DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

CLAIRE MURPHY

"SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF THE TYPES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED IN THE SCHOOL SETTING"

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BA (HONS) COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

SUPERVISOR   GAEL LE ROUX

DATE   16TH APRIL 2010

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This study investigates Teachers' perceptions of the level of stress they experience as a direct result of their occupation, within the classroom and related to external factors, including Management, Society, and Government.

A qualitative methodology was employed using a semi-structured interview. Six participants were interviewed, three male and three female; each with at least twenty years experience. The schools were representative of schools in Ireland and included advantaged and disadvantaged, urban and rural.

The aim of the study was to show that teacher stressors and coping mechanisms in Ireland have changed over the past twenty years. The results supported this overall aim with student misbehaviour, parental interference, perceived societal reduced value of the teacher, a feeling of isolation, the inflexibility of the curriculum and mixed ability students within mainstream classrooms being cited as the major differentials. However, stress response was not shown to be a key coping strategy. Differentials were seen between the male and the female participants relative to the experience of emotional exhaustion.

Limitations in the study included a small cohort of six participants; a lack of variety in the type of participant; some errors in the design of the questionnaire; the lack of a specific methodology to measure the participant's stress.

Recommendations include the need to more fully evaluate the impact of the changed society on teachers, both from the teacher's perspective and societies; a comparative national study to evaluate if female teachers experience emotional exhaustion more than males; the need to incorporate stress education and training as a preventative measure in all schools nationally.

CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   General Introduction to Thesis

This research project will examine teachers' perception of the types of stress experienced in the secondary school setting in Ireland, and the coping mechanisms employed. Firstly, some of the current global literature examining this issue shall be explored. Secondly, the design of the current study shall be explained and the results from the research presented. Following this, a discussion on the findings of the present study in isolation and then in relation to existing research shall be reviewed. Finally, the researcher shall explore the limitations of the current research project as a single study and in relation to previous data make recommendations on what, in light of the overall findings may be researched in the future.

CHAPTER 2   LITERATURE REVIEW

Title

Secondary School Teachers' perception of the types of stress experienced in the school setting.

2.1   Introduction

This chapter is concerned with exploring the issue of stress and coping mechanisms employed by secondary school teachers generally. Also in this chapter Ireland's economic situation shall be examined and the impact for teachers' in Ireland reviewed. The proposed study plans to enquire of teacher's perceptions of their experiences in the school and classroom today as opposed to twenty years ago. The intention is to review the specific actions or behaviours that result in teachers feeling stressed, with reference to the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) model and in particular noting the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment experienced by teachers.

2.2   Stress in context

Stress, when experienced by the individual, may present with either internal or external symptoms; for example, the stressed person may feel sick, have a headache, or they may exhibit their stress by acting out, crying, throwing

things etc. As Davis, Eshelman & McKay, (2007), suggest stress is experienced from four basic sources; a. environment, b. social stressors, c. psychological and d. inner thoughts. "Stress, as defined by Quick *et al.* (1986), is the generalized, patterned unconscious mobilization of internal energy resources that occur when a person is confronted with a stressor, or that condition that causes stress." (Olalekan Arikewuyo, 2004). Several models have been developed to measure occupational stress, some examples include; the Coping Responses Inventory (CRI), the COPE scale, (a multidimensional self administered coping inventory), the Perceived Stress Scale, (PSS) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Occupational Stress may be defined as "…harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker." (Ahghar, 2008). What this means is that the employee is experiencing pressures that they are unable to cope with as a direct result of their working environment. The proposed study is concerned with occupational stress as experienced by teachers in the secondary school setting in Ireland and, Murray, (2007) has suggested that teacher stress has resulted in a high level of absenteeism in Ireland. This suggests that the impact of teacher stress on the country could have a clear fiscal implication due to absenteeism and illness costs.

Many researchers choose the MBI model to measure occupational stress and its' consequences, some include Kokkinos, (2006); Rasku, & Kinnunen,

(2003); Stoeber, & Rennert, 2008. However, Byrne, (1993) says of the MBI that it"…is undoubtedly the most widely used measure of occupational burnout, its validity for use with educators has not yet been firmly established". Additionally, Betoret, (2006) suggests that the MBI is far superior to the more clinical approaches for measuring teacher burnout. As Kokkinos, 2006 explains the MBI is designed to measure three elements; these include, emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalisation (DP), and personal accomplishment (PA), he goes on to say "…the measure can both serve as a preventative – in the sense that it will assist in the identification for those teachers at risk – as well as a diagnostic one, including implications for interventions". If a rating is low in any one of these areas the individual may be diagnosed as suffering from burnout. EE occurs when individuals are psychologically compromised and cannot perform their functions effectively. DP refers to a situation where the individual distances themselves from others, they avoid interpersonal contact. PA describes reductions in feelings of self worth resulting in negative self-image and a lack of confidence in their ability to perform tasks. Each one of these EE, PA, DP, cause extreme distress for the sufferer, which may manifest in numerous somatic or psychological complaints, or both.

2.3   Social Changes in Ireland

Ireland is a small open economy, which historically was largely dependent on agriculture; however, in recent years this has changed to Ireland being

9

dependent on the high-tech internationally traded services sector. "Beginning in the early 1990's, unprecedented economic growth saw the level of Irish real GDP double in size over the course of little more than a decade." (ESRI, 2010). However according to the ESRI, (2010), the pace of growth decelerated in late 2007, this was mainly due to a "contraction in the housing construction. In 2008 it is estimated that output fell for the first time since 1983, and the recession deepened in 2009". Employment rose from 1.2million in 1990 to 2.1 million in 2007. In 2006 "…a General Government Surplus of 3 per cent of GDP was recorded" (ESRI, 2010).

 At the Annual Congress meeting of the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI), in 2008, Tim O' Meara, President said, "The TUI is particularly angry and dismayed at the recent Benchmarking Report that recommended pay increases to just 15 of 109 grades examined, most of which were concentrated at more senior levels." This supports the notion that teachers' position in society was not highly ranked at a time of relative economic health. With the deepening recession unemployment for 2009 was estimated to be at 12%. With this dramatic reversal in the economy, Government finances became limited and pressure on public spending became apparent. Many sectors have had pay cuts imposed and according to the Teachers Union of Ireland, (2009) in the year 2009 to 2010 teacher's salaries have reduced by approximately 20% due to direct pay cuts and levies.

As society has changed, the teachers' reduced social standing and social support appears to have added to the level of stress and pressure felt. Their perceived feelings of lack of acknowledgement of their work by school authorities, the parents and society in general have exacerbated the stressors placed on teachers (Morianna & Herruzo, 2006; Weiqi, 2007). Previously, teachers had a high standing in the community on a global basis, but this no longer appears to be the case.

2.4   Teaching in the Irish educational system

With the changed society in Ireland many differing challenges for the teacher occur. During his address to the TUI in 2008, O'Meara spoke of teachers reduced morale due to media focus on a minority of teachers who experience professional difficulties and to the inadequate support services provided for teachers. He also highlighted the lack of professional development made available, indiscipline in schools, lack of innovation, increasing workload, poor resources, increasing legislation and changing ethnicity, saying "Irish society has changed from a largely monocultural and monolingual one to a multicultural and multilingual one". This adds to the challenges facing the teacher in Ireland, as there is little up skilling available for them and neither are there the required numbers of school psychologists on hand to assist staff with pupils who are misbehaving.

2.5   Prevalent Causes of Stress for the Teacher

There are many causes of stress in everyday life. For the teacher, there are

additional issues that cause stress in the classroom setting. These may

consist of pupil misbehaviour, which includes acting-out, by either being

disruptive or presenting with behavioural disorders. The end point is for the

teacher to feel psychologically challenged resulting in them being emotional

exhausted, as Axup, & Gersch, (2008) point out, "…increasing teacher

concern about student disruptive behaviour was causing significant

professional anxiety." and this view is supported by Chaplain, (2008) and

Shukla, (2008).

"…constant parent evaluation…" is cited by Pascual, Perez-Jover,

Mirambell, Ivanex, & Terol, (2003), as another cause of stress for the

teacher, where the teacher feels that they are being constantly evaluated or

judged and this view is supported by Stoeber, & Rennert, (2008). This

means that the teacher feels they are always being monitored by the parents,

which may limit their way of working with the children as this parental

interference acts as a buffer between the child and the teacher; the

consequence of which may be the teacher questioning their own actions,

abilities and scope of activity with the children in the classroom.

Fitzgerald, 2008, says "…the isolated nature of the job can lead to poor

communication and this together with inconsistency of policy – particularly

regarding discipline – and a lack of resources are major causes of teacher stress". Poor communication may occur between the teacher and their colleagues; the teacher and their pupils; the teacher and the organization or a combination of all three. In addition, poor communication as to what the curriculum requirements are, plays a large part in adding to the stresses experienced by the teacher in the school setting, (Betoret, 2006).

Children misbehaving in the classroom is a major cause of stress for the teacher, as Chaplain, (2008), says "...managing pupil behaviour has been reported as the most stressful element." This constant having to be vigilant to those children who are acting out and also to those children who, because they are quiet may not get the attention they deserve, leading to frustration for the teacher, which is manifested in a feeling of stress.

A lack of flexibility by the organisation or within the curriculum and poor support from school management has also been cited as a causative factor of stress for teachers (Ahghar, 2008; and Shukla, 2008]. Another area of communication difficulty arises for the teacher of pupils with dyslexia or those who do not speak the vernacular language at home. Here the teacher has to find ways to interact with the child without affecting the other children's learning. "…the principles of the structured approach can be adapted to support literacy development at home and in school". (Cortazzi, & Hunter-Carsch, 2000). These issues may add to the teachers' pressure and

increase the level of stress experienced as the teacher tries to ensure that all students have been communicated with and understand what is taking place in the classroom.

Malinauskiene, (2005), suggests that bullying behaviour is seen as a causative factor of stress for the teacher in the classroom. Bullying refers to where the teacher perceives themselves to be on the receiving end of negative behaviour, which includes either physical or verbal behaviour, or both. The protagonists of this behaviour may be students or colleagues or management, or a mixture of all three. The literature appears to have found no noticeable differential by gender, with both males and females experiencing the same levels of bullying behaviour. This finding was supported by Pisanti, Gagliardi, Razzino, & Bertini, (2003). Those who have experienced bullying behaviour may develop an acute stress disorder, which is described as similar to post traumatic stress disorder by the American Psychiatric Association, (2005).

Lack of autonomy for the teacher has impacted on feelings of reduced accomplishment in the classroom. Bates, (2005), says, "Whilst there is evidence of collaboration and mutual support, teachers need individual and collective responsibility and autonomy returning to them." This view is supported by other authors including, Azlihanis, Naing, Aziah, & Rusli, (2006), and Kittel, & Leynen, (2003). For the teacher, not being able to

make independent choices as to how to impart knowledge as the result of an inflexible curriculum limits their feelings of achievement and will impact on their view of themselves and their self worth.

In addition, the solitary nature of teaching has led to feelings of isolation and separateness as Pisanti, et al, (2003) reported. The teacher is alone in the classroom facing their students, often times with very little time in between classes, so there is little opportunity for social interchange with their peers, precluding the opportunity for the teacher to speak about any issues that may be uppermost in their minds. In fact a teacher is very much alone, having to rely on their inner selves, to trust their instincts and feelings as they face their students and go about their daily work. Turner, (1997), refers to this feature as self-reliance.

2.6   The Consequences of Stress

One of the possible consequences of occupational stress if not properly addressed may be reduced productivity of the individual, for numerous reasons. The reduced social standing of teachers in society and the lack of social support appears to be related to increased somatic complaints such as fatigue; gastro-intestinal disorders etc. (Verhoeven, Kraaij, Joekes, & Maes, 2003). These, along with issues associated with bullying behaviour result in an increased level of absenteeism, and in one particular study those who experienced bullying behaviour had a 25-90% increased incidence of illness,

(Malilnauskiene, Obelenis, & Dopagiene, 2005). Pisanti, et al., (2003), suggest that absenteeism also occurs due to teachers experiencing emotional exhaustion, (EE) depersonalisation (DP) and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment (PA). Several researchers have noted a gender differential relative to the feelings of depersonalisation, which could be described as feelings of negativity toward students, management or the parents. (Pascual, et al. 2003). Although another study, whilst accepting that there are some gender differences evident in their research similar to those of other researchers noted that this did not apply to their view of the schools organizational policy, parental expectation, or teaching evaluation, with both men and women having similar experiences. As cited by Ravichandran, & Rajendran, (2007), "…there are no gender differences on the remaining six factors: personal expectations, teaching evaluation, lack of support from parents and other, facilities available at school, organizational policy and parental expectation".

The condition referred to as burnout could be described as a feeling of tiredness; loss of interest in all things, which may be personal, social and/or work related; increased feelings of frustration which interferes with occupational performance, and usually burnout occurs following prolonged exposure to stress. In the case of teaching, which has already been shown to be a highly stressful occupation, burnout is a particularly damaging consequence. Verhoeven, (2003) says, "Teaching is considered to be a

stressful occupation and one that has been associated with significant levels of burnout." These increased levels of stress may lead to bouts of depression, somatic issues, sleeping disorders, and increased use of alcohol or cigarette smoking in some instances, (Morianna, & Herruzo, 2006). An extreme case of prolonged or debilitating stress for the teacher results in them choosing to leave the profession through early retirement as cited by Chaplain, (2008) or by choosing to quit the profession and move to another occupation as suggested by Olalekan Arikewuyo, (2004). In Ireland Fitzgerald, (2008), states that "Some 11% of all retiring teachers retire on grounds of ill health, with 50% of disability retirements attributed to stress/depression/anxiety." These figures alone demonstrate the need for further investigation into this area in Ireland.

2.7   Teachers; coping mechanisms to relieve stress

The literature suggests that there is no single approach to alleviate the stress experienced by teachers and therefore many techniques are employed either in combination, or individually. Coping strategies may include active behavioural (AB), inactive behavioural (IB), active cognitive (AC) strategies. Active behavioural strategies involve confronting or attempting to change the sources of stress. Inactive cognitive strategies involve conforming to superiors' expectations, perceiving one's helplessness and expressing resentment. Active cognitive strategies involve problem appraisal, talking about the sources of stress and seeking more information

(Olalekan Arikewuyo, 2004).   These coping strategies could include breathing exercises, back and neck exercises, management techniques, self praise, sharing views and experiences with peers, taking physical exercise, talking to family and friends, avoiding the source of the stress, e.g. evading certain individuals or situations, and in the extreme leaving the teaching profession (Axup, & Gersch, 2008). Other authors have proposed ways of dealing with stress include "…social support and self-efficacy should be important factors of consideration when designing a prevention or intervention programme in the guidance of teachers' coping strategies and psychological counselling." (Shen, 2009)

 It appears that task oriented coping mechanisms as opposed to emotional-oriented strategies have a greater success rate for teachers, (Stoeber, & Rennert, 2008). According to Saarenen, (2007), older German teachers displayed avoidance-oriented coping mechanisms, where they would choose to avoid the specific situation that was stress causative. In a study by Shen, 2009, it was shown that Chinese teachers were generally more self-dependent and used a positive thinking technique and employed external social support mechanisms as a way of coping with occupational stress, which typically was not of an emotional type for this group.

2.8   The need for further research?

The reviewed literature highlighted some areas that may require further enquiry. For example, it was suggested by Olalekan Arikewuyo, (2004), that firstly, methods for dealing with occupational stress should be incorporated into initial teacher training, and secondly, that stress management education should be part of on-going continuous education for the qualified teacher. This second suggestion was supported by other authors including Pascual, et al., (2003). In Ireland, a pilot programme run in 1999 showed that an emphasis on the prevention of stress amongst teachers through the use of analysis and training appeared to be the optimum route to take in addressing this issue, though, as yet this pilot has not been extended to a nationwide programme, (Fitzgerald, 2008).

Some of the reviewed literature examined methods of dealing with the stress experienced by the teacher through the use of stress management programmes, intervention techniques, and personal development. Shen, (2009), proposed that the emphasis for any prevention or intervention programme should focus on self-efficacy and social support for the teacher. Ahghar, (2008), suggested that the effects of occupational stress is more prevalent in western societies saying, "It is considered an illness of the advanced and industrialized societies."

2.9   Conclusion

Through reading the various literature many perceived causes of stress by

the teacher in the classroom have been highlighted. The varying methods for

evaluating stress levels have been reviewed and the data concentrating on

the use of the MBI was focused upon, as this has been recognized as a key

measurement tool for occupational stress. Several types of stress have been

discussed and the coping mechanisms that are employed by a wide variety

of authors discussed. In conclusion, the issue of teachers' stress is a real

problem, not least because of the increased levels of absenteeism and illness

noted and the trend for those in the profession choosing to retire early or to

leave the role entirely.

In order to evaluate the causes and extent of the level of stress experienced

by teachers in Ireland and their different ways of coping with it, the

following hypotheses and sub-hypotheses will be considered:

H.1   Teachers' today are more stressed than twenty years ago

> SH.1.1 Parental expectation exacerbates teacher stress
> SH.1.2 Classroom multiculturalism adds to teachers' stress
> SH 1.3 Societal changes over the past twenty years in Ireland has
>   increased teachers' stress

H.2   Curriculum inflexibility increases teachers'' stress

> SH 2.1 The curriculum causes additional stress for teachers'
> SH 2.2 The school system adds to teachers' stress
> SH 2.3 Unapproachable Principals add to teachers' stress

H.3   **Stress response is used as a stress reliever for teachers**

SH 3.1 Peer support is a means of stress relief for teachers
SH 3.2 Teachers' use relaxation techniques to relieve stress
SH 3.3 Family interactions are a key factor in relieving teachers'
      stress

CHAPTER 3   **METHODOLOGY**

3.1   Introduction

Most of the research that was considered in the literature review appears to

have used a quantitative method for data gathering. This method appears to

be quite constrained and systemized, for example, not allowing a deeper

exploration with the individual as to the direct causes of stress and the

varying consequences for that individual. Neither does this type of

methodology allow for an in depth discussions about the ways in which

people cope with the impact of the stress that they've experienced.

Dallos and Vetere, (2005) suggest that qualitative research method permits

the participants' voices to be heard and for the individuals experience to be

seen in its entirety. They also say that this method allows for the emphasis

of subjectivity, as each persons experience is unique. In a project of this size

it is not possible to review all materials relevant to the subject matter. In

Ireland, Fitzgerald (2008) states "Some 11% of all retiring teachers retire on

grounds of ill health, with 50% of disability retirements attributed to

stress/depression/anxiety." These figures alone suggest the need for further

investigation into this area in Ireland.

3.2   Participants

It is the researcher's opinion that quantitative methodology does not allow

for detailed questioning of the teacher, and this supports my plan to conduct

one on one semi-structured interviews with several teachers who work in differing environments. Each participants is from different schools, one mixed school, two mixed designated deprived school, one all boys school, one all girls school and one rural school. The participants have each been teaching for at least twenty years. Three male and three female teachers were interviewed.

3.3   Materials

The materials required to carry out this research project included a questionnaire, a dictaphone and a quiet room. The participants were asked to give their consent to be taped and for the content of the discussion to be used in the research project.

3.4   Interview Guidelines

A questionnaire using open questions was developed and was tested in advance of meeting with any of the participants of the study. The testing of the questionnaire highlighted some issues which resulted in the addition and amendment of some of the questions. The final questionnaire included ten open questions. In addition, a general information participant sheet was developed to gather data about each teacher being interviewed. The data captured in this form included a designated participant number (to ensure anonymity), a section noting the explanation of the thesis, a section to record that verbal consent was obtained, a section to record that the issue of

confidentiality was discussed, the sex of the teacher, the number of pupils in the school, the average number of pupils in each class, the type of school and the teachers years of service. Once the interviews were completed and the transcript produced this sheet was stored alongside.

3.5   Procedure

The researcher contacted several teachers by email and explained the context of the research project to them, inviting them to partake. Following this six teachers were contacted by phone and details of what was required discussed. The researcher made an appointment to carry out the interview, having explained that these would taped for the purpose of accuracy. Six teachers composed the research group, three female and three males. It was arranged to meet for one hour in a private room where there would be no interruptions. The procedure was explained to each individual and a note made of this recorded in the general information sheet prior to commencing the interview. The issue of confidentiality was discussed with all six participants when the researcher informed them that neither their identity nor that of the school would be disclosed at any time. The researcher's view being that all six teachers' may be more forthcoming if they were made aware of these facts. At this time, once again the need to tape the interview was broached and permission to do so obtained and granted. Having checked that the machinery was in good working order, the researcher placed the dictaphone close to the teacher to ensure good quality sound.

The interview commenced and once all of the questions had been answered the teacher was thanked and the meeting concluded. Each participant was informed that should they wish to have a copy of the thesis or should they wish to remove themselves from the research they could do so at any time. The participants were asked if they were happy with the way in which the interview was conduced and each of them was. A transcript of the interview was typed up and stored for examination once all six interviews had been completed.

3.6 Ethics

The rationale for the research project was explained to each participant before commencing the interview. The issue of confidentiality was discussed and each teacher was assured that their identities and that of the school would remain anonymous. Verbal consent for the inclusion of their interview in the research project was sought and received in all cases. Each teacher was offered the opportunity to read the completed project if they so desired. In addition, should the teacher decide that they no longer wished to have their views included in the research piece, this would be respected and their data excluded from the final analysis.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion a decision was made by the researcher to conduct qualitative research using a questionnaire developed specifically for this purpose. Six

teachers, three male and three female who each had at least 20 years experience teaching comprised the research group. A general information data-gathering document was developed and the contents recorded for further analysis when all of the results will be evaluated. One on one interviews were conducted in private and were recorded to ensure accuracy. The teachers were assured that neither they nor their schools names or locations would be made public. Finally, the teachers were all afforded the opportunity to remove themselves from the research if they so chose, or to have access to the thesis once completed. The next chapter shall consider the results of the data gathered by the researcher.

CHAPTER 4   RESULTS

4.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines the results of the study. It will begin with the demographics of each of the participants involved. This will be followed by an outline of the various themes and trends that emerged in the data analysis, looking at both the classroom and specific role causes of stress for the teachers; curriculum and management causes of stress for the teachers; coping mechanisms employed by the teachers to relieve stress; changes noted by the teachers over the past twenty years; the overall impact of the occupation of teaching on the participants' personal life and the teachers recommendations of what to put in place to relieve occupational stress associated with teaching.

4.2   Participants

There were six participants in the study, three male and three female. Three schools were designated disadvantaged, two advantaged, and one rural advantaged school. All of the teachers had worked in the secondary school setting for at least twenty years and within their current school for a period of between seven and thirty eight years. All of the teachers have spent the majority of their career in the one school, with two teachers having spent their entire working careers in their current school.   The demographic data is available in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Demographics of Participants

Participant	1802	2402	2602	0403	0503	0903
Sex	M	F	F	M	F	M
Total Years of service	26	20	38	32	35	24
Years of Service in Current School	7	17	38	31	32	24
Type of School	M	M	AG	AB	AG	M
School Social Class	D	D	A	D	R A	A
Approx Number of Students	800	500	600	650	800	800
Approx Number of Students per Class	30	28	25	24	24	26

M: Male F: Female M: Mixed AB: All boy AG: All girl
D: Disadvantaged. A: Advantaged. R: Rural

4.3   Classroom and Role sources of stress for Teachers

There were numerous causes of stress for the teacher in the classroom

setting and this study found that five of the six teachers cited student

misbehaviour as a cause of stress for them. All six teachers interviewed said

that parental interference increases the levels of stress experienced by the

teacher. The changes in family structure have resulted in added stress for the

teacher with one teacher saying that the need to 'parent more' was evident

and had added to their workload. The participant expressed the opinion that

children's parents are less available and that as a direct consequence the

students seek support in what were traditional parental issues. Five of the

teachers cited student and parental expectation to achieve good results in

examinations as a source of stress, saying that the onus was placed on the

teacher as opposed to the student for their achievement. Four of the six

teachers said that having mixed ability students included in the mainstream

classroom was a direct cause of stress, saying that they found it difficult to

give adequate attention to all of the students and this lead to frustration. Two

of the teachers expressed the feeling of their isolation in the classroom and a

sense of being exposed as a contributor to the occupational stress

experienced.

4.4   Curriculum and Management causes of Teacher stress

Lack of management support regarding discipline issues was cited as a

cause of stress for three of the six teachers. The expectation for good exam

results by management was said to be a source of stress for two of the six teachers. The inflexibility of the curriculum was said to be a source of stress for five of the six teachers. The threat of litigation by either parents or students was seen as an issue by two of the six teachers. Four of the six teachers stated that increasing administration and bureaucracy added to their workload and two of the six teachers cited inconsistent policies within the school as a cause of stress. All six teachers said that reduced resources, for example fewer special needs assistant's resulted in increased occupational stress experienced.

4.5   Changes observed in the past Twenty Years

Five of the six teachers said that children misbehave more today compared to twenty years ago, for example they are less inclined to do their homework or to take direction from the teacher, evidenced by the poor work ethic of the students, and an expectation to achieve good results without doing the required work was stated as a differential in the past twenty years by three of the six teachers.

Technology, in the form of mobile phones, texting, Facebook, was mentioned as a big change for teachers in the past twenty years. The students use of drugs and alcohol was mentioned specifically by one teacher unprompted, and alluded to by three others when probed by the researcher. The lack of respect by students for teachers was mentioned by

three of the six participants as something that has occurred over the past twenty years. The issue of increased materialism was cited as an obvious change in the past twenty years by three of the six teachers. All of the teachers said that parental interference, either directly with the teacher or through the management structure, was something that did not occur in the same fashion twenty years ago, when, in the opinion of these teachers' parents supported and endorsed decisions made in school; this appears not to be the case today with many parents.

4.6   **Coping Mechanisms Employed to Relieve Stress**

All six teachers interviewed said that the most effective coping mechanism they employ is sharing their problems with their peers in the school setting. Three of the six teachers said that when worried or stressed about something within the school setting they were able to go to Management and received adequate support there. Four of the six teachers relied for support from their spouse, with whom they would share their concerns relative to an issue in school causing them to feel stressed. Two of the six teachers employed exercise as a means of overcoming their occupational stress. One teacher liked to relax whilst having a glass of wine in front of the fire and she found this to be a useful coping mechanism. Three of the teachers said that when they leave school they try to leave any concerns there and not bring them home.

4.7 Overall impact of the Occupation on the Teachers' personal life

A lack of energy or a feeling of disinterest in parenting their own children was expressed by all three female teachers; saying that having given of themselves emotionally in school they felt they had less to give their own children. The men did not have this experience, with one of the male teachers saying that he felt his role enabled him to spend more time with his children because of the long periods of leave, and so he felt it enhanced his family role. All six teachers expressed the fact that they become very tired as a direct result of their role, although they could not specify exactly why this was.

4.8 Teacher recommendations on how to relieve stress

One teacher recommended that students without English as their first language should spend one year doing intensive schooling in this subject before joining mainstream school. Four of the six teachers expressed a need for additional resources to be given to schools to enable them to do deal with the workload. Three teachers said that Management should be able to sanction students who misbehave without recourse to the Department of Education and Science. One teacher suggested that the profession should value the classroom teacher's role, saying that it appeared advancement was seen to be the achievement of a Principal role or that of an inspector in the Department, which could be demoralizing.

4.9   Conclusion

Six secondary school teachers, each with at least twenty years experience were interviewed, three men and three women. The schools were representative of secondary schools in Ireland. The causes of stress for the teacher in the classroom; in the school; as a direct result of the specific type of Management style; by the requirements of the curriculum were explored. Methods employed by the teachers to relieve experienced stress were reported. Finally, the overall impact of teaching as an occupation on the personal life of the participant was described and suggestions by this cohort on how to address occupational stress for the secondary school teachers were disclosed. The following chapter shall discuss these results in detail.

CHAPTER 5   DISCUSSION

5.1   Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results of the current study. The findings shall

be analyzed independently and in conjunction with previous research in the

area of teacher stress conducted globally. The areas that will be reviewed are

the causes of stress for teachers within the classroom and as a direct result of

their specific occupation. The next area to be reviewed is that of the impact

of school Management and the curriculum on the level of stress experienced

by teachers. This will be followed by a discussion on differences that

teachers have noted today as opposed to twenty years ago.

A dialogue will follow this on coping mechanisms employed by teachers in

dealing with the stress they experience. The researcher shall then review the

overall impact of this occupation on the teachers' personal life and their

recommendations on how to relieve occupational stress for those in their

profession. The researcher shall conclude by making recommendations

regarding any possible future areas of study for this subject matter.

5.2   Stressors in the Classroom

All six participants interviewed experienced some form of stress in the

classroom setting. Five of the teachers interviewed said that student

misbehaviour was a direct cause of stress for them, this presented in the

form of students acting out, answering back, talking in class, being generally

unruly and this finding is supported by American research (Axup, 2008) and UK research (Chaplain, 2008). With this group each of the six cited parental interference as a source of stress. Parents appear to have been siding with their children and making excuses for them, for example, writing notes when homework had not been completed or challenging the teacher if they reprimanded their child and this is seen as a major source of stress for the participants. This finding is supported by Spanish research (Pascual, 2003).

Parental expectation for their children to achieve good results was a source of stress for five of the six teachers interviewed, and they commented that regardless of the students' attention or inattention, attendance or lack of attendance, the parents expected their children to score highly in exams and this finding is supported by UK data (Stoeber, 2008). The fact that mixed ability students are included in mainstream classrooms was said to be a source of stress for four of the six teachers interviewed. With mixed ability students, the feeling was that the brighter students did not receive adequate attention, as the teachers' efforts had to be given to those who found the subject matter challenging. Previous research in this area from Iran (Ahghar, 2008) supports this finding. A feeling of isolation and being exposed in front of the students was expressed as being a source of stress by two of the participants and this finding is supported by previous Irish research (Fitzgerald, 2008) and Italian research in this area (Pisanti, 2003). The comments were that as a teacher they are alone in the classroom with the

door closed, facing a roomful of students and the have only themselves to rely on for the most part of every working day.

5.3   External stresses for Secondary School Teachers

All six teachers said that reduced resources, for example fewer special needs assistants has resulted in increased occupational stress experienced and this is linked to previous research in the area carried out by Fitzgerald, (2008). The inflexibility of the curriculum, poor support from management and a rigid organizational structure was expressed as a source of stress by five of the six teachers. They commented that they have to deliver the curriculum in a very specific way, with little flexibility, which means that, on the one hand there is national consistency, but equally, difficulty experienced in any particular module may not be fully addressed because of time factors and policy. These findings are supported by UK research (Ahghar, 2008) and Indian research (Shukla, 2008) and they go to support the hypothesis Curriculum inflexibility increases teachers' stress and the sub-hypothesis the curriculum causes additional stress for teachers'

A lack of management support for discipline issues was cited as a cause of stress for three of the six teachers and this is linked to previous research in the area carried out in Malaysia (Azlihanis, 2006) and Belgium (Kittel, 2003). The participants said that often times they will bring a case to the Principal and, in a number of instances, if the parents complain or pose any

opposition to the teachers' view, the principal will side with them as opposed to the teacher and this was found to be stressful and demoralizing. Fear of litigation was cited by a two of the participants as the reason for this occurrence and as a result few students are either suspended or excluded from school as a direct response to poor behaviour and this view is supported by previous Irish data (TUI, 2008). The sub-hypothesis that unapproachable Principals add to teachers' stress was not shown in this research project.

The expectation to achieve good exam results by management was said to be a source of stress for two of the six teachers and this view is supported by previous Spanish research (Pascual, 2003) and more recent UK research (Stoeber 2008). It is possible that these two teachers, who are working in fee paying schools may feel some pressure due to the annual publication of the school league tables, however this theme was not explored in the interviews and could form part of future research. The sub-hypothesis, the school system adds to teachers' stress has not been borne out fully and requires further specific investigation.

Four of the six teachers stated that increasing administration and bureaucracy added to their workload and two of the six teachers cited inconsistent policies within the school as a cause of stress and this data is supported by previous Spanish data (Betoret, 2006). Having to form fill in

order to take students on a school tour was mentioned and the need to record all interactions with parents or students outside of the normal working day, were given as examples.

5.4   Differences for Teachers' today as compared with twenty years ago

The lack of respect by students for teachers was mentioned by three of the six teachers as something that is different today to twenty years ago suggesting that the position the teacher holds in society has changed and this finding is supported by previous Irish research (ESRI, 2010) and in Spain (Morianna, 2006). A number of the teachers said that it is not unusual for a student to use foul language in the classroom directed at the teacher these days, whereas, previously students would have spoken respectfully. Some of the teachers suggested that the lack of any real sanctions may have contributed to this situation; however, this view needs to be further examined.

Five of the six teachers said that children are less well behaved today than twenty years ago, for example they are less inclined to do their homework or to take direction from the teacher and, it appears that the work ethic of the students has deteriorated, whilst their expectation to achieve good examination results without doing the required work was stated as a major change in the past twenty years by three of the six teachers.

The issue of increased materialism was cited as an obvious change in the past twenty years by three of the six teachers. All of the teachers said that parental interference, either directly with the teacher or through the management structure was something that did not occur in the same fashion twenty years ago, when parents supported and endorsed decisions made in school and that this is not the case today with many parents and evidence from research conduced in China (Weiqi, 2007) supports this finding. Parental interference, their lack of support for the school or the teacher, was a frequent theme in all six interviews and three of the teachers said that attending Parent/Teacher meetings was always a strain.

5.5   How Teachers' manage Occupational Stress

Each of the participants in this study said their most effective stress coping mechanism is peer support in the school setting, where they discuss the causative issues in an informal ways amongst their colleagues, either in the staff room, in between classes or in the playground and this view is supported by research conducted in Nigeria (Olalekan, 2004). The finding in this research project supports the sub-hypothesis; Peer support is a means of stress relief for teachers.

Four of the six teachers relied on support from their spouse, with whom they shared their concerns and this view is linked to UK research (Axup, 2008). This finding supports the sub-hypothesis that family interactions are a key

factor in relieving teachers' stress. Two of the six teachers employed

exercise as a means of overcoming their occupational stress, which in

comparison with some of the research previously conducted appears quite

low; this research includes data from China (Shen 2009) and the UK (Axup,

2008) and (Stoeber, 2008). The exercise techniques used by the participants

included cycling, walking and gardening. Other coping strategies employed

by the participants, included talking to Management, taking a glass of wine

and leaving any occupational concerns within the school setting. The

Hypothesis that stress response is used as a stress reliever for teachers and

the sub-hypothesis that teachers use relaxation techniques to relieve stress

were not borne out in this research project.

5.6   How Teaching affects the Individuals lifestyle

All six teachers' said that they experience tiredness as a direct result of their

role, linked to the stress they experience, although they were unable to

specifically identify which element made them most tired, saying that they

felt it was a combination of several things. Chronic tiredness is seen as a

symptom of burnout, although none of the teachers interviewed for this

study suggested that they were suffering from burnout, and they never

referred to the term. However, burnout is associated with feelings of

tiredness and Spanish research (Morianna, 2006) suggested that prolonged

exhaustion will lead to psychiatric leave and possibly burnout. It is possible

that with more detailed questioning on the levels of tiredness and other

somatic symptoms that a more robust outcome could be achieved. Further research needs to be conducted in this area to fully assess this theme.

A lack of energy or a feeling of disinterest in parenting their own children was expressed by all three female teachers; saying that having given of themselves emotionally in school they felt they had less to give their own children. This could be called emotional exhaustion and previous Lithuanian research (Malinauskiene, 2005) in this area supports the notion that teachers often suffer this symptom. The MBI states that if someone is experiencing emotional exhaustion, they may be suffering from burnout (Ahghar, 2008). In this current research the researcher did not find that the male participants experienced emotional exhaustion, in fact one of the male teachers said that he felt his role enabled him to spend more time with his children because of the long periods of leave and that therefore his family life was enhanced as a direct result of his profession.

5.7 What Teachers suggest to alleviate stress

Of the group interviewed for this research project one teacher recommended that those students, where English is their second language, could spend one year doing intensive schooling in this subject before joining mainstream school. In this way he suggested stress would be reduced for teacher, student and the entire class, as communication would be enhanced, which goes to support previous Spanish research, (Betoret, 2006). Communication within the classroom appears to be a challenge as the teacher has to maintain order

and keep the attention of twenty five students', having children in the classroom who neither understand instruction, nor can communicate their feelings is time consuming, frustrating for all and, resource intensive.

Four of the six teachers expressed a need for additional resources to be given to schools to enable them to do the work and this view supports other authors' research (TUI, 2008; ESRI, 2010). They mentioned the need for special needs assistants for those students who have difficulty in a particular area of learning.

Three teachers said that they, in collaboration with management, should be able to sanction students who misbehave without recourse to the Department of Education and Science; this view of increased autonomy is supported by research conducted in Ireland (Bates, 2005). However, they said that there is less ability to discipline students as a direct result of increasing litigation and the associated fear on the part of school management of this.

One teacher suggested that the profession should value the classroom teacher's role, saying that it appeared advancement was seen to be the achievement of a Principal role or that of an inspector in the Department of Education and Science, which could be demoralizing. This lack of societal recognition is linked to previous research in this area (Verhoeven, 2003). Twenty years ago the teacher was seen to be a leader within their

community, however, this is no longer the case and some of the teachers said that during the 'Celtic-tiger' teaching as a career was denigrated.

5.8 Conclusion

The current study found that parental interference was a major source of stress for all of the participants and student misbehaviour appears to be an on-going cause of teacher stress in Ireland, these findings are supported by previous literature. Teachers' feeling isolated, undervalued, and unsupported by Management and society was a theme that surfaced in the current research and also in previous global studies. Student, Management and Parental expectations to achieve good exam results were seen to be a constant source of pressure as the onus for these achievements were placed with the teacher. Altered society appears to have resulted in a change of status for the teacher as in the past teaching was considered an admirable profession; this view appears to have changed. The most constant stress coping mechanism reported by teachers was peer support and this theme is supported by previous global research. Chronic fatigue is recognized as a symptom of burnout and each of the participants reported this feeling though no linkage was made by them to the impact this may have on their overall well being and health.

CHAPTER 6   CONCLUSION

6.1   Introduction

This section shall give an overall view of the limitations of the current study and end with conclusions on this research project in the context of other studies completed in this area globally. The researcher shall make some recommendations as to what areas should be researched in the future.

6.2   Limitations to the Study

This was a small research study with only six participants and this fact influences the type of information obtained. All of the participants were of a similar age, and therefore their views, experiences, and opinions may not be representative of the wider secondary school teacher cohort. The researcher had previously worked with two of the teachers and therefore some of the responses may have been influenced by this fact. The design of the questionnaire had errors. Questions three and five were too broad and the information obtained was general as opposed to specific. Being a semi structured interview, the researcher attempted to overcome this challenge by asking alternate questions to elicit more specific responses to enable evaluation. All six participants reported fatigue as a constant symptom of their work and yet they did not link this to any possible health implications; the researcher did not probe them on this fact and

therefore cannot draw any definite conclusions. Each of the participants had a subjective view of what stress is and therefore the information collected was quite personal and possibly not comparable nationally; using a measurement tool, for example the MBI, to evaluate the level of occupational stress with each of the teachers in advance of the interview may have delivered more robust and comparable data with other global studies.

6.3   Conclusion

The change in family structure in Ireland appears to be a source of stress for the teachers' interviewed, resulting in the need to parent their students more; this theme was noted with the female participants and not the male and therefore warrants further research as this may be a differential on a national basis and could help direct the types of interventions made with male and female teachers. An increased expectation for examination success on the part of students, parents, and school management is a real source of stress for teachers. The feeling was that the achievement of examination success is the responsibility of the teacher and that the students are less prepared to study independently to achieve. It would be useful for additional research to be carried out in these areas to fully establish the impact of social change on today's teachers in Ireland. These findings go to support the hypothesis that Teachers' today are more stressed than twenty years ago and the sub-hypotheses that parental

expectation exacerbates teacher stress and societal changes over the past twenty years in Ireland has increased teachers' stress. However, as the study was so small, these findings are not robust and need to be validated by further examination in this area.

The increasing levels of teacher absenteeism cited as a real cause of concern by Murray, (2007) was not borne out in this research project. In fact only one participant disclosed that he knew of one teacher, in his twenty-four years of teaching, who was absent as a direct result of occupational stress. This participant then questioned if the stigma attached to stress was the reason for this anomaly. It is clear that in the context of previous data, both local and global, that absenteeism is a major cause of concern for the teaching profession and that, as such, further enquiry is warranted.

Four of the six teachers expressed a need for additional resources to be given to schools to enable them to do the work efficiently and effectively; this included a suggestion that teacher student ratio be kept as low as possible, and this view is supported by Fitzgerald, (2008). One teacher recommended that students without English as their first language should spend a year doing intensive schooling in this subject before joining mainstream school in order to enhance overall communication. As Ireland has become quite a multicultural society, in a relatively short space of

time (ESRI, 2010), it may be prudent to fully evaluate the impact of multilingual students in the classroom and the effect on teacher stress and workload. This finding goes to support the sub-hypothesis that classroom multiculturalism adds to teachers' stress.

Three teachers said that management should be able to sanction students who misbehave without recourse to the Department of Education and Science. One teacher suggested that the profession should value the classroom teachers' role, saying that it appeared advancement was seen to be the achievement of the role of Principal or that of an inspector in the Department of Education and Science, which could be demoralizing; in other words, advancement was seen to be achieved outside of the actual classroom. Further research needs to be conducted in this area, in particular, firstly on how teaching as a profession is seen by those within the profession and, secondly, how teaching as a professions is seen by the public at large. This may help to inform policy on how to maintain teacher morale and assure succession and reduce attrition within this occupation.

There have been many changes for Teachers in the past twenty years; some of those mentioned include the area of technology in the form of mobile phones, texting, and facebook. In addition, with more money the student use of drugs and alcohol was discussed and this appears to be a

situation that is prevalent across all social divides. It would be interesting to undertake national research in Ireland to estimate the actual level of substance abuse and misuse. Also a further study to assess the impact of new technology on students and teachers may present data that supports previous research showing that new technology has lead to increased forms of bullying behaviour for students.

Clearly, further research needs to be carried out in Ireland to fully assess the level of stress among secondary school teachers', their ways of coping with this stress and the impact occupational stress has on the teachers' health, their family, and their overall wellbeing. The Fitzgerald, (2008), paper cited a pilot stress programme conducted by ASTI in 1999 which showed that the issue of stress could be addressed successfully through analysis and training and the recommendation was to extend this programme nationally, this view is supported by research from Nigeria (Olalekan Arikewuyo, 2004). This researcher suggests that with adequate resources this programme could be implemented and may help to alleviate the burden of occupational stress experienced by secondary school teachers' in Ireland.

Reference List

Ahghar, G. (2008). The Role of School Organizational Climate in Occupational Stress among secondary school Teachers in Tehran. *International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health. Vol. 21 (4).* Pp. 319-329.

American Psychiatric Association. (2005). (4th ed.) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorders. DSM-1V-TR.* Arlington, VA.

Axup, T. Gersch, I. (2008). The impact of challenging student behaviour upon teachers' lives in a secondary school: teachers' perceptions. *British Journal of Special Education · Vol. 35. No 3*, pp. 144-151.

Azlihanis AH., Naing, L., Aziah, B.D., & Rusli, N. (2006). Sociodemographic, occupational and psychosocial factors associated with job strain among secondary school teachers in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. *The Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences. Vol. 13*, *Supplement 1.*

Bates, T. (2005). Editorial. *Journal of In-Service Education. Vol. 31 Issue 2*, pp 229-234.

Betoret, F.D. (2006). Stressors, Self-Efficacy, Coping Resources and Burnout among Secondary School Teachers in Spain. *Educational Psychology. Vol. 26, NO. 4,* pp. 519-539.

Byrne, B.M. (1993). The Maslach Burnout Inventory: Testing for factorial validity and invariance across elementary, intermediate and secondary teachers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology. Vol. 66*, pp.197-212.

Chaplain, R.P. (2008). Stress and psychological distress among trainee secondary teachers in England. *Educational Psychology. Vol. 28, NO. 2*. pp.195-209.

Cortazzi, M. Hunter-Carsch, M. (2000). Multilingualism and Literacy Difficulties: Bridging home and school. *UKRA*. Pp. 39-45.

Davis, M. Eshelman, E.R., & McKay, M. (2000). *The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook.* 5th Ed. New Harbinger Publications, Inc. USA.

Economic and Social Research Institute (2010). http://www.esri.ie/irish_economy/

Espinosa, L.M. (2005). Curriculum and Assessment Considerations for Young

Children from Culturally, Linguistically, and Economically Diverse Backgrounds. *Psychology in the Schools. Vol. 42*. pp 837-853.

Fitzgerald, B. (2008). Teachers and Workplace Stress. *ASTIR. Vol. 26: Number 1*, p. 17-18.

Kittel, F. Leynen, F. (2003). A Study of Work Stressors and Wellness/Health Outcomes among Belgian School Teachers. *Psychology and Health. Vol. 18, No. 4,* pp. 501-510.

Kokkinos, C.M. (2006). Factor Structure and psychometric properties of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey among elementary and secondary school teachers in Cyprus. *Stress and Health. Vol. 22*, pp25-33. Published online in Wiley INterScientce (www.interscience.wiley.com).

Malilnauskiene, V. Obelenis, V. & Dopagiene, D.. (2005). Psychological terror at work and cardiovascular diseases among teachers. *Acta Medica Lituanica. Vol. 12. No.2*. pp. 20-25.

Morianna, JA. Herruzo, J. (2006). Variables related to psychiatric sick leave taken by Spanish secondary school teachers. *Work & Stress. Vol. 20 (3),* pp. 259-271.

Murray, N. (2007, April 9th). Stress levels rising among teachers. *Irish Examiner.*

Olalekan Arikewuyo, M. (2004). Stress management strategies of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. *Educational Research. Vol. 46, No. 2,* pp. 195-207.

Pascual, E. Perez-Jover, V. Mirambell, E. Ivanex, G., & Terol, M.C. Job Conditions, coping and wellness/Health outcomes in Spanish secondary school teachers. (2003). *Psychology and Health. Vol. 18, No 4*, p. 511-521.

Pisanti, R. Gagliardi, M.P. Razzino, S., & Bertini, M. (2003). Occupational stress and wellness among Italian secondary school teachers. *Psychology and Health. Vol. 18, No. 4,* pp. 523-536.

Rasku, A. Kinnunen, U. (2003). Job Conditions and wellness among Finnish upper secondary school teachers. *Psychology and Health. Vol. 18, No 4*, pp. 441-456.

Ravichandran. R. Rajendran. R. (2007). Perceived Sources of Stress among the Teachers. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology. Vol. 33*, pp.133-136.

Saan, U. (2003). Job conditions and wellness of German secondary school teachers. *Psychology and Health. Vol. 18*, pp. 489-500.

Saarenen, T. Tossavainen, K. Turunen, H. Kiviniemi, V. & Vertio, H. (2007). Occupational well being of school staff members: a structural equation model. *Health Education Research. Vol. 22*, pp. 248-260

Shen, Y.E. (2009). Relationships between self-efficacy, social support and stress coping strategies in Chinese primary and secondary school teachers. *Stress and Health. Vol. 25*, pp.129-138.

Shukla, I. (2008). Burnout and Stress among Secondary School Teachers in relation to their teaching effectiveness. *E-journal of All India Association for Educational Research (EJAIAER). Vol. 20*. No: 3 & 4.

Stoeber, J. Rennert, D. (2008). Perfectionism in school teachers: Relations with stress appraisals, coping styles, and burnout. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping. Vol. 21 (1)*, pp. 37-53.

Teachers' Union of Ireland. (2008). Annual Congress Address, Mr. Tim O'Meara.

Turner, C. (1997). Born to Succeed. How to release your unlimited potential. *Element Inc., UK.*

Verhoeven, C. Kraaij, V. Joekes, K. & Maes, S. (2003). Job Conditions and Wellness/Health Outcomes in Dutch Secondary School Teachers. *Psychology and Health. Vol. 18*, pp. 473-487.

Weiqi, C. (2007). The Structure of Secondary School Teacher Job Satisfaction and Its Relationship with Attrition and Work Enthusiasm. *Chinese Education and Society. Vol. 40, no. 5*, pp. 17-31.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions for Thesis

1. How long have you been teaching in this particular school?

2. What things, specifically, in your role as a teacher, do you find stressful?

3. If you were to rank those things that appear to cause stress in the classroom, what are they?

4. If you were to rank those things that appear to cause stress in the school, what are they?

5. Could you tell me how the curriculum, Management and Government impacts on your role as a teacher?

6. Have you noticed any additional stressors in your role today as opposed to 20 years ago

7. What do you do to help relieve experienced stress within the school setting?

8. What do you do to help relieve stress experienced as a result of your occupation in your home setting?

9. What impact, if any, has stress had on your life?

10. What suggestions would you give to the hierarchy relative to how to deal with teacher stress in the classroom?

APPENDIX 2

General Information for Interview.

Candidate Number	
Explanation on thesis	*Secondary School Teacher's perception of the types of stress experienced in the school setting*
Verbal Consent Given	
Confidentiality Discussed	
Sex of Teacher	
Number of Pupils in School	
Number of Pupils in classes	
Mixed School	
All Boy School	
All Girl School	
Advantaged (A) or Disadvantaged (D) School	
Years of Service	
Miscellaneous	