



Investigating the coping strategies utilised by secondary school managers to manage significant negative emotions through emotional intelligence – A Case Study of Secondary School Managers in Lejweleputswa District

Amanda Naidoo¹ , Mlungisi Patrick Nohako²  & Matsolo Mokhampanyane² 

¹. Department of Government Management, Central University of Technology, Welkom, South Africa.

². Language and Social Science Education, Central University of Technology, Welkom, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

This empirical paper examined the significant negative emotions experienced by secondary school managers and the application of emotional intelligence in this context. This paper explored the emotional experiences of secondary school managers as they navigate complex feelings and emotions. The school environment is a highly emotional and stressful setting. Managers must manage their emotions when addressing challenging teachers and coordinating various activities within a limited timeframe. The paper is grounded in critical emancipatory research theory, which advocates for social justice, equality, freedom, and labour peace. This paper is qualitative. Ten participants from two schools in the Lejweleputswa Education District in the Free State, South Africa, including five school managers, four teachers, and one senior subject specialist, were interviewed face-to-face. The face-to-face interview method was employed to explore the significant feelings experienced by secondary school managers when dealing with daily stress and to understand how they manage these emotions. The study found that school managers lack knowledge of emotional regulation, which frustrates them in their daily work, and they are not emotionally intelligent. The sample size consisted of only two schools within the educational district, and the generalisability of the results was limited. The study's results and findings might have considerably varied with an increased sample size. The study suggests that managers and leaders must be trained to regulate negative emotions and that training programmes must be implemented to improve the social skill of self-regulation. This paper adds to existing literature on enhancing emotional intelligence among school managers in South African secondary schools.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Critical Emancipatory Research, School Managers, Negative Emotions, Self-Regulation.

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic and often challenging environment of secondary education, school managers frequently encounter emotionally intense situations that test their resilience and leadership skills. These challenges

CORRESPONDENCE – Matsolo Mokhampanyane Email: mmokhamp@cut.ac.za

PUBLICATION HISTORY - Received : 11th July, 2025 | Accepted: 18th February, 2026 | Published: 23rd April, 2026.

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE – Naidoo, Amanda, Mlungisi Patrick Nohako, and Matsolo Mokhampanyane. "Investigating the coping strategies utilised by secondary school managers to manage significant negative emotions through emotional intelligence – A Case Study of Secondary School Managers in Lejweleputswa District." *Journal of Education and Learning Technology* 7, no.3 (2026): 299 -310. <https://doi.org/10.38159/jelt.2026737>

COPYRIGHT AND LICENSING - © 2026 The Author(s). Published and Maintained by Noyam Journals.
This is an open access article under the CCBY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

may contribute to a negative psychological, physical, and social work environment for managers.¹ Due to the complex environment in which secondary school managers operate, they must manage administrative duties, staff relationships, students' welfare, and policy requirements. Nwoko et al. argue that workload and maintaining a balance between professional and personal life are critical factors that influence the well-being of teachers or managers within the basic education environment.² These often exert pressure that frequently causes significant negative emotions, such as stress, frustration, and anxiety. In some instances, that is why other people regard teaching as one of the most stressful professions compared to other occupations, and secondary school managers face a challenging position. The study is influenced by emotional challenges experienced by secondary school managers. Several studies have investigated the impact of daily stressors on negative emotions and the role of emotional intelligence in mitigating these feelings.³ Generally, school managers who cannot master emotional stressors end up suffering emotionally, and some fall into a state of depression and anxiety.⁴ There is a lack of professional development opportunities that focus on emotional intelligence. There is limited empirical evidence of workshops organised by the Department of Basic Education as the sole stakeholders in education within the district where the study was conducted, aimed at promoting emotional intelligence as a strategy to help school managers cope with daily stressors.

The study examined the coping strategies employed by secondary school managers and encouraged the development of such programs based on the needs identified by participants. The findings are presented in subsequent sections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Goleman and Solovai developed and coined the theory of Emotional Intelligence (EI), but some researchers paved the way for further development of EI based on their foundation. The workplace was traditionally regarded as a cold and cognitive environment, but recent studies indicate that emotions are the antithesis of rationality.⁵ Recent studies suggest that emotions play a crucial role in occupational success and achievement, as noted by Urquijo et al.⁶ Sheppard and Levy assert that emotions play a crucial role in the decision-making process of school managers, as they influence their thinking and can have a positive or negative impact on their perspective.⁷

Gómez-Leal et al. affirm that there is an extensive body of literature on the prevalence of negative emotions, highlighting a compelling need to develop strategies for improving the emotional intelligence of secondary school managers.⁸ This study specifically focuses on the relationship between negative emotions and EI. Many researchers in the field of EI agree that it can be taught because it is a learnt behaviour, as stated by a school manager. EI can be developed, as confirmed by Kovalchuk et al.⁹ Stress and emotions are interconnected; where there are negative emotions such as anger, stress is also present, as asserted by Uchida et al.¹⁰

There is limited empirical evidence on structured learning programmes, but a body of data exists from published papers on the impact of EI in the workplace. Caruso and Wolfe noted that many studies

¹ Patrick Bruce et al., "Staff Stress and Interpersonal Conflict in Secondary Schools—Implications for School Leadership," *Societies* 12, no. 6 (2022): 186.

² Joy C Nwoko et al., "Navigating Teachers' Occupational Well-Being in the Tides of Classroom Processes and School Structures," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 11 (2024): 1225.

³ Rosanna G Lea et al., "Does Emotional Intelligence Buffer the Effects of Acute Stress? A Systematic Review," *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (2019): 810.

⁴ Julia Mahfouz, "Principals and Stress: Few Coping Strategies for Abundant Stressors," *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 48, no. 3 (2020): 440–58.

⁵ Åsa Wettergren, "Emotive-Cognitive Rationality, Background Emotions and Emotion Work," in *Emotions in Late Modernity* (Routledge, 2019), 27–40.

⁶ Itziar Urquijo, Natalio Extremera, and Garazi Azanza, "The Contribution of Emotional Intelligence to Career Success: Beyond Personality Traits," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 16, no. 23 (2019): 4809.

⁷ Maia Sheppard and Sara A Levy, "Emotions and Teacher Decision-Making: An Analysis of Social Studies Teachers' Perspectives," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 77 (2019): 193–203.

⁸ Raquel Gómez-Leal et al., "The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in School Leaders: A Systematic Review," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 52, no. 1 (2022): 1–21.

⁹ Vasyi Kovalchuk et al., "Development of Emotional Intelligence of Future Teachers of Professional Training," 2022.

¹⁰ Yukiko Uchida, Masataka Nakayama, and Kimberly S Bowen, "Interdependence of Emotion: Conceptualization, Evidence, and Social Implications from Cultural Psychology," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 31, no. 5 (2022): 451–56.

have highlighted the need to develop workshops for teachers and school managers, but lack guidance on how to run these learning programmes.¹¹ In this study, the negative emotions of anger, conflict, anxiety, and frustration, as experienced by participants, drive the development of strategies, as stated by Yazdi et al.¹²

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Emancipatory Research

The study employed a critical emancipatory research (CER) framework to enhance the emotional intelligence of secondary school managers. This theory is attributed to Kurt Lewin, a German-born American social psychologist. It is based on the assumption that power relations are discursive, meaning power is exercised through language and discourse.¹³ This theory was chosen because the approach used in this study is emancipatory. A transformative paradigm serves as the lens through which this study is guided. In this perspective, Kivunja and Kuyini argue that political, social, and economic oppression must be addressed.¹⁴ The study aims to confront and transform political, social, and economic conflicts and oppression. The epistemological, ontological, and axiological positions must be transformative for participants, with deliberate efforts to promote their rights. Secondary school managers have rights that must be safeguarded by all who play a material role in managing secondary schools. The values of democracy, equality, peace, freedom, and social justice are essential tools to combat marginalisation and all forms of inequality. This theory was selected because it offers a platform for voiceless individuals to express concerns and seek sustainable solutions to their problems. It is relevant to the study because secondary school managers can voice their challenges and endorse the recommendations since they generate the suggestions.

METHODOLOGY

In the study, a qualitative method was employed because the researchers were interested in the presentation of knowledge and experience of reality as perceived by the participants, and how they use language to convey their beliefs and assumptions. The study was situated within the transformative paradigm, a qualitative approach that focuses on creating new knowledge and critically reflecting on what is learnt to inform political, social, and economic change. The study included a sample of 10 participants from two schools in the Lejweleputswa district, as well as one subject specialist from the district office. The participants were purposefully chosen because we aimed to gather first-hand information about daily emotional challenges to explore the emotional intelligence of secondary school managers. The participants matched the age, gender, and experience categories considered when selecting these participants.

The data was analysed using thematic analysis, offering suggestions to consider when transcribing the data. The analytic process comprised six phases: data familiarisation, initial code generation, theme development, theme review, defining and naming themes, and report writing. During data familiarisation, we immersed ourselves in the data to grasp its depth and breadth. The researcher diligently searched for patterns, allowing meaning to emerge. The researchers began transcribing audio and data, reading and re-reading datasets, and making notes. They started with initial code generation, a stage involving creating preliminary codes to organise the data, giving equal attention to each item. This was followed by labelling and categorising data items into meaningful groups. The third stage involved generating themes by grouping codes into initial themes and exploring the meanings and relationships between them. The fourth stage, theme review, involved identifying coherent patterns within the coded data. The fifth stage, defining and naming, aimed to align the broader narrative of the

¹¹ David R Caruso and Charles J Wolfe, "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Development," in *Leader Development for Transforming Organizations* (Psychology Press, 2004), 237–63.

¹² Mohammad Hossein Yazdi, A. Mahrooghi, and O. Zarandi, "Enhancing the Performance of Solar Tower Power Plants Using an Auxiliary Heat Source," *Journal of Engineering & Technological Advances* 9, no. 1 (July 29, 2024): 75–89, <https://doi.org/10.35934/segi.v9i1.110>.

¹³ Dube Bekithemba and Dipane Hlalele, "Revisiting Critical Emancipatory Research in School Violence Narratives. A Quest for Safe School. *Educational Research for Social Change*, 8(4), 74-86," October 31, 2018.

¹⁴ Charles Kivunja and Ahmed Bawa Kuyini, "Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts," *International Journal of Higher Education* 6, no. 5 (September 5, 2017): 26, <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>.

data with the research questions. Finally, the report was produced by composing a clear argument that addresses these questions. The procedures outlined above were adapted from Campbell et al.¹⁵

After the data was written off, it was returned to the participants for verification, and they were asked to confirm that their responses were accurately recorded and their views correctly interpreted. The participants expressed satisfaction with how their ideas were used to form themes. Themes followed the set of questions, and responses shaped sub-themes. This step was crucial in ensuring the validity of the research. The following sections present the findings that address the research questions. Codes are used to conceal the real names of participants. The findings below and the themes that emerged from the following research question: What are the daily emotional challenges experienced by secondary school managers? What are the strategies to improve the emotional intelligence of secondary school managers? The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the study or its procedures. The permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Department of Basic Education, the university where it was conducted, and the school principals of the participating schools. The participants were informed that their contributions to the study would be used solely for research purposes. Consent was obtained from all participants.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Negative emotion of frustration

The CER theory supports research on respect, equity, human dignity, and social justice. Participants were able to express themselves freely during face-to-face interviews. Frustrations arise from the overwhelming workload, including curriculum management were freely discussed during the meeting. The PAM document details the job description of school managers, covering teaching, extracurricular activities, administrative, and communication duties. School managers must oversee both the curriculum in their own classes and the curriculum provided by the teachers they supervise. This was cited by the school manager of school A, who lamented:

“I feel so frustrated when I look at the amount of work I must do and the time allocated for me, and I cannot finish the curriculum and execute my other general and administrative duties...”

This emotion of frustration is supported by a female educator from the same school, who added:

“What frustrates me the most are the colleagues and teachers that I am working with because there are those that will be expecting me to do things the way they would normally do back then, forgetting that the learners are not the same and that we are not teaching the same generation. So the experiences of a thirty-year-old teacher are not the same as the experiences of teachers who have been in the field for many years.”

The school manager of School B echoed the frustrations as follows:

“There are other frustrations brought by the system we are working under, like other things are happening now, but we cannot solve them now, especially things like load-shedding.”

The principal of school A cited learning barriers as one of the frustrations for teachers and managers who must complete a curriculum that does not cater to certain special types of learners. Sometimes, it becomes difficult when the secondary school discovers a child with special needs after primary school. The norm is to identify learners at the primary school and place them in special schools, or the secondary school should be capacitated to deal with such exceptional cases.

“Learners have several barriers, like reading and writing, which bring too much stress and frustration to school managers and teachers alike.”

Curriculum management presents many emotional challenges that require individuals to possess or exercise EI, because curriculum management is the core responsibility of school managers, and

¹⁵ Finlay Campbell et al., “Increased Transmissibility and Global Spread of SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern as at June 2021,” *Eurosurveillance* 26, no. 24 (June 17, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.24.2100509>.

teachers are expected to assist in accomplishing such a monumental task. Karibeeran and Mohanty note that Goleman emphasises the importance of EI as a social skill.¹⁶ Gunning et al. emphasise that EI is crucial for understanding other psychological challenges faced by school managers.¹⁷ Humphrey further states that when managing these challenges, EI becomes vital because it helps school managers demonstrate professionalism. They will handle primary school managers professionally.¹⁸ However, it is frustrating to see learners with learning barriers at the secondary level when they should have been identified in primary school. Secondary managers are involved in curriculum management, which is demanding and requires managers with high EI. Cardno explains that curriculum management is essential in learning, including subject content.¹⁹ Kydd et al. support this view by defining school curriculum management as the techniques or methods used by the school to acquire, consolidate, support, understand, construct, and value the endorsed curriculum within the classroom's setting and constraints, which are then implemented.²⁰

Curriculum delivery and implementation require managers and teachers with high EI. That is why school managers often feel frustrated when managing the curriculum. The decisions that need to be made are not free from feelings of frustration and burnout.²¹ Secondary school managers need to experience high levels of job performance and job satisfaction, and this sense of frustration must be addressed by school managers who possess high EI. This situation occurs daily, with emotions involved in all decisions. Maintaining interpersonal relationships is essential. Karibeeran, and Mohanty emphasise the importance of EI as a social skill, enabling school managers to self-regulate their emotions.²² A teacher from school B also shed some light by saying:

“Emotional intelligence is being able to deal accordingly and in a civilised manner with matters that challenge your emotional state.”

In their recent study on frustration, Jeronimus and Laceulle conclude that each person's experience of frustration can have significant life outcomes that shape our social environment, well-being, and, most critically, the occupational function of school managers and teachers.²³

Regulation of negative emotions of anxiety

School managers experience anxiety, and they need a high level of EI to manage the situation better and achieve high job performance and job satisfaction. School managers work in a highly stressful environment, but the significant feelings of these conditions can be grouped, and one of the major feelings is anxiety.

A participant in school A commented that:

“When working under pressure, I feel stressed and experience some level of anxiety.”

Another teacher agreed with the views of the principal by saying:

“I feel anxious when I cannot finish the ATP (Annual Teaching Plan) because I have to work on the skills of these learners.”

A school manager in school B echoed the same feelings of anxiety when dealing with curriculum management.

¹⁶ Sathyamurthi Karibeeran and Shefali Mohanty, “Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents,” 2019.

¹⁷ Ciara Gunning et al., “A Systematic Review of Generalization and Maintenance Outcomes of Social Skills Intervention for Preschool Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder,” *Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 6, no.2(2019):172–99.

¹⁸ Nicole M Humphrey, “Emotional Labor and Professionalism: Finding Balance at the Local Level,” *State and Local Government Review* 53, no. 3 (2021): 260–70.

¹⁹ Carol Cardno, “Policy Document Analysis: A Practical Educational Leadership Tool and a Qualitative Research Method.,” *Educational Administration: Theory & Practice* 24, no. 4 (2018): 623–40.

²⁰ Andrew Kydd, “Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation,” *International Organization* 54, no. 2 (July 9, 2000): 325–57, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551190>.

²¹ Jessica Nápoles, “Burnout: A Review of the Literature,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 40,no.2(2022):19–26.

²² Karibeeran and Mohanty, “Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents.”

²³ Bertus F Jeronimus and Odilia M Laceulle, “Frustration,” in *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (Springer, 2020), 1680–83.

“.....when I see learners not interested in their schoolwork, I become anxious when I think about results.”

These conditions emotionally and physically strain school managers because they are central to their role, particularly curriculum management, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Anxiety is an unavoidable feeling for managers and has a direct impact on their job performance.²⁴ Managers must utilise EI as a tool to improve their performance. Secondary school managers need innovative methods to achieve job satisfaction. Face-to-face interviews, conducted through the perspective of CER and grounded in the values of peace, freedom, equality, fairness, and social justice, enabled participants to express their anxiety. School managers should be supported in self-regulating their anxiety and experiencing freedom in their managerial duties.²⁵ Peer support was identified as a factor that could enhance peace and freedom among staff members during face-to-face interviews.²⁶

Dealing with feelings of sadness

The teacher mentioned a spectrum of challenges, but she added that some of the frustrations are caused by different teaching methods and ways of doing things. A schoolteacher from School A echoed the feelings of sadness when she shared her experiences.

“Our stress is not only caused by learners, but the teachers also contribute.... Teachers who do not adhere to due dates in terms of submission are not adhering to the ATP... sometimes get emotional because they go to the teacher to explain why he has not done their duties. The teacher gives an attitude, and they feel undermined by that..... Furthermore, this gives me a feeling of sadness.”

School managers, especially departmental heads, must occasionally fill in for teachers who are temporarily absent to cover the curriculum, ensuring that learners do not fall behind with their schoolwork. The school manager of School B lamented:

“At times, became a substitute teacherand I take someone else’s responsibility, and I feel so sad.”

The manager of School A clearly shows sadness as part of daily life. As managers experience these feelings, they often experience burnout; however, self-control is a valuable attribute that enhances their strength.

“... When learners do not respond positively to their work.”

He further added by saying.

“I feel sad and bad if I cannot work under pressure.”

From the responses of the participants, it is evident that school managers and teachers require high EI when managing daily responsibilities and making crucial decisions. High cognitive ability alone will not enable school managers to perform effectively if they lack high EI. They must have strong EI to handle various emotional situations. Strategies such as positive self-talk and positive thinking, which are components of emotional intelligence, can be employed by school managers as effective coping mechanisms.²⁷

²⁴ Jana Prodanova and Ljupco Kocarev, “Is Job Performance Conditioned by Work-from-Home Demands and Resources?,” *Technology in Society* 66 (2021): 101672.

²⁵ Izhar Oplatka and Dor Oren, “The Emotion of Fear among Schoolteachers: Sources and Coping Strategies,” *Educational Studies* 46, no. 1 (2020): 92–105.

²⁶ Neil Greenberg et al., “Managing Mental Health Challenges Faced by Healthcare Workers during Covid-19 Pandemic,” *Bmj* 368 (2020).

²⁷ Oplatka and Oren, “The Emotion of Fear among Schoolteachers: Sources and Coping Strategies.”

Dealing with a negative emotion of anger

School managers and teachers become angry at the system and education officials when they make unfair and unachievable demands. Curriculum management can only occur under certain favourable conditions for school managers and the environment. When school managers and teachers feel that the school environment does not facilitate the delivery of the school curriculum and its effective management, they become frustrated.

The principal of school A cited these conditions that made him angry.

“Sometimes the school must come out early due to water shortage.”

He further said:

“The load-shedding is affecting the teachers and us, and I become so angry.”

The senior subject specialist explained this, that is how he puts it:

“.....Additionally, the pressure to provide guidance and support to teachers and learners adds an extra layer of stress to my already busy schedule.”

The above scenario shows that certain contextual factors are beyond what school managers can handle, and high EI is needed as much as IQ to solve these challenges. Job performance is, to a greater extent, dependent on the ability of the school managers to handle the situation. Excessive anger can negatively impact a person's physical well-being and increase the risk of certain diseases. School managers need to possess a high dose of EI. Evaluating situations rationally and systematically can help school managers eliminate high levels of anger. Factors that cannot be changed will be rationally accepted and isolated from those that can be changed, which is a clear sign of high EI. Managers who make a proper assessment of potential aggression are those who have a high level of EI.²⁸

In addition, when managers engage in strategic planning, they should mitigate against contextual factors that have the potential to cause anger. They should have strategies for things like load shedding and other contextual factors, like a shortage of running water. The school manager of School B made the following suggestion for dealing with negative emotions:

“At times, it is difficult because things happen unexpectedly, but when confronted with issues that need to make decisions, I know how to control my emotions.”

The above shows the importance of self-regulation as one of the elements of emotional intelligence. Self-regulation enables school managers to work effectively under pressure and plan for challenging situations. EI is a social skill that makes one act professionally in challenging situations. As suggested by the school manager from school B, the ability to self-regulate must be used to formulate and develop training material for workshops and increase the EI of managers across various managerial roles. Managers in different industries experience negative emotions, so further research can be conducted to develop the framework for EI in different managerial roles.²⁹ The themes below emanated from the responses to the second question of the study. Those themes emanated from the second research question.

Strategies to improve the emotional intelligence of secondary school managers

The data collected and interpreted suggest the following strategies, as suggested by the participants. These strategies are not exhaustive because the recommendations were from a limited number of participants, some of whom are experts in the field of EI. Nevertheless, the contributions of these participants provided an informed perspective and recommended addressing these challenges.

²⁸ Franziska Neumann, “Antecedents and Effects of Emotions in Strategic Decision-Making: A Literature Review and Conceptual Model,” *Management Review Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2017): 175–200.

²⁹ Alkis Thrassou et al., “Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Negative Emotions in Intercultural Service Encounters: Building and Utilizing Knowledge in the Banking Sector,” *European Business Review* 32, no. 3 (2020): 359–81.

Peer collaboration

Peer Collaboration is regarded as one of the strategies that participants raised as a means to help them overcome the challenges they face. This is what a manager in School B suggested as a strategy to manage personal emotions.

“When I am frustrated, I talk to colleagues who are managers from other schools. It is good to have someone you can share your frustration with”.

Chen et al. demonstrate that managers utilise peer collaboration to manage pressure and stressful situations.³⁰ As they shared their experiences with their peers, managers could reflect on and refine their responses for future encounters. Peer collaboration was further supported by De Villa et al., who found gaps between managers.³¹ Still, as they continue collaborating, they learn from each other and improve their EI. The second strategy was self-awareness and self-regulation.

Self-awareness and self-regulation

Self-awareness and self-regulation are among the strategies that participants shared. The manager from school B said:

“When I am overwhelmed, I go to my office and cry and let the pain out, and then after that, I put on a brave face and face the challenges that are before me. I do not allow myself to cry in front of my juniors....”

In support of the view, the Principal from school A said:

“Education for us to understand and manage ways in which we deal with our emotions, as that directly influences how we interact with staff, students, and parents. It would be better for us even to be aware of the signs.”

Participants were of the view that education and being made aware of the crisis in their work environment would be of great help. According to Younas et al., self-aware managers can control their emotions and act intelligently in most situations.³² This suggests that if school managers are aware of their emotional state, they can develop a strategy to deal with emotions that compromise their responsibilities. Manning-Geist attests that self-awareness is an adaptive coping mechanism that reduces stress and burnout.³³ This strategy is further supported by Pretorius et al., who confirm that self-aware managers can drastically reduce their stress levels and improve productivity output.³⁴ The third strategy was regular workshops.

Regular workshops

Regular workshops are one of the pivotal strategies suggested by participants.

The teacher from school A said:

“The Department of Education can help us by conducting regular workshops on coping with workplace stress.”

In support, another participant from School B stated the following.

“I think coping mechanisms workshops can assist us, even if it can be quarterly.”

³⁰ Helen X Chen, Xuemei Xu, and Patrick Phillips, “Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Styles,” *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 27, no. 3 (2019): 458–70.

³¹ Jennilou A De Villa and Franz Kevin B Manalo, “Secondary Teachers’ Preparation, Challenges, and Coping Mechanism in the Pre-Implementation of Distance Learning in the New Normal,” *IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 2, no. 3 (2020): 144–54.

³² Ahtisham Younas et al., “Role and Application of Self-awareness in Managerial Practice: A Qualitative Study of Nurse Managers,” *Journal of Nursing Management* 29, no. 4 (2021): 785–93.

³³ Beryl Manning-Geist et al., “Pre-Clinical Stress Management Workshops Increase Medical Students’ Knowledge and Self-Awareness of Coping with Stress,” *Medical Science Educator* 30, no. 1 (2020): 235–41.

³⁴ Anton Pretorius and Bernadictus O’Brain Plaatjies, “Self-Awareness as a Key Emotional Intelligent Skill for Secondary School Principals’ Leadership Toolkit,” *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 5, no. 2 (2023): 52–74.

Participants were of the view that coping strategies, such as workshops, can help them improve their stressful situation. Participants' views are supported by Almoradie et al., who propose having regular workshops for focused groups who must deal with emotional challenges in the workplace.³⁵ These workshops can help school administrators manage emotional challenges. Brooks et al. call these workshops coping workshops, providing managers with tools to improve their EI.³⁶ Cahill and Morris further state that managers will find solutions to their unique challenges as they interact in these workshops.³⁷ These strategies provide a solid base where secondary school managers build high EI.

Discussion Summary

The primary conclusion is that various stressors in the school environment evoke negative emotions among school managers. The negative impacts of these stressors must be further explored, while the Department of Education should focus on developing coping strategies for school managers. It is not enough to rely solely on the school manager's self-development, as some may not be aware of the effects of negative emotions. Organisations' EI of managers can be developed in line with the values of CER and a transformative perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations have been made. It is recommended that the Department of Basic Education develop a framework for improving the EI of secondary school managers and produce guidelines on how they can better deal with stressful conditions. Secondary school managers should also be engaged in strategic planning and focus on ways to mitigate contextual factors that promote negative emotions and high-stress levels. The Department of Basic Education is encouraged to invest in the well-being of its secondary school managers by conducting workshops on EI. The study further encourages basic education through its systems, recognising the efforts of individual secondary school managers on self-development and supporting school managers by creating support groups for school managers on mental health and other factors. It also recommends that all education stakeholders cultivate a culture of positive thinking and speaking, particularly during routine meetings.

CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the significant negative emotions experienced by secondary school managers, including frustration, anxiety, sadness, and anger, primarily due to curriculum management, workload, and contextual challenges. Key findings include a lack of Emotional Regulation. School managers often lack knowledge of emotional regulation, which can lead to frustration and burnout. Emotional intelligence is crucial for managing negative emotions, improving job performance, and achieving job satisfaction. The study recommends the development of a framework. A framework should be created for improving emotional intelligence among secondary school managers by key stakeholders. School Management Boards must invest in the well-being of their managers. They must offer workshops and support groups to enhance the well-being of managers. These strategies will encourage a culture of positive thinking and speaking among education stakeholders, leading to efficient and effective performance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Almoradie, Adrian, Mariana Madruga De Brito, Mariele Evers, Aymar Bossa, Mawuli Lumor, Charlotte Norman, Yira Yacouba, and Jean Hounkpe. "Current Flood Risk Management Practices in Ghana: Gaps and Opportunities for Improving Resilience." *Journal of Flood Risk*

³⁵ Adrian Almoradie et al., "Current Flood Risk Management Practices in Ghana: Gaps and Opportunities for Improving Resilience," *Journal of Flood Risk Management* 13, no. 4 (2020): e12664.

³⁶ Samantha K Brooks, G James Rubin, and Neil Greenberg, "Traumatic Stress within Disaster-Exposed Occupations: Overview of the Literature and Suggestions for the Management of Traumatic Stress in the Workplace," *British Medical Bulletin* 129, no. 1 (2019): 25–34.

³⁷ Niamh Cahill and Dearbháile Morris, "Recreational Waters – A Potential Transmission Route for SARS-CoV-2 to Humans?," *Science of The Total Environment* 740 (October 2020): 140122, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.140122>.

Management 13, no. 4 (2020): e12664.

- Bekithemba, Dube, and Dipane Hlalele. "Revisiting Critical Emancipatory Research in School Violence Narratives. A Quest for Safe School. Educational Research for Social Change, 8(4), 74-86," October 31, 2018.
- Brooks, Samantha K, G James Rubin, and Neil Greenberg. "Traumatic Stress within Disaster-Exposed Occupations: Overview of the Literature and Suggestions for the Management of Traumatic Stress in the Workplace." *British Medical Bulletin* 129, no. 1 (2019): 25–34.
- Bruce, Patrick, Carol Bruce, Victor Hrymak, Niamh Hickey, and Patricia Mannix McNamara. "Staff Stress and Interpersonal Conflict in Secondary Schools—Implications for School Leadership." *Societies* 12, no. 6 (2022): 186.
- Cahill, Niamh, and Dearbháile Morris. "Recreational Waters – A Potential Transmission Route for SARS-CoV-2 to Humans?" *Science of The Total Environment* 740 (October 2020): 140122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.140122>.
- Campbell, Finlay, Brett Archer, Henry Laurensen-Schafer, Yuka Jinnai, Franck Konings, Neale Batra, Boris Pavlin, et al. "Increased Transmissibility and Global Spread of SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern as at June 2021." *Eurosurveillance* 26, no. 24 (June 17, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.24.2100509>.
- Cardno, Carol. "Policy Document Analysis: A Practical Educational Leadership Tool and a Qualitative Research Method." *Educational Administration: Theory & Practice* 24, no. 4 (2018): 623–40.
- Caruso, David R, and Charles J Wolfe. "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Development." In *Leader Development for Transforming Organizations*, 237–63. Psychology Press, 2004.
- Chen, Helen X, Xuemei Xu, and Patrick Phillips. "Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Styles." *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 27, no. 3 (2019): 458–70.
- Gómez-Leal, Raquel, Allison A Holzer, Christina Bradley, Pablo Fernández-Berrocal, and Janet Patti. "The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in School Leaders: A Systematic Review." *Cambridge Journal of Education* 52, no. 1 (2022): 1–21.
- Greenberg, Neil, Mary Docherty, Sam Gnanapragasam, and Simon Wessely. "Managing Mental Health Challenges Faced by Healthcare Workers during Covid-19 Pandemic." *Bmj* 368 (2020).
- Gunning, Ciara, Jennifer Holloway, Bairbre Fee, Órfhlaith Breathnach, Ceara Marie Bergin, Irene Greene, and Ruth Ní Bheoláin. "A Systematic Review of Generalization and Maintenance Outcomes of Social Skills Intervention for Preschool Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder." *Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 6, no. 2 (2019): 172–99.
- Humphrey, Nicole M. "Emotional Labor and Professionalism: Finding Balance at the Local Level." *State and Local Government Review* 53, no. 3 (2021): 260–70.
- Jeronimus, Bertus F, and Odilia M Laceulle. "Frustration." In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, 1680–83. Springer, 2020.
- Karibeeran, Sathyamurthi, and Shefali Mohanty. "Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents," 2019.
- Kivunja, Charles, and Ahmed Bawa Kuyini. "Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts." *International Journal of Higher Education* 6, no. 5 (September 5, 2017): 26. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>.
- Kovalchuk, Vasyl, Ivan Prylepa, I Marynchenko, V Opanasenko, and Y Marynchenko. "Development of Emotional Intelligence of Future Teachers of Professional Training," 2022.
- Kydd, Andrew. "Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation." *International Organization* 54, no. 2 (July 9, 2000): 325–57. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551190>.
- Lea, Rosanna G, Sarah K Davis, Berenice Mahoney, and Pamela Qualter. "Does Emotional Intelligence Buffer the Effects of Acute Stress? A Systematic Review." *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (2019): 810.
- Mahfouz, Julia. "Principals and Stress: Few Coping Strategies for Abundant Stressors." *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 48, no. 3 (2020): 440–58.
- Manning-Geist, Beryl, Fremonta Meyer, Justin Chen, Andrea Pelletier, Katherine Kosman, Xiaodong Chen, and Natasha R Johnson. "Pre-Clinical Stress Management Workshops Increase Medical Students' Knowledge and Self-Awareness of Coping with Stress." *Medical Science Educator* 30,

no. 1 (2020): 235–41.

- Nápoles, Jessica. “Burnout: A Review of the Literature.” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 2 (2022): 19–26.
- Neumann, Franziska. “Antecedents and Effects of Emotions in Strategic Decision-Making: A Literature Review and Conceptual Model.” *Management Review Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2017): 175–200.
- Nwoko, Joy C, Emma Anderson, Oyelola Adegboye, Aduli E O Malau-Aduli, and Bunmi S Malau-Aduli. “Navigating Teachers’ Occupational Well-Being in the Tides of Classroom Processes and School Structures.” *Education Sciences* 14, no. 11 (2024): 1225.
- Oplatka, Izhar, and Dor Oren. “The Emotion of Fear among Schoolteachers: Sources and Coping Strategies.” *Educational Studies* 46, no. 1 (2020): 92–105.
- Pretorius, Anton, and Bernadictus O’Brain Plaatjies. “Self-Awareness as a Key Emotional Intelligent Skill for Secondary School Principals’ Leadership Toolkit.” *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 5, no. 2 (2023): 52–74.
- Prodanova, Jana, and Ljupco Kocarev. “Is Job Performance Conditioned by Work-from-Home Demands and Resources?” *Technology in Society* 66 (2021): 101672.
- Sheppard, Maia, and Sara A Levy. “Emotions and Teacher Decision-Making: An Analysis of Social Studies Teachers’ Perspectives.” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 77 (2019): 193–203.
- Thrassou, Alkis, Gabriele Santoro, Erasmia Leonidou, Demetris Vrontis, and Michael Christofi. “Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Negative Emotions in Intercultural Service Encounters: Building and Utilizing Knowledge in the Banking Sector.” *European Business Review* 32, no. 3 (2020): 359–81.
- Uchida, Yukiko, Masataka Nakayama, and Kimberly S Bowen. “Interdependence of Emotion: Conceptualization, Evidence, and Social Implications from Cultural Psychology.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 31, no. 5 (2022): 451–56.
- Urquijo, Itziar, Natalio Extremera, and Garazi Azanza. “The Contribution of Emotional Intelligence to Career Success: Beyond Personality Traits.” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 16, no. 23 (2019): 4809.
- Villa, Jennilou A De, and Franz Kevin B Manalo. “Secondary Teachers’ Preparation, Challenges, and Coping Mechanism in the Pre-Implementation of Distance Learning in the New Normal.” *IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 2, no. 3 (2020): 144–54.
- Wettergren, Åsa. “Emotive-Cognitive Rationality, Background Emotions and Emotion Work.” In *Emotions in Late Modernity*, 27–40. Routledge, 2019.
- Yazdi, Mohammad Hossein, A. Mahrooghi, and O. Zarandi. “Enhancing the Performance of Solar Tower Power Plants Using an Auxiliary Heat Source.” *Journal of Engineering & Technological Advances* 9, no. 1 (July 29, 2024): 75–89. <https://doi.org/10.35934/seg.v9i1.110>.
- Younas, Ahtisham, Subia Parveen Rasheed, Faisal Mehmood, and Shahzad Inayat. “Role and Application of Self-awareness in Managerial Practice: A Qualitative Study of Nurse Managers.” *Journal of Nursing Management* 29, no. 4 (2021): 785–93.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank all participants who contributed to this study.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr Amanda Naidoo holds a Doctor of Laws (LLD) with specialisation in Constitutional Law and Philosophy of Law. She is a lecturer in the Department of Government Management, Faculty of Management Sciences at the Central University of Technology, Free State, South Africa

Mlungisi Patrick Nohako is a departmental head of commerce at Marematlou Secondary School, and an experienced Business Studies teacher, who has been a senior marker since from 2015. I hold the following qualifications: BA Degree, Major in Economics and Education from VISTA University, HDE Major in Business Management and Commerce from VISTA University, HONS Degree Majoring

in Law and Systems from NWU, and Masters Degree from CUT Welkom campus. My passion is in education psychology and entrepreneurial development.

Prof Matsolo Mokhampanyane holds a Doctor of Education (D.Ed) specialising in Accounting Education and Economic and Management Sciences. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Language and Social Science Education, Faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Free State, South Africa. Her research focus is on accounting education, pedagogical content knowledge, and content knowledge.