burnout because it can only induce relief for a short moment (section 4.6).

Considering the inadequacy of the support structure and resources offered to teachers, participants in this research study suggested the following functional strategies for reducing and managing stress and burnout among secondary school teachers (section 4.8):

- Encouraging collaborative efforts to solve problems as a group, and team building programs where teachers can share their thoughts on stress and burnout related issues.
- Formation of teacher support groups where teachers can share information and resources.

- Encouraging teacher empowerment and parental involvement in the learning of their children.
- Teachers need to develop and demonstrate perseverance, patience, tolerance and love for the teaching job, and accept what cannot be changed as all teachers are faced with similar challenges.
- Government re-introducing aptitude tests to determine prospective teachers' genuine interest, fitness and willingness to become a good teacher.
- Government addressing the poor socio-economic situation of parents and learners in particular.
- Designing special stress management courses and workshops for teachers, particularly for senior management members and district department of education officials to equip them on how to handle teachers in a more professional manner.
- Amending the constitution to not only centre around the learners, but also protecting the teachers and introducing greater disciplinary measures against school violence and learner misbehaviour.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Sufficient research has shown that an effective teacher is one of the single most important factors responsible for learning (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood & Hamilton, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek &Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Schacter & Thum, 2004), yet the teaching profession is characterised by and fraught with many problems that makes many teachers find the challenges of being a professional educator in today's schools difficult and stressful. The challenges that public secondary school teachers face on a daily basis are overwhelmingly frustrating, indicating apparent symptoms of teacher burnout (section 1.1; section 2.3). The research questions for this study was aimed at and focused on ways of alleviating stress and burnout among secondary school teachers, and as such the conclusions of this study focused on providing viable and meaningful answers to each of the study's five research questions.

The review of relevant literature and the data collected from individual and focus group interviews as well as participant observation have provided meaningful answers to this

research question. The research questions and discovered answers for this study follow.

1. What factors causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers?

The inherent dissatisfactions in the teaching profession are self-evident. The teaching profession is riddled with ambiguity and confusion and is characterised by poor working conditions, work overload, unfair treatment, and a high rate of change and reformation (section 2.10; section 5.2.3). This research study has shown that public secondary school teachers experience high stress levels and are susceptible to stress factors and possible burnout from a variety of sources, which literature categorised as long-term and shorter-term or general and work-related stressors (par 2.10; par 5.2.3). Stressors are all-inclusive, emanating from biographical, organisational and transactional factors (section 2.10; section 5.2.3). Through this research process and study, one can conclude that both experienced and inexperienced public secondary school teachers generally experience stress and burnout on a daily basis caused by factors inside and outside the classroom (section 2.10; section 5.2.3). Key stressors that are work-related include large class sizes, job ambiguity and role conflict, learner misbehaviour, lack of autonomy and feeling unvalued, job overload, unpleasant working conditions, unsatisfactory management and administration, poor quality of school facilities, continuous work overload and excessive paperwork, time pressure, poor interpersonal relationships, low salaries and job insecurity, school climate and school performance, lack of parental support, inadequate teacher training and lack of professional development. Those factors considered as transactional factors causing teacher stress and burnout include school violence, perception of organisation leadership style, teacher self-esteem and self-efficacy, internal reward and job satisfaction (section 2.10; section 5.2.3). Furthermore, there are factors that are unique to each teacher such as the influence of age, gender, marital status and years of experience, content area taught, number of children, ethnic group, and personality characteristics (sections 2.10; 5.2.3).

The ten major themes, namely work overload, unrealistic time constraints, unruly learner behaviour, lack of autonomy, poor working relationships, low salaries, a

consistent lack of resource material, overcrowding of classroom, administrative problems, and wrong subject allocation that emerged from the empirical study findings added a level of depth and validation to the literature review findings, with regard to the causes of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. However, wrong subject allocation, as a new finding, resonated in this research study. Teachers expressed that they are often being asked to teach subjects which they are not qualified to teach in order to balance out the school workload, causing them a great deal of stress and burnout. In view of the above contextual factors causing stress and burnout, one can conclude that teachers working in public secondary schools do experience a range of stressors of a consistent and prolonged nature that can lead to the experience of burnout (section 4.5).

2. What is the effect of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning?

This research study has shown that teacher stress and burnout can reduce the quality of teaching and learning (section 2.12; section 5.2.4). Firstly, literature measured the effect of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning externally through teacher attrition and shortages. In this regard, teacher attrition and shortages make it difficult for schools to attract and develop effective teachers, resulting in an instability and a hampering of learners' process of proper learning, and a disruption in schooling as well as learners being routinely taught by the least experienced, least effective teachers (section 2.12; section 5.2.4). One can conclude that teacher attrition drains financial resources and diminishes the quality of education. Research reveals that it is possible for teachers to suffer from stress and burnout but still remain engaged. For teachers who remain in the profession and carry on mechanically, literature measured the effect of teacher stress and burnout through teachers' reduced job satisfaction and commitment to the teaching profession. In this regard, teachers' dissatisfaction and a lessening of interest and commitment will result in high absenteeism, constant late coming, lowered personal achievement, lowered self-esteem, depersonalisation, depression, decreased mental function, teachers' inability to perform at consistently high levels, and emotional exhaustion, which in turn affects instructional time and the education that the learners receive and, ultimately, learner performance (section 1.2.5; section 2.12; section 5.4).

The empirical study findings with regard to the effect of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning is consistent with literature review findings. Participants expressed their intention to leave the teaching profession, but continue with teaching mechanically because they cannot find something else to do, resulting in job dissatisfaction and teachers being disengaged from the school or profession with a consequent loss of pedagogical knowledge. To this end, regular absenteeism, constant feeling of being sick, withdrawal and class avoidance, inability to go the extra mile and to properly attain curriculum delivery become a pattern in the school, and thus learners suffer (section 4.5.3; section 5.2.4). One can conclude that teacher stress and burnout is a problem and constitutes one of the greatest threats to teacher retention and effective teaching and learning (Nagel & Brown, 2003).

3. What support structure and strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, do secondary schools offer teachers who experience stress and burnout?

Effective teaching cannot take place unless teachers are supported both academically and administratively. This poses a challenge for teachers working in public secondary schools as the currently existing system does not seem to take cognisance of teachers' needs. Though literature provides a wide range of suggested strategies, at preventative and intervention levels, for reducing the effects of teacher stress and burnout, as discussed in Chapter 2, teachers in this research study expressed that their school management are more interested in micro-managing them than being supportive. This research study revealed that secondary school teachers experience a lack of support from school management and are often excluded from decision making structures (section 4.7; section 5.2.5).

However, the support structure and strategies that public secondary schools adopted in helping teachers deal with their stress and burnout included stress awareness and professional development programs in the form of facilitator training for teachers who have difficulties in teaching their subjects; and on-the-job training for novice teachers. Others include the introduction of School Based Support Teams (SBST) and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which provides interventions in the

form of collegial support, and counselling sessions for professional development purposes. School managers also provide appropriate social support mechanisms such as giving praise and recognition to deserving teachers, providing required material, and inviting teachers to a social gathering as a way of helping teachers deal with their stress. One can conclude that the support structures that public secondary schools offered to teachers who experience stress and burnout are woefully inadequate (section 4.7; section 5.2.5).

4. What coping strategies do teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout?

Research has shown that prolonged and unrelieved stress can result in burnout. There are various coping strategies mentioned in this research study that secondary school teachers use to manage stress. These strategies include balancing between work and leisure time, believing in one's ability to control a given situation, furthering education to stay up-to-date with the demands of the teaching profession, spending time with family and friends, exercising self-control, prioritising work and organising time effectively, following a healthy diet and ensuring adequate sleep, meditating and physical exercise (section 2.13.2; section 5.2.5).

The empirical study revealed additional coping strategies which include reading the Bible and meditating on the scripture, going to classes prepared, drinking a lot of water, smoking and drinking alcohol, and obtaining a clear description of work duties. One can conclude that, while public secondary school teachers do attempt to cope with stress and burnout, they do not always appear to do so in a structured or successful manner (section 4.7).

5. What are the strategies on an organisational and individual level to alleviate teacher stress and burnout?

Through the interview process, participants in this research study expressed their personal suggestions, interventions and ideas that can prevent or alleviate stress and burnout among secondary school teachers. The overarching theme emerging from the research is that there is a pressing need for effective, workable support structures.

Specifically identified were empowerment, parental involvement, effective management and leadership, greater discipline in schools, uplifting the socio-economic status of parents, re-introducing aptitude tests for 'would-be' teachers, formation of teacher support groups in schools, promoting collaboration, and fostering team building programs. Participants also suggested that teachers should learn to develop perseverance, patience, tolerance and love, and accepting what they cannot change (section 4.7).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to prevent and alleviate teacher stress and burnout so that effective teaching and learning can take place in public secondary schools, all the components of an educational system should be aimed at creating an atmosphere in which teachers can work at their best and a setting where learners can expand their horizons. Therefore, to combat teacher stress and burnout, and to dramatically improve the climate and motivation and performance levels of public secondary school teachers, all stakeholders, namely, teachers, school managers, and provincial department officials must fully utilize the following recommendations for sustainable, positive change:

- Pre-service programs should provide those choosing to enter the teaching profession with realistic experiences as well as outlining what a beginning teacher can expect to face during the first few years of teaching.
- Pre-professional education programs should provide teachers with information about teacher stress and burnout as well as how to cope with them.
- Schools should provide a comprehensive induction program, which includes basic induction and mentoring in order to increase individual teachers' self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Schools have an obligation to create a teacher-guided system by providing all beginning teachers with a mentor, which allows new teachers to gain experience and advice in one setting, and to receive personalised attention with matters pertaining to teaching as well as other professional issues.

- Schools should provide training for mentor teachers on ways to model stress and burnout intervention and management (Nagel & Brown, 2003).
- Schools should provide regular in-service training and continuous professional development for updating and upgrading teachers' understanding of the teaching profession in order to encourage them to remain in the teaching profession (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008).
- In view of the major stressors identified in this research study which can cause teacher stress and burnout, it follows that schools can also determine what leads to a reduction in stress and burnout. These may include improving working conditions, providing support network for teachers, empowering teachers and allowing teachers to be part of major decisions, recognising teachers' personal and professional achievements so as to increase teaching efficacy, focusing on increasing teachers' self-esteem, providing adequate physical facilities, and providing clear job expectations.
- Delegating power and responsibilities to teachers in order to establish them as productive team members who can take the burden off the school managers, thus increasing their self-efficacy and sense of belonging (Nagy, 2006).
- Developing supportive environments that encourage the promotion of health, healthy lifestyles and well-being as a precondition for teaching and learning success. This may include improvement in the physical work environment; class size reductions; giving positive praise and recognition; relief from increasing workloads and changes to deadlines; improved flow of communication; greater levels of teacher participation in planning and decision making; building a sense of collegiality.
- Making use of social workers and/or guidance counsellors in providing counselling services for teachers experiencing high levels of stress to cover aspects of preventing and/or treating stress and burnout as part of their contribution to schools, and creating wellness programs to provide teachers with opportunities to improve their health status through a variety of health assessments, education, and activities in order to help teachers cope more effectively with the outcomes of stress.

- Providing workshops on burnout and training in emotional intelligence, team building, time management, stress management, exercise and relaxation techniques, as well as life skills education to empower teachers in engaging and dealing with life and its challenges (Slocum & Hellriegel, 2007).
- Schools should engage in a constructive and pro-active conflict management by clarifying the task-role expectations communicated to teachers (Nelson & Quick, 2006).
- Teachers need to focus on building positive relationships with learners as the means to prepare them for universities, colleges and other career opportunities. Also, Department of Education officials and School Management Team members need to build positive relationships with teachers and create informal opportunities to build personal connections.
- Schools should recruit only those who are qualified and passionate about teaching to change the perception of people viewing teaching as a stop-gap form of employment (Bruce, 2009). In addition, schools should foster professionalism by allocating right, teachable subjects to teachers.
- Incentives for teachers to supplement their income as well as rewards for extra effort and responsibilities should be provided by schools.
- More drastic measures are required to assist in maintaining discipline and combating crime, as well as reducing the occurrence of school violence and workplace bullying.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The data collected in this study produced information that can bring about positive change to school climate and motivation levels of teachers serving as a foundation for further studies in understanding the complexities of the phenomenon of teacher stress and burnout. This supports Kamper and Steyn (2006) who state that when future studies on teacher stress and burnout are considered, it is important to consider possible focuses of research that could lead to a deeper understanding of the teacher stress and burnout phenomenon. To this end, the following suggestions are made for further research:

- Research on coping should examine why teachers do not follow coping strategies when they are aware of their existence.
- Further research should be conducted to develop a human resource costing and accounting model for the South African environment to effectively determine the financial implications of absenteeism and turnover intentions due to occupational stress (Mostert, Monstert, Nell, & Rothman, 2008).
- Future studies in South Africa should determine the suicide tendencies, teacher victimization and the relationship of these factors to teacher stress, since statistics with regard to this are limited (Oosthuizen & Van der Bijl, 2007).
- The teacher environment should be further studied to see how the environment supports or constrains the efforts to cope with stress.
- Further research should be conducted on the influence of basic personality characteristics and structure on an individual's susceptibility to stress and burnout in the teaching profession.
- Further research should be conducted on the influence of emotions on the work and lives of public secondary school teachers (Cowie, 2011:236).
- The effects of peer mentoring and the types of effective mentoring programs as well as the benefits to the mentor and mentees should be researched.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research study focuses only on the causes of stress and burnout among public secondary school teachers, the effects of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning, support structures and coping strategies that public secondary school teachers used in dealing with stress and burnout, and how stress and burnout can be alleviated among public secondary school teachers in South Africa.

The participants who took part in this research study were school managers and teachers in urban public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province, and the outcome of this research study might be different if participants from rural schools were included in this study. Thus, this places a limitation on the generalisation that could be made on the findings of this study. In addition, the research study,

essentially, relies on the self-reported information of the participants, and it must be kept in mind that the findings were obtained from a relatively small sample of teachers in two South African schools, which in itself probably limits the generality of the findings. Furthermore, the research study was limited by the following factors:

- Professionally qualified teachers in two public secondary schools that provide for learners in Grades 8 to 12 (section 3.4.3).
- School managers with proved teaching and management experience for at least three years, and teachers with more than a year teaching experience (section 3.4.3).
- The literature was limited by the results that the databases returned.
- The literature returned by the databases was limited according to the keywords.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The data collected reveals relevant information about stress and burnout that secondary school teachers face. Research has shown that the most valuable and costly part of an educational system are the people who teach. Thus, maintaining their well-being and their contribution to effective teaching and learning should be a primary objective (Maslach & Leiter, 1999). This research study has shown that teaching is emotionally taxing, potentially frustrating and stressful as well as a difficult profession that requires strength of character and resilience. This research study has also shown that there are widespread beliefs that work-related stress and burnout among teachers is serious, and that the negative impact of stress and burnout on teacher health and well-being reduce the effectiveness of the school and the quality of teaching and learning and education in general. Similarly, the increasing attrition of teachers due to stress and burnout also poses a serious problem, with documented rates of teacher turnover rising in public schools worldwide over the past decade. Thus, all evidence points to stress and consequent burnout being a significant challenge for secondary school teachers. One can conclude, therefore, that public secondary school teachers are stressed and experience burnout in the course of performing their duties, have few

support structures and adopt predominantly ineffective coping strategies to manage stress and burnout.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF REQUEST TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE SELECTED SCHOOL

Request for permission to conduct research at your school

Title: Management strategies to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout on secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Ojonla Lekomo, am doing a research under the supervision of Prof H. M. van der Merwe, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Management strategies to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout on secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province.

The aim of the research study is to investigate and discover ways of alleviating and managing stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.

Your school has been selected because you are a public secondary school within Boksburg area in Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province.

The research study will entail allowing the researcher access to your school in order to conduct semi-structured individual interviews with four members of the school management team, and a focus group interview consisting of six teacher participants. Once the researcher has received permission to conduct the research study, the individual and focus group interviews will be conducted at times convenient for the participants, and that will not disrupt classes in any way.

The benefits of this study are that participants will have the opportunity to provide valuable information about the causes of teacher stress, available support network and strategies public secondary school teacher use to cope with stress and burnout.

Strategies and information acquired may be useful to novice teachers, and to other teachers and school management team members with years of experience, who may be having issues with teacher stress and burnout. Awareness may be raised for the needs of secondary school teachers as it relates to job stress and burnout prevention, and learners may be better served by teachers who are not burnt out.

There are no known or anticipated risks to the participants by being involved in this research study. Participation in this research is completely voluntary. If the school management team and the teacher participants decide to participate, they may withdraw at any time without consequence. If they withdraw from the project, their data will not be used. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected at all times. Your school and member participants will remain anonymous. Participants will be referred to by a pseudonym in the dissertation and any further publications

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail providing participants with a copy of the study.

Yours sincerely

Ojonla Lekomo

Researcher

APPENDIX B

LETTER REQUESTING TEACHERS/HODs/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL/PRINCIPAL TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

Dear Teachers/HODs/Deputy Principal/Principal,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Ojonla Lekomo am conducting as part of my research as a master's student entitled: Management strategies to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout on secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by The Gauteng Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of stress management in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately sixty minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for five years in my locked office.

The benefits of this study are that participants will have the opportunity to provide valuable information about the causes of teacher stress, available support network and strategies public secondary school teacher use to cope with stress and burnout. Strategies and information acquired may be useful to novice teachers, and to other teachers and school management team members with years of experience, who may be having issues with teacher stress and burnout. Awareness may be raised for the needs of secondary school teachers as it relates to job stress and burnout prevention, and learners may be better served by teachers who are not burnt out. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mr. Ojonla Lekomo on 0848516096 or email lekomoojonla@yahoo.com.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 0848516096 or by e-mail at lekomoojonla@yahoo.com.

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

Yours sincerely

Ojonla Lekomo
25/08/2017
Researcher's name

Researcher's signature: Date:

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print):_____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher Name: (Please print) _Ojonla Lekomo

Researcher Signature:

Date: 25/08/2017

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT WITH PARTICIPANTS

August 15, 2017

Title: Management strategies to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout on secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT,

My name is Ojonla Lekomo. I am doing research under the supervision of Prof H. M. Van der Merwe a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Management strategies to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout on secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could be useful to novice teachers and to other teachers and school management team members with years of experience, who may be having issues with teacher stress and burnout. It could also help in preparing new teachers for inevitable challenges and raising awareness for the needs of secondary school teachers as it relates to job stress and burnout prevention as well as identifying the resources to alleviate the effects of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you a registered, professionally qualified public secondary school teacher with more than a year teaching experience and/or a member of the school management team with at least three years of proving teaching and school management experience, employed by the Gauteng Department of Education and currently working in a public secondary school. I obtained your contact details from the school principal after receiving permission to conduct the research study at the school.

A total number of ten (10) participants, consisting of four (4) school management team members and six (6) teacher participants, drawn from your school will be participating in this research study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

This study involves a face-to-face, semi-structured individual or focus group interview with the researcher. The interview will take between thirty minutes to one hour and will be held at your convenience. All interviews will be audio-recorded in the interest of accuracy, and transcribed by the researcher. Interview questions relates to your experience(s) with stress and burnout as a teacher or school manager.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study, your data will not be used.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no real benefits to the individual participants. However, participants will have the opportunity to provide valuable information about the causes of stress, available support networks, and types of strategies public secondary school teachers use to cope with stress and burnout. The study offers participants the opportunity to help in adding to the existing knowledge, and thus contributing to the field of education with regards to teacher stress and burnout.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

You may be uncomfortable discussing issues about your feelings of stress. Regardless, there are no known or anticipated negative consequences or risks to the participants by being involved in this research study.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity, e.g. when focus groups are used as a data collection method.

Focus group interviewing involves a small, homogeneous and qualitative sampled group of people who are gathered in order to study or assess a problem. In focus group discussion, the researcher interviews more than one participant with common characteristics or experiences for the purpose of eliciting ideas, thoughts and perceptions about a specific topic or certain issues linked to the area of interest. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at home for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participants will not receive any payment or reward for participating in this research study. There are no known or anticipated financial costs to the participants by being involved in this research study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, University of South Africa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mr. Ojonla Lekomo on 0848516096 or email lekomoojonla@yahoo.com.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact him at:

Cell: 0848516096

Work: 0118261497/8

Email: lekomoojonla@yahoo.com

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof. H. M. Van der Merwe at:

Cell: 0834421503

Work: 0129934370

Email: vdmerhm@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the face-to-face, semi-structured individual or focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

_____

_____

Participant Signature Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

Ojonla Lekomo 25/08/2017

Researcher's signature Date

FOCUS GROUP CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I_____ grant consent that the information I share during the focus group may be used by Mr. Ojonla Lekomo for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: (Please print): Ojonla Lekomo

Researcher's Signature:

Date: 25/08/2017

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This research study is in pursuit of my master's degree with the University of South Africa, and the aims and objectives of the research study are as follows:

- To find out what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.
- To assess the effects of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning.
- To find out the coping strategies that teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout.
- To assess support structures and strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, that secondary schools offers teachers who experience stress and burnout.
- To find out how stress and burnout can be alleviated among secondary school teachers.

This face-to-face interview will last for about sixty minutes in which I will ask you a series of open-ended questions. Please feel free to answer as you wish. Please be assured that the answers you give will be kept confidential. Though I may take a few notes, this interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate interpretations of collected data. Do you have any questions?

- How would you describe your education and experiences that led you to the position of a school manager?
- What are your roles and responsibilities as a member of the school management team?
- As a member of the school management team, what would you say are the most stressful events or times for your teachers? What makes you feel this way?

- What would you say the most significant signs of teacher stress and burnout might be, and how do you think that might affect your teachers and the quality of teaching and learning in your school?
- How would you describe organisational factors that might cause your teachers' stress? Describe your experience with teacher stress and burnout.
- Do you have disruptive learners in your school? If yes, have any teachers been injured/attacked or assaulted by a learner within the past 12 months? How do you deal with such disruptive learner?
- Describe the processes or procedures currently in place to assist your teachers in their teaching job?
- How often do you meet with your teachers and how is the agenda developed?
- Describe how you support your teachers when it comes to stress reduction and burnout preventions?
- Describe the stress management resources or professional development (e.g. training, supplies, collaboration, consultation etc.), you have offered your teachers in the past months, and how do they utilise these resources?
- Do you or have you ever considered a stress management program? Does the school have a stress management program or do your teachers need one?
- Is there anything else that you would like to discuss about teacher stress and how you perceive the phenomenon?

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. This information will remain confidential and anonymous. The interview will be transcribed and interpreted within the next month. If you have any questions about my research please do not hesitate to contact me. The result and a copy of the research study will be made available to you at the end of the research. Thank you.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This research study is in pursuit of my master's degree with the University of South Africa, and the aim and objectives of the research study is as follows:

- To find out what causes stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.
- To assess the effects of teacher stress and burnout on the quality of teaching and learning.
- To find out the coping strategies that teachers use to reduce and manage stress and burnout.
- To assess support structures and strategies, at preventive and intervention levels, that secondary schools offers teachers who experience stress and burnout.
- To find out how stress and burnout can be alleviated among secondary school teachers.

This focus group discussion will last for about sixty minutes in which I will ask you a series of open-ended questions. Please feel free to answer as you wish. Please be assured that the answers you give will be kept confidential. Though I may take a few notes, this interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate interpretations of collected data. Do you have any questions?

1. How would you define/describe stress with regards to teaching? How strong a link do you think there is between stress and teaching?
2. Describe your perception of the causes of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers?
3. How would you describe your personal responsibility when it comes to stress management and burnout prevention? What coping strategies do you use to manage stress and prevent burnout? Do you use any particular methods such

as relaxation, socialising, drinking or smoking, time management and organisation, deep breathing and calming exercises or others?

4. How would you describe your experiences with regards to stress and burnout in secondary school teachers? Have you been tempted to leave teaching? If yes, what would be the main reasons?
5. How would you describe organisational factors and resources that help to alleviate stress and prevent burnout or contribute to it?
6. What have you learned from this group and what might you do different (if anything) in the future to help prevent stress and burnout among secondary school teachers?
7. During the last ten minutes, please add any additional thoughts that you may have regarding the topic of stress and burnout among secondary school teachers.

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. This information will remain confidential and anonymous. The interview will be transcribed and interpreted within the next month. If you have any questions about my research please do not hesitate to contact me. The result and a copy of the research study will be made available to you at the end of the research. Thank you.

APPENDIX F

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

1. Do teachers arrive to classes on time?

2. Was there a point during the research study when a teacher was reported absent or took leave due to poor health or work related stress?

3. Was there any indication of work overload arising from large class size, administration, meeting targets or deadlines?

4. While teaching, do teacher appear exhausted, tired, or fatigue most of the time?

5. While working, do teachers appear irritated, angry, frustrated, helpless, anxious, depressed, or unable to concentrate?

6. Was there a point during the research study when a learner attacked or assaulted a teacher?

7. How did the physical environment of the classroom and school affect teachers' teaching experience (number of learners in a classroom, outside noise, lighting, problems with equipment, etc?)

8. Were there any support structures, stress management resources or professional development activities that were available for teachers in dealing with stress and burnout?

9. How effective were these resources or activities in reducing or alleviating teacher stress and burnout.

10. Other comments or observations:

APPENDIX G
RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/11/15

Ref: **2017/11/15/50153315/14/MC**
Name: Mr O Lekomo
Student: 50153315

Dear Mr Lekomo

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2017/11/15 to 2020/11/15

Researcher:

Name: Mr O Lekomo
Email: lekomoojonla@yahoo.com
Telephone: +27 84 851 6096

Supervisor:
Name: Prof HM van der Merwe
Email: vdmerhm@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 993 4370

Title of research:

Management strategies to alleviate the effects of stress and burn-out on secondary school teachers within Ekurhuleni district in Gauteng province

Qualification: M ED in Educational Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/11/15 to 2020/11/15.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/11/15 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2020/11/15. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2017/11/15/50153315/14/MC** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

College of Education
2017 -11- 22
Office of the Executive Dean

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za