

**IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON HEAD TEACHERS'
TASKS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KISUMU COUNTY,
KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Albert, my daughter Anne and granddaughter Kimberly for their invaluable love, support and encouragement during the study period and to my mother Priscilla for her zeal for education that inspired me to undertake this Masters Programme.

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This work has been possible due to support from several people whom I feel honoured to recognize and appreciate.

My praise and salutation to God for granting me abundant wisdom and health throughout the study period.

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ABSTRACT

Stress is considered a major global health challenge affecting the well being of service providers especially those working in the human service sectors like teachers, health care providers, media specialists and security agencies. The sources of stress are attributed to socio-economic, occupational and political pressures of modern life. This study was prompted by emerging information from studies that stress is a silent killer that affects the health of service providers leading to mental, physical, emotional and behavioural illnesses and disorders. The objectives of this study were: to identify sources of stress among head teachers, determine levels of stress among head teachers, analyse effects of stress to tasks performance of head teachers and establish strategies employed by head teachers to mitigate effects of stress. Stratified Random Sampling technique was used to identify the study sample. The study sampled head teachers, Heads of Department (HoD) and the Provincial Director of Education (PDE). The total number constituted 73 respondents: 18 (24.66%) head teachers, 54 (73.97%) Heads of Department (HoD) and one (1.37%) Provincial Director of Education (PDE) drawn from Kisumu County: seven (38.9%) schools in Maseno Division, seven (38.9%) schools in Winam Division and four (22.2%) in Kombewa Division. Questionnaires and key informant interview schedule were used as data collection tools. Data analysis was done thematically using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) based on the objectives of the study. The key findings of the study were that: the position of headship, stake holders and families are the sources of stress to the head teachers; the level of stress differs with head teachers' biological, psychological and social systems; head teachers stress affects other teachers and the school performance; and the stress mitigation strategies employed by the head teachers and Ministry of Education are not effective. The study recommends that: MOE should develop a policy on stress management to guide the induction, operations and counselling of head teachers on their day to day duties; the MOE should involve the head teachers in designing effective Stress Management programmes in Counties. Heads of Department and teachers need to be inducted on stress management strategies because HoDs handle most administrative roles in the absence of the head teacher while teachers need to know how to relate with a stressed head teacher to avoid being the triggers of aggravated stress.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
BoG	Board of Governors
BBK	Barclays Bank of Kenya
CBE	Curriculum Based Establishment
CATS	Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress
DEO	District Education Officer
FSE	Free Secondary Education
GAS	General Arousal System
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
HoD	Head of Department
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
KESSP	Kenya Education Sector Support Programme
MoE	Ministry of Education
PDE	Provincial Director of Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UK	United Kingdom

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides background information to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance and assumptions of the study, delimitation and limitations, and ethical issues. It also presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Stress had been defined as a condition of being subject to external forces or pressures and can either be positive/pleasant (eustress) or negative/unpleasant (distress) (Melgosa, 2004; Willis 2005).

According to opinion of psychologists on Wikipedia, stress is a condition that results when a persons - environment transactions lead an individual to perceive a discrepancy whether real or not between the demands of a situation and the resources of the person's biological, psychological and social systems. This affirms Melgosa (2004) and Willis (2005) definitions which both underlines the force/discrepancy that leads to stress.

The condition that causes stress can either be pleasant or unpleasant. These conditions are attributed to occupational, socio-economic and political challenges of life which includes everything both inside and outside the body that challenges an individual to adapt. They can either be physical such as heat, cold, and noise or emotional such as fear, anxiety and depression (Kane, 1987; Willis, 2005).

Stress is rated as a silent killer among other illnesses such as: HIV/AIDS, heart disease, cancer and diabetes. A good example is Japanese who call unpleasant stress

“Karoshi” meaning instant death from overwork. It is considered to be an executive disease with one “Karoshi” hotline receiving more than 1,500 calls a year from stressed executives (Ursin et al., 1991).

Psychologists presuppose that personality differences influence the levels of stress in ones life. They have identified and classified two basic personality types; A and B. Type A are hyperactive, aggressive, super ambitious, hard driving, and tend to have a short fuse while type B are composed, relaxed, less ambitious and easy going. The conclusion drawn is that Type A are more likely to experience stress, apt to have heart diseases and other stress related diseases (Kane, 1987 and Willis, 2005). Kane (1987) further notes that the impact of any stressor to the subject varies dependent on age, social status, income, cultural background, stage in life and previous experiences.

Numerous studies have documented statistical data on occupational stress related incidences. The United Kingdom’s (UK) Health and Safety Executive (HSE) acknowledges that the top seven stressed professionals are teachers, nurses, managers, social workers, road transport drivers, police officers and prison officers (Willis, 2005). The typically overstressed person being a non-white male or female teacher aged 35-44 years. Further, the Guardian Financial Services of UK ranks professions according to stress levels as illustrated in table 1.1.

***Table 1.1: Rank of Professions by Stress Levels.**

Profession Area	%
Education	54
Media specialists	51
Professional service providers	50
Information providers	45
Health care providers	42
Travel and leisure providers	39
Financial service providers	34
Accountants and financial workers	25
Manufacturers	20

***Source: Willis J.B (2005). Cracking the Stress Problem. Thailand. The Stanborough Press Ltd.**

The Guardian Financial Services survey indicated that 500,000 workers in the UK suffer from work related stress, 150,000 have taken at least a month sick off due to work related stress and altogether 6.5 million sick days/offers have been taken during the year under stress related incidences. It is estimated that every day, 270,000 people take time off for stress related illnesses at a cost to the economy of £10.2 billion annually (Willis, 2005).

In Kenya, studies rank teachers as the most stressed professionals which are also a major cause of ill health among head teachers of secondary schools in Kenya (Maslach and Leiter, 1999). The top 10 stressors perceived to be facing managers such as the teachers are: missing being with their growing children, putting their work before home and family considerations, having to move away from home for their employment, missing leisure/hobby time, short or long commuting to work, breaking up with their partners, frequently travelling away from home and either not having or postponing parenting children (Management Today Magazine Survey, 1998; Willis, 2005).

As managers, head teachers in Kenya handle both teaching, instructional programmes and administrative tasks which include: curriculum and instructional programmes, finance and business, staff, students, physical resources and public relations (Olembo, 1975 and Okumbe, 2007). This is a lot of work that causes prolonged accumulation of stress which is known to result into burnout; a state of emotional and physical exhaustion which reduces productivity and saps energy. Burnout in turn causes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment (Otieno, 1998).

Stress related burnout is a real threat to business managers, teachers and workers. In a study conducted among entrepreneurs, more than half of those surveyed said they experience high levels of stress and extreme fatigue, 46% said they come to work one to four days a year when they are too stressed to be effective. (Barclays Bank Magazine, 2006).

The Seed (2008), while analyzing the causes of violent student riots in Secondary schools in Kenya notes that head teachers are overworked and suffering from stress caused by inability to raise issues for fear of job loss or vindictive transfer, lack of support from superiors, parents and political establishment, the plague by anonymous letters, rumours and innuendo. Further, the rising cases of student indiscipline witnessed in acts of violence, arson and deaths such as the Upper Hill Secondary School is also a source of hyper stress among head teachers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that studies rank teachers as the most stressed professionals (Maslach and Leiter, 1999), Head teachers in Kenya handle both teaching, instructional programmes and administrative tasks which include: curriculum and instructional

programmes, finance and business, staff, students, physical resources and public relations (Olembo, 1975 and Okumbe, 2007). This forces them to work for long hours, encounter new problems and less free time for resting and leisure because their social and emotional times are spent working in school environments that determine their survival (Ursin et al., 1991).

Based on the experiences of head teachers' occupational tasks; long working hours, new challenging responsibilities, less leisure time, increase in ill health and being appointed to positions of head teachers without any formal preparations on school management, there was need to establish the impact of occupational stress on head teachers' tasks in secondary schools and mitigating factors.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the physical, emotional, mental and behavioural impact of occupational stress on head teachers' tasks in secondary schools and their mitigating factors.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Identify sources of stress among head teachers.
- ii. Determine levels of stress among head teachers.
- iii. Analyse effects of stress in relation to tasks performance of head teachers.
- iv. Establish strategies employed by head teachers to mitigate effects of stress.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What factors predispose head teachers to occupational stress?

- ii. What is the relationship between stress levels and head teachers status?
- iii. How does stress affect task's performance by head teachers in the academics?
- iv. How do head teachers cope with stress in their line of duty individually and using Ministry of Educations strategies?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to make significant contributions to educational management by equipping head teachers with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for coping with stressors.

The findings provide a basis/framework for comparative study on executive stress in other organizations. It will also guide policy makers on the need to integrate stress management information in teacher education and leadership courses as it contributes to the body of literature on management of executive stress in organizations.

1.7 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study.

1.7.1 Limitations of the Study.

The negative reception of the researcher by some head teachers due to the subject of the research prevented the researcher from collecting data in some schools. Also the study covered public schools only, stress of head teachers in private schools is not known.

1.7.2 Delimitations.

Stress affects head teachers in both public and private schools. The study covered three categories of public schools: boys, girls and mixed boarding and day secondary schools in three divisions: seven (38.9%) schools in Maseno division, seven (38.9%) schools in Winam division and four (22.2%) in Kombewa division. Further, the

researcher replaced some schools with others bearing the same characteristics.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions:

- i. The respondents will provide adequate and with accurate information.
- ii. The head teachers experience stress at their work place.
- iii. Head teachers have coping mechanisms of managing stress.

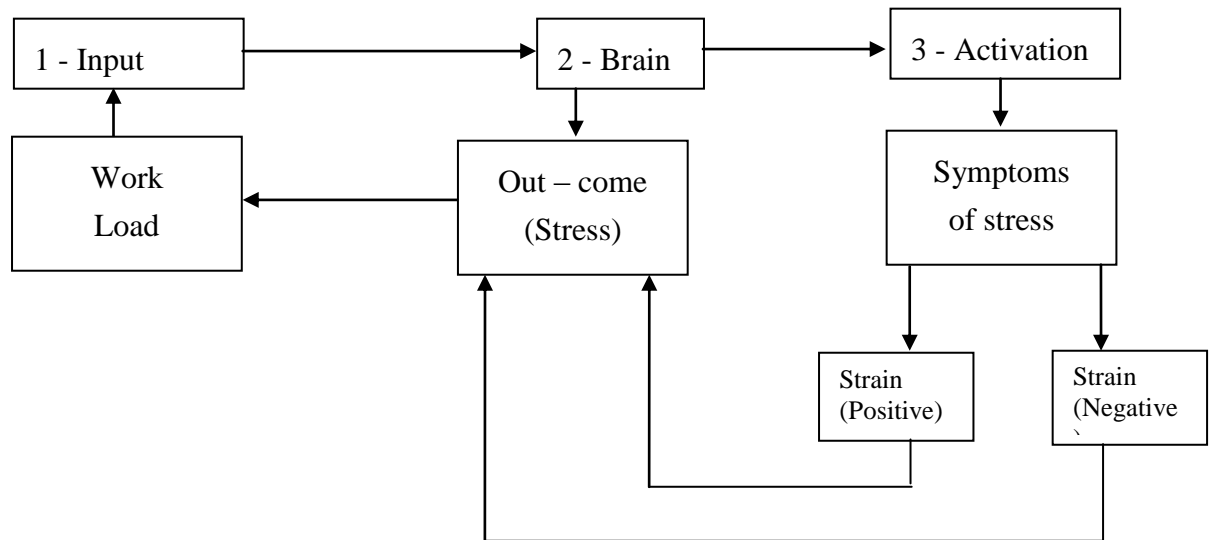
1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Levine and Ursin, (1991): The Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress Theory. This theory explains stress in four states: stress stimuli, stress experience, general stress response, and experience of stress.

The Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (CATS) defines stress as negative stimuli subjective to reports of an experience (humans only), a general non-specific increase in arousal (activation and the feedback to the brain from this response).

The theory is relevant to the study because it illustrates the stress reaction chain among humans. The performance of administrative tasks subjects head teachers to variety of work load and depending on the nature and weight of the work, the brain registers, interprets and evaluates the load causing the body to react accordingly. If the work is manageable (positive), the body maintains normalcy but if the work is beyond the scope of the head teacher, the body reacts negatively triggering stress. Levine and Ursin (1991), depicted the theory which addresses the flow of stress as shown in figure 1.1;

***Figure 1.1 The Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress - Flow of Stimuli.**



***Source: Levine and Ursin, (1991). Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress.**

Family Health Option at <http://www.familyhealth.com/CATS-Theory>

The flow of stress is explained as:

a. Input

This is the source of stress. It can be the work load, students, teachers and the general work load that the head teacher performs. Whether a stimulus is pleasant or threatening depends on the individual appraisal of the situation from the input level (Levine and Ursin, 1991).

b. The Brain

This is referred to as the stress experience. All the stimuli are evaluated or filtered by the brain, and that psychological, emotional 'loads' are the most frequently reported stress stimuli (Levine and Ursin, 1991). Given that a particular stimulus, or set of stimuli, is perceived (appraised) as threatening or negative, humans report this as 'stress'. Animals are restricted to 'report' that this is something they want to avoid.

For humans, this particular experience or feeling is easy to measure by interview or

questionnaires. Particular importance to the study was the level of stress experienced by the head teachers and how they cope with it.

c. The Stress Response

The general response to stress stimuli is a non-specific alarm response, eliciting a general increase in wakefulness and brain arousal, and specific responses to deal with the reasons for the alarm. This increase in arousal is referred to as activation. This study was interested to know what activates stress for head teachers' and how they respond to it. The increase in arousal manifests itself in many or most organ systems, with individual and situational variance in strength, reciprocal relations, and time parameters (Eriksen et al., 1999).

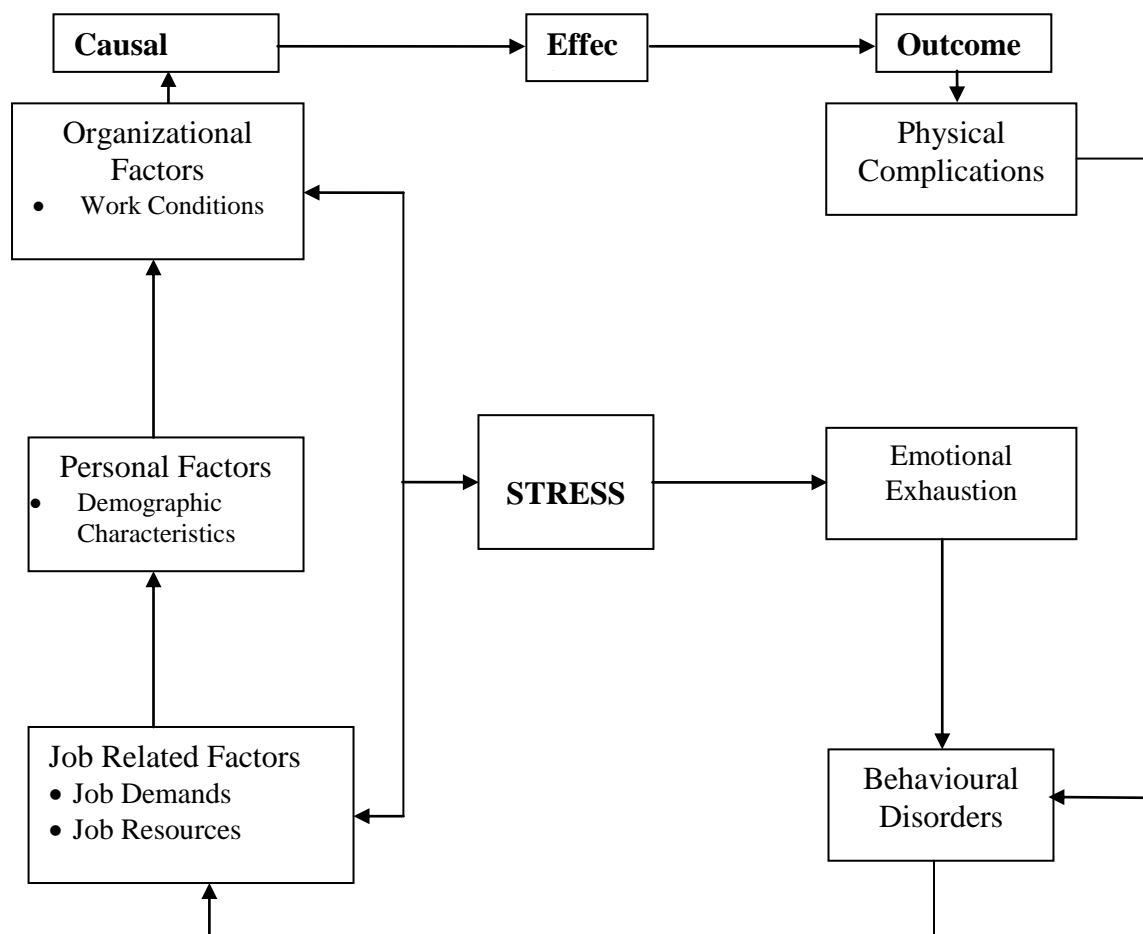
d. Feedback From the Stress Response

The brain can be trained to respond and handle certain things positively that are to produce positive stimuli rather than the negative stimuli that activate stress. When the response is positive, it goes back to the brain and activates other positive responses. Positive response motivates the head teacher in his/her performance but negative response strains the head teacher hence produces stress.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

Personal, organizational and job related factors are primary sources of occupational stress among executives, Garfield, J. (1995). The perception of a discrepancy in the person – environment interactions and transactions between the demands of a situation and the resources of the person's biological, psychological, occupational and social systems trigger the onset of stress. Figure 1.2 shows the conceptual framework of this study.

***Figure 1.2 Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Efficacy**



*Source: Pajares (2002). An Improvised Model of Social Cognitive Theory on Occupational Stress. at <http://www.cognitivetheory.com/occupationalstress>

The interplay of work conditions such as: unexpected overtime, unsafe environment, strict supervisory practices, job demands, role conflict and ambiguity and job resources such as human capital, financial base and infrastructure bears a heavy physical and emotional effect on an employee irrespective of age, gender, marital status and professional experience.

In situations where an employee is unable to cope with the demands and conditions of work, pressure triggers the onset of stress leading to mental, physical, emotional and

behavioural complications.

1.11 Operational Definitions of Terms

Administrative Tasks: - Refers to duties and responsibilities (job specific) assigned to the position of school headship.

Aggression: - Is the tendency to become violent without a just cause.

Burn-out: - Refers to extreme physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged and chronic stress.

Coping Strategies: - Activities that help in containing or alleviating situations that are perceived as challenging or unfavourable.

Design: - Is the structure, plan or scheme showing how all the major parts of the research work together to generate answers to research problems.

Ethics: - Are the moral rules and principles of behaviour that govern the conduct/ relationship between the investigator and respondents to avoid infringement on the rights of respondents.

External Stressors:- These are physical conditions such as heat, cold, pollution, continued noise and psychological environments such as working conditions and abusive relationships.

Immune System: - Refers to the ability of the body to fight diseases by producing antibodies that fight disease causing antigens.

Internal Stressors: - These are physical ailments such as infections, inflammations
And emotional/psychological problems such as worrying, fear, anxiety, depression and anger.

Job Related Factors: - Are factors that influence the execution of the job viz a viz job resources such as human, financial and physical resources and job demands such as work overload, role conflict, ambiguity, overtime and clamour for performance improvement.

Motivators: - Are factors capable of having positive effect on job satisfaction resulting in an increase in employee total output capacity.

Occupational Stress: - Is the strain imposed on an employee's physical, social and emotional states as a result of unfavourable workplace environment and practices.

Organizational Factors: -Refers to the internal environment (work condition) under which a job is performed i.e. policies, supervisory practices, motivational factors, relationship between the management and employees.

Performance: - This is the action of carrying out a piece of work or duty according to the established methods and acceptable standards.

Personal Factors: - Refers to individual characteristics/variables and their effect/influence on job performance i.e. age, gender , academic & professional qualifications, abilities, interpersonal relationships and customer contact.

Principal: - the head of an educational institution. In the context of the study refers to head teacher of a secondary school.

Proofing: - Having protection against something harmful.

Regressive Behaviour: - Is the tendency for behaviour of a person to move from bad to worse.

Reliability: - Is the consistency of results obtained in piloting research instruments after several trial runs using the test re-test and split half methods.

Strategy: - Is skilful planning intended to ensure success in the conduct of research.

Strain: - Pressure exerted on a person due to unfavourable work condition.

Stress: - A condition caused by the imbalance between demands of a situation and the persons ability to cope with it.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a review of relevant literature in the area of occupational stress. The concept of stress, sources, effects and strategies used to cope with stress are covered. The fundamental administrative tasks performed by head teachers were also covered to build the basis framework for discussing the complexity of head teachers' tasks that contribute to occupational stress.

2.2 Administrative Tasks

Studies have documented six basic administrative tasks performed by head teachers in the management responsibilities as follows:

2.2.1 Curriculum and Instruction

Olembo et al (1975), says school programme includes numerous activities and processes which relate directly to the means intended to achieve their goals. The head teachers are charged with the responsibility of planning, directing, controlling and evaluating these activities which include formulation of objectives and instructional programmes, provision of resources for programme implementation, management and supervision of the teaching and learning process and evaluation of the program (Okumbe, 2007).

2.2.2 Finance and Business

The head teacher is charged with the responsibility of determining the sources of funding and revenue collection, budget construction analysis, procurement of goods

and services, monitoring, control, evaluation, accounting and auditing processes (Knight, 1993; Okumbe, 2007).

2.2.3 Staff Personnel

This involves recruitment, deployment, supervision, staff development and training, appraisal, guidance and counselling, welfare and discipline (Olembo, 1975 and Knight, 1993).

2.2.4 Student Personnel

This entails admission, tracking attendance and participation, monitoring the teaching and learning processes, evaluation, maintenance of progress records, guidance and counselling, welfare, discipline and supervision of student activities (Olembo, 1992).

2.2.5 Physical Facilities Resource

These refer to infrastructure that supports the implementation of instructional programme. They include buildings, plant and machinery, equipment, furniture and grounds. The principal is charged with the responsibility of procurement and development of infrastructure, overseeing operations, repairs, maintenance and improvement of the facilities and record keeping (Knight, 1993).

2.2.6 School Community Relations

Schools are social systems. The community supplies the school with learners, workers and tuition support materials (Okumbe, 2007). The head teacher as the school public relations officer is charged with the responsibility of enhancing the school image to the public through participation in community activities, involving the

community in school activities such as education days and fund raising for development, accessing the community to school infrastructure/amenities for use during social functions and general customer care (Campbell, 1971; Olembo, 1975 and Okumbe, 2007).

2.3 Concept of Stress

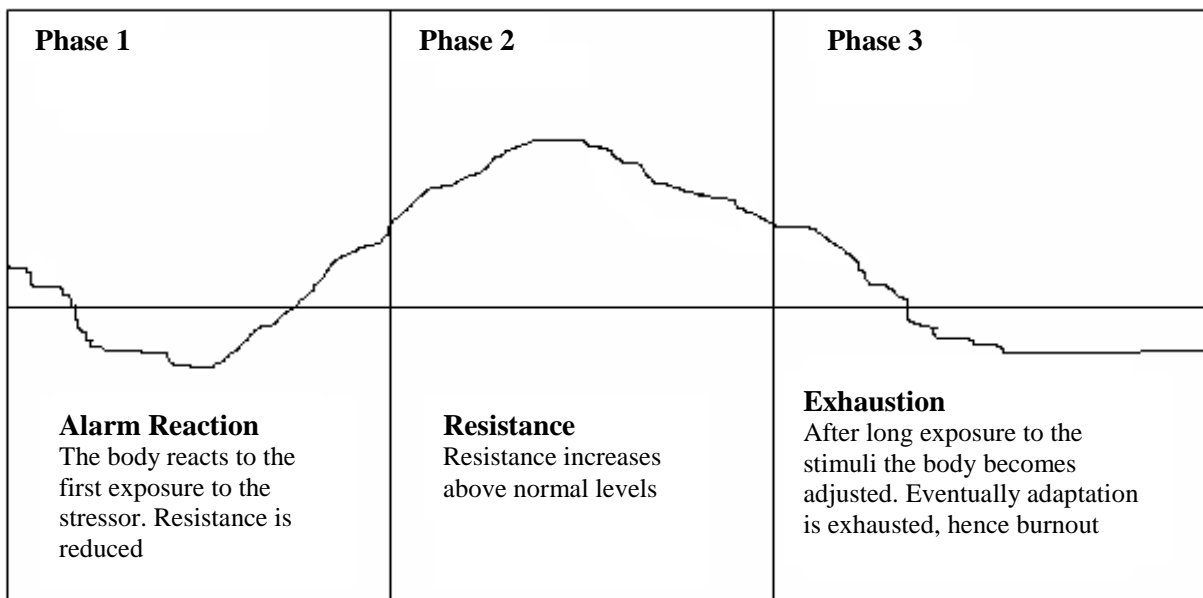
In order to gain in-depth insights into the theoretical foundations of the stress phenomenon, the researcher reviewed the following models:-

- (i) Jenkins' Model of Stress Reaction.
- (ii) The General Arousal System (GAS) model.

2.3.1 Jenkins' Model of Stress Reaction

This model proposes three phases of the stress reaction as summarised in figure 2.1.

***Figure 2.1: Jenkins' Model of Stress Reaction**



***Source: Melgosa, J (2004). Less Stress. (Vol. 4) Spain. MARPA Artes Graificas.**

The alarm phase: This is the first phase of how the body reacts to stress. The body stress level resistance is reduced but after sometimes, it starts to increase. This phase

is further characterized by acute anxiety and fear if the stressor is a threat or grief and depressive mood if the stressor is a loss. Other common characteristics of this phase includes silence, withdrawal, loneliness or aggressive, lack of self control among others.

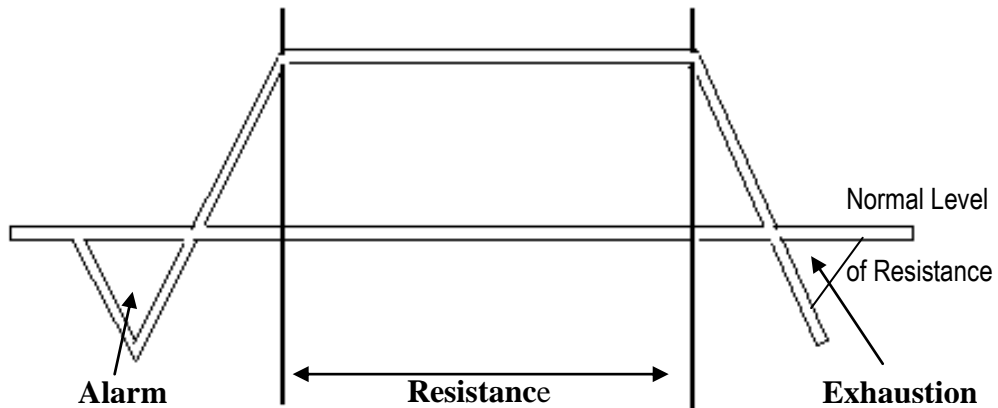
The resistance phase is the second phase where the body develops defence and problem solving behaviours to handle all the stress. The resistance rises to the highest note to clear stress and a person seems have regained a sense of self control though the stress is still there. It hasn't been solved. If not handled, it overwhelms the body resistance mechanism which starts to depreciate leading to the exhaustion phase.

The exhaustion phase is the extreme case of stress which affects the body and characterized by mental and physical disorders. This is the burnout effect which leads to illnesses, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, low personal accomplishment and in extreme cases, leads to death (Otieno, 1998).

2.3.2 General Arousal System (GAS) Model.

The GAS model presents three phases of the stress reaction similar to Jenkins Model namely; the alarm, resistance and exhaustion stages, (Willis, 2005). The GAS model is illustrated in figure 2.2

***Figure 2.2: General Arousal System of Stress Reaction**



***Source: Willis J.B (2005). Cracking the Stress Problem.
Thailand. The Stanborough Press Ltd.**

The stages of this model are the same with phases of Jenkins' Model of Stress Reaction (Melgosa, 2004) as described on 2.3.1. The Alarm stage is characterized by the body dropping below the normal level of resistance as it gets hormones working. This does not take long and instead of returning to the normal level of resistance, the body hormones move to a heightened level as the body adapts to the crisis leading to the **Resistance stage**. **Exhaustion Stage** occurs because either the crisis has passed or gone on for so long that the adrenal glands can no longer keep up production of adrenaline (stress resistance) indefinitely causing the body to drop below the normal level of resistance once more.

2.4 Causes and Sources of Stress

There are stressors to virtually every occupation and business. Kane (1987) classifies stressors into two categories: acute and chronic. Acute stressors are the reaction to the immediate threat (fight or flight) response caused by noise, danger, over-crowding, bullying or harassment. Chronic stressors are pressures which are ongoing and continuous when the urge to fight or flight has been suppressed such as on going

pressurized work, on going relationship problems, isolation and persistent financial worries (Chapman, 1995-2007).

Numerous studies have identified the major causes of stress and burnout in the service industry as work conditions that employees such as teachers, police, managers and prison warders are exposed to. Work overload, conflicts between workers and management, role ambiguity, difficult interpersonal relationships, role over load, customer contact, social support, job autonomy and locus of control were cited as major causes of stress and burnout among teachers, hoteliers, emergency health care service providers and professional residential service workers. Willis (2005) enumerates stressors as self centeredness, hate, worry, guilt feelings, envy, over sensitivity, sorrow, resentment, jealousy, fear, frustration and desire for approval. He further outlined lifestyle change events which contribute to excessive stress as death of a spouse, divorce, personal injury or illness, marriage, pregnancy, sex difficulties, gain of a new family member, financial commitments (loan, mortgage), trouble with in-laws, trouble with boss, change in work conditions, change in schools and minor violations of the law. Among this, sexual harassment and domestic violence are major sources of stress (adapted from; Sexual harassment in the workplace in the European Union, 1998).

According to Chapman, (1995-2007), the typical causes of stress at work include bullying or harassment, feeling powerless and uninvolved in determining ones own responsibilities, continuous unreasonable performance demands, lack of effective communication and conflict resolution, lack of job security, long working hours, excessive time away from home and family, office politics and conflict among staff, a feeling that ones reward is not commensurate with ones responsibilities, working hours, responsibilities and pressures disrupting life-balance (diet, exercise, sleep and

rest, family time). These conditions described suites the characteristics of Kenyan teachers meaning the teachers are working under stress.

Head teachers' administrative, teaching and management tasks changes with time in relation to change in environment challenges. This poses to head teachers which accumulate pressures from time to time. If the pressure is not well handled, the head teacher will suppress it for sometime. This is a dangerous condition which Chapman (1995-2007), states it can lead to chronic stress.

The Encyclopaedia of Health and Education for the Family classifies stress factors into three categories: chemical, physical and emotional factors as follows,

The chemical factors: deficient diet, incorrect diet, excess sugar and salt, alcohol, caffeine, stimulants and vitamin deficiencies. Physical factors: hospitalization, accidents, infections, environment, lack of rest, noise, pollution, violence and poverty. Emotional factors: anxiety, fear, guilt, death, excess of information or orders, frustration, family separation and excessive demands.

The encyclopaedia further categories stress agents as: father, mother, society and school as illustrated in Figure 2.3;

***Figure 2.3: Stress Agents.**

Father	Mother	Society	School
Professional insecurity	Irritability	Poverty	Examination
Work problems	Tiredness	Wars	Qualifications
Economic problems	Lack of communication	Fears	Threats
Incapability	Aggressiveness	Tensions	Comparisons
Marginalization	Marital problems	Violence	Depersonalization
Bad treatment	Divorce	Catastrophe	Punishment
	Jealousy	Competitiveness	Excessive demands
	Reproaches	Pollution	Human relationships
	Health complication	Communication	Sensorial overload
	Separation	Unsuitable housing	
		Noise	
		Agitation	

***Source: Isidor, A .J. Galbes, H. (2002). Encyclopaedia of Health and Education for the Family.**

In a school setting, the head teacher assumes gender roles of father or mother and attends at the socio-economic, political, professional and domestic challenges. These challenges coupled with societal pressures such as poverty, wars, violence and pollution contribute to stressful life. In addition, the demand for superior performance and penalty for poor performance in disregard of the schools variables exerts excessive stress on the head teacher.

‘The Seed (2008)’ while analyzing the causes of violent students’ riots in Secondary Schools in Kenya observes that head teachers are over worked and suffering from stress caused by inability to raise issues for fear of job loss or vindictive transfer, lack of support from the Ministry of Education officials, parents and political establishment.

Failure by parents to pay school fees resulting in inability to feed and equip the school; disgruntled teachers; support staff and parents incitement of students makes life more difficult for the head teacher.

2.5 Signs and Symptoms of Stress.

Stress manifests itself in four distinct changes: body signs and physical health, emotions and feelings, behaviour and thoughts (Willis 2005). The changes were illustrated in Figure 2.4

***Figure 2.4: Changes that Depict Signs of Stress.**

Changes in Body Functions and Physical Health	Changes in Emotions and Feelings	Changes in Behaviour	Changes in Thinking Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backache • Muscle tension. • Nervous stomach • Breathing problems. • Frequent urination. • Fatigue. • Dizziness. • Difficult breathing • Dry mouth • Tight muscles. • Pounding heart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Tension. • Excessive tiredness. • Trouble sleeping. • Inability to concentrate • Anger. • Worries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug use. • Drinking alcohol. • Eating (too much or too little. • Want sex (more or less). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to remember things • Hard to concentrate • Looking at the dark side of life. • Hopelessness • Helplessness.

***Source: Willis J.B (2005). Cracking the Stress Problem. Thailand. The Stanborough Press Ltd.**

Barclays Bank Magazine, (2006) enumerates the Classical Symptoms of stress as less physical energy, emotional tiredness, lowered physical immunity, reduced efficiency at work and reduced business optimism.

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, (internet at <http://www.Family Doctor.org/handouts/278.html>) the signs of stress include feeling depressed, edgy, guilty, tired, having headaches, stomach aches, trouble sleeping, laughing or crying for no reason, blaming other people for bad things that happen to you, only seeing the down side of a situation, feeling like the things you used to enjoy are not fun or are a burden, resenting other people or your responsibilities. These body states if not checked can culminate into stress.

The signs and symptoms outlined by the American Academy of Family Physicians; Barclays Bank Magazine, (2006); and Willis (2005) shows there are no single characteristic describing stress hence head teacher can have multiple sufferings; emotionally, physically, behavioural and cognitively without knowing the main cause of the suffering is work related stress.

2.6 Effects and Consequences of Stress

Excessive stress is linked to a wide range of illnesses which affect the physical, behavioural and emotional states of affected subjects, (Willis 2005), (Barclays Bank Magazine 2006).

2.6.1 Physical/Physiological Effects.

Studies estimate that 85% of all physical illnesses are stress related (Ernesto, 1996). Awake Magazine (2010), notes that physical exhaustion may present in the form of headache, shaking, inability to think clearly and relax, lack of natural communication, anger resulting in explosive talk, vulnerability to common cold, cancer automotive diseases and experience of gastrointestinal problems. Stress can cause chronic fatigue, risk of stroke, worsen an asthma attack, proneness to accidents and athletic injuries,

(Kane, 1987).

Willis, (2005) states that, stress ages the immune system by boosting one of its chemical regulators known as interleukin 6 the increase of which is related to age and age-related conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis.

According to Barclays Bank magazine, (2006), the costs of stress can be very high for organizations. This include; physical illness, increase in health care costs, loss of productivity and creativity and probability of making more mistakes at work.

2.6.2 Behavioural/ Relational Effects.

High levels of stress may result into administered job performance, rapid deterioration of relationships with family, friends, co-workers and strangers, increased arguments, isolation from social activities, absenteeism, conflicts with co-workers, domestic and work place violence, over-reactions to little provocations or nuisances of life (Wikipedia Internet; http://helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm).

The wider costs of stress include low tolerance of frustration, regressive behaviour, lowering of aggression threshold and morbid aggression, alcohol and drug abuse and diseases related to stress, Willis, (2005). True Love Magazine (2008/2009) contends that stress adversely affects reproduction because a person suffering from a stressed libido experiences sexual dysfunction which can lead to diminished sexual desire and inability to achieve orgasm.

Various studies contended that stress may contribute to the development of negative, unhealthy and unproductive escapist individual and organizational behaviours such as desire to reduce tension by drinking, smoking, self medicating with drugs, using sleeping pills or tranquilizers to relax, sleeping too much, over eating or under eating, withdrawing from activities, promiscuity and destructive life style. These behaviours

contribute to death, disabilities, depression and can cause suicide (Internet, Understanding stress; http://helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm).

2.6.3 Emotional and Psychological Effects.

Mental illnesses linked to stress include schizophrenia, claustrophobia, agoraphobia and depression. Persons suffering from these conditions are likely to be hospitalized and to attempt suicide (Kane 1987 and Willis 2005). Kane (1987) further contends that, psychological stress causes bodily illness called psychosomatic while excessive stress causes a myriad of negativities such as emotional exhaustion, despair, apathy, feeling trapped, anorexia nervosa, obsessive disorder, sexual abuse, memory problems, trouble thinking clearly, feeling out of control and suicide.

Emotional stress leads to lack of enthusiasm, feeling of losing control as well as experience of an unexplainable grief. It results in loss of productivity and creativity, fuels negativity and cynicism with quickness to get angry, lack of sleep, blame and detachment from others.

Prolonged chronic stress results into a psychological consequence called burnout. Burnout occurs when the body's defensive coping is exhausted leading to reduced productivity and energy, leaving the victim feeling increasingly hopeless, powerless, cynical and resentful. It can eventually threaten ones job, relationship with others and may lead to death (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia Internet and Kane 1987). Otieno (1998) describes the consequences of burnout as high emotional exhaustion, high depersonalization, low personal accomplishment, compromised quality of work, impaired judgement, narrowed attention, negative experience and unpleasant emotional development. The consequences of stress and burnout are outlined in Figure 2.5:

Figure 2.5: Effects of Stress and Burnout

Stress	Burnout
Characterized by over engagement.	Characterized by disengagement.
Emotions are overactive.	Emotions are blunted.
Produces urgency and hyperactivity.	Produces hopelessness and helplessness.
Loss of energy.	Loss of motivation, ideals and hope.
Leads to anxiety disorders.	Leads to detachment and depression.
Primary damage is physical.	Primary damage is emotional.
May kill one prematurely	May make life seem not worth living.

*Source: Stress Management. at <http://En.wikipedia.Org/wiki/stress> –
Management – Burnout - 34 k.

Burnout is the final stage of the stress phenomenon characterised by mental, emotional and physical exhaustion. In severe cases of workplace burnout, people experience thoughts of suicide.

According to Barclays Bank magazine, (2006), the costs of stress can be very high for organizations. The head teachers can suffer financially due to consequences of stress acquired on line of duty which the employers are not paying for them. The consequences can be physical, behavioural or emotional, which causes; physical illness, increase in health care costs, loss of productivity and creativity and probability of making more mistakes on the line of duty as a head teacher.

2.7 Coping Strategies and Stress Proofing

Various studies have documented stress management mechanisms/techniques. However, there are no clear strategies documented for teachers. Kane (1987) enumerates them as staying away from potentially stressful situations, controlling stress responses, using drugs such as mild tranquilizers, physical exercises which stimulate the fight or flight behaviour, burns off stress hormones and helps stay in

good physical health, progressive and meditative relaxation.

Japanese have turned to products believed to relieve stress such as adults' milk, resting the head on disembodied hands, yelling into a vase, massaging the digits with a roller device, swimming with a zen dolphin, electronically erasing stress using a stress eraser device and sleeping on a scalp-massaging helmet (Awake Magazine, 2010).

The BBK Business Magazine (2006), contends that, checking in with the doctor, regular exercise routine, working on time management skills, spending more time with family and friends, developing a leisure activity, eating a balanced diet and setting realistic expectations for a business organization will ease the stress burden.

Willis (2005), outlines four coping mechanisms as:

i) Coping in Practice.

Avoiding being over-competitive and an absolute perfectionist for things that do not matter much. Working off anger and hostility and not being afraid of failure.

The short fall of coping in practice, is that people differ in terms of characteristics and not all of them are capable of controlling their emotions.

ii) Coping Spiritually.

This helps in living a balanced life through Bible Study for enhancement of mental and spiritual improvement. This is a biased coping strategy for Christians only. Furthermore, the matter of faith differs from one community to another.

iii) Coping Emotionally.

It entails building of Social relationships which help meet important needs such as being nurtured, emotional closeness, social integration, re-assurance of worth, guidance and reliable alliance. This depends on a community relationship with the individuals. It can also be the cause of stress in case of community hostility.

iv) Coping through Relaxation.

This includes meditation, bio-feed back, loosening exercises and use of prescribed drugs to meet the physical and mental needs.

The technique of active coping which involves the development of internal capacities

for coping with stress has three domains: the individual, environmental and organizational oriented techniques. The individual technique includes cognitive restructuring, positive self instruction and thought stopping techniques. The environmental technique includes diversion of one's mind, attention and energy to a thing that contains little or no stress, taking holidays, games and recreation, listening to music, taking walks and relaxation while the organizational oriented strategies focus on many areas within the business including delegation of power and responsibility that build leisure and relaxation into the system and management practices that reduce administrative bottlenecks.

Other coping procedures include; bio-feed back therapy, massage therapy, medication, humour, hypnosis, hobbies and meditation (Willis, 2005).

With the traumatic consequences of stress, head teachers need to be induced on several coping mechanism that can be effective to their working environment some of which as outlined by Willis (2005), do not require any financials but time for them to be implemented

2.8 Summary

Studies have documented generalized information about stress as a cross cutting health challenge among professions with teachers being ranked at the top among the most stressed professionals, Willis (2005). The review has discussed head teachers

tasks that contribute to occupational stress and various stress agents on head teachers' environment.

The literature reviewed on educational sector outlined stress incidences as lack of motivation, job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, discipline, academic performance and burnout. Several models has been used to describe the causes, sources, signs, symptoms, concept and effect of stress to the teachers; physically, behaviourally and emotional. However, there existed insufficient literature on studies conducted specifically on the level of stress and stress incidence among head teachers of secondary schools.

Coping strategies was also reviewed though there are no specific strategies outlined for the educational sector like the Japanese stress relief products (Awake Magazine, 2010). In particular, there is insufficient evidence of studies conducted in Kisumu County to assess the impact of stress on head teachers' tasks in secondary Schools.

This study assesses the impact of stress on head teachers tasks' performance, establish individual head teacher response and management of stress and seek suggestions on interventions for alleviating the impact of stress. The literature reviewed formed the basis of explaining concepts of the findings.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology adopted for the present study. It presents the study population, sampling, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data presentation, analysis and interpretation techniques and ethical considerations.

3.1 The Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Orodho (2003) defines descriptive survey as a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. This method can be used when collecting information about people's attitude, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho and Kombo, 2002).

The study aimed at collecting information on occupational stress from the respondents' in relation to head teachers in Kisumu County. The research instruments were restricted to fact finding and generated primary data which was obtained through questionnaire and key informant interview. Secondary data which largely came from; internet, journals and books (Kombo; Tromp 2006) was used for the study.

3.2 Locale' of the Study

The study was conducted in three divisions: Maseno, Kombewa and Winam in Kisumu County of Nyanza Province, Kenya. Kisumu County was chosen based on the work experience of the researcher in the country and the fact that the county has both the leading performing schools nationally and poorly performing schools nationally.

As a leading Education officer, the researcher handled stress related problems in the county which affected service delivery and national examination results. The background information made the county convenient in terms of access to information based on the objectives of the study.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for the study were head teachers, Heads of Department (HoDs) and one PDE as summarized in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Variables	Population	Sample	Sampling Ratio	Percentage %
PDE	1	1	1	100%
Head Teachers.	60	18	1/6	30%
HoDs	180	54	1/6	30%

The respondents provided information on factors contributing to stress among head teachers, the impact of stress on head teachers' tasks performance and strategies used by head teachers to cope with stress.

3.4 Sampling Procedure.

A research sample is a specific unit/section of the population that we take to study basically because it is practically difficult to study the entire population. A research sample is expected to mirror the population from which it comes (Trochim, 2005).

Orodho (2004) maintains that in any education and social sciences studies, the sample should be selected in such away that one is assured that such sub-groups in the population will be represented in the sample in proportion to the numbers in the

population itself. The investigator used stratified random sampling technique in selecting the sample. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), stratified random sampling technique involves dividing target population into homogeneous subgroup and then taking a simple random sample in each subgroup. A total of eight district schools (44.4%), nine provincial schools (50%) and one national school (5.6%) were sampled.

Out of these schools, eight were day schools (44.4%), four were boarding schools (22.2%) and six were both day and boarding schools (33.3%). Based on the gender; four boys schools (22.2%), five girls schools (27.8%) and nine mixed schools (50%) were sampled with seven located in the urban area (38.9%) and 11 located in the rural area (61.1%).

3.5 Research Instruments.

The researcher used questionnaires and key informant interview as the main data collection instruments.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

This was the main tool of data collection tool and was used because; they are easier to administer; close-ended questions are easier to analyze; and open-ended questions provide a greater depth of response (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:72). Further, it was an appropriate tool for the study was quantitative in nature.

The questionnaires were administered to:

3.5.1.1 Head Teachers Questionnaire

It sought information on;

- Demographic profile of head teachers.

- Institutional data.
- Sources of stress.
- Levels and effects of stress on job performance.
- The coping strategies used to manage stress.
- Suggestions and recommendations to the MoE and TSC on stress management interventions.

3.5.1.2 Heads of Department Questionnaire

This instrument sought to generate information on:

- Sources of stress among head teachers
- Effects of stress on job performance of head teachers
- Suggestions on ways to mitigate stress factors among head teachers

This instrument was chosen because it is most effective when dealing with a large number of sampling units which are geographically far apart.

Table 3.2: Respondents Schedule N=73

Respondents	Sample	Percentage
Provincial Director of Education.	1	1%
Head Teachers.	18	25%
Heads of Department.	54	74%
Total	73	100%

3.5.2 Key Informant Interview

This interview was for the PDE. It sought to find information on;

- Number of secondary schools in the province and in particular, Kisumu County.
- Distribution of Schools based on gender of students.
- Factors contributing to stress among head teachers.
- Effects of stress on head teachers' job performance.

- Programmes the Ministry of Education has put in place to address the stress factor among head teachers.

3.6 Pilot Study

The researcher undertook trial of the instruments by administering them to a sample of respondents with the same characteristics as the study sample and were drawn from three secondary schools representing boys, girls and mixed schools. Their responses to questionnaire items enabled the researcher to ensure each instrument was in line with the intended objectives.

The purpose of piloting was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the questionnaire items in order to adjust the research instruments. The sample used in pilot study was excluded from the actual research.

3.6.1 Validity of Instruments.

The investigator did the cross checking, inspection and scrutiny of information in the research instruments to ensure accuracy, relevance, completeness, consistency and uniformity on the collected data. This enabled the researcher to establish whether content in question items dealt with and reflected the content and objectives of the study (content validity and construct validity), (Patton, 2002).

3.6.2 Reliability of Instruments.

Reliability refers to the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

Test-retest technique was applied to establish efficiency of the instruments. Spearman rank order correlation was used as shown in the formula

$$r = 1 - \frac{6 \sum (d)^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

Where: r = rank
d = difference
N = Sample size

d=1 N=73

$$r = 1 - \frac{6}{73(73^2 - 1)} \quad \mathbf{r=0.99998}$$

The rank is 0.99998 which tends towards one hence positive correlation.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The investigator sought research authorization from Kenyatta University Graduate School and obtained a research permit from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education. Administrative protocol was observed during school visits by seeking authority from the PDE, DEO and the head teachers at school level. Administration of research instruments was done in strict adherence to ethical and legal considerations involved in research such as seeking informed consent from respondents, maintaining confidentiality of information and anonymity of respondents and avoidance of plagiarism and fraud.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researched observed all the ethical concerns as the researcher adhered to all ethical guidelines and avoided any acts of misconduct in research. The researcher observed confidentiality, plagiarism, honesty, objectivity, respect of intellectual property, dissemination of findings, anonymity, non-discrimination, voluntary and informed consent, academic freedom, social responsibility and respect for colleagues. Information collected was handled with confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis and interprets the findings of the study. Data was collected through questionnaire and key informant interview schedules. Data presentation is descriptive in nature and analysis was done according to study objectives. The study objectives were: to identify the sources of stress among head teachers, determine the levels of stress among head teachers, analyse effects of stress in relation to tasks performance of head teachers and to establish strategies employed by head teachers to mitigate the effects of stress. The presentation of the data has been done according to the way the questions were structured following the study objectives and as per the respondents' categories. Tables and figures are used to present data.

4.2 Characteristics of Respondents and Response Rate

4.2.1 Response Rate

The total number of respondents was 73 as per the study's intended population sample size giving a response rate of 100%.

4.2.2 Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 73 respondents participated in the study. These included 18 (24.6%) head teachers, 54 (74%) Heads of Department (HoD) and one (1.4%) Provincial Director of Education (PDE).

The schools were drawn from Kisumu County: seven (38.9%) schools in Maseno Division, seven (38.9%) schools in Winam Division and four (22.2%) in Kombewa

Division. The sample was done in relation to the total number of schools in each Division.

The head teachers and HoDs were sampled from eight (44.4%) district schools, nine (50%) provincial schools and one (5.6%) national school. Out of these schools, eight (44.4%) were day schools, four (22.2%) were boarding schools and six (33.3%) were both day and boarding schools. Based on the gender; four (22.2%) boys schools, five girls (27.8%) schools and nine (50%) mixed schools were sampled with seven (38.9%) located in the urban area and 11(61.1%) located in the rural area. Table 4.1 indicates the study population sample size.

Table 4.1: Study Population Sampled Size (N=73)

Category	Total Population	Sampled size	Percentage of the sampled size (%)
Provincial Director of Education.	1	1	1.4
Head Teachers.	60	18	24.6
Heads of Department.	180	54	74
Total		73	100

4.2.3 Characteristic of Provincial Director of Education

Data was collected from her through key informant interview representing 1.37% of the respondents.

4.2.4 Characteristics of Head teachers

A total of 18 responded: 13 (72.2%) male and five (27.8%) female head teachers participated in the study by filling the questionnaires. In terms of marital status; 13 (72.2%) were married, three (16.7%) were single and two (11.1%) were widowed.

On hours of service: one representing 5.6% was working less than five hours a day, five representing 27.8% were working between 6 to 10 hours a day and 11

representing 61.1% were working between 11 to 15 hours a day. In terms of professional qualifications; two (11.1%) respondents had diplomas, 15 (83.3%) had Bachelors of Education (B.Ed) and one (5.6%) had Bachelor of Science (B.Sc).

On work experience in the position of headship, five (27.8%) had worked for less than five years, six (33.3%) had worked for between 6 to 10 years, four (22.2%) had worked for between 11 to 15 years and one (5.6%) had worked for 24 years as head teachers. Two (11.2%) respondents did not specify their work experience as head teachers.

Further, half (50%) of the respondents stated they had undergone induction courses on appointment to the position of headship and half stated they had not, 15 (83.3%) had undergone management and leadership courses since they were appointed to the positions of headship while three (16.7%) had not.

On rating their duties: eight (44.4%) rated their duties as manageable while 10 (55.6%) rated their duties as overloaded with 13 (72.2%) dissatisfied with the terms and conditions of service and four (22.2%) termed the conditions of service as standard. One did not specify.

4.2.5 Characteristics of Heads of Department

They were the largest number of respondents: 59.3% male and 40.7% female representing different departments. The departments were: five Academic/Career departments (9.3%), five Technical and Creative Arts departments (9.3%), five Co-curricular activities departments (9.3%), five Guidance and Counselling departments (9.3%), 12 Languages departments (22.1%), eight Humanities departments (14.8%), eight Mathematics departments (14.8%) and four Sciences departments (7.4%) as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 HoD Departments (N=54)

Department	Frequency/ Number	Percentage (%)
Academic/Career	5	9.3
Technical and Creative Arts	5	9.3
Co-curricular activities	5	9.3
Guidance and Counselling	5	9.3
Languages	12	22.1
Humanities	8	14.8
Mathematics	8	14.8
Sciences	4	7.4
Did not answer	2	3.7
Total	54	100.0

4.3 Sources of Stress among Head teachers.

The first objective of the study was to identify sources of stress among head teachers. An understanding of sources of stress was essential in establishing the relationship between the work of the head teacher and the negative stress agents. When asked about the position of headship, work done and factors causing stress among head teachers, the respondents' responses varied as indicated in the following discussion.

4.3.1 PDE's Rank on Sources of Stress.

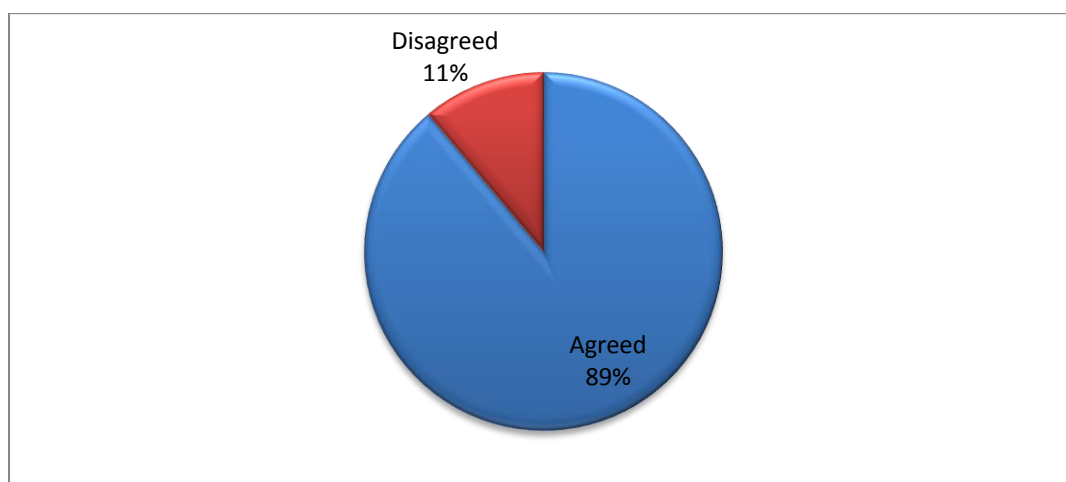
The PDE ranked stress as a major problem among the head teachers in the province. She stated the common source of stress to the head teachers as: teachers' management, academic performance both for good, average and poor performing schools, discipline of the students, pressure from parents for the school to perform well and the characteristics of the school.

4.3.2 Head Teachers' Rank on Sources of Stress

The sources of stress for this category of respondents was divided in three areas: position of headship, school stakeholders and the family. Position of headship covered the work of the head teachers in school; the school stake holders involved the school environment while the family involved the home environment of the respondent.

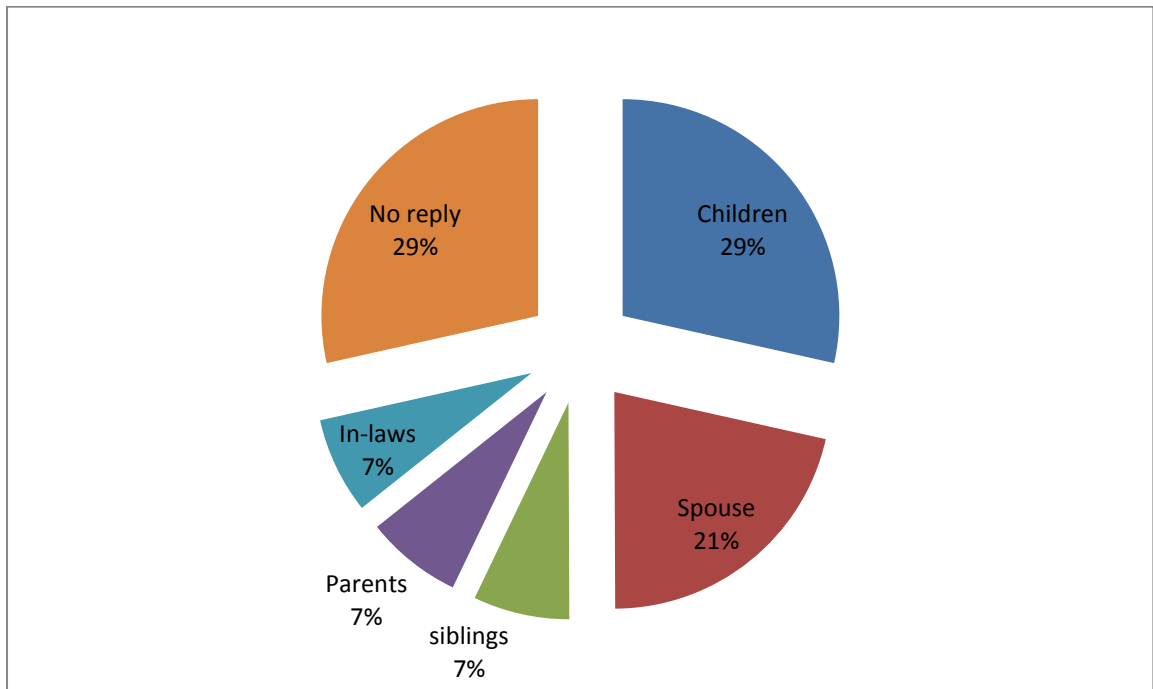
When asked if they considered the position of head teacher as a source of occupational stress, most (88.9%) agreed while few (11.1%) disagreed as shown in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Position of Head teacher as a Source of Stress



All the respondents (100%) considered stakeholders as contributing factor to source of occupational stress. On family, 77.8% stated their families as source of stress and the rest (22.2%) disagreed. Those who stated their families as source of stress were asked to state who stressed them most: the highest stated their children (22.2%), followed by their spouse (16.7%), then the siblings, parents and in-laws each at (5.6%). A higher percentage (22.2%) did not state who stresses them most. Figure 4.2 shows this.

Figure 4.4: Family members who Stress Head teachers most



4.3.3 Response from HoDs

The respondents were drawn from different types of schools; Boys, Girls and Mixed Boarding and Day schools. When asked which type of school was hard to administer, 45 (83.3%) stated mixed schools five (9.3%) stated girls school and three (5.6%) stated boys school. On the position of head teacher as source of stress, 41 (75.9%) said it was a source of stress while 12 (22.2%) said it was not a source of stress.

The HoDs further listed the following factors as contributing to stress among head teachers:

1. Poor working relationship between the head teacher and the school staff.
2. Poor school fees payment and lack of support from parents.
3. Inadequate finance especially with the rising cost of living.
4. Poor academic performance of the school.

5. Indiscipline among the students; strikes, use of drugs and substances of abuse, boy/girl relationships.
6. Understaffing and inadequate school resources; library, books, laboratories etc.
7. Poor planning due to lack of strategic plan.
8. Poor management and utilization of school resources.
9. Low number of students.
10. Late disbursement of Free Secondary Education (FSE) funds.
11. Domestic issues.
12. Lack of rest, family and self balance.

Being a group that works closely with head teachers, the HoDs' were asked to rate if the duties of the head teachers can be their source of stress: 53.7% of the respondents rated the duties of the head teachers as manageable while 42.6% rated as overload.

4.3.4 Discussion of Findings on Source of Stress

According to studies carried out by Maslach and Laiter (1999), teachers were ranked as the most stressed professionals. This was supported by Willis, (2005), who ranked the education profession as the most stressed profession among seven professions in the world; teachers, nurses, managers, social workers, road transport drivers, police officers and prison officers.

The findings of this study are a reflection of Maslach and Laiter (1999), and Willis (2005) studies. The PDE stated stress as a major problem among the head teachers in the province and a cause of other problems in the school, family and the community.

Out of 18 head teacher respondents, 16 (88.9%) stated their position of headship was a source of stress with only two (11.1%) disagreeing. This was supported by 41

(75.9%) HoDs who viewed the position of a head teacher as source of stress against 12 (22.2%). Melgosa defined stress as a condition of being subject to external forces or pressures and can be either positive or negative (Melgosa, 2004). Both the PDE and HoDs attributed the sources of stress to pressure and external force on the workload of the head teacher who performed the teachers' role as a classroom teacher and an administrative role as the head teacher. This was also supported by an article in *The Seed* (2008) which stated, head teachers are overworked and suffering from stress caused by inability to raise issues for fear of job loss or vindictive transfer, lack of support from superiors, parents and political establishment.

According to Chapman (1995-2007), the typical sources of stress at work include continuous unreasonable performance demands, lack of job security, long working hours, excessive time away from home and family, office politics and conflict among staff, working long hours, responsibilities and pressures disrupting life-balance (diet, exercise, sleep and rest, family time). This was in line with the common sources of stress raised by both the PDE and HoDs which included: teachers' management, academic performance, discipline of the students, long working hours, pressure from the parents for the school to perform well, punishment of the students and the characteristics of the school. "The head teacher does not have a balanced work, family and personal life" said the PDE.

All the head teachers 18 (100%) stated the environment and stake holders as contributing factors to their source of stress. Family was also attributed as the source of stress by 14 (77.8%) head teachers with spouse, siblings, children, parents and the in-laws listed as contributing factors. This was explained by Pajares (2002) as the cause of a discrepancy in the person that triggers stress— environment interactions and transactions between the demands of a situation that trigger the onset of stress.

The study did not reveal any relationship between the bio data of the respondents and the sources of stress. This shows the position of head teacher, stakeholders and family are sources of stress to the head teachers regardless of their back ground.

All the nine (50%) respondent head teachers who stated they were inducted on appointment to their current position of headship were among the 16 (88.9%) who stated the position of head teacher was a source of stress. Further, out of 15 respondents who had undergone managerial/leadership courses since appointment, 13 (86.7%) were among those who stated their position of headship was a source of stress.

The findings clearly revealed that, despite the trainings, induction seminars, back ground of the head teacher and work experience, all 18 (100%) head teachers get stress from the stakeholders, 16 (88.9%) from the position of headship and 14 (77.8%) from their families.

4.4 Levels of Stress among Head teachers

The study sought to find out from the respondents the levels of stress among head teachers based on the sources of stress in their line of duties. Their views are as indicated below.

4.4.1 Response from PDE

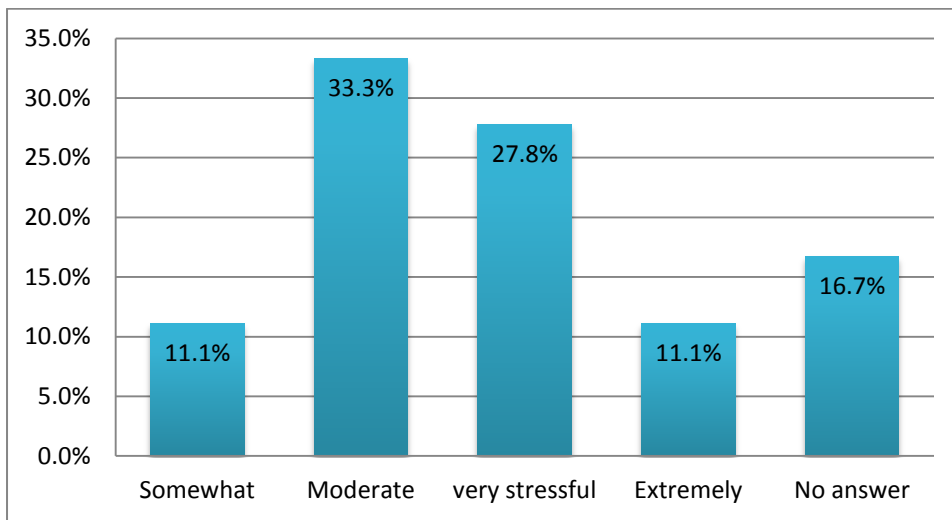
When the PDE was asked what determined the level of stress of the head teachers, she said;

'the head teachers stress level differs from an individual to another due to the head teachers age, gender, experience, marital status, family issues, the type of school and its location. It also differs based on the social factors'.

4.4.2 Response from Head Teachers

The respondents were asked to scale the level of stress based on their positions as head teachers being a source of the stress; two (11.1%) rated as somewhat stressful, six (33.3%) as moderately stressful, five (27.8%) as very stressful and two (11.1%) as extremely stressful. Figure 4.3 shows the scale of the levels of stress;

Figure 4.3: Scale of the Level of Stress



The day to day roles of head teachers revolve around six administrative tasks. Head teachers were asked to rank how great administrative tasks corresponded to their level of stress based on: not at all stressful, least stressful, average stressful, very stressful and extremely stressful. Finance and business management was ranked as very stressful (50%) and Physical facilities management also as very stressful. Teaching and non teaching staff management was ranked as average stressful at 44.4%, same level with Student personnel management (44.4%). Curriculum and Instruction management was ranked as average stressful at 38.9%. School Community and Public relations management was evenly selected as least, average and very stressful all at 27.8% consequently.

The head teachers who considered the stake holders as contributing factor to occupational stress ranked them cumulatively according to the perceived stress levels

as; politicians (12.9%) and students (12.4%) as the most stressful stakeholders while MOE (9.9%) and the school sponsor (9.0%) as the least stressful stakeholders. Table 4.3 ranks the stake holders according to their perceived stress levels by the head teachers cumulatively.

Table 4.3: Stake holders as contributing factors to source of occupational stress

No.	Stake holder	Contributing factor (%)	C. Frequency (%)
1	Politicians	12.9	12.9
2	Students	12.4	25.3
3	Non – teaching staffs	11.8	37.1
4	BOG	11.5	48.6
5	Parents	11.3	60.0
6	Teaching staff	11.0	71.0
7	Community	10.1	81.1
8	MOE	9.9	91.0
9	Sponsor	9.0	100.0

4.4.3 HoDs Response on Levels of Stress

HoDs play major roles in administrative responsibilities in their line of duties either by delegation or during the absence of the head teacher. The respondents were asked to rank the stress levels they got from different administrative responsibilities and other related tasks in their line of duty. The level of ranking were; most stressful, stressful, average, least stressful and not stressful.

Inadequate facilities: staff houses, tuition and boarding facilities, library etc; and student discipline were ranked as the most stressful responsibilities by 22 (40.7%) and 18 (33.3%) respondents simultaneously.

Responsibilities identified as stressful were: payment of fees (boarding and lunch program) 26 (48.1%), inadequate teaching staff 24 (44.4%), preparation of professional records and books of accounts 20 (37%), intimidation/harassment by

seniors 17 (31.5%) and administration of KCSE examinations 16 (29.6%).

Most responsibilities (58%) were ranked as average on the level of stress caused to the respondents. They included: teaching work load and students attitude to academic work each by 25 (46.3%) respondents, school inspection and coordination of co-curricular activities each by 23 (42.6%), disbursement of FSE funds and discrimination each by 20 (37%). Responsibility for students' performance by 19 (35.2%) respondents, audit of books of accounts and responding to audit queries by 18 (33.3%) respondents, relationship with BOG/Sponsor by 17 (31.5%) respondents, unwanted transfers by 16 (29.6%) and relationship with the community by 14 (25.9%) respondents.

Among the responsibilities given, only the relationship with academic and non-academic staff was ranked the highest on least stressful level of stress by 18 (33.3%) respondents.

Table 4.4: HoDs Rank on Levels of Stress from Administrative Tasks

		Most stressful (%)	Stressful (%)	Average (%)	Least stressful (%)	Not stressful (%)
1	Inadequate facilities	40.7	24.1	25.9	3.7	1.9
2	Student discipline	33.3	27.8	31.5	3.7	1.9
3	Payment of Fees (Boarding and Lunch Program)	22.2	48.1	16.7	5.6	3.7
4	Inadequate teaching staff	27.8	44.4	18.5	1.9	3.7
5	Preparation of professional records and Books of Accounts	9.3	37.0	27.8	16.7	7.4
6	Intimidation/ harassment by Seniors	11.1	31.5	14.8	22.2	18.5
7	Administration of KCSE Examination	18.5	29.6	27.8	11.1	9.3
8	Teaching Work load	13.0	27.8	46.3	5.6	5.6
9	Student attitude to academic work	7.4	27.8	46.3	9.3	3.9
10	School Inspection	7.4	24.1	42.6	16.7	5.6
11	Coordination of co-curricular activities	5.6	29.6	42.6	13.0	5.6
12	Disbursement of FSE funds	11.1	31.5	37.0	9.3	1.9

13	Discrimination (Tribalism, Gender, Faith, Nepotism). Tick (√) applicable ones	7.4	11.1	37.0	16.7	22.2
14	Responsibility for students performance	27.8	27.8	35.2	1.9	5.6
15	Audit of books of accounts and Responding to Audit Queries	18.5	14.8	33.3	14.8	11.1
16	Relationship with BOG/Sponsor	5.6	22.2	31.5	16.7	14.8
17	Unwarranted transfers	11.1	18.5	29.6	22.2	11.1
18	Relationship with community	0.1	22.2	25.9	24.1	20.4
19	Relationship with academic and non academic staff	3.7	16.7	22.2	33.3	18.5

4.4.4 Discussion of findings

The Research findings revealed that head teachers perceived stress on different levels. Though 16 (88.9%) out of 18 stated their position of headship as source of stress, they rated the same position of headship differently on the level of stress it caused to them: six (33.3%) as moderately stressful, five (27.8%) as very stressful, two (11.1%) rated as somewhat stressful and two (11.1%) as extremely stressful. The level of stress for an individual head teacher differed with the perception of a discrepancy in other head teachers.

Garfield, (1995) noted the discrepancy is normally caused by environment interactions and transactions between the demands of a situation and the resources of the person's biological, psychological, occupational and social systems that trigger the onset of stress. Levine and Ursin, (1991) supported this on their Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (CATS). They stated that whether a stimulus is pleasant or threatening, it depends on the individual appraisal of the situation from the input level.

Though the PDE stated age, gender, experience and marital status as key factors that influenced stress levels among head teachers, the study findings showed no correlation. These bio data were distributed to all levels of stress without a clear pattern. Eriksen et al., (1999) noted, the increase in stress arousal manifests itself in

many or most organ systems, with individual and situational variance in strength, reciprocal relations, and time parameters. This explains the variance on the level of stress for each individual is based on their strength, reciprocal relations, and time parameters but not physical characteristics only.

Administrative tasks were ranked as average stressful and very stressful. The average stressful management responsibilities included: teaching and non teaching staff (44.4%), student personnel (44.4%), curriculum and instruction (38.9%), and school community public relations (27.8%) while the very stressful included finance and business (50%) and physical facilities (38.9%). Finance and business management caused the highest stress level among the head teachers.

The HoDs further rated inadequate facilities 22 (40.7%) and student discipline 18 (33.3%) as the most stressful responsibilities for head teachers with payment of fees (boarding and lunch Program) 26 (48.1%), inadequate teaching staff 24 (44.4%) and preparation of professional records and books of accounts 20 (37%) as stressful. All these responsibilities involved financial aspect.

“Finance remains the major challenge for the head teachers both in school and their families especially with the rising cost of living” said the PDE.

These findings reveal lack of clarity on the way head teachers ranked their levels of stress. The variation on ranking the same source of stress at different levels by the head teachers depicts the variance was based on the individuals perception of a discrepancy between the demands of a situation and the combined resources of the person’s biological, psychological and social systems (Isidor, Galbes, 2002).

4.5 Effects of Stress in relation to Tasks Performance of Head teachers.

The study sought to find out the effects of stress on head teachers' performance, other teachers performance and the school performance. The objective formed the basis of identifying coping mechanisms employed by head teachers and their effectiveness.

4.5.1 Response from PDE on Effects of Stress

The PDE stated the following during the interview:

“Stress lowers a head teachers performance due to poor public relation to the teachers, students and the parents. A head teacher cannot think correctly when stressed but can easily be controlled by his/her emotions” said the PDE on the effects of stress on the head teachers' performance.

She further said *“The level of stress and how the head teacher handles it will determine other teachers' performance.”* She explained, *“If a head teacher controls his/her stress level, s/he can not affect other teachers but when s/he does not control it, s/he affects other teachers negatively which de-motivates them in performance of their duties.”*

As for the students: *“When the head teacher is stressed and de-motivates/negatively influences the teachers, students are always left on the receiving end. They will receive poor quality teaching, the head teachers and teachers will not listen to them and their performance will generally degenerate.”*

She mentioned the long term consequences of head teachers stress as poor performance of their tasks, teachers de-motivation and students low performance which affects the general performance of the school.

4.5.2 Response from Head Teachers on Effects of Stress

When asked if stress affected their performance as head teachers, majority (83.3%) said yes while few (11.1%) said no. Those who said yes listed the following as effects of stress on their performance: difficult in decision making, fatigue, lose of appetite, irritability, headache, indiscipline, poor performance in exams, low esteem, loneliness, sickness, mood swings, forgetfulness, poor judgement and poor service delivery.

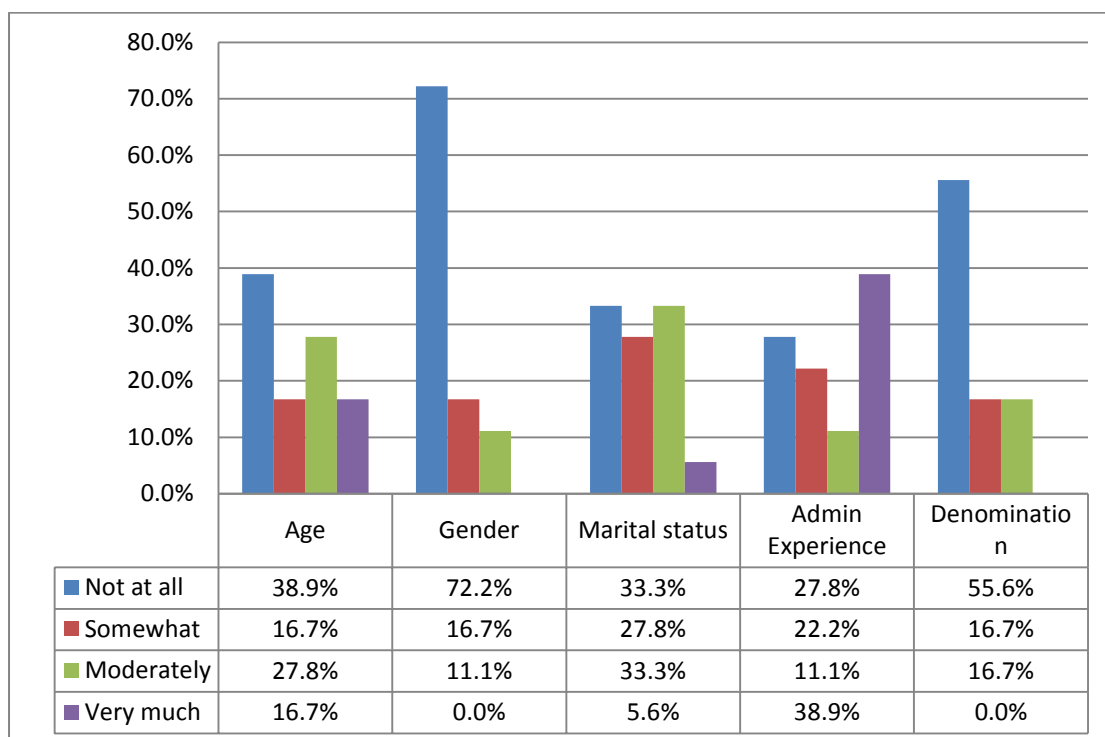
On individual characteristics, head teachers were asked to rate the effects of age, gender, marital status, professional qualifications and administrative experience on their performance as head teachers.

On age, seven (38.9%) stated age did not affect their performance, five (27.8%) moderately affected them ,three (16.7%) somewhat affected them, and three (16.7%) affected them very much. On gender, 13 (72.2%) stated it did not affect their performance, three (16.7%) somewhat affected them and two (11.1%) moderately affected them. The big discrepancy was also identified on religious denominations where 10 (55.6%) stated as not affecting them, three (16.7%) somehow and another three (16.7%) moderately affected them.

Six respondents (33.3%) stated marital status did not affect their performance while the same number stated it moderately affected them. Five (27.8%) stated it somehow affected them and only one stated it affected him/her very much.

Administrative experience had a different output. Seven (38.9%) accepted as very much stressful, five (27.8%) not at all stressful, four (22.2%) somewhat stressful and two (11.1%) as moderately stressful,. The effects were summarized in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Effects of Demographic Factors to Head teachers' Stress.



4.5.3 HoDs Response on Effects of Stress

Based on their experience, HoDs were asked if the head teachers stress factors affected their performance as head teachers: 40 (74.1%) said yes while 13 (24.1%) said no.

When asked to state briefly how stress affected performance of head teachers in the position of headship, the following were mentioned:

- Constant absenteeism due to many creditors visiting the school hence inefficiency on performance.
- Aggressive behaviour towards staff and students.
- Lack of concentration on the most crucial duties.
- Inability meet deadlines.
- Constant threats of resignation.
- Harshness to staff leading to rebellion or negative attitude or strike.
- Sickness and hospitalization.

- Irrational decision making.
- De-motivation of staff.

When asked if head teachers stress affected other teachers performance, 37 (68.5%) agreed while 12 (22.2%) disagreed. Those who agreed outlined the following as ways that head teachers stress affected other teachers' performance:

- As role model to other teachers, when stressed, s/he stresses other teachers.
- Constant conflict or quarrel makes teachers slow down on their work commitment.
- Difficulty in addressing academic issues leaves teachers to handle administrative tasks hence overworked.
- Poor judgement leads to victimization of teachers unfairly leading to enmity and lack of teamwork.
- Stressful environment causes tension which impacts negatively on teachers.
- Ineffective supervision leads to inadequate implementation of the curriculum.
- Poor supervision and planning leads to laxity among teachers in their duties.
- Sickness and absenteeism.
- Indiscipline, aggression, anger and withdrawal of the head teacher affects other teachers conduct in the school.

On school performance, 39 (72.2%) respondents agreed that the stress of head teachers also affected the general school performance while 11 (20.4%) disagreed.

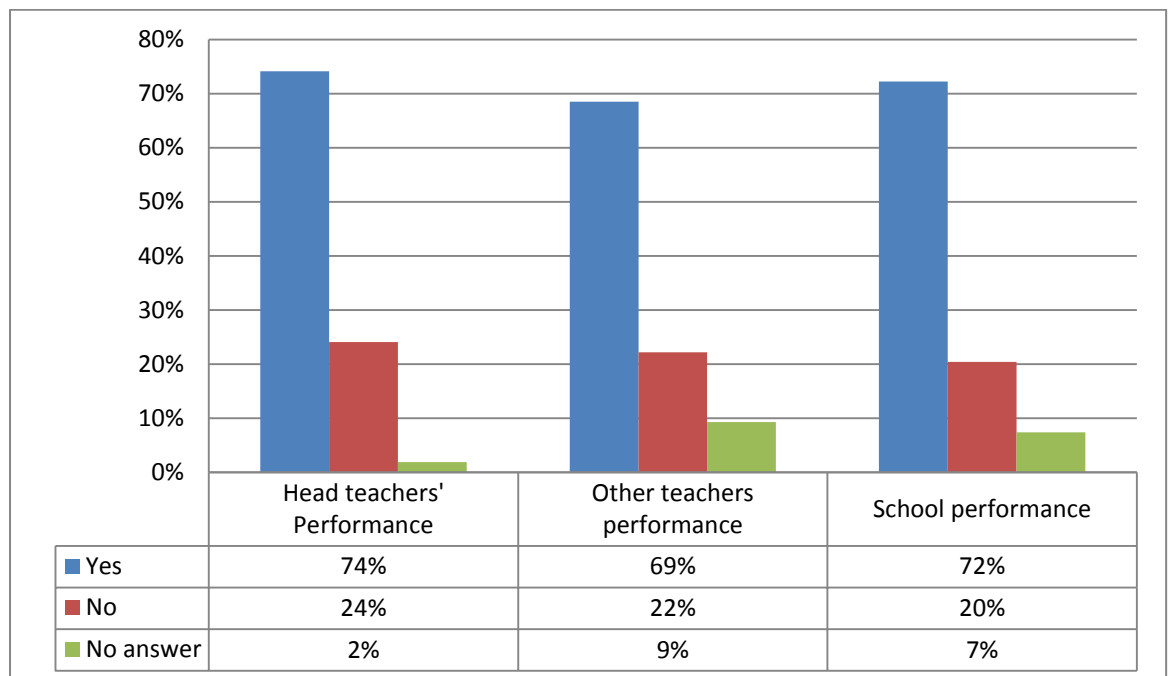
Those who agreed stated the following as ways in which the school performance is affected:

1. A withdrawn head teacher can't effectively manage the schools academic process.
2. Absentee head teachers are not able to cope with workload when they report back.
3. Consequently poor management and teaching produce poor results.

4. Lack of timely provision of resources required to enhance effective teaching/learning.
5. A stressed head teacher does not have clear control of the school hence school routines and policies are not adhered to the latter.
6. Poor strategies put in place may discourage positive performance.
7. Teachers tend to rebel and transfer to other schools which creates shortage of staff.
8. Low work output causes psychological/health problems, loss of sleep and poor coordination.

Effects of head teachers stress as perceived by the HoDs are summarised in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Effects of Head teachers Stress as per HODs Responses.



4.5.4 Discussion of the findings on Effects of Stress

The findings generally revealed the head teachers stress affects his/her performance, other teachers' performance and the school performance in general. Out of 18 head teacher respondents, 15 (83.3%) said stress affected their performance as head

teachers, while two (11.1%) said it did not.

According to Willis (2005), stress is linked to a wide range of illnesses that affect the physical, behavioural and emotional states of an individual. In line with this, head teachers listed several physical, behavioural and emotional ways in which stress affected their performance which included: difficult in decision making, fatigue, loss of appetite, irritability, headache, indiscipline, poor performance in exams, low esteem, loneliness, sickness, mood swings, forgetfulness, poor judgement and poor service delivery.

On their bio data, head teachers stated age, gender, marital status, professional qualifications and religious denominations did not affect their stress levels. However, administrative experience was ranked as very much stressful though with a lower percentage. Out of 18 respondents: seven (38.9%) respondents accepted as very much stressful, five (27.8%) not at all stressful, four (22.2%) somewhat stressful and two (11.1%) as moderately stressful. This is a reflection of Isidor, (2002) work which shows the variance of stress effect is based on individual, biological, psychological and social systems.

Based on their experience, 40 (74%) HoDs respondents out of 54 said Head teachers stress factors affected their performance while 13 (24.1%) said it did not. Further, 37 (69%) stated head teachers stress factor affected other teachers performance but 12 (22.2%) disagreed. On school performance, 39 (72.2%) respondents agreed that the stress of head teachers also affected the general school performance while 11 (20.4%) disagreed.

The findings reaffirm Willis (2005) and Barclays Bank Magazine (2006) that stress is linked to a wide range of illnesses which affect the body signs and physical health, emotions and feelings, behaviour and thoughts of affected subjects. The findings

concluded that head teachers stress affected his/her performance (83.3% head teachers were stressed), other teachers' performance (68.5% of HoDs were affected) and the school performance in general by 72.2%.

4.6 Strategies employed to mitigate Effects Of Stress.

The focus of the study was also to establish the existing strategies employed by the head teachers to mitigate effects of stress and their effectiveness. Respondents were asked to state strategies employed by head teachers and the MOE to mitigate the effects of stress at the work place. Their views varied as indicated below.

4.6.1 PDEs Response on Stress Management Strategies

The PDE stated that head teachers have different strategies some of which she does not know. However, she mentioned relaxation, sharing the problem with other head teachers and attending workshops organised by the Ministry of Education as the common strategies.

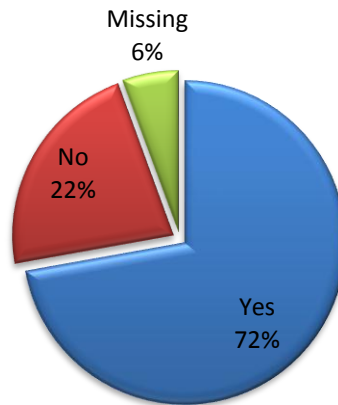
Further, she said the MOE had designed programs and support services towards aiding head teachers in reduction of stress at the work place. These were: organising workshops on stress reduction, induction of head teachers on appointment to their position of headship and banning holiday tuition to enable them relax on schools holidays.

4.6.2 Head Teachers Response on Stress Management Strategies

When asked if they had personal stress management strategies, 13 (72.2%) said yes, four (22.2%) said no while one (5.6%) did not answer as shown in figure 4.6:

Figure 4.6: Head teachers with Stress Management Strategies

Stress Management strategies



The strategies mentioned were analysed in table 4.5:

Table 4.5: Analysis of Stress Management Strategies by Head teachers (N=18)

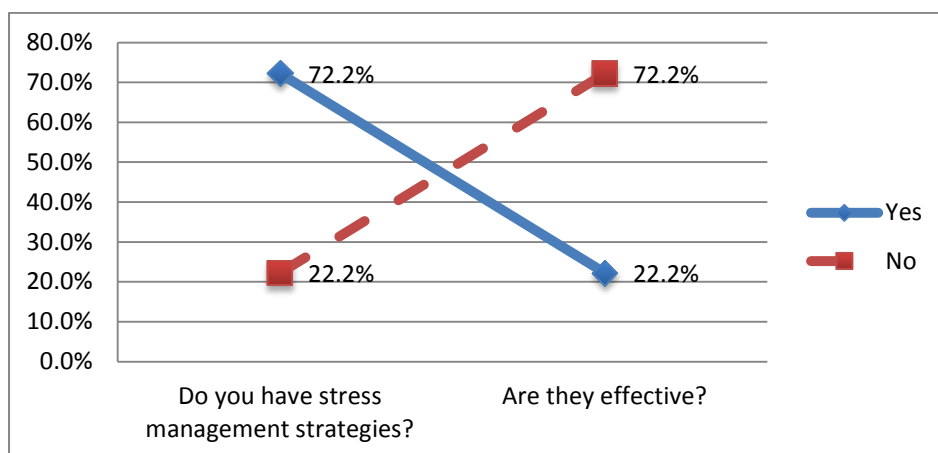
Description of the strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Adequate rest and sleep	6	33.3
Delegation of duties	4	22.2
Physical exercise	4	22.2
Problem identification and resolution on basis of importance	3	16.7
Good work plan	3	16.7
Entertainment	3	16.7
Consultations	2	11.1
Praying and singing	2	11.1

It is important to note, some head teachers mentioned more than one strategy.

Though most head teachers 13 (72.2%) had personal stress management strategies, only four representing 22.2% said the strategies were effective while 13 representing

72.2% said they were not effective. This was a direct opposite of the number that stated they had stress management strategies as compared in the figure 4.7:

Figure 4.7: Analysis of Stress Management Strategies by Head teachers



When asked if they knew any stress reduction interventions put in place by the MOE/TSC to support head teachers in managing stress, 13 (72.2%) said they did not know but four (22.2%) said they knew.

Those who said they knew listed: the annual regional and national conferences, term breaks to allow head teachers to relax, head teachers meetings where they share their problems openly and encourage each other, counselling units and services during the head teachers meetings, trainings/seminars for head teachers on stress management, commendation of good work and advice from the PDE/DEO.

Of these interventions, all the four head teachers (100%) who listed them stated they were not adequate.

4.6.3 Response from HoDs on Stress Management Strategies

They were asked to state some of the coping mechanisms used by the head teachers to reduce stress. The commonly listed were:

- Co-curricular activities e.g. games
- Indulgence in alcohol.

- Delegating duties.
- Counselling services.
- Proper planning.
- Allowing democracy and listening to teachers.
- Prayers and attending church.
- Consulting with PTA/BOG and holding regular staff meetings.
- Looking for other sources of funds and employing BOG teachers.
- Good relationship with suppliers, community and all stakeholders.
- Managing and accounting for funds with well planning and budgeting.
- Open forum with students to air their grievances
- Group support/therapy

4.6.4 Discussion of Stress Management Strategies

According to Levine and Ursin, (1991), when the body is stressed, a non-specific alarm response is generated in the body which elicit a general increase in wakefulness and brain arousal that searches and produces specific responses to deal with the reasons for the alarm.

Different people develop different strategies to mitigate effects of stress. On the Jenkins' Model of Stress Reaction, this stage is called the resistance phase and is characterized by ego defence and problem solving behaviours (Melgosa, 2004).

According to the PDE, there are so many strategies that the head teachers have developed to mitigate the effects

of stress some of which she did not know. Out of 18 head teacher respondents, 13 (72.2%) agreed they had their own mechanisms but four (22.2%) said they had none.

Though 13 (72.2%) of the head teachers stated they had stress mitigating strategies,

only four representing 22.2% said the strategies were effective while 13 representing 72.2% said they were not effective. Willis (2005) explains this when he stated there are many ways of mitigating stress which differ with the kind of stress. The body hormones move to a heightened level as the body adapts to the crisis leading to resistance every time stress triggers the body. The body reacts to each stress situation differently and one mechanism might not be effective in the long run.

The study also revealed that the MOE had designed stress mitigating programs for head teachers which included: workshops on stress reduction, induction of head teachers on appointment to their position of headship and banning holiday tuitions to allow head teachers to relax. However, out of 18 head teachers, only four (22.2%) said they knew the intervention program but 13 (72.2%) said they did not know. Further, the analysis revealed that the four (22.2%) who said they knew the program were inducted on position of headship and they all (100%) did not consider the programmes effective.

HoDs listed several ways that head teachers used to mitigate stress. These strategies are grouped according to Willis (2005) four coping strategies: coping in practice like indulgence in alcohol, physical exercise and counselling services; coping spiritually which involves, prayer, singing and meditation; coping emotionally i.e. emotional closeness, social integration, re-assurance of worth; and coping through relaxation which involves delegating duties, taking time off, sleeping, walking and entertainment.

Different authors stated different ways of mitigating stress as listed by the HoDs and mentioned by the PDE. Kane (1987) enumerates stress reduction strategies as staying away from potentially stressful situations, controlling stress responses, using drugs such as mild tranquilizers and physical exercises. The BBK Business Magazine

(2006), contends that, checking in with the doctor, regular exercise routine, working on time management skills, spending more time with family and friends, developing a leisure activity, eating a balanced diet and setting realistic expectations will ease stress.

Though 72.2% of head teachers have different stress mitigation strategies, the finding revealed that they were not effective. The MOE had also implemented strategies which are not known by many head teachers. Only four (22.2%) of the respondents knew the strategies who further stated they were not effective.

4.7 Suggestions on Stress Mitigation Strategies

The study sought recommendations from the respondents in relation to how head teachers and MOE/TSC should put in place strategies to mitigate the effects of stress among head teachers.

4.7.1 PDEs Suggestions on Stress Mitigation Strategies.

The PDE suggested the MOE/TSC should; organise more stress management workshops, ban tuition in schools, avoid setting high standards and expectations for teachers especially those in low schools and providing the required resources evenly in all the schools based on their needs. As for head teachers, *“Head teachers should learn not to take personal the issues of the school and should relate well with everybody”* said the PDE.

4.7.2 Suggestions from Head teachers

They were asked to suggest other stress reduction strategies that the MOE/TSC should put in place for the head teachers. Their suggestions were:

1. Government to give entertainment allowance for them to relax.
2. Have adequate and balanced staff and be involved in policy formulation.

3. Organise more trainings/capacity building workshops along head teachers' line of duty.
4. Allow teachers to rotate in schools/ regular transfer of Head teachers.
5. Provide adequate funding and avoid grading of schools.
6. Relieve head teachers of class work.

4.7.3 Suggestions from HoDs

Recommendations by respondents under this category to the head teachers included:

- Adopt peaceful resolutions and form a management committee of senior influential teachers.
- Avoid handling issues when annoyed.
- Be transparent, patriotic, upright and honest.
- Attending counselling sessions.
- Delegating duties to the right members of staff.
- Taking time off to unwind.
- Good planning and prioritization.
- Develop the correct work, family and personal balance.
- Engaging parents in managing students discipline.
- Have strong PTA/BOG appointed for effective school management.
- Involve staff, community and students in decision making.
- Further studies and reading widely.
- Head teachers should not teach but concentrate on management duties.
- Attend workshops on stress management.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of research findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations for improvement. The study was guided by the following objectives: to identify the sources of stress among head teachers, determine the levels of stress among head teachers, analyse the effects of stress in relation to tasks performance of head teachers and to establish strategies employed by head teachers to mitigate the effects of stress.

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

This section provides a summary of the research findings based on the objectives of the study.

5.1.1 Sources of stress among head teachers.

Majority of respondents agreed that the position of head teacher was a source of occupational stress to head teachers.

All 18 (100%) head teachers considered stakeholders as source of occupational stress; 16 (88.9%), considered their position of head teacher as a source of occupation stress; and 14 (77.8%) stated their families as source of stress i.e. spouse (16.7%), siblings (5.6%), children (22.2%), parents (5.6%) and the in-laws (5.6%). On the HoDs, 41 (75.9%) out of 54 respondents considered the position of the head teachers as a source of stress.

5.1.2 Levels of stress among head teachers.

The levels of stress reported to be high among head teachers with major contributory factors being cited as administrative duties and stakeholders.

Out of the 16 (88.9%) head teachers who considered their position of headship as a source of stress, two (11.1%) rated as somewhat stressful, six (33.3%) as moderately stressful, five (27.8%) as very stressful and two (11.1%) as extremely stressful. Stake holders were ranked based on their level of stress caused to the head teachers as; politicians (72.4%), students (69.2%), non – teaching staffs (66.1%), BOG (64.6%), parents (63.5%), teaching staff (61.5%), community (56.8%), MOE (55.2%) and the school sponsor at 50.5%.

Administrative responsibilities were ranked as average stressful or very stressful. The average stressful included: teaching and none teaching (44.4%), student personal (44.4%), curriculum and instruction (38.9%), and school community public relations (27.8%), while the very stressful included finance and business (50%) and physical facilities (38.9%). Finance caused the highest stress level among the head teachers.

5.1.3 Effects of stress in relation to tasks performance of head teachers.

Most respondents agreed that stress affected the performance of head teachers and the head teachers stress in turn affected the performance of teachers and the general performance of the school.

Head teachers (83.3%) and HoDs (74.1%) agreed stress affected the head teachers' performance. Further, 37 (68.5%) HoDs stated head teachers stress affected other teachers' performance and 39 (72.2%) HoDs stated it also affected the general school performance. Different effects were listed.

5.1.4 Strategies employed to mitigate effects of stress.

Majority of head teachers reported that they had personal stress management strategies such as delegation of duties, physical exercise and consultations but were not effective. MOE/TSC had stress reduction strategies, only four (22.2%) said they knew it but they were not effective.

Out of 18 head teachers respondents, 13 (72.2%) had personal stress management strategies but only four representing 22.2% ranked the strategies as effective. Though

5.2 Conclusions

This section provides conclusions drawn from the study findings qualified by limited key data from the study findings based on the objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Sources of stress among head teachers.

The study revealed the key sources of stress for the head teachers are: the position of a headship, school stakeholders and the family. All (100%) head teachers stated the stakeholders, 88.9% stated their position of headship and 77.8% stated their families as source of stress. 74% of the HoDs also supported the position of headships as source of stress. Despite the different types of schools, their performance, location and other factors, the study concludes, all head teachers receive stress from their position of headship, stakeholders and their families.

5.2.2 Levels of stress among head teachers.

The study revealed that head teachers perceived their source of stress differently which caused different level of stress from one individual to the other. All the sources of head teachers stress; position of headship, stakeholders and the family were ranked

differently both by the head teacher and the HoDs. It can be concluded from these findings of the study that stress affects head teachers on different level based on a person's biological, psychological and social systems (Galbes, 2002).

5.2.3 Effects of stress in relation to tasks performance of head teachers.

The study revealed the consequences of stress on the head teachers' performance, other teachers' performance and the school in general: 83.3% head teachers' respondents stated stress affected their performance, 68.5% HoDs stated head teachers stress affected other teachers' performance and 72.2% HoDs stated it affected the general school performance. The study concluded, the head teachers stress is linked to a wide range of illnesses which affects the physical, behavioural and emotional states of the head teachers, other teachers and the school in general (Willis, 2005).

5.2.4 Strategies employed to mitigate effects of stress.

According to the study findings, 72.2% of head teachers had different stress mitigation strategies which were not effective. The MOE stress mitigation strategies were not known by the head teachers 22.2% and were not effective. From these findings, it can be concluded that stress management strategies both by the individual head teachers and the MOE/TSC are ineffective and require urgent measures to be taken to sufficiently support head teachers stress management and prevent further physical, behavioural and emotional effects of stress.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Sources of Stress among Head teachers.

The study recommends that the MOE should develop a policy on stress management

to guide the induction, operation and counselling of head teachers in their day to day duties so as to sufficiently support them manage stress and prevent further physical, behavioural and emotional effects of stress.

5.3.2 Levels of Stress among Head teachers.

The Head teachers stress levels should be handled individually since they differ based on the individuals' biological, psychological and social systems.

5.3.3 Effects of Stress in relation to Tasks Performance of Head teachers.

Other teachers need to be inducted on stress management strategies especially HoDs who handle most of the head teachers administrative roles in the absence of the head teacher. Further, teachers need to know how to relate with a stressed head teacher to avoid being the triggers or contributors of stress.

5.3.4 Strategies Employed to Mitigate Effects of Stress.

The MOE should involve the head teachers in designing workable stress management programmes in Counties. Head teachers should also be trained how to develop their own effective stress management strategies to assist in the short term.

5.4. Suggestions for further Research

Further research should be carried out to determine:

- a. The levels of stress of the head teachers in relation to their biological, psychological and social systems.
- b. The long term effects of stress to the head teacher.

- c. The effects of head teachers stress on the academic performance and life of students.
- d. The impact of Stress among Managers in other organisations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Occupational Stress Key Informant Interview for Provincial Director of Education.

Introduction

To the Provincial Director of Education

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: DATA COLLECTION FOR M. ED RESEARCH PROJECT

As part of my M.Ed degree course, I am required to undertake a study on factors contributing to occupational stress among Heads of secondary schools in the larger Kisumu district. I am therefore requesting you to participate in this study. It is important because it will address challenges and mitigatory interventions towards reduction of occupational stress among educational administrators.

The information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for purposes of research only. Your time for short interview will greatly be appreciated.

Thank you in advance for accepting to participate in this study.

Yours truly,

ROSE K. SAGARA

Key Informant Interview

1. How many secondary schools are there in the province?.....
2. How many secondary schools are in the Kisumu district?.....
3. What is the distribution in the larger Kisumu district in terms of:

a). School category

School Category	Number
District	
Provincial	
National	
Total	

b). Number of schools based on gender of students

School Type	Number
Boys Schools	
Girls Schools	
Mixed Schools	

c). Headship by gender

Gender of Head Teacher	Number
Male	
Female	
Total	

4. a) Are there criteria for appointing heads of schools?

Yes [] No []

b) If yes, which ones:

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....

5. Do the Head Teachers undergo induction courses on appointment to headship?

Yes [] No []

a) If the answer is yes, what topics are covered during induction

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....

6. In your view, what are some of the administrative challenges facing Head Teachers in managing schools in the province?

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. a. Do you think Head Teachers in the province experience stress at the work place?

Yes [] No []

b. If yes, what do you think are factors contributing to stress?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. Do you agree that the following influence stress level among Head Teachers?

Age Yes [] No []

Gender Yes [] No []

Experience Yes [] No []

Marital status Yes [] No []

School Characteristics Yes [] No []

9. In your opinion, what are the effects of stress of the Head Teacher on;-

a. His/her performance.....

b. Other teachers performance.....

c. Students performance.....

d. The school in general.....

10. What strategies do Head Teachers employ to mitigate the effects of stress at the work place?

.....
.....
.....
.....

11. a) Has the Ministry of Education designed any programmes and support services towards aiding Head teachers in reduction of stress at the work place?

Yes [] No []

b) If yes, state. If no, why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Any suggestions that can assist

a) The Ministry of Education on stress reduction strategies at the work place?

.....
.....
.....
.....

b) Head Teachers on stress Reduction strategies?

.....

Appendix 2:

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS (TQ)

To the Head Teacher,

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DATA COLLECTION FOR M.ED RESEARCH PROJECT

As part of my M.Ed degree course I am required to undertake a study on factors contributing to stress among head teachers of secondary schools, I am therefore requesting you to participate in this study.

The study is important because it will address challenges and mitigatory interventions towards reduction of occupational stress in education management.

The information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the purposes of research only. You are not required to write your name or the name of your institution on the questionnaire. Please complete the questionnaire and submit by the

Thank you in advance for participating in this study.

Yours truly,

ROSE K. SAGARA

HEAD TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Tick (√) in the appropriate cell

SECTION ONE

Demographic data

1. How old are you?

- a) Below 30 years [] c) 41 – 50 years []
b) 31 – 40 years [] d) 51 – 60 years []

2. Gender

- a) Male [] b) Female []

3. What is your marital status?

- a) Single [] c) Separated [] e) Widowed []
b) Married [] d) Divorced []

4. Professional qualification

- a. Diploma [] c. M.ED []
b. B.ED [] d. Other specify.....

5. What subjects do you teach?

- a)
b)

6. How many lessons do you teach in a week?

- a) 5-10 [] d) 21-25[]
b) 11-15[] e) 26-30[]
c) 16-20[] f) don' teach []

7. How do you categorize your lessons?

- a) Insufficient [] b) Sufficient [] c) Overload? []

8. School type

- a) Day [] b) Boarding [] c) Day and boarding []

9. How many hours do you work on a typical school day?

- a) 0-5 [] c) 11-15 []
b) 6-10 [] d) Others, specify.....

10. At what time do you report for work?

- a) 5am [] b) 6am [] c) 7am []

d) 8am [] e) 9am [] f)Other.....

11. What time do you retire from work?

a) 5pm [] c) 7pm [] e) 9pm []
b) 6pm [] d) 8pm [] f) Other.....

12. How many years have you served in the current position of headship?

a) 0-5 [] c) 11-15 [] e) Others,
b) 6-10 [] d) 16-20 []

13. Were you inducted on appointment to the current position?

Yes [] No []

14. a. Have you undergone managerial/leadership courses since appointment to position of headship?

Yes [] No []

If no, go to Q.15

b. If yes, list.

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

15. How satisfied are you with the terms and conditions of service?

a) Satisfied [] c) Standard []
b) Dissatisfied [] d) Don't know []

16. How do you consider your duties as the head teacher?

a) Little/few [] b) Manageable [] c) Overloaded []

SECTION TWO

Institutional Profile

17. School Category

a) District [] d) Other
b) Provincial [] Specify
c) National []

18. School setting

a) Urban [] c) Slum []
b) Rural [] d) Urban slum []

19. Gender of Students

a) Boys [] b) Girls [] c) Mixed []

20. Number of students in the school

- a) Below 100 [] c) 200-300 [] e) 400-500 []
 b) 100-200 [] d) 300-400 [] f) 500 and above []

21. What is the current staff establishment (teaching and non teaching)?

- a) Below 10 [] d) 21-25 [] g) Others, specify...
 b) 10-15 [] e) 26-30 []
 c) 16-20 [] f) 31-35 []

22. Provide information on the KCSE mean grade for the last 5 years.

- 2005 [] 2007 [] 2009 []
 2006 [] 2008 []

SECTION THREE

Sources of occupational stress

23. In general, do you consider the position of head teacher a source of occupational stress?

- Yes [] No []

If no, go to Q.25

24. If yes, use the scale below to rate your level of stress.

- a) Somewhat Stressful [] c) Very Stressful []
 b) Moderately Stressful [] d) Extremely Stressful []

25. To what extent do you find the following factors affecting your administrative task as the head teacher?

Demographic Factors	Not at All	Somewhat	Moderately	Very Much	Excessively
Age					
Gender					
Marital Status					
Professional Qualifications					
Administrative Experience					
Denomination					

26. Do you consider stakeholders a contributory factor to occupational stress?

Yes [] No []

If no, go to Q 28.

27. Rank the following stakeholders according to the perceived stress levels they cause. Use scale 1- 10 (numerical numbers) with 1 being the highest stressor and 10 the lowest stressor.

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|
| a) Parents | [] | f) B.O.G | [] |
| b) Politicians | [] | g) Teaching Staff | [] |
| c) Students | [] | h) Non-teaching Staff | [] |
| d) Sponsor | [] | i) Parents | [] |
| e) MOE officials | [] | j) Community Members. | [] |

28. The table contains a list of administrative tasks for a head teacher. How great a source of stress are the tasks to you? Tick (√) the cell that corresponds to your stress level.

Administrative Task Area	Not at all Stressful	Least Stressful	Average Stressful	Very Stressful	Extremely Stressful
Curriculum and Instruction Management					
Teaching and non teaching staff management					
Finance and business management					
Student personal management					
Physical facilities management					
School community public relations management					

29. a. Are there occasions when you experience stress from the family front?

Yes [] No []

If no, skip to Q 30.

b. If yes, indicate who stresses you most times

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----|--------------------|-------|
| (a) Spouse | [] | (d) Siblings | [] |
| (b) Children | [] | (e) Parents | [] |
| (c) In- Laws | [] | (f) Others(Specif) | |

c. Do family experiences affect your job performance?

Yes [] No []

30. Does Stress affects your performance as the head teacher?

Yes [] No []

If no, skip to Q 31.

31. In your opinion, what are the effects of stress to your performance as the Head teacher?

.....
.....

32. Is personal stress management strategy important?

Yes [] No []

33. i. Do you have personal stress management strategies?

Yes [] No []

If no skip to the next question

ii. If yes, state them

.....
.....

34. In your opinion, are they adequate?

Yes [] No []

35. a. Do you know any stress reduction interventions put in place by the MOE/ TSC to support head teachers in managing stress?

Yes [] No []

If no, go to Q. 36

b. If yes, list four:

.....
.....
.....

c. Do you consider these interventions adequate?

Yes [] No []

36. Suggest other stress reduction strategies that the MOE/TSC should put in place to mitigate the effects of stress among head teachers.

.....

Appendix 3:

**OCCUPATIONAL STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE HEADS OF
DEPARTMENT.**

To the H.o.D

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DATA COLLECTION FOR M.ED RESEARCH PROJECT

As part of my above named cause, I'm required to undertake a study on factors contributing to stress among Heads of secondary Schools. I'm therefore requesting you to participate in this study.

The study is important because it will address challenges and mitigatory interventions towards reduction of occupational stress in education management.

The information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the purposes of research only. **Do not write your name or the name of your institution.** Please complete the attached questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for participating in this study.

Yours affectionately,

Rose K. Sagara

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR H.o.D

Instruction: Tick (✓) in the appropriate cell

1).What is your age

- a) Below 30 years []
- b) 30-40 years []
- c) 41-50 years []
- d) 51-60 years []

2). Gender Male [] Female []

3). Professional Qualifications

- a) Diploma []
- b) B. Ed []
- c) M. Ed []
- d) Others, Specify.....

5). What is your teaching experience?

6). Which department do you head?

7) Type of School,

- a) Boys school []
- b) Girls school []
- c) Mixed school []

8) In your opinion, which of the above school type is difficult to administer?

- a) Boys school []
- b) Girls school []
- c) Mixed school []

9) a. In your opinion, do you think the position of the head teacher is a source of occupational stress?

- Yes []
- No []

b. If yes, state the major factors that contribute to stress among head teachers.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

10) What is your take on the duties of the head teachers?

- a) Little/Few []
- b) Manageable []
- c) Overloaded []

11). The following table contains administrative responsibilities and other related issues in schools that can cause stress. Tick (✓) the appropriate cell based on the level of stress it causes to you.

	Most stressful	Stressful	Average	Least stressful	Not stressful
1. Student discipline					
2. Teaching Work load					
3. Student attitude to academic work					
4. School Inspection					
5. Preparation of professional records and Books of Accounts					
6. Responsibility for students performance					
7. Payment of Fees (Boarding and Lunch Program)					
8. Administration of KCSE Examination					
9. Inadequate teaching staff					
10. Disbursement of FSE funds					
11. Relationship with BOG/Sponsor					
12. Relationship with academic and non academic staff					
13. Unwarranted transfers					

14. Relationship with community					
15. Intimidation/ harassment by Seniors					
16. Discrimination (Tribalism, Gender, Faith, Nepotism). Tick (✓) applicable ones					
17. Audit of books of accounts and Responding to Audit Queries					
18. Inadequate facilities (Staff house, tuition and boarding facilities).Tick (✓) applicable ones.					
19. Coordination of co-curricular activities					

12. List other factors that can contribute to stress and are not captured in the table above:

- a) _____ c) _____
 b) _____ d) _____

13. Based on your line of duty in your school and others,

a. Does the head teachers stress factors affects his/her performance?

Yes [] No []

If no go to part b

If yes, state briefly how.....
.....
.....
.....

b. Does it affect other teacher's performance?

Yes [] No []

If no go to part C of the question

If yes, briefly outline how.....
.....
.....

c. Do you agree that it also affects the school performance?

Agree [] Disagree []

If agreeing, state how.
.....
.....
.....

14. State some of the coping mechanisms used by the H/Ts to reduce stress?

.....
.....
.....

15. Suggest three other ways that can help head teachers in reducing stress.

- i.....
.....
- ii.....
.....
- iii.....
.....

APPENDIX 4

A MAP OF KISUMU COUNTY

