

Causes of Work Related Teacher Stress in Early Childhood Development: A Qualitative Analysis

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ABSTRACT The study employed a multiple a case study design to establish the causes of work-related stress in the East London education District of the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Eighteen participants were purposively selected from East London centres. Interviews were used to collect data. Findings revealed that teachers were stressed due to lack of parental involvement; lack of safety and security for children, teachers and property; and mistrust by parents and lack of resources. The researchers also conclude that there is a training need for stakeholders in order to reduce these sources of stress. Thus, the study recommends that all stakeholders receive training on their roles in early childhood development (ECD) provisioning to avoid conflicts. Clear policies on the running of ECD centres should also be put in place so that issues, such as funding of centres, payment of fees, material resource provisioning and safety and security of learners would be resolved.

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have defined stress as the difference as well as a mismatch between the demands of particular situation and the coping strategies (Brewer and McMahan-Landers 2003; Chaturvedi and Purushothaman 2009; Okeke et al. 2014; Okeke et al. 2015). Work-related stress or occupational stress is conceptualised as a contemporary pandemic facing occupational health and safety. Blaug et al. (2007) posit that due to stress organisations lose much money in stress-related accidents, lost productivity, absenteeism and medical insurance costs. The symptoms of work related-stress are classified as physical, emotional or mental.

To try and establish causes of stressful job events, three overlapping approaches are used: the engineering, physiological and psychological approaches (Jovanovic et al. 2006; Kerr 2011; Dlamini et al. 2014). Jovanovic et al. (2006: 164) define the engineering approach as an “aversive noxious characteristic of the work environment”. It is the environmental cause of ill-health. A physiological approach entails a response or aversive stimuli to a threatening environment, while the psychological approach resonates through the dynamic interaction

between the person and their work environment (Jovanovic et al. 2006). It is important to note it was this particular understanding that made the larger study leading to this paper to be orientated from the perspective of the Person- Environment Fit theory (Okeke and Dlamini 2013).

Hansen and Sullivan (2003) posit that causes of work related teacher stress can be psychological. This can be due to the amount of time and energy a job requires, the number and types of stressors inherent in doing a job and the amount of control an individual has over his/her job. This includes whether the worker (teacher) has freedom to determine the work pace, to decide order of tasks, method of accomplishing the tasks and to make autonomous decisions. High strain jobs, whereby individuals have little control over how the work is done are associated with high levels of stress (Hansen and Sullivan 2003). In this case, work becomes psychologically draining and unrewarding (Okeke and Dlamini 2013). This is in opposition to active jobs which provide significant control over how the work is done; work that is challenging but rewarding and granting the worker with a certain level of autonomy. Smith (2013) attests to this by indicating that the major cause of stress is the feeling that one is losing control.

Role conflict also causes work related stress. This is when demands and expectations of the job are in conflict (Hansen and Sullivan 2003; Pitsoe and Machaisa 2012). Providing increased

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control can reduce stress and prevent many harmful effects of prolonged stress. In line with this, role ambiguity is another cause of stress (Perry and Li 2012). This occurs when there is confusing information regarding expectations or if there is unclear information about how to meet the expectations when one is not given clear or adequate information on how to tackle an issue. For example, a teacher is asked to teach a class and is not given guidance on how to teach or what to teach (Hansen and Sullivan 2003).

Other sources of stress for teachers are children's distress that may impact hugely on their ability to learn; discipline issues in the classrooms; time pressures; and heavy workloads (Kyriacou 2001; Holeyannavar and Itagi 2012; Hansen and Sullivan 2003; Mapfumo et al. 2012). These stressors increase demand on the teachers' time, energy, patience and reduces their autonomy resources (Hansen and Sullivan 2003). In addition, Hebbhardt (2012) found that 75 percent of teacher respondents indicated that their role was extremely stressful. Similarly, Tyson et al. (2009) state that one third of teacher respondents in their study rated their job as highly stressful. Findings on causes of teacher stress in South Australian schools revealed the following: children behaviour, workload, parent/family issues, administrative challenges, lack of time to fulfil official and even personal obligations, lack of support for children with learning or behaviour needs and departmental priorities (Hebbhardt 2012; Sarmah and Baruah 2012: 2).

An earlier study by Eckersley (1999) brings in another dimension to work-related stress. The author notes that powerlessness, the expanding role of the teacher and increased behaviour problems due to the influence of declining social values on the school setting caused teachers stress. In addition, literature gives the following sources of teacher stress: coping with change; the unpredictable effect of being evaluated by others; the dynamics of dealings with colleagues at workplace; self-esteem and status and poor working conditions (Kyriacou 2001; Richard 2012; Dlamini et al. 2014); inadequate salaries; involuntary transfers (Kaur 2011; ETUCE/CSEE 2012; Smith 2013). The current study, sought to find out what the South African context bears as far as causes of work related teacher in early childhood development. The research question that the study sought to find answers to was:

what are the causes of work related teacher stress Early Childhood Development?

Person- Environment Fit theory

Stress is a consequence of a disproportion between job demands and the ability of the individuals to deal with the demands of such job (Sarmah and Baruah 2012; Vazi et al. 2013). According to Al-Mohannadi and Capel (2007: 56), the central premise of the Person-Environment (P-E) Fit theory "is that stress does not arise from a person or their environment separately, but rather from the interaction... between a person and the environment". According to Brewer and McMahan-Landers (2003: 38), the basic tenet of P-E fit theory is that "stress arises from the fit or more precisely, from a misfit between an individual and his or her environment." The misfit occurs at different levels. For instance, stress may occur when there is a mismatch between demands placed on an individual's and his or her ability to meet the demands. It can be theorised that the event of stress will be most significantly reduced when there is a fit between the individuals and the environment. Inversely, individuals will experience stress when there is person-environment unfit or misfit. In line with this assertion, Okeke and Dlamini (2013) suggest that there should be correspondence between individual characteristics such as needs, abilities or values and environmental characteristics like job supplies, job demands or organisational values for stress to be alleviated.

In the present study this theory is appropriate in the investigation of the causes of work related teacher stress among early childhood teachers in schools in one Eastern Cape Education District. Okeke and Dlamini (2013) have argued that teachers seem to be trapped in a mesh as personalities and professional roles interact. Conflicts may exist between a teacher's personality and professional needs. Given the complexities of working with young children, the current researchers felt that it would be most appropriate to apply this theory to the study leading to the present paper. The theory shows that there is interplay between the elements - person and environment. The researchers also assumed that what impacts teachers' psychosocial wellbeing whether inherently from the point of view of the person or the environment

would most certainly impact the wellbeing of children. We argued that this particular theory would afford the present study the epistemological strength to investigate the causes of work related teacher stress among early childhood educators in schools in one Eastern Cape Education District.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A multiple-case study design was adopted (Yin 2013). The 18 selected ECD teachers were bounded cases. These cases allowed for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Yin 2013; Bernard and Ryan 2010; Rule and John 2011), in this case, teacher stress. A multiple case study design offered the researchers a deep understanding of the phenomenon of teacher stress.

Case Selection

Population and samples are prominent in survey research, however, in case studies, the focus is on case identification; case selection and case description (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 450; Rule and John 2011: 13; Gerring 2007: 211). The researchers purposively selected the cases for this study on the basis of their judgement about which ones would be best suited to the research purpose (Maxfield and Babbie 2006). Extreme case purposive selection was used to select participants as it is used to select units that have special or unusual characteristics (Creswell 2009). In this case, only 18 early childhood teachers were selected as they were special cases different from other categories of teachers.

Research Instruments

In-depth interviews were used for data collection. McNair et al. (2008) postulate that in-depth interviews are commonly used in research on sensitive issues such as HIV/AIDS, loss and grief, stress and child abuse, and teacher stress is one such. Denzin and Lincoln (2003:343) suggest that the interview gives the researcher opportunity to “gaze into the soul” of the interviewee, hence, our decision to use in-depth

interviews. However, the approach is highly emotional and is fraught with ethical dilemmas.

Data Analysis

Data analysis focused upon identifying recurrent themes across transcripts. Rule and John (2011:150) posit that “themes are recurrent and distinctive features of participants’ accounts, characterizing particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question.” Hence, themes identified in this study are presented in the next section.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Research Quest

What are the causes of work related teacher stress? In response to this question, a plethora of causes of teacher stress were given by the participants.

Lack of Parental Involvement

One of the causes of teacher work related stress cited by respondents in the study is lack of parental involvement. For instance the following responses were given:

Parents don’t want to be involved. They just send their kids to school and do not follow up. Almost every month we have new kids whose parents we have never seen. They leave them at the gate (TEACHER AC1).

They do not care; they do not even come to meetings. They do not want to pay school fees. Do you know that our school fess is R10 a month but parents in this location, although they get social grant they don’t want to pay school fees. But their children do come to school. When you ask parents for school fees, they just keep their children at home (TEACHER BC1).

The responses above buttress the fact that some parents whose children are in the centres visited neglected their role of providing for their children’s education. This was found to be a cause of stress among the teachers. **SCHOOL AT2** also extended lack of cooperation from parents as a cause of stress as she highlighted how they disdain for participation in meetings and any other delegated duty but rather relish in gossiping. This is reflected in her statement below:

SCHOOL AT2 When parents are called to a meeting they do not want to attend they know the agenda and discuss it in footpaths and reach conclusions that all we want is money -what they are also looking for. Even those who do attend they do not want to be delegated any duties.

The study also established that parents ignore what is resolved in meetings and this stresses teachers as stated in **SCHOOL BT1**'s statement below:

SCHOOL BT1 Non-involvement of parents in relation to decisions made in meetings for the smooth running of the school also causes me so much stress. For instance we will plan in a meeting school graduation or excursion but when it comes to payment of funds parents will not conform. Lack of commitment by parents most of the time delay the school programmes and that can be so frustrating.

ECD programming is also stalled by parents' lack of commitment and this becomes a cause of teacher stress.

Lack of Funding from Department of Social Development

The study also revealed panoply of issues surrounding funding from the Department of Social Development. The following captions attest to this:

TEACHER BC1 Its hard work in these ECD centres. There is no payment. Social Development gives us a stipend and this stipend is "money left over after we have purchased resources, bought food." And we have to divide what is left over, amongst ourselves. Sometimes we go on without funding from Social Development. For example Jan- March we don't get anything from Social Development. But children do come to school and we have to teach and feed them. Sometimes we take food from our homes or ask certain parents for help.

TEACHER AC2 I am not funded by Social Development. But in this area there is no other pre-school and I find myself under pressure to ensure that I offer the best to these children. ... My child I have given up on being funded. I submit every year all the documentation. But no one tells you why you cannot get funding. But there are centres opened after this one that are funded.

TEACHER BC3 Money is the main cause of stress: ... you are never sure of how much your stipend is per month. The Department of Social Development changes everyday. The Department of Social Development is not reliable and is the main cause of stress and conflict.

TEACHER CC4 Even that funding from Social Development is never on time

Admin C5 We are not treated the same. Some teachers are under the Department of Education and other are under Social Development. Those that are under the Department of Education get paid a salary every 15th day of the month, those with Social Development are given a stipend. The stipend fluctuates; people are never sure of how much they would get at the month end. Social development pays R15 per child per day. If there are let's say 10 school days a month they pay for those ten days. But in reality pre-schools do not totally close when schools close. Parents are working and they bring their children to school. Social Development seems not to understand the realities.

SCHOOL GT3 Then social development intervened and bought in an administrator who is more learned than us. That is when our troubles soared as the stipend paid by social development goes only to this administrator. She is not even too much engaged in teaching children all she does is to do this paper work, get in and out, attend meetings, workshops and training whilst we sit here. The money sent by social development is budgeted for things like toys, food stationery and what is left pays her, what about us? No one answers that question.

In summary of the above, it would be deduced that disbursement of funding is fraught with irregularities. Sometimes teachers or centres go without funding and yet they are expected to carry on with their activities. In addition, some teachers profess ignorance on the criteria used for eligibility to get funding. Information on how to get funding appears to be privy to some. Amounts the centres and teachers get seems shrouded in secrecy. Disbursement is not done timeously. There is a disparity in the allocation of funding as the teachers are not in one department and as such they have different working conditions.

Stringent Requirements from Department of Social Development (DSD)

Further to the above, the study found that centres find it difficult to access funding as the DSD.

SCHOOL QT1 *Administration causes me stress because I was employed as a practitioner and not as an administrator. Social Development requires so many documents to be filled. Amongst the documents that were needed to register this day care was a business plan and health and safety certificate. For me social development makes things difficult for us with so much paperwork to be done. Remember we are semi-literate we run around the township asking for help with forms and guess what these greedy unemployed matriculants charge us a fee to assist us. We feel embarrassed to seek help from our colleagues we do not want them to see our weaknesses. What frustrates more is that if you have to submit something, you are called anytime anyhow even on weekends.*

As given by teacher **SCHOOL QT1**, some of them find it difficult to complete forms as their level of education is low and the forms are pegged above their comprehension. They then have to part with their meagre resources in order to get assistance in completing forms. Coupled with this, the teachers may be affected psychologically as they have to hide their weaknesses from colleagues. In addition, Admin C4 put it that managing the funds was stressful. She gave the account below:

Admin C4 *The management of funds is stressful. We get funding from Social Development but they are strict. They do not allow us to look at our needs and then budget how to use the money we receive from them. Even the windows were to break; social development will never allow that we use their money for that. For example **apha** (here) we do get food sponsored by our four local shops. We would use part of the grant from Social Development for something else that is a need. But WOW.*

Admin C4 buttresses the strictness of the DSD. The rigid demands of DSD on how the money can be used stresses the practitioners as there can be incidentals that need immediate attention but may not be attended as they are not of what is gazetted by the department.

Confusion over the Running of Day Care Centres

The study found that there seems to be a power wrangle over the running of ECD centres as is explained below by Admin 5, Admin 4 and School AT1.

Admin C5: *the school board committee: the members want to control everything, especially the management of funds. But they expect me to account to the Department of Social Development on expenditure. They sometimes want to go and do groceries on their own and 'misplace the invoices.' The board members need to be trained. We have for years requested the Social workers to come but nothing has happened. Social workers do not treat matters reported to them with the urgency they deserve*

Admin C4 *The school board is also another issue. They want to control the funds although they do not know how the funding is supposed to be managed. We have requested Social Development to come and train the board members but no one is responding to that.*

SCHOOL AT1 *But seemingly nobody wants to own the preschool children, its teachers and its centres. Yesterday it was missionaries, then agriculture and education departments. Today its social development but we don't know whom will we belong to tomorrow.... Some of us were placed by department of education in schools what criteria was used is still not clear to us. We feel that we are a forgotten community; we should have been made permanently employed by department of education a long time ago. Social Development is not our employer but is caring for the welfare of children wherever they are. Lack of clarity of who our employer is stresses us most.*

From the descriptions above, it seems board members crave for authority to be in charge of finances at the centre but, however, lack skills of handling financial matters and for them to have an appreciation of their parameters. Hence, Admin C4 and Admin C5 advocate for the training of board members. Admin C5 also feels that social workers need re-orientation so that they can execute their duties well. Respondent Admin C5 also highlighted the shortcomings of social workers when she gave the account below:

Admin C5 *Social development is the cause of conflicts. The social workers are not sure of their work. For example they give you mixed*

and conflicting messages on the requirements of the business plan. With the stipend some say we are supposed to be paid R1540 for 30 children. Others say something totally different. You are never sure of what the truth is and what to message to convey to other practitioners. This causes conflicts and lack of trust amongst us. Social workers need to be work-shopped. They confuse us. These social workers do not visit the centres. They stay in their offices. They use the principal to be the bridge between them and the communities. That is so wrong.

From the above, it can be deduced that there is no cordial relationship between teachers and social workers and probably the social workers are unknowingly causing conflict between the practitioners. As Admin C5 claims the social workers need to be “work-shopped.” However, it can also imply that the teachers as well need to be work-shopped so that they understand the role of social workers.

Lack of Financial Security

The study found that the remunerations were low and thus did not accord teachers financial security. For example, teachers gave the following responses that support the assertion:

Admin C5 *Practitioners are not committed: this is so because of the uncertainties that come with non-payment and the fact that there is no binding contract. When practitioners find jobs elsewhere they simply call you. Others just disappear. Do you think there could be effective teaching in such a scenario?*

SCHOOL AT1 *In me stress levels are elevated by money problems. It is so painful to work not only the whole month by most of your life dealing with 0-6 year olds yet at the end of it all you have nothing to show. I am close to pension age but I have no pension benefit in the job I have been doing over a period of more than 25 years. I came into this profession as a volunteer....My age has taken its toll from me at first I used to go up and down seeking for help, donations, assistance, resources knocking at any door that can open. But I don't have that energy anymore I feel so depressed and vulnerable I am not coping at work anymore. It is just that there is nowhere to run to I am closer to retirement age. What stresses me more is that I have nothing at hand, no pension fund, no unemployment fund, no medical aid, no benefits*

whatsoever. I have been waiting patiently; I thought by now things would be sorted, I would be permanently employed.

The issue of “uncertainties” and not knowing what the future holds, as Admin C5 put it, causes a lot of stress and has an impact on teacher retention as teachers disappear the moment they get something better. Teacher School AT1 sees a bleak future and is tormented by lack of financial security in old age as she was stuck in a place for more than twenty five years but has nothing to show for it.

Working with Children from Economically Disadvantaged Communities

Another cause of teacher stress identified by respondents was due to dealing with children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

SCHOOL AT2: *We are stressed because we are looking after the children of parents who are unemployed. We know that it is a child's right to be educated and looked after, provided with shelter and basic survival needs. Because we are working in rural areas, we are deprived of our rights and children also suffer. Nobody seems to care about us; we find it difficult to make ends meet.*

SCHOOL BT1: *This day care centre is registered but we have not received funding yet. The stress I have is to work with children that come from different family backgrounds. Poverty is its worst from in this rural area as a result some children come to school in empty stomachs. We cannot develop learners who are hungry. In such situations you do not expect a child to perform in school activities so you have to make means of providing food for them first before you educate them. The problem now lies with the parents who do not provide lunch for their children.*

Teachers School AT1 and BT1 are stressed by the poverty that surrounds them as they try to provide early childhood education. Both feel the rural environment in which they work in is the cause of the deficiencies that they experience. They both profess knowledge of the rights of the children and the calamitous effect on learning of not providing learners with their basic needs.

Parents' Failure to Pay Fees

One of the great concerns teachers had was that parents did not want to pay fees for various

reasons and this had negative repercussions for ECD provisioning.

SCHOOL AT2 They claim that the grant money is for the welfare of their children and not to pay for the school fees. Yet the social development department gives an allowance to teachers who have 30 children in one class and the other teacher sits with no salary but a stipend from the coffers generated by school fees. When parents refuse to pay the school fees that means one teacher goes hungry and miserable just like their children they send to us.

SCHOOL BT1 Parents do not want to pay school fees here although we need only R10. We also asked social development to come to our parents meetings and to intervene on our behalf for the payment of school fees. Social development pays for 1 teacher who takes care of 30 children. If there are more teachers employed one has to pay them out of her own pocket.

SCHOOL CT1 Moneywise parents pay certain amounts others do not bother to pay at all. They pay R50 per month but most parents are not working therefore payment of school fees is not consistent at all. I give the kids, food, and education they are not willing to pay for.

TEACHER AC2 Some parents do not pay school fees. Maybe they think I am lying when I tell them that I am not funded.

From the sentiments above, teachers get stressed when parents do not pay school fees as it implies that some teachers will not get paid;

Lack of Monitoring

Findings also revealed that there was lack of monitoring of their endeavours in providing early childhood education.

TEACHER AC4 No one monitors what we do. We do not know whether we doing the right thing or not. That's why in South Africa children are abused. How do you let people take care of children and no one monitors your work?

Teacher AC4's view reveals that lack of monitoring of activities leads to other negative consequences such as child abuse. This may require further investigation for the safety of the children.

Lack of Resources

According to **TEACHER AC2** lack of resources was a thorn in the flesh. She lamented:

I don't have enough equipment. Look at the playground there I have a few tyres and 2 swings. As you can see the children have formed a line to use the swings. It's because the swings are still new. I bought them from my own pocket because I realized that my kids were getting bored with having to play with tyres all the time. I need toys, books for my grade R.

TEACHER AC2 claimed that she had limited resources and resorted to improvisation using her paltry means. The swings were still not enough as children had to queue in order to access the few tyres and swings.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy was cited as one of the causes of teacher stress in ECD. The teachers claimed that

SCHOOL QT1 Remember we are semi-literate we run around the township asking for help with forms and guess what these greedy unemployed matriculants charge us a fee to assist us. We feel embarrassed to seek help from our colleagues we do not want them to see our weaknesses. What frustrates more is that if you have to submit something, you are called anytime anyhow even on weekends.

SCHOOL WT2 Remember that we are the old stock we are not that learned but social development meetings or workshops you will be asked to bring a USB (memory stick). Some of us are not only illiterate but also lack computer skills. I entered the profession as a nanny there were no qualification requirements then. Through trainings and workshops we find ourselves graduating with certificates from different institutions. I believe the more learned you become the better you cope with children. In the trainings facilitators give you tips and coping strategies to teach young minds. We were motivated to study as we heard rumours that day care centres will be closed and teachers will be moved to schools.

School WT2 brought in a different type of illiteracy- computer illiteracy. From what she intoned one can see an individual who strove to be where she is but has not been tutored to catch up with the ever-changing modern trends and thus is lagging behind in computer literacy. This has a bearing on the type of training needs of teachers. **SCHOOL QT1** revealed that she tried to hide her semi-illiteracy from peers by engaging youth in the community who charged

exorbitant fees. The stresses the teachers endured seemed to be unnoticed by those in authority who even infringed on their weekends.

Lack of Safety and Security for Children

The study also unravelled that teachers were stressed due to lack of safety and security for children, teachers and property. The responses below indicate these sentiments.

SCHOOL GT1: *When I am working with children I am stress free but when it comes to safety of children I worry much. Look at this building there was a heavy storm and half of the roof was blown away. Nobody cares to attend to the damage as a result children are learning in this unconducive environment. We have been urging parents to mend this structure but our cries fall into deaf ears. When you ask any volunteer to fix the roof then need to be paid. Funny enough it is their children whose lives are at risk. On rainy days we have to make means to protect the children. Our equipment and learning materials are damaged as they are exposed to all kinds of weather. That causes too much stress to look after the children of uncaring parents although the risks of potential accidents are too high. The community as well is not cooperating when we sought help from them. They suggest that parents of the learners must fix the temporary structure as it hosts their children. Clearly then even if somebody dies no one will be held responsible. It's quite risky to work with children in an unsafe environment but what else can we do. We try to cope under these bad working circumstances by providing safety for our learners.*

SCHOOL LT1 *My main worry is my security and that of children. There is so much crime in the area, many young men are unemployed. You will find them sitting or playing on streets, in corners and next to the shop. Me and the kids sit and learn outside most of the day. I don't want to find myself in a situation where I am trapped inside with the kids. I want the neighbourhood to be vigilant and see each and every move that happens in the school. Even when the kids are sleeping I monitor them while I sit outside. I can't talk there have been so many incidents.... When you don't trust your neighbourhood it means you also don't trust the employer and that's stressful.*

SCHOOL UT6 *I don't have much to say but I am angry with the people who are supposed to be looking after our safety and security as teachers. The community says the day centre is their innovation therefore it belongs to them. But what the community members are doing is contrary to what they say. There are so many reported cases of burglary, stolen properties and theft but no one is ever been arrested and the community protects their children. Thugs steal the school furniture, school nutrition and stationery. We know the culprits because they sell the stolen items on the street where we live.*

The teachers seemed to concur that they were stressed because the environment was not safe for children to learn. Teachers have phobia. **SCHOOL LT1** even feared being inside the centre for fear of being accosted in cramped spaces. The other teacher, **SCHOOL GT1** was stressed because the structures they used were insecure and no one seemed keen to repair them. According to **SCHOOL UT6**, the community which claimed ownership of the centre was not concerned about the safety and security of the teachers.

DISCUSSION

In the current study, parental participation in ECD was viewed by teachers as generally lax as evidenced by Teacher AC1, Teacher BC1 and School AT2. These findings corroborate findings by other studies that there is no full commitment in parental involvement in ECD as expected by teachers (Bogenscheider and Johnson 2004; Keman 2012; Okeke et al. 2014; Bassoon et al. 2015; Okeke et al. 2015). This scenario calls for a redress in policy and practice so as to accommodate parents in a more engaging manner as advocated by Epstein (2001). Epstein (2001) advocates for policy makers to invest in parental involvement as it yields positive results in the long run. However, in the study Admin C4 and Admin C5 viewed the School Board, which is part of the parent representative body, to be interfering in the running of the ECD centres. We wonder if both parties were oriented as to their roles in the running of ECD centres. According to the findings it is not only the School Board that does not seem to be cognisant of its role, but Social Workers too. These findings highlight the need for "work shopping" of stakeholders so as to reduce teacher stress (Hamid et al. 2015; Mushoriwa and Dlamini 2015).

Cooper and Marshall (1978) presented five sources of stress which in summary are: those that are intrinsic to the job, such as poor physical conditions, work overload or time pressures; role in the organisation, including role ambiguity and conflict; career development, such as, lack of job security and promotion; relationships at work and organisational structure and climate (Johnson et al. 2005). This classification corroborates some of the findings of this study. For example, the theme confusion over the running of day care centres fits in well with organisational structure and climate. Lack of safety and security fits into the broader sources of stress that are intrinsic to the job (van der Spur et al. 2015; Wadesango et al. 2015). An example is the poorly maintained building alluded to by School GT1.

Poor interpersonal relationships with work colleagues and administration were also cited as a source of teacher stress at university level by Bashir et al. (2013). However, findings from this current study straddle over to include parent-teacher relationship; teacher-social worker relationship and teacher-department relationship. Conflict is evident in all these inter-relationships. This displays that all these conflictual inter-relationships cause instability in the intra-personal relationship of the teacher. Stress signifies loss of equilibrium in one's own relationship.

Further to the above, findings of this study seem to be in agreement with the P-E Fit theory that states that stress is a result of the interplay between the person and the environment (Brewer and McMahan-Landers 2003). Teachers (P) operate in environments (E) that present them with situations that cause stress. For example the environment that is not safe and secure for children causes stress to the teacher.

CONCLUSION

The current study concludes that there are many causes of teacher work-related stress in ECD. To recapitulate, among the causes are lack of parental involvement, lack of safety and security for teachers and property, lack of safety and security for children, confusion over the running of day care centres, stringent requirements from DSD and lack of funding from DSD. The researchers also conclude that there is a training need for stakeholders in order to reduce these sources of stress. It is the researchers'

conclusion that the environment in which teachers operate presents stresses that need external intervention to curtail them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that all stakeholders receive training on their roles in ECD provisioning to avoid conflicts. It further recommends that the Departments responsible for ECD ensure the safety and security of learners and practitioners in ECD centres. Clear policies on the running of ECD centres should also be put in place so that issues, such as funding of centres, payment of fees, material resource provisioning and safety and security of learners would be resolved. Further research is envisaged to cover effects of stress and its coping strategies. The study was limited to teacher work related stress from their own perspectives. This stance could sometimes be viewed as skewed. Rather getting other people's views could make the findings rounded as it would provide information other than from the teachers' perceptions only.

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