STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING WORK RELATED STRESS

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Assignment submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Business Administration at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

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NOVEMBER 2007
DECLARATION

I, Elsie Müller hereby declare that:

• the work in this research paper is my own original work;

• all sources used or referred to have been documented and recognised;

• this research paper has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfillment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognized education institution.

___________________________ _________________
ELSIE MüLLER DATE
ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to identify the strategies (primary, secondary and tertiary) that can be employed to manage work related stress. A questionnaire, was designed based on the strategies found in a literature study on the topic and used to gather inputs from academic head of department and lecturers. The questionnaire was delivered by hand to 18 potential respondents. All 16 questionnaires returned could be used. These were processed and analysed using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

In general support was found for primary stress management strategies pertaining to work schedule, work load and work pace, job content, career development, the home-work relationship and work environment. Lifestyle management in terms of physical activities and a healthy diet were regarded as the preferred secondary stress management strategies. The strategies related to lifestyle management which were identified from the literature study were physical activities, healthy diet, relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga. Support was found for tertiary stress management strategies but most of the respondents were not sure if their organisation offered any wellness, employee assistance or stress management programmes. Wellness programmes were indicated as a strategy that will have the most impact on reducing work related stress and employee assistance programmes (EAPs) ranked there after. Overall respondents indicated that they did not perceive their work as very stressful.
Acknowledgements

During the completion of this study, many others played a role to ensure success. I am deeply indebted to them and want to thank and honour them through this acknowledgement:

- My promoter, Prof Dave Berry, for his patience and gentle, professional and expert encouragement through this study;

- To all respondents who participated in this study;

- Editor, Hilda Pienaar, for editing and proof-reading the report;

- My husband for his love and support during my MBA studies and while completing this report;

- My parents and brothers for their encouragement and support during my studies;

- Lecturers and staff of the MBA Unit, MBA study group members and other colleagues and friends, for their support and encouragement;

- I am dependent on my Heavenly Father and He therefore deserves my utmost gratitude and honour.
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CHAPTER 1

1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The word “stress” is one of the most frequently used words today. We live in a world developing fast, requiring constant adaptation. Technology is changing, so are social habits, values, social structures and people. Everybody has to cope with those changes, not only individuals, but the organisations and government as well (Thompson, 2002: 30).

Some people are aware of positive values of those changes, but very few think of the negative consequences that may ensue. According to some estimates, humankind looses 100 million workdays every year due to the aftermath of stress. What matters more, 50 to 75 per cent of today’s diseases are related to stress. The European Agency for Health and Safety at Work, states that stress within organisations is the second most frequent trouble and affects as many as 28 per cent of employees (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2006: 3).

In SA during March 2005 and the beginning of March 2006, 45 out of every 1000 employees took time off for psychological reasons. This had risen to 65 out of every 1000 between March 2006 and March 2007. Psychological illness includes depression and absenteeism due to stress. Absenteeism in the work place could be costing the South African economy as much as R12 billion a year, according to the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB).

A staggering 65 per cent of all South African business owners are reportedly more stressed out today than they were a year ago. This, according to Grant Thornton’s 2006 International Business Owner’s Survey which polled 7 000 enterprise owners running medium-sized organisations in 30 countries. SA is rated seventh out of the 30 countries polled. Last year SA was rated third. This while globally, the report indicates that business owners are now 50 per cent more stressed than last year (Colley, 2006 5).
The managing of work relates stress is a “real” issue and any organisation that seeks to establish and maintain the best state of physical, mental and social well-being of its employees needs to have policies and procedures that comprehensively address health and safety. These policies will include strategies to manage stress, based on the needs of the organisations and its members, and will have to be regularly reviewed and evaluated.

1.2 THE MAIN PROBLEM
The aim of this research project is to identify those strategies that can be employed to manage work related stress, or more specifically, to address the following problem:

Which strategies should be followed in order to manage work related stress?

1.3 SUB-PROBLEMS
The following sub-problems have been identified and will be addressed in order to deal with and solve the main problem:

Sub-problem one:
What strategies relevant to the managing of work related stress are proposed or discussed in the literature?

Sub-problem two:
To what extent has the selected organisation implemented strategies to manage work related stress and which strategies have enabled employees to reduce work related stress?

Sub-problem three:
How can the results of these two sub-problems be integrated to identify specific strategies which can be used by the selected organisation in order to manage work related stress?
1.4 DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the delimitation is to make the research topic manageable from a research point of view. The exclusion of certain topics does not necessarily imply that there is no need to research such topics but rather a need to focus on one aspect.

1.4.1 Selected organisation

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) lecturers on the satellite campus in George (Saasveld) were selected for this study.

1.4.2 Level within the organisation

The study was limited to head of departments and lecturers of the NMMU.

1.4.3 Geographic delimitation

The study was restricted to the South Cape region, in particular George.

In order to limit the research to a manageable process, the other campuses, from other regions, were excluded from this study. The empirical survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire that was given per hand to the selected respondents. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and the completed questionnaire was placed in a box on the campus, for collection by the researcher.

1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

To ensure clarity and understanding, the descriptions of key concepts below will apply to this research paper.

1.5.1 Stress

In scientific literature, stress has at least three distinctive meanings. First, stress may refer to any event or environmental stimulus that causes a person to feel tense or aroused. In this sense the stress is external to the person. When
speaking of stress as an external stimulus, it is more appropriate to talk of stressors. Second, stress may refer to a subjective response. In this sense, stress is the internal mental state of tension or arousal. It is the interpretive, emotive, defensive and coping processes occurring inside a person. Such processes may promote growth and maturity. They also may produce mental strain. Finally, stress may be the body’s physical reaction to demand or damaging instructions. This is the sense in which Selye (1936: 32) used the term. Demand promotes a natural arousal of the body to a higher level of activity. The function of these physical reactions is probably to support behavioural and psychological efforts at coping (Baum, 1990: 657). Recent evidence suggests that repeated exposure to arousing stressors may lead to physiological toughness. Dienstbier (1989: 96) defines physiological toughness as increased capacity for responding to stress plus increase resistance to the potential physical damage that stress can produce. Conditions of chronic stress may bring about negative states, including exhaustion, disease and death.

Several related terms appear frequently in discussions of stress, sometimes almost as though they are interchangeable. These include anxiety, conflict, frustrations and hassles.

Anxiety generally refers to “a specific, unpleasurable state of tension which indicates the presence of some danger to the organism” (Budzynski & Peffer, 1980: 413). The most serious anxiety reactions are panic attacks. Distinguishing anxiety from stress is nearly impossible. Thus, stress and anxiety can both refer to the subjective psychological result of environmental pressure.

Competition between goals results in conflict. There are three types of conflict (Lewin, 1949: 65; Miller, 1944: 431). Approach-approach conflicts occur when two equally desirable goals compete and only one goal can be obtained. Avoidance-avoidance conflicts occur when two goals have equally unattractive values. Approach-avoidance conflicts exist when the same goal has both positive and negative features.
When some barrier comes between a person and the attainment of a goal, frustration occurs. One possible, though not inevitable, outcome of frustration is aggression. Berkowitz (1990: 502) provided evidence that a primary negative emotion, such as frustration, works through a sequence of body-arousal and cognitive attributions to increase the likelihood of aggression.

In everyday conversation hassles conveys the sense that pressures are piling up or that someone is pressing too hard. More formerly, hassles are “the irritating, frustrating, distressing demands that in some degree characterise everyday transactions with the environment” (Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1981: 3). Hassles are less intense than catastrophic types of stress, but they are persistent, nagging thorns in the flesh.

For the purpose of this research, stress will be defined in terms of the three distinctive meanings discussed above.

### 1.5.2 Strategies

According to Kroon (1995: 135) strategy refers to the “action of choice in a changing environment with consideration of the business’ ability”. It is seen as a plan to lead the business entity in making the most of future possibilities, taking its own resources and situation in consideration. Hellriegel, Jackson & Slocum (1999: 11) define strategy as “the major courses of action than an organization takes to achieve its goals”. For the purpose of this study, strategies will be defined as courses of action taken by the individual or organisation to achieve their goals with consideration of their own resources and situation.

### 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Since stress and coping (managing stress) are considered key determinants of health and quality of life, stress-coping research has important theoretical and practical implications (Zeidner & Endler, 1996: 75; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000: 648). For instance, examining the ways in which people cope and manage work related stress may help facilitate better understanding of the processes
and mechanisms by which coping strategies counteract the negative impact of stress on health and wellness.

This knowledge, Somerfield and McCrae (2000: 670), Folkman and Greer (2000: 12) argued could also be useful in the development of effective health-related policies and programmes to prevent stress-provoked illnesses, reduced health service costs in companies and promote a nation’s population health.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Firstly, the research requires an in depth literature study of available sources, such as books, journal articles and Internet sources, that discuss the thinking and findings on work-related stress. Stress has different implications for different businesses in different contexts. This study focuses on a tertiary institution - in specific the NMMU’s satellite campus in George.

Secondly, a number of NMMU head of departments and lecturers, were targeted to participate in the study. They were asked to complete a structured questionnaire which investigated their attitude towards work related stress and the extent of impact of some of the identified strategies.

Thirdly, responses from the questionnaires were processed into a spreadsheet with statistical graphics for a more visual presentation of the questionnaire results.

1.7.1 Literature survey
A study of the literature was made to develop a thorough understanding of the concept and strategies involved for managing work related stress. In this way the first sub-problem was addressed: “What strategies relevant to the managing of work related stress are proposed or discussed in the literature?”

1.7.2 Research design
A non-experimental, quantitative research method, the descriptive survey, was used to address the second sub-problem: “To what extent has the selected
organisation implemented strategies to manage work related stress and which strategies have enabled employees to reduce work related stress?” For this purpose a questionnaire was developed, consisting of a section covering demographic characteristics and sections on primary, secondary and tertiary strategies, identified during the literature review.

1.7.3 Data collection
Collis and Hussy (2003: 173) identifies questionnaires as one of the techniques for gathering survey data. A questionnaire is one of the most widely used data collection methods. It provides an effective way of collecting responses from a large number of respondents beyond the physical reach of the researcher prior to a quantitative analysis. In this study a combination of questionnaire and ratings scale checklist was used because of the relative low cost and ease of administration.

Since department heads and lecturers normally have limited time, closed questions were used, as these type of questions are quicker and easier to complete. They are also easier to process in the data analysis stage of the research study. A point rating scale was used to determine the respondents’ opinions regarding the impact the different strategies had on their career progress. The questionnaires were hand delivered to potential respondents.

1.7.4 Sampling
Snowball sampling or networking is associated is associated with phenomenological studies where it is essential to include people with experience of the phenomena being studied in the sample. In this research report judgemental sampling was used. This type of sampling is similar to snowball sampling as the participants are selected by the researcher on the strength of their experience of the phenomena under study. With judgemental sampling the researcher makes the decision prior to the commencement of the survey and does not pursue other contacts which may arise during the course of the study (Collis & Hussey, 2003: 158).
1.7.5 Data analysis
The data was processed and analysed using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. The outcome of the analysis was integrated with the information provided in the literature to derive conclusions and recommendations.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT
The following chapters are included in the research paper:

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement, delimitation of the research, definition of concepts, the significance of the study, research methodology and an outline of the research approach;

Chapter 2: Work related stress; background to work related stressors, consequences of stress, and personality and stress;

Chapter 3: Strategies for managing work related stress; primary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies, and a comparison of these strategies;

Chapter 4: Research methodology; research design, data collection, and data analysis

Chapter 5: Analysis of the research results and integration of research results with the literature study;

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations.

1.9 CONCLUSION
In this chapter the problem and sub-problems to be addressed in this research report were formulated. The key concepts, such as stress and strategies were defined. A discussion of the importance of the topic was followed by an outline of the research approach and the report structure. The next two chapters will be dedicated to the literature study. In chapter 2 a background to work related
stress will be described as well as the consequences of stress and stress prone personality types. In chapter 3 the core to this research paper will be discussed and strategies for managing work related stress identified.
CHAPTER 2

2 WORK RELATED STRESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Levinson (1970: 34) writes, “A man devotes nearly half of his waking hours to his job. It is said, he both works to live and lives to work”. Work can be the most valuable source of satisfaction, as well as the cause of stress. More often than not, people are identified by the work they do. Hans Selye (1974: 231) suggested that work is a biological necessity, thus it may be argued that work is the psychological glue that helps hold an individual together and assists in providing the individual with a sense of self. Consequently, there are aspects of the person-job relationship, particularly how a person feels about himself in his or her work role, which affects health in general.

Any organisation that seeks to establish and maintain the best state of physical, mental and social well-being of its employees needs to have policies and procedures that comprehensively address health and safety. These policies will include procedures to manage stress, based on the needs of the organisations and its members, and will be regularly reviewed and evaluated.

This chapter will discuss the background to work related stress, consequences of stress and investigate personality traits and stress.

2.2 BACKGROUND TO WORK RELATED STRESSORS

2.2.1 Work related stressors

Theories about the causes of stress, ranging from the anthropological to physiological aspects, have been propagated for at least the past four decades. Such studies have shown that there are physiological, psychological and social components to stress and successful stress management (Clarke & Cooper, 2000: 174). Sources of stress are derived not only from factors inherent to the job itself, but also from the organisational context, such as the structure and climate of the organisation. Examples include management styles, communication and company politics. Research by Clarke and Cooper (2000:
178) showed that organisational stressors can have more impact on an individual than factors intrinsic to the job. The perceived causes of stress can include any event or occurrence that a person considers a threat to his or her coping strategies or resources. These causes can be classified into personal and/or work related stressors.

Everyone encounters challenges, threats, or annoyance in the course of daily life. Occasionally these can be life-threatening, but more often they simply threaten our pride, our prestige, and our position at work, our place in the family or society and our self-image (Auerbach & Gramling, 1998: 45). Also, factors such as noise, redundancy, job security and company take-overs will influence employees’ experience of stress. The feeling of being tired and having a lack of energy all the time is probably the most common symptom of stress. Others include insomnia, anxiety, tension headaches, backache, depressive features, indigestion and constipation, to mention but a few (Aldwin, 1994: 32).

We have noted that there are both internal-to-the-person and external-to-the-environment causes of stress. These will be considered separately. However, three points need to be made about these lists of causes. First, these lists are not usually rank-ordered, because the importance of each stressor differs from job to job and from time to time. However, for most individuals these stressors are not equal; in fact, they may not exist at all for some employees. Secondly, many of these stressors are related, so that although they are listed independently of one another, it is highly likely that they are fairly closed interrelated. Thirdly, it is likely that these lists are not fully comprehensive in that there are probably factors – unique to certain jobs – that are not on the list. Nevertheless, they provide a beginning to understanding the problem.

- Organisational factors
Change and job security are stressful for employees. Restructuring, downsizing, acquisitions, closures and retrenchments leave the survivors facing job loss, extra work demands and anxiety about the next change. Many South African organisations still have a mechanic or bureaucratic structure. This also inhibits employee flexibility, risk taking and career development, causing frustration (Potgieter, 1996: 206).
• Job design factors
Some jobs have to be performed in difficult and unpleasant working conditions such as extremes of temperature (heat or cold), loud noise, crowding, poor lighting, or with old and inefficient machinery. Unpleasant features such as noise are at their most stressful when they are unpredictable, uncontrollable and excessive. The best example is road construction engineers with drills digging up the road. Very stressful for them, it is equally unpleasant for those in close proximity who can not control, reduce or predict when the noise occurs. Employees in manufacturing, engineering and the building trades often suffer from this source of stress (Potgieter, 1996: 208; Rice, 1999: 187).

• Interactional factors
Lack of social support – having friends and supporters in times of difficulty helps managers see stressful events as less threatening and more controllable than if they had little or no support. They can provide emotional, financial and information support at different times. Friends and supporters can also often suggest useful strategies for dealing with the sources of stress. In addition, they can also help reduce the negative feelings that often accompany exposure to stressful events. Social support is of course also qualitative and quantitative. Usually it is better to sacrifice quantity for quality, although ideally one would have both in liberal amounts to prevent stress (Potgieter, 1996: 208; Rice, 1999: 187).

Lack of participation in decisions make middle managers feel as if they are victims of decisions made at a higher level, over which they have no control. The major cause is that managers are neither allowed to witness not to contribute to important business decisions that affect their jobs (Furnham, 2005: 113).

• Career and promotional factors
Poor performance appraisal can also cause work related stress. At least two types of stress result from problems with performance appraisals. The first is not receiving any appraisals and hence not knowing how one is doing. The second is being given negative feedback without being told how to improve one’s performance. Unless an organisation has a good, well thought through
Performance appraisal system, employees can suffer great stress (Furnham, 2005: 115; Potgieter, 1996: 210).

Stress can also be caused by stress from being stuck at the same level or beneath the “glass ceiling”. Most organisations at least hold out the carrot of career development based on a mixture of performance and seniority. As a result, employees and managers build up expectations about their career development. Having these realistic (or unrealistic) expectations disillusioned is indeed a source of stress and frustration.

- Role-related factors
For many executives, it is important that they engage in role juggling – rapidly switching from one role and one type of activity to another (from boss to friend, teacher to partner). These adverse effects of role conflict are less pronounced in work settings characterised by friendliness and social support than in work settings where such conditions are lacking (Furnham, 2005: 132; Potgieter, 1996: 210).

Role ambiguity (stress resulting from uncertainty), can occur when managers are uncertain about several matters relating to their jobs, such as the scope of their responsibilities, what is expected of them, and how to divide their time between various duties. Sometimes, ambiguity results from not having clear job descriptions, goals or specified responsibilities, but often it is attributable to changes occurring in the organisation or the marketplace at large (Rice, 1992: 187).

Most managers are responsible for their subordinates – they have to motivate them, reward and punish them, communicate and listen to them. Considerable stress is often experienced by managers when confronting the human costs of organisational policies and decisions: listening to complaints, mediating disputes, promoting cooperation and exercising leadership (Furnham, 2005: 132).

Stress can also result from having two jobs, home and work. Although probably more common among females than males, stress often results from conflicts
over time and loyalties between the many demands of the home and work. Since employees and managers experience severe conflict between home and work demands, with neither being tolerant of the other or supportive, the obvious result is stress (Furnham, 2005: 132).

- **Work underload and overload factors**
  Work overload can be both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative overload stress occurs when managers are asked to do more work, in a limited period, than they are able to do. Qualitative overload stress occurs when managers believe they lack the required skills, ability or resources to perform a given job. Similarly, stress is related to both types of underload. Quantitative underload leads to boredom that occurs when boring, routine, repetitive jobs are associated with chronic lack of mental stimulation (Cooper, 1983: 371; Potgieter, 1996: 210).

- **Stressful occupations**
  Some jobs are quite simply more stressful than others. Various studies have shown that certain features associated with particular jobs are stressful. For example, the greater the extent to which the job requires: making decisions; constant monitoring of machines or materials; repeated exchange of information with others; unpleasant physical conditions; and performing unstructured rather than structured tasks, the more stressful the job tends to be (Hildebrand, 1986: 80; Potgieter, 1996: 210).

### 2.2.2 Non-work stressors

Two examples of non-work stressors are discussed below. Important to note that this list is by no means complete and more stressors can be responsible for non-work related stressors.

- **Time and strain-based conflict**
  Non-work role stressors create stress for employees trying to balance work, family and self. Time-based conflict reflects the stress that is experienced when employees try to balance time that is demanded by work, family and non-work tasks. Strain-based conflict occurs when stress from the work and non-work
domains spill over into one another. Stress in personal life can affect the work experience, while personal life stress can create increased stress and weariness among employees at work (Potgieter, 1996: 211).

- Significant life events
A group of many major life events (for example the death of a spouse; divorce) can significantly forecast our likelihood for future illness. It is important to note that a group of minor life events (for example going on holiday; the change in eating habits) may have the same negative effect as one or two significant life events in the same period (Potgieter, 1996: 211).

2.3 CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS
The consequences of stress are felt by individuals, their families, the organisations they work for and the economy as a whole. Indeed, it is even possible though absenteeism and performance related measures to calculate the effects of stress.

We will focus on two consequences of stress – burnout and aggression – as they both have serious negative repercussions for employees, their families and organisations.

2.3.1 Occupational burnout
Occupational burnout is a condition where the employee’s coping resources have been consumed by work and life demand, to the point of poor job performance and exhaustion. Burnout develops as a result of over work, trying to reach too many goals in a high pressure environment while working with difficult peers, managers and customers. Burnout does not affect the more even-tempered employee it affects those people whose high expectations for success exceed their ability to deliver in the long term (Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005: 83; Potgieter, 1996: 213; Rowe, 2000: 215).

Some of the warning signs of burnout can be identified in employees - too busy to take leave or time off work; complaining about quality of work of others;
regularly taking work home; avoiding colleagues; increased absenteeism; to name a few (Rice: 1999: 185).

2.3.2 Aggression
In most cases, frustration, if not released, leads to aggressive behaviour (Chapman & O’Neill, 1999: 98). This is the frustration/aggression hypothesis. This hypothesis explains the dynamic that causes an employee to lash out verbally and physically at other people or objects in the workplace. This is caused because they have not managed their stress reaction in response to either a major frustration or a series of minor frustrations (Chapman & O’Neill, 1999: 99). We normally react in four aggressive ways: verbal aggression (verbally lash out at another person); physical aggression (this can include damage to work equipment and violence towards others); internalised aggression (this occurs when we keep the hurt and frustration inside of us, inside and suppress the feelings that we have); corporate aggression (this refers to aggression towards your company) (Potgieter, 1996: 213).

2.4 PERSONALITY AND STRESS
Although working and home conditions do affect work related stress, it may equally be true that stress is influenced by personal factors such as personality traits, coping mechanisms and intelligence. There are various individual difference factors that appear to make people prone to stress. Again the list is neither exhaustive, nor does it consider problems that are unrelated.

2.4.1 Neoroticism and stability
There is a fairly consistent body of literature which suggests that people with “negative effect”, namely those with a mix of anxiety, irritability, neuroticism and self-depreciation, tend to be less productive, less job satisfied and more prone to absenteeism (Furnham, 1992: 86). Neorotics tend to dwell on their mistakes disappointments and shortcomings, and to focus more on the negative aspects of the world in general. They seem more prone to experiencing stress and less able to cope with it. Neoroticism is often associated with high absenteeism and low morale among employees (Furnham, 2005: 368).
2.4.2 Locus of control

It assumes that individuals develop a general expectancy regarding their ability to control their lives. People who believe that the events that occur in their lives are the result of their own behaviour and/or ability, personality and effort are said to have the expectancy of internal control, whereas those who believe events in their lives to be a function of luck, chance, fate are said to have an expectancy of external control (Burger, 1985: 1521).

Employees with internal locus of control tend to see threatening events at work as less stressful and they cope with it better than employees with external locus of control. Locus of control is related to desire for control, conceived as a trait reflecting the extent to which individuals are generally motivated to control the events in their lives. People with high desire for control tend to have internal control, to have higher aspirations, to be more persistent and respond more to challenge, and to see themselves as the source of their success (Burger, 1985: 1521; Newton & Keenan, 1990: 1229-1230).

More recently, the locus of control concept has been applied to behaviour in organisations. Spector (1982: 483), noted that locus of control is related to motivation, effort, performance, satisfaction, perception of the job, compliance with authority and supervisory style, as well as being an important moderator between incentives and motivation, satisfaction and turnover. For instance, internals tend to prefer piece-rate systems, whereas externals tend to be more satisfied with direct supervision, to comply more with demands of coercive supervisors, and to be more compliant with social demands than internals (Greenberg & Baron, 2000: 143).

2.4.3 Type A behaviour

Over 25 years ago, psychiatrists became interested in whether heart attack patients shared any psychological traits. Through various studies they did indeed find a pattern, labelled the Type A pattern, which was initially characterised by extreme and competitive drive and an enhanced sense of time urgency. From the start, however, this behaviour pattern was seen to be multidimensional, having many components such as intense sustained desire to
achieve, an enthusiasm to compete, persistent drive for recognition, a continuous involvement in deadline activities, and habitual propensity to accelerate mental and physical functions, and consistent alertness. Considerable research has identified other traits associated with this syndrome. It is suggested that this behaviour is learnt. Price (1982: 12) has suggested that this behaviour pattern is learned in open, competitive economies, where upward mobility is possible, success is thought to be a function of individual effort, and progress is best defined in terms of material or tangible achievements and related states. Among the social and cultural antecedents of the Type A behaviour pattern are the education system, urbanisation and social-economic factors (Furnham, 2005: 369; Potgieter, 1996: 215; Zellars & Perrevé, 2001: 460-461).

2.4.4 Coping strategies

Psychologists have spent considerable effort in describing and categorising different coping strategies, some of which are thought to be successful and adaptive and others not. These strategies are stress-specific concepts; hence they tend to be better predictors of occupational stress than broadband stress concepts. One distinction made by Folkman & Lazarus (1980: 230) was between problem-focused coping (aimed at problem-solving or doing something to alter the source of stress) and emotion-focused coping (aimed at reducing or managing the emotional distress that is associated with a particular set of circumstances). Others has pointed out that this distinction is too simple. Thus, Carver, Scherer & Weintraub (1989: 267) distinguished between the two types of coping as follows: some emotion-focused responses involve denial, others involve positive reinterpretation of events and still others involve the seeking out of social support. Similarly, problem-focused coping can potentially involve several distinct activities, such as planning, taking direct action, seeking assistance, screening out particular activities, and sometimes stopping acting for an extended period (Furnham, 2005: 370; Mak & Mueller, 2000: 319).

Many studies have shown how coping styles and behaviours mediate between various variables. Thus, using a six-dimensional questionnaire, Parker and Brown (1982: 1386) demonstrated how some behaviour reduced and others
exacerbated the relationships between life events and depression. Similarly, Patterson and McCublin (1987: 178) noted how 12 coping strategies in adolescents were clearly related to substance use and abuse. The 15 strategies outlined by Carver et al (1989: 270) are: positive reinterpretation and growth; active coping; planning; seeking social support for emotional problems; seeking social support for instrumental problems; suppression of competing activities; religion; acceptance; mental disengagement; focus on/venting emotion; behavioural disengagement; denial; restraint coping; alcohol abuse; and humour.

It is argued that, for various reasons, individuals tend to adapt and habitually use a few of these coping patterns, which may or may not be successful. However, it does appear that people can be taught or trained to relinquish less successful coping strategies and adopt others (Fumham, 2005: 370-371).

2.4.5 Optimism

A personal factor that seems to play an important role in determining resistance to stress is the familiar dimension of optimism/pessimism. Optimists are hopeful in their outlook of life, interpret a wide range of situations in a positive light, and tend to expect favourable outcomes and results. Pessimists, by contrast, interpret many situations negatively, and expect unfavourable outcomes and results. The results of recent studies indicate that optimists are more stress-resistant than pessimists. For example, optimists are much less likely than pessimists to report physical illness and symptoms during highly stressful periods such as final exams (Seligman & Schulman, 1986: 832).

Optimists and pessimists adopt sharply contrasting tactics for coping with stress. Optimists focus on problem-focused coping – making and enacting specific plans for dealing with sources of stress. In addition, they seek social support – the advice and help of friends and others – and refrain from engaging in other activities until current problems are solved and stress is reduced. Pessimists tend to adopt rather different strategies, such as giving up in their efforts to reach goals with which stress is interfering, and denying that the stressful events have even occurred. Furthermore, they have different
attribution styles: the optimists attribute success internally and failure externally and vice versa. Indeed, that is how optimism and pessimism are both measured and maintained (Furnham, 2005: 371).

2.4.6 Hardiness

Another individual difference factor that seems to distinguish stress-resistant people from those who are more susceptible to its harmful effects is hardiness (Kobasa, 1979: 114). This term refers to a cluster of characteristics rather than just one. Hardy people appear to differ from others in three aspects. They show higher level of commitment – deeper involvement in their jobs and other life activities; control – the belief that they can, in fact, influence important events in their lives and the outcomes they experience; and challenge – they perceive change as a challenge and an opportunity to grow rather than as a threat to their security (Furnham, 2005: 371).

Together, these characteristics then arm hardy persons with high resistance to stress. People classified as high in hardiness report better health than those low in hardiness, even when they encounter major stressful life changes. Hardiness is a useful concept of understanding the impact of stress. However, recent evidence suggests that commitment and a sense of control are the most important components of hardiness (Furnham, 2005: 371).

There may well be other individual differences which are highly predictive of stress, but the ones mentioned above have attracted most research attention (Greenberg & Baron, 1994: 12).

2.5 CONCLUSION

In chapter 2 a background to work related stress were described as well as the consequences of stress and stress prone personality types. This chapter was included to give the reader a sound background of stress, its causes and consequences.
CHAPTER 3

3 STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING WORK RELATED STRESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There are a number of strategies to consider in looking at the managing of work related stress. In this chapter these strategies will be discussed in detail.

3.2 PRIMARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Primary stress management strategies is concerned with taking action to change or eliminate sources of stress inherent in the work environment and thus reduce their negative impact on the individual. This approach to stress depicts stress as the consequences of the “lack of fit” between the needs and demands of the individual in his/her environment. The focus of primary stress management strategies is in adapting the environment to “fit” the individual (Manshor, Fontaine & Choy, 2003: 623).

Rice (1992: 267) mentions a useful range of possible strategies to reduce and manage work related stress: redesign the task; redesign the work environment; establish flexible work schedules; encourage participative management; include the employee in career development; analyze work roles and establish goals; provide social support and feedback; build cohesive teams; establish fair employment policies; and share the rewards.

A number of other primary stress management strategies for managing work related stress will be discussed in some detail, below:

3.2.1 Work environment

This strategy refers to the current work environment and how redesigning the work environment can help to reduce primary stress management. There is no significant research that redesigning the work environment can reduce stress and help with the management of work related stress this change can be directly synthesised (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 8).
3.2.2 Work load and work pace

Demands (both physical and mental) should be adequate with the capabilities and resources of workers, avoiding underload as well as overload. Provisions should be made to allow recovery from demanding tasks or from increased control by workers over characteristics such as work pace of demanding tasks (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 8; McShane & Von Glinow, 2000: 137).

3.2.3 Work schedule

Work schedules should be compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job. Flexi-time, a compressed work week, and job sharing are examples of positive steps in this direction. When schedules involve rotating shifts, the rate of rotation should be stable and predictable (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 8; Rice, 1992: 187)

3.2.4 Career development

Job stress mirrors the developmental peaks and valleys in the employee’s career. According to one national study of work stress, people bring several specific hopes to a job. They hope for rapid, or at least steady, advancement. They hope for some freedom in the job and increased earning power. Preferably, they hope to learn new things and work at new jobs. Finally, they hope to find solutions to certain work problems (Veniga & Spradley, 1981: 196). For some employees, the promotion does not come. The job that once looked so secure may be eliminated. Then they respond in ways that reveal building stress. When their hopes and dreams only flicker faintly, employees often lose a sense of accomplishments and self-esteem. Minor irritants they would have casually brushed aside when the dream was fresh now irate and fester inside.

Four factors are closely related to stress in the in career development: under promotion, over promotion (also called the Peter Principle), lack of job security, and frustrated ambitions. Contrary to what some manager believe job insecurity, not increasing production demands, increases stress and generally lowers productivity (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 8; Rice, 1992: 196).
3.2.5 The home-work connection

Most people think of home as a sanctuary, a place that is private and quiet and where one can be alone. It is a retreat that allows rebuilding and regrouping of inner strengths to meet outside demands. When pressure invades that sanctuary, however, it may magnify the effects of stress at work. Denise Rousseau (1978) provided evidence of spill over from events at work to events at home. Rousseau believes that work experiences are positively related to nonwork experiences. If a person has a job that diminishes self-esteem and produces low satisfaction, that person will have similar experiences in social life.

3.2.6 Job content

Job tasks should be designed to have meaning and provide stimulation and an opportunity to use skills. Job rotation or increasing the scope of work activities is ways to improve narrow, fragmented work activities that fail to meet these criteria (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 8; Rice, 1992: 187).

In conclusion - primary stress management strategies are often a vehicle for cultural change. Evidently, as the type of action required by an organisation will vary according to the kinds of stressors operating, any intervention needs to be guided by some prior diagnosis or specific audit or risk assessment to identify the organisational-, site-, or departmental-specific stressors responsible for employee stress (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 8).

3.3 SECONDARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Secondary stress management strategies are essentially concerned with the prompt detection and management of experienced stress by increasing awareness and improving the stress management skills of the individual through training and educational activities. Individual factors can alter or modify the way employees exposed to work related stressors perceive and react to this environment. Each individual has their own personal stress threshold, which is why some people thrive in a certain setting and others suffer. This threshold will vary between individuals and across different situations and life stages. Some key factor variables that influence an individual’s vulnerability to stress
include their personality, their coping strategies, age, gender, attitudes, training, past experience, and the degree of social support available from family, friends and work colleagues, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Secondary stress management strategies can focus on developing self awareness and providing individuals with a number of basic relaxation techniques. Health promotion activities and lifestyle enhancement and modification programmes also fall into this category (Williams & Spur, 2007: 30-31).

Stress education and stress management training serve a useful function in helping individuals to recognise the symptoms of stress, and to overcome much of the negativity and stigma still associated with the stress label. Awareness activities and skills training programmes designed to improve relaxation techniques, cognitive coping skills and work/lifestyle modification & enhancement skills (e.g. time management courses or assertiveness training) have an important part to play in extending the individual’s physical and psychological resources. They are partially useful in helping individuals deal with stressors inherent in the work environment that can not be changed and have to be lived with, for example, job insecurity. Such training can also prove helpful to individuals in dealing with stress in other aspects of their life that is non-work related (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 9).

For the purpose of this study we will “label” secondary stress management strategies as “lifestyle management” and this will be discussed in detail below.

3.3.1 Lifestyle management

Although this “trend” or “perks” of lifestyle management is still new in South Africa, some top listed companies (like Old Mutual, Santam, Nedbank and Hollard Insurance) in SA are providing staff with services ranging from massage therapy to crèches to help them deal with work related stress and achieve balance in their lives. In return these companies retained their best staff, boosted productivity and reduced absenteeism (Piliso, 2007: 8). But balancing work and non-work roles requires a purposeful appraisal of one’s career goals,
strategies and conception of success. Time-based conflicts extent beyond employees with families and it has become important to address the “balancing” of these roles. Planned rest periods after a period of high stress is a useful technique. This could be used on an hourly, daily, weekly and monthly basis. For every “peak” period, employees must build in a “valley” area where they can rest, relax and restore themselves for the next challenge. Personal leave, “time out” (e.g. lunchtime gym session) or paid sabbaticals are uses frequently for this purpose (Potgieter, 1996: 218).

Physical health is a buffer for the negative consequences of stress. Physical exercise is used to build and maintain “stress fitness” (Williams & Spur, 2007: 30-31). It helps employees to moderate the automatic adrenalin response when faced with stress, as well as provide high levels of endorphins (feel good hormones) in the blood system. Correct nutritional intake, enough sleep, relaxation and spiritual prayer and meditation will enable your body and mind to maintain optimal functioning during stress (Environmental Nutrition, 2000: 7).

However, the role of secondary prevention strategies is essentially on damage limitation, often addressing the consequences rather than the sources of the stress which may be inherent in the organisation’s structure or culture. They are concerned with improving the “adaptability” of the individual to the environment. Consequently this type of intervention is often described as “the band aid” or inoculation approach, because it is implicitly assumes that the organisation will not change but continue to be stressful, therefore, the individual has to develop and strengthen his/her resistance to that stress.

3.4 TERTIARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Tertiary stress management strategies is concerned with the treatment, rehabilitation and recovery process of those individuals who have suffered or are suffering from serious ill health as a result of stress. Intervention strategies at the tertiary level typically involve the provision of counselling services for employee problems in the work or personal domain. Such services are either provides by in-house counsellors or outside agencies in the form of an
employee assistance programme (EAP), wellness and stress management programmes, which will discussed in detail below.

### 3.4.1 Wellness programmes

Wellness programmes fall under the occupational health care programme for workers. The focus is on the improvement of emotional, physical and spiritual wellness of employees (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 9; Potgieter, 1996: 219).

Emotional wellness is defined as a stage of complete well-being and not only the lack of symptomatic behaviour of employees (Matlala, 1999: 24). Salutogenic (healthy) workplace behaviour is synonymous with the current concept of “wellness”, a term that refers to a conscious behavioural strategy that will optimise all areas of the employee’s life, including work, family, self, intellectual and social domains. Some characteristics of salutogenic work behaviour are goal directedness, productivity, acceptance of responsibility, dynamics, flexibility, initiative, concentration and creativity (Potgieter, 1996: 219).

### 3.4.2 Employee assistance programmes (EAPs)

EAPs provide counselling, information and/or referral to appropriate counselling treatment and support services. Originally introduced in the United States of America (USA) to tackle alcohol related problems, the concept of workplace counselling has since assumed a significantly wider focus. Such services are confidential and usually provide a 24-hour telephone contact line. Employees are able to voluntarily access these services or in some cases are referred by their occupational health function. The implementation of comprehensive systems and procedures to facilitate and monitor the rehabilitation and return to work of employees who have suffered a stress-related illness is another aspect of tertiary stress management strategies (Arthur, 2000; Clarke & Cooper, 2000).

There is evidence to suggest that counselling is effective in improving the psychological well-being of employees and has considerable cost benefits. Based on reports published in the USA, figures typically show savings to
investment rates of anywhere from 3:1 to 15:1. Such reports have not been without criticism, particularly as schemes are increasingly being evaluated by the “managed care” companies responsible for their implementation and who frequently are under contract to deliver a preset dollar and/or rand saving. However, evidence from established counselling programmes which have been rigorously evaluated, such as those introduced by Kennecott in the USA and the United Kingdom (UK) Post Office, resulted in a reduction of absenteeism in one year of approximately 60%. In the case of the UK experience, measures taken pre- and post-counselling showed significant improvements in the mental health and self-esteem of the participating employees. However, there was no improvement in levels of employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Like stress management programmes, counselling services can be particularly effective in helping employees deal with workplace stressors that can not be changed and non-work related stress (i.e. bereavement, marital breakdown, etc.), but which nevertheless tend to spill over into work life (Clarke & Cooper, 2000: 175).

In a South African study – a six-month project focused on changing the lifestyle of construction workers from sex and drinking as hobbies, to a more balanced lifestyle and exercise programme (Mead, 1998: 22) – a multidisciplinary team of nurses and biokineticians introduced fitness programmes, healthy diets and Aids and lifestyle education. The outcome was a R2 million improvement on the bottom-line production figures for that specific construction camp. This type of health promotion is normally offered through employee assistance programmes (EAPs). They offer counselling services to assist employees to cope more effectively with personal and organisational stressors. These programmes also include assistance for addiction problems, HIV/Aids policies and programmes, and family counselling. In South Africa several organisations such as Eskom, Iscor and Nedbank have introduces EAPs as a direct attempt to reduce the negative effects of work related stress (Potgieter, 1996: 219).

### 3.4.3 Stress management programmes

A specific focus in the South African context has been the post-traumatic stress debriefing service. Traumatic events such as job loss, armed robberies, serious
accidents and sexual harassment require immediate and professional intervention that aims to reduce the negative impact of traumatic experiences on employees. Stress management programmes are developed in organisations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training and managing of lifestyle (Stephens & Long, 2000: 423-424).

3.5 A COMPARISON OF STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Whereas there is considerable activity at the secondary and tertiary level, primary strategies are comparatively rare. This is particularly the case in the USA and the UK. Organisations tend to prefer to introduce secondary and tertiary level stress management strategies for various reasons:

- There is relatively more published data available on the cost benefit analysis of such programmes, particularly EAPs (Berridge, Cooper & Highley, 1992: 23);
- Those traditionally responsible for initiating interventions, that is, the counsellors, physicians, and clinicians responsible for health care, feel more comfortable with change individuals than changing organisations (Ivancevich, Matteson, Freedman & Philips, 1990: 253);
- It is considered easier and less disruptive to business to change the individual than to embark on any extensive and potentially expensive organisational development programme – the outcome of which may be uncertain (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994: 455);
- They present a high profile means by which organisations can be seen to be doing something about stress and taking reasonable precautions to safeguard employee health.

Overall, evidence as to the success of interventions which focus at the individual level in isolation suggests that such interventions can make a difference in temporarily reducing experienced stress. Generally evidence as to the success of stress management training is confusing and imprecise, which possibly reflects the distinctive nature of the form and content of this kind of training. Some recent studies that have evaluated the outcome of stress management training have found a meek improvement in self-reported
symptoms and psychological indices of strain (Reynolds, Taylor & Shapiro, 1993: 101), but little or no change in job satisfaction, work stress or blood pressure. Participants in a company-wide programme, for example, reported improvements in health in the short term, but little was known about its long-term effect. Similarly, as discussed, counselling appears to be successful in treating and rehabilitating employees suffering from stress, but as they are likely to re-enter the same work environment as dissatisfied in their job and no more committed to the organisation than they were before, potential productivity gains may not be maximised. Firth-Cozens and Hardy (1992: 83) have suggested that, as symptom levels reduce as a result of clinical treatment for stress, job perceptions are likely to become more positive. However, such changes are likely to be short term if employees return to an unchanged work environment and its indigenous stressors. If such initiatives have little impact on improving job satisfaction, then it is more likely that the individual will adopt a way of coping with stress which may have positive individual outcomes, but may have negative implications for the organisation (i.e. taking alternative employment).

The evidence concerning the impact of health promotion activities has reached similar conclusions. Research findings which have examined the impact of lifestyle changes and health habits provide support that any benefits may not necessarily be sustained. Lifestyle and health promotion activities appear to be effective in reducing anxiety, depression and psychosomatic distress, but do not necessarily moderate the stressor-strain linkage. According to Invancevich et al (1990: 254-255), after a few years 70% of individuals who attend such programs revert to their previous lifestyle habits.

Furthermore, as most stress management programmes or lifestyle change initiatives are voluntary; this raises the issue as to the characteristics and health status of these participants who elect to participate. According to Cooper (1983: 371), participants tend to be the “worried well” rather than the extremely distressed. Consequently, those employees who tend to need most help and are coping badly are not reached by these initiatives. In addition, access to such programmes is usually restricted to managers and relatively senior personnel within the organisation. Given that smoking, alcohol abuse, obesity and coronary heart disease are more prevalent among the lower socioeconomic
groups, and that members of these groups are likely to occupy positions within the organisational structure which they perceive afford them little or no opportunity to change or modify the stressors inherent in their working environment, the potential health of arguably the “most at risk” individuals are not addressed. Finally, the introduction of such programmes in isolation may serve to enhance employee perceptions of the organisation as a caring employer – interested in their health and well-being – and so may contribute to create a “feel good” factor which is unlikely to be sustained if the work environment continues to remain stressful.

Secondary and tertiary stress management strategies have a useful role to play in stress prevention but as “stand alone” initiatives, they are not the complete answer unless attempts are also made to address the sources of stress itself (Cooper, 1983: 361). Cardiovascular fitness programmes may be successful in reducing the harmful effects of stress on the high-pressured executive, but such programmes will not eliminate the stressor itself, which may be over promotion or a poor relationship with his/her boss (Cooper, 1983: 365). Identifying and recognizing the problem and taking steps to tackle it, perhaps by negotiation, might arguably arrest the whole process. If, as has been discussed, experienced stress is related to the individual’s appraisal of an event or situation, an organisation can reduce stress by altering the objective situation (e.g. by job redesign).

A further limitation of secondary and tertiary stress management strategies is that they do not directly address the important issue of control. This is particularly critical in terms of the health of blue-collar workers. Research has shown (Cooper, 1983: 376) that jobs which place high demands on the individual, but at the same time afford the individual little control or discretion, are inherently stressful. Stress management training may heighten the awareness of workers to environmental stressors which may be affecting their health, but because as individuals they may lack the resource or positional power to change them, they my arguably even exacerbate the problem.

Again there is not a great deal of research evidence which has evaluated the impact of primary stress management strategies on employee health and well-
being. However, what exists has been consistently positive, particularly in showing the long-term beneficial effects.

Treatment may often be easier than prevention, but it may only be an effective short-term strategy. In focusing at the outcome of the stress process (i.e. poor mental and physical health) and taking remedial action to redress that situation, the approach is essentially reactive and recuperative rather than proactive and preventative.

In summary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies are likely to be insufficient in maintaining employee health without the complementary approach of primary/stressor reduction initiatives. Secondary and tertiary level interventions extend the physical and psychological resources of the individual, particularly in relation to stressors which can not be changed, but those resources, but those resources are ultimately limited. Tertiary level interventions are likely to be particularly effective in dealing with non-work related stress. Evidence from workplace counselling programmes indicates that approximately a quarter of all problems presented concerned relationships outside of work (Arthur, 2000: 221). Organisations considering counselling schemes should recognize that counselling is a highly skilled business and requires extensive training.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

The previous sections has emphasized the importance and potential cost benefits to the organisation of introducing initiatives and strategies to reduce and manage stress and promote employee health and well-being in the workplace. Action to reduce stress at work is usually prompted by some organisational problem or crisis, for example, escalating rates of sickness, absence or labour turnover. Consequently, actions then to be driven by a desire to reduce or arrest costs rather than the desire to maximise potential and improve competitive edge. The danger of this type of approach is that once sickness absence or labour turnover rates stabilise at an acceptable level, intervention strategies may lose their momentum and be considered no longer necessary. It has to be recognised that stress is dynamic and in a rapidly
changing environment, is unlikely to ever disappear completely, but needs to be regularly monitored and addressed. Organisations need to consider stress prevention not only as a means of cost reduction or containment but also as a means of maintaining and improving organisational health and increasing productivity. The costs of stress and the collective health and wealth of organisations and their employees are of great importance to society as a whole. Occupational stress is not just an organisational problem but a wider societal problem which should ultimately be shared by all organisations in SA.

These strategies were used as the framework for the development of a questionnaire to assess the strategies employed to manage work related stress. In the next chapter an outline will be given of the empirical study in which this questionnaire was used, including the data collection and data analysis methods.
CHAPTER 4

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the literature on strategies to manage work related stress was discussed. In this chapter the empirical study designed to address the research problem (formulated in Chapter 1) will be outlined. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies will first be discussed, followed by a description of the research design, data collection method and data analysis process.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Leedy (1997: 103-104) asserts that the research method used should be chosen with cognizance of the data which will be gathered to solve the research problem: “The data dictate the research methodology”. There are two main approaches to collecting and analysing data: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative approach is used to determine the relationships among measured variables to explain, predict and control phenomena. The end result of a quantitative study is usually the confirmation or disconfirmation of the hypotheses which were tested. In a qualitative approach the emphasis is on describing and understanding the nature of phenomena, and the end result is tentative answers or hypotheses about what has been observed. Further quantitative studies can then be based on these tentative hypotheses. The qualitative and quantitative research methodologies identified by Leedy (1997: 104) are discussed below.

4.2.1 Qualitative research methodologies

The most common qualitative research designs include case studies, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and historical research (Leedy, 1997: 156).

In case studies detailed information is gathered in the process of exploring a single phenomenon to provide a detail description or possible explanation of the
phenomenon, or to evaluate it (Collis & Hussey, 2003:60, 68). Case studies can be contrasted by with statistical studies on the basis of their emphasis on depth rather than breadth.

Ethnography entails the study of a cultural group in their natural setting over a long period of time with the purpose of describing the culture and understanding the relationship between culture and behaviour (Collis & Hussey, 2003:60, 70).

With the phenomenological research design an attempt is made to understand people’s perspectives and views of social realities (Leedy, 1997: 161). The context in which events are taking place would be of particular concern.

Grounded theory refers to a set of procedures followed in analysing data to develop theory useful to the particular discipline. The research, therefore, does not commence the study with a defined theoretical framework, but the theory emerges from the process of data collection and analysis (Saunders et al, 1997: 349).

Leedy (1997: 174) states that in historical research, past events are studied to determine “a factually supported rationale to explain why events happened”. Knowing the origin of current conventions and problems leads to a better understanding of these conventions and problems (Welman & Kruger, 1999: 186).

4.2.2 Quantitative research methodologies

Leedy (1997: 104, 189, 229-231) distinguishes between non-experimental and experimental quantitative research. Non-experimental research refers to descriptions of observed phenomena and/or exploration of possible relationships between different phenomena as they are, without manipulating variables. The descriptive survey, longitudinal, correlation and ex post facto research designs are included in this category.

The descriptive survey measures the characteristics of a sample at one point in time. Saunders et al (1997: 78) state that this design allows for the collection of
a large amount of data in an economical manner. Questionnaires are most often used to gather the data and, as the data are standardized, comparisons can easily be made.

In longitudinal research the same group is examined at different time intervals (Welman & Kruger, 1999: 87). Saunders et al (1997: 77) view the fact that the researcher can study change and development as this design’s main strength.

The correlation design is seen as the simplest non-experimental design. Each individual or unit in the sample is measured on two or more variables at about the same time and the relationship between these variables is analysed (Welman & Kruger, 1999: 86).

With ex post facto research designs the researcher can examine how specific independent variables affect the dependent variable. According to Cohen and Manion (1980: 177), no manipulation of the variables is possible as the independent variable (or variables) has already occurred. The research entails observing the dependent variable (or variables) and then studying the independent variable (or variables) in retrospect, to determine the relationship with the dependent variable (or variables).

In experimental research the research situation is controlled to determine cause-and-effect relationships between variables. Experimental designs can be categorized into two groups, functional and factorial designs. Leedy (1997: 231) distinguishes between these two types of designs on the basis of the amount of control the researcher has over the independent variable: “whether the researcher can control the independent variable at will (the functional design) or whether, during the course of the experiment, the researcher can not control the independent variable (the factorial design).”

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

To determine the most applicable research design, the research problem and nature of the data to be collected should be clarified. The main problem researched in this study was:
What strategies will enable people to manage work related stress?

The following sub-problems were identified and addressed to deal with and solve the main problem:

- What strategies relevant to the managing of work related stress are proposed or discussed in the literature?
- To what extent has the selected organisation implemented strategies to manage work related stress and which strategies have enabled employees to reduce work related stress?
- How can the results of these two sub-problems be integrated to identify specific strategies which can be used by the selected organisation in order to manage work related stress?

A literature study was conducted to address the first sub-problem. Information about similar research projects was found on the Nexus Database System of the Human Sciences Research Council’s website. Relevant literature on the subject was obtained through searching the electronic databases (Emerald and EBSCOHost) on the NMMU’s library website. The details of books and additional articles were obtained from the reference lists of the articles accessed on the electronic databases. These were then obtained in the NMMU’s library or ordered from other South African libraries. The writer also contacted one author in Cape Town by electronic mail for copies of articles and/or questionnaires. The results of this literature study were reported on in chapter 2 and 3.

The second sub-problem required information regarding the strategies and organisation had employed to enable them to manage work related stress. This implied the use of observation and the descriptive survey, a non-experimental research method (see 4.2.2 above).

The analysis of the data provided by the survey and its subsequent interpretation and integration with the information obtained in the literature study, addressed the third sub-problem.
4.4 DATA COLLECTION

Collis and Hussy (2003: 173) identifies questionnaires, interviews and rating scale checklists as techniques for gathering survey data. A questionnaire is one of the most widely used data collection methods. It provides an effective way of collecting responses from a large number of respondents beyond the physical reach of the researcher prior to a quantitative analysis. Interviews allow for probing to obtain additional, clarifying information, but can be expensive if the respondents are geographically spread out. The rating scale checklist is a list of items with a scale on which varying degrees of intensity or a range of frequency for certain events can be indicated.

In this study a combination of questionnaire and rating scale checklist was used because of its relatively low cost, ease of administration and ability to reach respondents physically removed from the researcher. However, only the term “questionnaire” will be used.

4.4.1 Questionnaire

Collis & Hussy (2003: 174) stress that the validity and reliability of the data collected and the response rate achieved largely depend on the design of the questions, the structure of the questionnaire and the effectiveness of the pilot testing.

The choice of individual questions is determined by the data needed and can be developed by the researcher, or adapted or adopted from other questionnaires.

In designing the questionnaire for this study (see Appendix A), new questions were formulated. Section A is dedicated to demographic characteristics, while primary stress management strategies are targeted in Section B, secondary stress management strategies in Section C and tertiary stress management strategies in Section D. The content of the questions in Section B, C and D is based on the literature review discussed in chapter 3.

Head of departments and lecturers normally have limited time. It was therefore decided to use closed questions for most of the questions as this type of
question is quicker and easier to compete. They are also easier to process in the data analysis stage of the research study. The closed questions were a combination of what Collis & Hussey (2003: 179-180) refers to as list and scale questions. List questions include a list of responses from which the respondent can choose the relevant response. These were mainly used to establish whether a respondent had used or had been exposed to a specific strategy. Scale (or rating) questions are often used to collect data about attitudes, beliefs or opinions and consist of a scale with a sequence of defined numbers. A 4-point rating scale was used to determine the respondent's opinions regarding the impact the different strategies had on them. Questions were closed to facilitate the data analysis process.

Collis & Hussy (2003: 180) caution that the length of the survey will affect the response rate. They suggest that the optimal length of a self-administrated questionnaire is six to eight A4 pages. The questionnaire used in this study is five pages long: one page that cover demographic characteristics, one and half page primary stress management strategies, one and half page secondary stress management strategies, one page tertiary stress management strategies, and a half page that requests some general, optional information.

4.4.2 Cover letter

Collis & Hussey (2003: 66) stresses the importance of a well-structured and courteous cover letter. The letter should persuade the respondent to complete the questionnaire, but remain tactful and respectful to build and maintain good interpersonal relations. The same is relevant for any reminders to be sent out if a reply is not received by the due date.

A covering letter was formulated on the basis of these guidelines (Appendix B) and was sent out electronically a day before the actual questionnaire was physically delivered to the respondents.
4.4.3 Pilot testing

Collis and Hussy (2003: 173) stress that a questionnaire must be pilot tested to refine it and eliminate potential difficulties in completing and analysing it. Furthermore, the pilot study respondents should be similar to the members of the research population.

Prior to the pilot study, a lecturer at the NMMU, Mr Richard Muller, checked and commented on the draft questionnaire. After some adjustments were made, the questionnaire was sent to one respondent for completion and evaluation. This respondent is a lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch. Feedback was obtained and minor changes were made.

4.4.4 Sampling

Restrictions of time, money and access make it impossible to survey every member of the population. A sampling technique should therefore be used to allow for the collection of data from a subgroup from which generalisations about the total population can be made. Welman and Kruger (1999: 47) distinguish between probability and non-probability sampling. In the case of probability sampling the chance of each member of the population to be selected for inclusion in the sample can be determined. The characteristics of the population can then be estimated statistically from the sample. Examples of probability samples are simple random samples, stratified random samples, systematic samples and cluster samples. In contrast, the probability of each member being selected from the population is not known in the case of non-probability sampling. No statistical inferences can therefore be made, although the researcher will still be able to make generalisations about the characteristics of the population. Examples are quota, purposive, snowball, self-selection and convenience samples.

4.4.5 Administration of questionnaire

The cover letter was e-mailed to potential respondents and the questionnaire was given by hand to potential respondents on the 19th of October 2007. Respondents were requested to complete and the return the completed
questionnaire by placing the questionnaire in a post box provided on their campus. One follow-up e-mail message was sent to encourage respondents to complete the questionnaires. There was no final cut-off date provided by most of the questionnaires were received back within one week.

In total, 18 questionnaires were sent to potential respondents, and 16 completed questionnaires were received within one week of delivery. The 16 completed questionnaires represent a response rate of 88 percent.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

All the questionnaires were numbered before they were handed out to potential respondents. After 16 of the questionnaires had been received they were ordered from numbers 1 to 16. Six spreadsheets were developed on a personal computer by means of Microsoft Excel software to facilitate the input and analysis of the data. The rows and columns were labeled according to the respondent’s numbers and question numbers, respectively. The following Excel statistical functions were utilised (Microsoft Excel definitions, except where a different source is indicated):

- Mean: The arithmetic average of a frequency distribution (Collis & Hussey, 2003: 350);
- Standard deviation: The extent by which data values are spread around the mean. If the data values are close to the mean, and the standard deviation thus relatively low, the mean is more typical of the data than when the values vary widely (Collis & Hussey, 2003: 356);
- Rank: The size of a value relative to other values in the data set.

The following data were entered on the first spreadsheet:

- The codes or other responses relating to the demographic data in Section A of the questionnaire;
- The ratings indicated under “extent of impact” for each of the primary stress management strategies in Section B of the questionnaire. If no rating was given, the space was left open;
• The ratings indicated under “extent of impact” for each of the secondary stress management strategies in Section C of the questionnaire. If no rating was given, the space was left open;
• The ratings indicated under “extent of impact” for each of the tertiary stress management strategies in Section D of the questionnaire. If no rating was given, the space was left open.

The mean, standard deviation, rank, minimum and maximum for the strategies in Section B, C and D were calculated by means of the statistical functions. These same functions were applied to the respondent’s ratings for all three sections.

On the second spreadsheet the codes for the demographic data on the first spreadsheet were counted and inserted in tables. Percentages were calculated and by means of the spreadsheet functions.

The number of each score for the primary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies was counted and entered in tables on the third, forth and fifth spreadsheets, respectively. The summarized data for the extent of impact were then copied from the first two spreadsheets to these three spreadsheets (see Appendix D, E, F).

The information used on the last three spreadsheets were used to determine
• The ranked primary stress management strategies according to the extent of impact;
• The ranked secondary stress management strategies according to the extent of impact;
• The ranked tertiary stress management strategies according to the extent of impact;

Although ranking strategies provided some insight into the value of the various strategies in managing work related stress, there were some limitations. The extent of impact ratings pertained only to those strategies that the respondents had experienced in their work. Also, some of these strategies were not
identified as “real” stresses in this particular organisation. The average of these ratings could therefore be misleading.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the empirical study designed to address the research problem was described. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were discussed, followed by a description of the research design used in this study. Details were given of the literature study conducted to address the first sub-problem: “What strategies relevant to the managing of work related stress are proposed or discussed in the literature?”

A non-experimental quantitative research method, the descriptive survey, was chosen to address the second sub-problem: “To what extent has the selected organisation implemented strategies to manage work related stress and which strategies have enabled employees to reduce work related stress?” For this purpose a questionnaire was developed, consisting of a section covering demographic characteristics and sections on primary, secondary and tertiary strategies to manage work related stress.

The questionnaire was sent to 18 potential respondents and was delivered by hand. Of the 16 completed questionnaires returned, 16 could be used. These were processed using Microsoft Excel. The research results will be presented and discussed in chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5

5 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS WITH THE LITERATURE STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research design and process used in this empirical study were described in the previous chapter. The results of the study will be presented in this chapter and furthermore integrated with the literature study. Information regarding the research response will be followed by the presentation and discussion of respondent’s demographic characteristics according to the responses in Section A of the questionnaire. Responses on the various primary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies will be discussed according to extent of impact. Respondents’ inputs on the open questions added to the understanding of strategies to manage work related stress and summaries of these will also be provided. The framework developed in chapter 3 and based on the literature study will be used in this chapter.

5.2 RESEARCH RESPONSE

As indicated in chapter 4 (4.4.5) 18 questionnaires were sent out, and 16 completed questionnaires were received. The response rate was therefore 88 percent. This is a high percentage, and is viewed as a good response rate. Collis and Hussey (2003: 131) regard a 30 percent response rate for postal and personal delivered surveys as acceptable. Reasons for the high response rate could possibly be found in the nature of the sample. The respondents were chosen from a small, selected group in an organisation. The respondents were approached individually and the personal contact with all respondents could have resulted in this high response rate. The questionnaire also consists only of 5 pages and did not take too much time of the respondents.

5.3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Section A of the questionnaire contained several questions on the respondents’ demographic characteristics. The representativeness of the sample could be determined on the basis of this information. In addition, the responses
contributed to an understanding of the demographic composition of the respondents. The relative small number of respondents limited the extent to which characteristics could be correlated with each other or with the strategies.

The respondents’ ages are reflected in Table 5.1. All of the respondents were older than 31 years, with most (37.5 percent) being from 41 to 50 years old. Age is a key factor that can influence an individual’s vulnerability to stress, but in this study it was not an objective to prove a direct correlation between age and stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE (YEARS)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 or over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composition of the sample is skew as the figures in Table 5.2 indicate that all the respondents were white. However, the relevance of the racial group composition is questioned with regards to this study and does not affect the results of this study as there is no significant proof that stress is more significant in certain racial groups than other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACIAL GROUP</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The respondent’s gender is reflected in Table 5.3. Most of the respondents (93.75 percent) were men. It could be argued that the composition is skew but the relevance of gender was not investigated for relevance in this study.

**TABLE 5.3: GENDER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>93.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the respondents were married / living together. As Rice (1999: 187) mentioned that having friends and supporters in times of difficulty helps individuals see stressful events as less threatening and more controllable than if they had little or no support. They can provide emotional, financial and information support at different times. Friends and supporters can also often suggest useful strategies for dealing with the sources of stress. In addition, they can also help reduce the negative feelings that often accompany exposure to stressful events. Although these facts could not be supported through this study, it is interesting to note that all respondents had a support system in terms of a husband / wife / partner.

**TABLE 5.4: MARITAL STATUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single - never married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single - divorced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single - widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married / living together</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 5.5 respondents’ highest qualifications are reflected. The majority had a Masters degree. The respondents are highly trained and could therefore be more equipped to hand stress (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 16).
### TABLE 5.5: HIGHEST QUALIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGHEST QUALIFICATION</th>
<th>NUMBER OF Respondents</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honours Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.4 PRIMARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The questionnaire included 10 sources of primary stress. The extent of impact was assessed on a four-point scale from “not stressful” to “very stressful”. A summary of these results is presented in Appendix D.

The following list was compiled based on the summarised data for the extent of impact of these primary sources of stress. Where the means of primary sources of stress were similar, the standard deviation was used to determine the extent of impact. Where percentages were similar, the mean and/or standard deviation were used to determine the rank.

The ranked primary stress management strategies according to the extent of impact are reflected in Table 5.6, below.

The primary stress management strategies listed in Table 5.6 ranked “1” on average had a strong to very strong impact on respondents’ stress levels. As can be seen from the standard deviation, there is a high degree of agreement among respondents regarding the value of most of these strategies, especially “the number of courses I teach in a semester”. The primary stress management strategies ranked “7” on average had a week or no impact on the respondents’ stress levels.
To incorporate the research results with the literature study in this section the questionnaire items pertaining to each specific strategy will be presented and the research results discussed and interpreted within the framework of the primary stress management strategies discussed in chapter 3. A small number of strategies may be included under more than one heading to allow for items which could serve different purposes.

### 5.4.1 Work environment

This strategy refers to the current work environment and how redesigning the work environment can help to reduce primary stress management. The questionnaire contained two questions related to work environment. Both of these questions ranked as the lowest primary stress management strategies (Table 5.6):

- Insufficient office space;
- The size of the class venue being taught.
The items in this category were all perceived to have no impact on the stress of the respondents. This finding is on par with Rice’s (1991: 241) research that there is no significant research that redesigning the work environment can reduce stress.

5.4.2 Work load and work pace

This strategy is about the demands (both physical and mental) of a work. Demands should be adequate with the capabilities and resources of workers, avoiding underload as well as overload. Provisions should be made to allow recovery from demanding tasks or from increased control by workers over characteristics such as work pace of demanding tasks (McShane & Von Glinow, 2000: 137).

The questionnaire contained one question related to work load and work pace. This question ranked as one of the higher primary stress management strategies (Table 5.6):

- Feeling that I have too heavy and workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal day.

This issue is a real problem in the organisation surveyed and as McShane and Von Glinow (2000: 137) found in their study, this organisation will also have to put steps in place for the recovery from demanding tasks or from increased control by workers over characteristics such as work pace of demanding tasks.

5.4.3 Work schedule

Work schedules should be compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job. The questionnaire contained two questions related to work schedule. These questions ranked as the highest primary stress management strategies (Table 5.6):

- The number of courses I teach in a semester;
- Attending committee meetings, which take up too much time?
These issues are real problems in the organisation surveyed and as McShane and Von Glinow (2000: 137) found in their study, this organisation will also have to put steps in place for the recovery from demanding tasks or from increased control by workers over characteristics such as work pace of demanding tasks.

However, such changes are likely to be short term if employees return to an unchanged work environment and its indigenous stressors. If such initiatives have little impact in improving job satisfaction, then it is more likely that the individual will adopt a way of coping with stress which may have positive individual outcomes, but may have negative implications for the organisation (i.e. taking alternative employment).

Again there is not a great deal of research evidence which has evaluated the impact of primary stress management strategies on employee health and well-being. However, what exists has been consistently positive, particularly in showing the long-term beneficial effects.

### 5.4.4 Career development

Job stress mirrors the developmental peaks and valleys in the employee’s career. According to one national study of work stress, people bring several specific hopes to a job. They hope for rapid, or at least steady, advancement. They hope for some freedom in the job and increased earning power. Preferably, they hope to learn new things and work at new jobs. Finally, they hope to find solutions to certain work problems (Veniga & Spradley, 1981: 196). Form some employees, the promotion does not come. The job that once looked so secure may be eliminated. Then they respond in ways that reveal building stress. When their hopes and dreams only flicker faintly, employees often lose a sense of accomplishments and self-esteem. Minor irritants they would have casually brushed aside when the dream was fresh now irate and fester inside. The questionnaire contained one questions related to career development. This question ranked as an average primary stress management strategy (Table 5.6):

- The promotion criteria are less stable and ambiguous.
If such initiatives have little impact in improving job satisfaction, then it is more likely that the individual will adopt a way of coping with stress which may have positive individual outcomes, but may have negative implications for the organisation (i.e. taking alternative employment).

5.4.5 The home-work connection

Most people think of home as a sanctuary, a place that is private and quiet and where one can be alone. It is a retreat that allows rebuilding and regrouping of inner strengths to meet outside demands. When pressure invades that sanctuary, however, it may magnify the effects of stress at work. Denise Rousseau (1978: 197) provided evidence of spill over from events at work to events at home. Rousseau believes that work experiences are positively related to non-work experiences. If a person has a job that diminishes self-esteem and produces low satisfaction, that person will have similar experiences in social life. The questionnaire contained one questions related to the home-work connection. This question ranked as an average primary stress management strategy (Table 5.6):

- Having job demands that interfere with other personal activities (e.g. family, recreation).

5.4.6 Job content

Job tasks should be designed to have meaning and provide stimulation and an opportunity to use skills. Job rotation or increasing the scope of work activities is ways to improve narrow, fragmented work activities that fail to meet these criteria (Rice, 1992: 187). The questionnaire contained two questions related to job content. The first question ranked as a low primary stress management strategy and the second questions ranked as a higher stress management strategy in terms of the extent of impact (Table 5.6):

- Insufficient current books and journals in the library;
- The basic sills of the students in written and oral expression of the English language.
In conclusion, three points need to be made about these lists of causes discussed in 5.4. First, these lists are not usually rank-ordered, because the importance of each stressor differs from job to job and from time to time. However, for most individuals these stressors are not equal; in fact, they may not exist at all for some employees. Secondly, many of these stressors are related, so that although they are listed independently of one another, it is highly likely that they are fairly closed interrelated. Thirdly, it is likely that these lists are not fully comprehensive in that there are probably factors – unique to certain jobs – that are not on the list. Nevertheless, they provide a beginning to understanding the problem and overall, evidence as to the success of primary stress management intervention strategies suggest that such interventions can make a difference in temporarily reducing experienced stress.

5.5 SECONDARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
The questionnaire included 4 sources of secondary stress. The extent of impact was assessed on a four-point scale from “less than once a week” to “5 to 7 times a week”. A summary of these results is presented in Appendix E.

The following list was compiled based on the summarised data for the extent of impact of these secondary sources of stress. Where the means of secondary sources of stress were similar, the standard deviation was used to determine the extent of impact. Where percentages of were similar, the mean and/or standard deviation were used to determine the rank.

The ranked secondary stress management strategies according to the extent of impact are reflected in Table 5.7.
TABLE 5.7: THE RANKED SECONDARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO EXTENT OF IMPACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lifestyle - do you eat a healthy diet?</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Physical activities such as jogging, walking, dancing, swimming and cycling are a great protection against stress and stress related illnesses. Do you participate in any of these or related activities?</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Physicians recommend meditation for many diseases connected with stress such as heart conditions, shortness of breath and problems with the stomach. Do you meditate?</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yoga is an Indian method that enables individuals to control stress on a physical and mental level. Do you practice yoga?</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To incorporate the research results with the literature study in this section the questionnaire items pertaining to each specific strategy will be presented and the research results discussed and interpreted within the framework of this secondary stress management strategies discussed in chapter 3. A small number of strategies may be included under more than one heading to allow for items which could serve different purposes.

5.5.1 Lifestyle management

Physical health is a buffer for the negative consequences of stress. Physical exercise is used to build and maintain “stress fitness”. It helps employees to moderate the automatic adrenalin response when faced with stress, as well as provide high levels of endorphins (feel good hormones) in the blood system. The questionnaire contained one question related to the physical activities. The answers to the question indicated that most of the respondents participated in physical activities such as jogging, walking and dancing at least one to three times a week as indicated in Table 5.7:

- Physical activities such as jogging, walking, dancing, swimming and cycling are a great protection against stress and stress related illnesses. Do you participate in any of these or related activities?
Correct nutritional intake, enough sleep, relaxation (e.g. yoga) and spiritual
prayer and meditation will enable your body and mind to maintain optimal
functioning during stress (Environmental Nutrition, 2000: 7). The questionnaire
contained three questions related to lifestyle (nutritional intake), meditation and
yoga. The answers to the questions varied but indicated that most of the
respondents eat a healthy diet but not a lot of the respondents engage in
relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditate on a regular basis, as
indicated in Table 5.7:

- Lifestyle – do you eat a healthy diet?
- Physicians recommend meditation for many diseases connected with stress
  such as heart conditions, shortness of breath and problems with the
  stomach. Do you meditate?
- Yoga is an Indian method that enables individuals to control stress on a
  physical and mental level. Do you practice yoga?

From the one open question it is clear that the majority of the respondents are
non-smokers and therefore practicing a healthy lifestyle as indicated in Table
5.8 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the other open question it is clear that the majority of the respondents are
struggling with time management and planning, as indicated in Table 5.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managing time and planning are core skills for dealing with a stressful job.
Symptoms of poor time management include rushing, stop-go management,
constantly missing deadlines, not enough time for rest, feeling overwhelmed by
details and spending most of the time doing what you do not want to do, as indicated by some of the respondents.

5.6 TERTIARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The questionnaire included 6 sources of tertiary stress. The extent of impact was assessed on a four-point scale from “yes” to “not sure”. A summary of these results is presented in Appendix F.

The following list was compiled based on the summarised data for the extent of impact of these tertiary sources of stress. Where the means of tertiary sources of stress were similar, the standard deviation was used to determine the extent of impact. Where percentages of were similar, the mean and/or standard deviation were used to determine the rank.

The ranked tertiary stress management strategies according to the extent of impact are reflected in Table 5.10, below.
TABLE 5.10: THE RANKED TERTIARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO EXTENT OF IMPACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stress management programmes are developed in organisations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training, managing of lifestyle. Does your organisation provide such programmes?</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wellness programmes have been developed to help employees to maintain their physical and mental health. These programmes consist of workshops that train employees how to perform some of the stress reducing individual behaviours, such as loosing weight, exercising and giving up smoking. Does your organisation provide such programmes?</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) support employees assistance in facing problems such as career planning, financial and legal advice. Does your organisation provide such a programme to you?</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you think stress management programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you think employee assistance programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you think wellness programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To incorporate the research results with the literature study in this section the questionnaire items pertaining to each specific strategy will be presented and the research results discussed and interpreted within the framework of that tertiary stress management strategies discussed in chapter 3. A small number of strategies may be included under more than one heading to allow for items which could serve different purposes.

5.6.1 Wellness programmes

Wellness programmes fall under the occupational health care programme for workers. The focus is on the improvement of emotional, physical and spiritual wellness of employees (Potgieter, 1996: 219). The questionnaire contained two questions related to wellness programmes. This first question indicated that the respondents’ organisation does not provide wellness programmes as 87.5 percent of the respondents answered “no” to the question below and 12.5
percent were not sure of their organisation provide such a programmes (Table 5.8):

- Wellness programmes have been developed to help employees to maintain their physical and mental health. These programmes consists of workshops that train employees how to perform some of these stress reducing individual behaviours, such as losing weight, exercising and giving up smoking. Does your organisation provide such programmes?

The second question on wellness programmes indicated that the majority (50 percent) thought that wellness programmes would help to reduce work related stress, 6.25 percent thought that wellness programmes would help to reduce work related stress, but would not help enough. 25 percent thought wellness programmes would not help to reduce work related stress, and 18.75 percent were not sure if wellness programmes would help to reduce work related stress. The question asked looked as follows:

- Do you think wellness programmes would help to reduce your stress?

### 5.6.2 Employee assistance programmes (EAPs)

Health promotion is normally offered through employee assistance programmes (EAPs). They offer counselling services to assist employees to cope more effectively with personal and organisational stressors. These programmes also include assistance for addiction problems, HIV/Aids policies and programmes, and family counselling. The questionnaire contained two questions related to EAPs. Note that this question was only answered by 15 respondents and not 16 as with the other questions. The first question indicated that 20 percent of the respondents said that their organisation provide EAPs, 46.66 percent said their organisation does not provide such a programme and 33.33 percent was no sure if their organisation provided such programmes (Table 5.8):

- Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) support employees assistance in facing problems such as career planning, financial and legal advice. Does your organisation provide such a programme to you?

The second question on EAPs indicated that the majority (46.66 percent) thought that EAPS would help to reduce work related stress. 20 percent
thought EAPS would not help to reduce work related stress, and 33.33 percent were not sure if EAPS would help to reduce work related stress. The question asked looked as follows:

- Do you think EAPs would help to reduce your stress?

Clarke & Cooper (2000: 175) suggest that counselling is effective in improving the psychological well-being of employees and has considerable cost benefits. Evidence from established counselling programmes which have been rigorously evaluated, such as those introduced by Kennecott in the USA and the United Kingdom (UK) Post Office, resulted in a reduction of absenteeism in one year of approximately 60%. In the case of the UK experience, measures taken pre- and post-counselling showed significant improvements in the mental health and self-esteem of the participating employees. However, there was no improvement in levels of employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Like stress management programmes, counselling services can be particularly effective in helping employees deal with workplace stressors that can not be changed and non-work related stress (i.e. bereavement, marital breakdown, etc.) but which nevertheless tend to spill over into work life (Clarke & Cooper, 2000: 175).

5.6.3 Stress management programmes

A specific focus in the South African context has been the post-traumatic stress debriefing service. Traumatic events such as job loss, armed robberies, serious accidents and sexual harassment require immediate and professional intervention that aims to reduce the negative impact of traumatic experiences on employees. Stress management programmes are developed in organisations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training and managing of lifestyle (Stephens & Long, 2000: 21).

The questionnaire contained two questions related to stress management programmes. The first question indicated that 81.25 percent said their organisation does not provide such a programme and 18.75 percent was not sure if their organisation provided such programmes (Table 5.8):
• Stress management programmes are developed in organisations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training, managing of lifestyle. Does your organisation provide such programmes?

The second question on stress management programmes indicated 37.5 percent thought that stress management programmes would help to reduce work related stress and 6.25 thought that it will help but will not reduce work related stress. 31.25 percent thought stress management programmes would not help to reduce work related stress, and 25 percent were not sure if stress management programmes would help to reduce work related stress. The question asked looked as follows:

• Do you think stress management programmes would help to reduce your stress?

In summary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies are likely to be insufficient in maintaining employee health without the complementary approach of primary/stressor reduction initiatives. Secondary and tertiary level interventions extend the physical and psychological resources of the individual, particularly in relation to stressors which can not be changed, but those resources, but those resources are ultimately limited. Tertiary level interventions are likely to be particularly effective in dealing with non-work related stress. Evidence from workplace counselling programmes indicates that approximately a quarter of all problems presented concerned relationships outside of work (Arthur, 2000). Organisations considering counselling schemes should recognize that counselling is a highly skilled business and requires extensive training.

5.7 QUALITATIVE DATA

The questionnaire included a few open-ended questions of which two provided a substantial amount of qualitative data. The first aspect to be discussed here relates to a closed question regarding smoking. The majority of respondents did not smoke. The respondents with a “yes” reply indicated that they smoked the following number of cigarettes per day:
• “4 per day”;
• “More or less 10 per day”;
• “More or less 15 per day”.

The second aspect to be discussed here relates to a closed question regarding effective time management. Although the results to this open-ended question were very close most of the respondents answered “no”, indicating that they did not think that they manage their time effectively. The following comments are some examples:
• “I like dreaming. Should do priority lists.”
• “Too little day.”
• “Perfectionist expect perfection from everyone –don’t like delegating to persons who I know won’t do the job perfectly.”
• “Do time management but it becomes chaos as urgent matters and crises crept up.”
• “Not as effectively as I should. Setting priorities needs to be focused on.”
• “I often procrastinate.”
• “I am not disciplined enough.”
• “Like to take responsibility self. Bit of a perfectionist.”

5.8 CONCLUSION

The results of the study were presented and analysed in this chapter. The research response was discussed first. All sixteen of the eighteen questionnaires send out could be processed. This represents a response rate of 88 percent.

Reponses of the various primary, secondary and tertiary stress managements strategies were discussed according to extent of impact and the strategy in each category were ranked. The results were represented in a tabular format. The results were discussed within the framework of the literature study. In the next chapter the main findings of the study will be summarised, recommendations made and shortcomings of the research discussed.
CHAPTER 6

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the research results were integrated with the literature on primary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies. In this chapter the main findings will be summarised. The problems encountered in the research process, as well as shortcomings of the study will be highlighted. Recommendations regarding the implementation of strategies and further research related to this study will be made.

6.2 MAIN FINDINGS

The following primary strategies emerged as those having had the highest impact to the lowest impact on work related stress:

- The number of courses the lecturers teach in a semester;
- The number of committee meetings, which take up too much time;
- The heavy workload of the lecturers;
- The basic skills of the students being taught;
- Job demands that interfere with personal activities;
- Less stable and ambiguous promotion criteria;
- Insufficient resources available from the library;
- Insufficient office space;
- Insufficient space in the lecturing classes.

In general, the respondents’ viewed their job as lecturer as “Not stressful”.

The following secondary strategies emerged as those having had the highest impact to the lowest impact on managing work related stress:

- A healthy lifestyle and diet;
- Taking part in physical activities;
- Regular meditation;
- Regular yoga exercises.
In general, most of the respondents did not smoke. Most of the respondents struggled to manage their time effectively. The following tertiary strategies emerged as those having had the highest impact to the lowest impact on work related stress:

- Stress management programmes;
- Wellness programmes;
- Employee assistance programmes (EAPs).

In general, the respondents thought that these programmes would help to reduce work related stress and it was evident that there is a need as to the respondents’ knowledge their organisation was not utilising such programmes.

6.3 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE RESEARCH

The comparability of figures reported – different authors might have different definitions of stress management strategies and the use of primary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies might be labeled by another author as individual stress management strategies and organisational stress management strategies. These different definitions could make the comparison of data unreliable.

6.4 SHORTCOMINGS

The most important shortcoming of this study is that the extent of the impact of the different strategies on managing work relates stress was determined by means of a subjective assessment of the respondents’ perception. It is therefore not possible to state that use of the identified strategies will result in reducing stress and managing work related stress.

The sample size was small and limited to one department within an academic institution and the difficulty therein relates to which the findings can be generalised. The sample size is not a true reflection of the population of South Africa as there was only one female respondent and no black, coloured or Asian respondents.
No input was obtained from the respondents’ organisation. Their perceptions of the value of the strategies they employ in managing work related stress might be different to those of the respondents’ themselves.

The study focused on primary, secondary and tertiary strategies in managing work related stress only and not other variables such as personalities. Although clear patterns regarding the strategies emerged, it is still possible that these do not explain if these strategies will reduce work relates stress. Since a questionnaire was used, the respondents’ inputs were structured within the limits of the questionnaire. Exploratory interview with the respondents would have provided a more complete picture. However, this was not possible due to lack of time and resources.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations flowing from the study with respect to primary stress management strategies:

- Provision of support to employees in the form of competent colleagues, coaches and mentors, and professional networks;
- Assessment of employee workload through collection of views of peers, supervisors and managers;
- The number of courses lecturers teach should be managed and equally divided between lecturers in departments;
- Short and concise meetings should be held, a limit of 30 minutes per meeting could be implemented;
- Managing significant changes in the organisation in an orderly way with as much consultation as possible, and keeping employees fully informed of the plans and progress of each stage;
- Establishing a standard conflict resolution mechanism through which employees can address matters such as conflict with peers or supervisors.
The following recommendations flowing from the study with respect to secondary stress management strategies:

- Promotion of work/life balance and introduction of flexible work options such as paid parental leave, part-time work, flexible start and finish times, flexi-days and job sharing;
- A healthy lifestyle within the organisation should be encouraged and promoted. Organisation can for example negotiate gym memberships at a special price in order to encourage physical exercise;
- Healthy food could be stocked in the local cafeteria in order to encourage a healthy diet;
- Time management courses could be given to employees;

The following recommendations pertain to tertiary stress management strategies:

- Stress management programmes should be implemented;
- Wellness programmes should be implemented;
- Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) should be implemented.

6.6 OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A qualitative study using in-depth, explanatory interviews with employees in all levels of an organisation could shed more light on the management of work related stress. A more objective measurement of the extent of the impact of the different strategies will have to be employed in such a study.

Further research could investigate the managing of work related stress as it pertains to gender or race group. Stress management at different demographics regions could also be studied and in specific national and international organisations with offices in different regions of South Africa and abroad.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The strategies rated as having the strongest impact to the weakest impact on managing work related stress were summarised in this chapter. This was
followed by a discussion of the problems encountered in the study, the shortcomings or research, recommendations and opportunities for further research.

Strategies, primary, secondary and tertiary, which enable employees to manage work related stress, were investigated in this study. It was found that most of the primary and secondary strategies covered in the literature were used by employees. Tertiary strategies was either not used or known to employees. In terms of the organisation there is no clear evidence that the organisation employs strategies to manage work related stress and which strategies enables employees to reduce work relates stress. Generally, the employees of the organisation investigated did not find their work stressful and it could therefore be argued that the organisation did not see a need to implement programmes and actions to reduce work related stress.

But the managing of work relates stress stays a “real” issue and any organisation that seeks to establish and maintain the best state of physical, mental and social well-being of its employees needs to have policies and procedures that comprehensively address health and safety. These policies will include strategies to manage stress, based on the needs of the organisations and its members, and will have to be regularly reviewed and evaluated.
REFERENCE LIST


Appendix A

SURVEY ON STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING WORK RELATED STRESS

This survey forms part of a research project to identify the strategies for managing work related stress. The results will be incorporated in an MBA dissertation. Your assistance in this important issue is greatly appreciated. Questions or comments regarding the questionnaire should be directed to:

Elsie Müller
Contact number: 082 775 5797
E-mail address: efmuller@webmail.co.za

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section of the questionnaire is used for statistical purposes only.

1. Indicate your **age** by making an X in the appropriate box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under 21</th>
<th>31 – 40</th>
<th>51 – 60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>41 – 50</td>
<td>61 or over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Indicate your **racial group** by making an X in the appropriate box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. Indicate your **gender** by making an X in the appropriate box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. Indicate your **marital status** by making an X in the appropriate box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single – never married</th>
<th>Single – Widow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single – divorced</td>
<td>Married/ Living together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Indicate your **highest qualification** by making an X in the appropriate box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 12</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Masters degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Diploma</td>
<td>Honours</td>
<td>Doctorate degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION B: PRIMARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Primary stress management strategies are concerned with taking action to change or eliminate sources of stress inherent in the work environment.

Indicate by making an X in the appropriate box.

**Legend:**
1 - Not stressful
2 - Slightly stressful
3 - Moderately stressful
4 - Very stressful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCES OF PRIMARY STRESS</th>
<th>EXTENT OF IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Insufficient office space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The size of the class venue being taught</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The number of courses I teach in a semester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The promotion criteria are less stable and ambiguous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Insufficient current books and journals in the library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Attending committee meetings, which take up too much time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal workday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The basic skills of the students in written and oral expressions of the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Having job demands that interfere with other personal activities (e.g. family, recreation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In general, how stressful do you find your job as a lecturer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION C: SECONDARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Secondary stress management strategies are concerned with the prompt detection and management of experienced stress by increasing awareness and improving the stress management skills of the individual through training and educational activities.

Indicate by making an X in the appropriate box.

Legend: 1 – Less than once a week  
2 – 1 to 3 times a week  
3 – 3 to 5 times a week  
4 – 5 to 7 times a week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCES OF SECONDARY STRESS</th>
<th>EXTENT OF IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Physical activities such as jogging, walking, dancing, swimming and cycling are a great protection against stress and stress related illnesses. Do you participate in any of these or related activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lifestyle - do you eat a healthy diet?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Physicians recommend meditation for many diseases connected with stress such as heart conditions, shortness of breath and problems with the stomach. Do you meditate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Yoga is an Indian method that enables individuals to control stress on a physical and mental level. Do you practice yoga?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Do you smoke?  
Yes  No

If yes, please provide the number of cigarettes you smoke per day:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
The key to managing time effectively involves taking control over your own actions, i.e. set priorities and stick to them; do not allow others to distract you; delegate responsibility to others. Do you think you manage your time effectively?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If no, please provide the reason(s) for not managing your time effectively:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

SECTION D: TERTIARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Tertiary stress management strategies is concerned with the treatment, rehabilitation and recovery process of those individuals who have suffered or are suffering from serious ill health as a result of stress.

Indicate by making an X in the appropriate box.

Legend: 1 – Yes

2 – Yes, but not enough

3 – No

4 - Not sure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EXTENT OF IMPACT</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<table>
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<th>SOURCES OF TERTIARY STRESS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stress management programmes are developed in organisations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training, managing of lifestyle. Does your organisation provide such programmes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think stress management programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### SOURCES OF TERTIARY STRESS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Wellness programmes have been developed to help employees to maintain their physical and mental health. These programmes consist of workshops that train employees how to perform some of the stress reducing individual behaviours, such as loosing weight, exercising and giving up smoking. Does your organisation provide such programmes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you think wellness programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) support employees assistance in facing problems such as career planning, financial and legal advice. Does your organisation provide such a programme to you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you think employee assistance programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SECTION E: GENERAL INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)

Do you want to receive feedback on the research finding?
Mark an X in the appropriate box:

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, please provide your name and contact details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CONTACT DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tel:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation!
Dear

I am completing my MBA this year and as part of this degree we need to complete a mini-treatise. My study is on the strategies for managing work related stress.

Jos Louw, has given me permission to distribute my questionnaire among all the George Campus: Saasveld lecturers and this e-mail serve to inform you that you will receive a hard copy of this questionnaire by tomorrow, the 19th of October 2007.

I know your are extremely busy but would really appreciate it if you can complete it as soon as possible (should not take more than 3 minutes of your time)

The completed questionnaire can be given to Richard Muller in person or placed in his post box.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards
Elsie Muller
E-mail: efmuller@webmail.co.za
Contact number: 082 77 55 797
Dear

Thank you for completing this questionnaire (*Strategies for managing work related stress*).

If you haven’t completed it yet, please complete it as soon as possible. The completed questionnaire can be given to Richard Muller in person or placed in his post box.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Elsie Muller

E-mail: efmuller@webmail.co.za

Contact number: 082 77 55 797
## SUMMARY OF PRIMARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO EXTENT OF IMPACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION NUMBER</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Insufficient office space</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The size of the class venue being taught</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The number of courses I teach in a semester</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The promotion criteria are less stable and ambiguous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Insufficient current books and journals in the library</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Attending committee meetings, which take up too much time</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal workday</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The basic skills of the students in written and oral expressions of the English language</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Having job demands that interfere with other personal activities (e.g. family, recreation)</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>In general, how stressful do you find your job as a lecturer?</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SUMMARY OF SECONDARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO EXTENT OF IMPACT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION NUMBER</th>
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<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
<th>RANK</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Physical activities such as jogging, walking, dancing, swimming and cycling are a great protection against stress and stress related illnesses. Do you participate in any of these or related activities?</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lifestyle - do you eat a healthy diet?</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Physicians recommend meditation for many diseases connected with stress such as heart conditions, shortness of breath and problems with the stomach. Do you meditate?</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yoga is an Indian method that enables individuals to control stress on a physical and mental level. Do you practice yoga?</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SUMMARY OF TERTIARY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO EXTENT OF IMPACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION NUMBER</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stress management programmes are developed in organisations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training, managing of lifestyle. Does your organisation provide such programmes?</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you think stress management programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wellness programmes have been developed to help employees to maintain their physical and mental health. These programmes consist of workshops that train employees how to perform some of the stress reducing individual behaviours, such as loosing weight, exercising and giving up smoking. Does your organisation provide such programmes?</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you think wellness programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) support employees assistance in facing problems such as career planning, financial and legal advice. Does your organisation provide such a programme to you?</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you think employee assistance programmes would help to reduce your stress?</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESPONDENTS’ ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

Primary stress management strategies:
- Number of courses I teach in a semester
  - First semester not a problem;
  - Second semester over crowded;
  - Perhaps one should evaluate a stress matrix integrated with the work load matrix as a set of “checks and balances”.

- The basic skills of the students in written and oral expressions for the English language
  - Language is not the problem, the challenge is for academics to meet this problem

Tertiary stress management strategies:
- Wellness programmes
  - Not for me, maybe for other people.

- Employee assistance programmes (EAPs)
  - Not for day to day issues, but maybe for stressful occurrences as a loved one dying, for example;
  - This is the corner of the new business environment, but can companies/firms/businesses afford these social add-ons?
  - Employers are moving to providing a package of benefits and then one’s on one’s own, e.g. pension, medical.

- Stress management programmes
  - And awareness programmes e.g. appropriate communication in this regard.

Additional “stresses” to be accounted for:
- Incompetent senior management
  - Lack of communication;
- Lack of consistency in decisions;
- Poor understanding of legal framework/structure of constitution;
- Poor understanding of financial framework of operational environment.

- Lack of appropriate support system for the changed environment in the “new”/current RSA academic student material.

- Remuneration structure.

- Adoption to the new social order in RSA.

- Perceptions as to transformational impacts.

- The amount of aggressiveness inherent in the RSA society.

- Travelling to and from the office.

- Passion for one’s job/nature of work.

- Sense of achievement.

- Acknowledgement: person to person; employer to employee.

- Intercultural groups/conflict/lack of understanding.