



## Teachers' Experiences on Stress during COVID-19: A South African Case Study

Thanduxolo Nomtshongwana<sup>1</sup>  & Andrea Mqondiso Buka<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Continuing Professional Teacher Development, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Walter Sisulu University, Mthatha, South Africa.

### ABSTRACT

COVID-19 posed an obstacle to many teachers as they tried to master online teaching. This study sought to investigate teachers stress experiences in primary schools in South Africa during COVID-19. The study adopted the interpretivism paradigm in which thematically analysed data was collected through interviews. Fifteen (15) participants were selected purposely from primary schools of Chris Hani East District in South Africa for the interview. In the study, teachers attributed their stress to the lack of protective resources, lack of proper plans for remote teaching, and lack of skills. Students were not co-operating with the teachers during online lessons. The study recommends that the necessary protective resources be provided by the Department of Education to protect teachers from being infected with Covid-19 and provide teaching assistants so that teachers can find it easier to teach with less burden. Schools must be equipped with digital technology and train teachers on how to use digital technology to ease the burden on them. It is important for teachers and motivational speakers to meet with students to raise students' interest and curiosity about learning and in the same vein boosting the students' self-confidence.

### Correspondence

Thanduxolo Nomtshongwana  
Email: [thanduxolon1@gmail.com](mailto:thanduxolon1@gmail.com)

### Publication History

Received 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2022  
Accepted 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2022  
Published online 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

**Keywords:** *anxiety, burnout, COVID-19, frustration, pressures, stress, and workload*

### INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization 2020 declared a worldwide pandemic on 11th March, 2020 because Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) was spreading rapidly after an exponential increase in death and infection rates. COVID-19 affected one hundred and ten nations in several regions. As result, the South African (SA) President announced the closure of all public places including schools, which led the schools to move from remote to online learning. The authors contend that there was no time to plan, design, and test online teaching under COVID-19 which placed teachers, especially those who work in deep rural areas where there was no network coverage under stressful situations.. For planning, preparation, and implementation of all these components to be successful, Means, Bakia and Murphy have stated that teachers need adequate resources and time.<sup>1</sup> So, while COVID-19 was ravaging the earth, it was unreasonable to expect every teacher to become an expert overnight in online teaching and learning. A new era in education began in SA with the occurrence of COVID-19.

<sup>1</sup> Barbara Means, Marianne Bakia, and Robert Murphy, *Learning Online* (London; Routledge, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203095959>.

Due to the COVID-19, the South African Department of Education adopted virtual remote learning to continue providing services to students. Teachers felt exhausted and stressed after teaching online in transition from traditional methods of teaching to virtual or online method of teaching. For online teaching and learning to be incorporated into the curriculum, Hodges, et.al., have stated the need for adequate time for planning, designing, testing and implementation.<sup>2</sup> Teachers seem to blame the lack of appropriate computer accessories and slow internet connectivity as the main barricades to teaching and learning effectively, according to Klapproth et. al.,<sup>3</sup> Teachers dealt with technological issues they already knew about, but when the lockdown began, the issues became more apparent. The available research demonstrates that working for an extended period in a stressful setting causes burnout in many teachers<sup>3</sup>. In many schools, especially the primary schools in Chris Hani East District, (CHED) in South Africa when teachers' experiences with stress have long been a source of concern. The literature demonstrates that stress experienced by teachers in primary school is related to COVID-19 and learners' performance, although teachers remain mute regarding the severity and impact of COVID-19.<sup>4</sup> The Department of Basic education (DBE) shut-some schools and designated some other schools in CHED as dysfunctional after COVID-19. Teachers who are stressed out may find difficulty in delivering quality teaching and learning. It seems studies are silent on how teachers who experience some level of stress can be assisted to reduced stress levels. Despite teaching challenges, there was a strong focus on student outcomes during COVID-19 and teachers held the burden of implementing new programs and maintaining day to day order in the face of chaos and disruption. Rural teachers, particularly those teaching in CHED, face greater challenges than those teaching in urban areas, because their regions have a poor network coverage, parents of their students are illiterate, and their students cannot afford the technology. Teachers found it difficult to communicate with their students due to a lack of internet network coverage and computer devices. This increased teacher stress as well.<sup>4</sup> The authors became interested in investigating rural primary school teachers after they observed that teachers feel helpless (despite their willingness) to do their work since there are many challenges, they face in their schools that lead them to stress during and after COVID-19.

The stress of teachers can also be attributed to under-resourced schools, poor co-worker relationships, and insufficient funds.<sup>5</sup> A teacher may also face additional stressors such as student misconduct, discipline problems, workload, role conflicts, ambiguity, and bullying.<sup>6</sup> As in many other countries, teachers in South Africa are experiencing excessive stress because of the lack of resources, redeployments, and rationalization of schools. Teachers can become stressed due to the stress and challenges they face since they do not receive adequate assistance from the DBE or enough time to fulfill their duties.

Pelser and Wyk mention that there is a high rate of stress among teachers in South Africa, with more than a third experiencing it.<sup>7</sup> A highly stressful working environment leads to burnout in many

---

<sup>2</sup> Charles B Hodges et al., "The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning," *Educational Review*, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Florian Klapproth et al., "Teachers' Experiences of Stress and Their Coping Strategies during COVID-19 Induced Distance Teaching.," *Journal of Pedagogical Research* 4, no. 4 (2020): 444–52, <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.2020062805>.

<sup>4</sup> Gerard Chung, Paul Lanier, and Peace Yuh Ju Wong, "Mediating Effects of Parental Stress on Harsh Parenting and Parent-Child Relationship during Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Singapore," *Journal of Family Violence* 37, no. 5 (July 2, 2022): 801–12, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00200-1>.

<sup>5</sup> Susanna Maria Boshoff, "Validation of the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) in a South African Context: The SABPA Study" (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Bruna de Falco, Mariana Amato, and Virginia Lanzotti, "Chia Seeds Products: An Overview," *Phytochemistry Reviews* 16, no. 4 (August 9, 2017): 745–60, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11101-017-9511-7>; Damiano Girardi et al., "Perfectionism and Workaholism in Managers: The Moderating Role of Workload," 2015.

<sup>7</sup> A.M.F Pelser and C. van Wyk, "Stressors in the Lives of Teachers in the Mahikeng Area, South Africa," *Journal of Psychology* 7, no. 2 (December 25, 2016): 128–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09764224.2016.11907853>.

teachers.<sup>8</sup> Researchers recently found that with COVID-19, teachers experienced a shocking and painful natural learning experience after several months.<sup>9</sup> Teachers were assigned the duty of checking the social distance between students In order to prevent COVID-19 spread. This was additional strain to teachers.

Various authors have demonstrated that social distancing can negatively affect intellectual health.<sup>10</sup> It has been shown that teachers who experience high levels of stress can suffer ill health and that it can cause adverse effects on students' achievement.<sup>11</sup> School stress is causing many teachers to leave their profession not because they want to , but because they lack the skills to deal with it. The CHED primary schools of South Africa were interviewed for this study to determine their stress experiences during COVID-19. The development of the research objectives is the most important aspect of a research project since they direct the researcher to get the appropriate data they are investigating. To fulfil that the authors formulated these objectives, to determine the causes stress among primary school teachers and to examine how primary school teachers overcome stress. Teachers in rural areas, particularly in primary schools, have seemed to struggle with stress. As a result, teaching and learning in schools became ineffective. A lack of collegiality in schools generally resulted in teachers feeling exhausted and strained. The effects of teacher health on teaching and learning have been documented.<sup>12</sup>

Teachers continued to be expected to create miracles while using online teaching and learning whereas there was no assistance with the provision of devices and there was a lack of network coverage, especially in CHED rural schools. Teacher pressure may have increased because of using online teaching without enough resources with a quick of time without proper planning. Teacher shortages compromised mental health and poor student outcomes may result from job-related stress and vicarious trauma in the absence of adequate support. The emotions and stress of teachers during COVID-19 have been extensively studied. However, there are no studies that qualitatively examine the teachers' experiences of stress in primary schools, especially in rural areas of CHED. Due to a paucity of research in this regard, this article has the potential to add to the scientific body of knowledge by re-evaluating the present stress experiences in primary schools during COVID-19 in rural areas of South Africa. It would be beneficial for administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of teaching-related stress during COVID-19 to plan for additional supports for teachers, especially in the future and during crisis situations.

This research is aimed at investigating teachers stress experiences in primary schools during COVID-19. The part of investigation is geologically demarcated as the CHED in SA. The existence of teacher stress dates to the establishment of democracy in SA. This is due to the abolishment of the Group Areas Act.<sup>12</sup> In addition, teachers stress became worse during the outbreak of COVID-19 in rural primary schools where they were no devices or even network to use online teaching and learning. Even after opening of schools' rural primary school teachers face the problem of withdrawal of policy

---

<sup>8</sup> Eva Oberle and Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl, "Stress Contagion in the Classroom? The Link between Classroom Teacher Burnout and Morning Cortisol in Elementary School Students," *Social Science & Medicine* 159 (June 2016): 30–37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.04.031>.

<sup>9</sup> Alexis L. Jones and Meghan A. Kessler, "Teachers' Emotion and Identity Work During a Pandemic," *Frontiers in Education* 5 (November 9, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2020.583775>.

<sup>10</sup> Michael de Quadros Duarte et al., "COVID-19 e Os Impactos Na Saúde Mental: Uma Amostra Do Rio Grande Do Sul, Brasil," *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* 25, no. 9 (September 2020): 3401–11, <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232020259.16472020>; Cuiyan Wang et al., "Immediate Psychological Responses and Associated Factors during the Initial Stage of the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Epidemic among the General Population in China," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no. 5 (March 6, 2020): 1729, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17051729>.

<sup>11</sup> Ruth Harmsen et al., "Measuring General and Specific Stress Causes and Stress Responses among Beginning Secondary School Teachers in the Netherlands," *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 42, no. 1 (January 20, 2019): 91–108, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2018.1462313>.

<sup>12</sup> Thanduxolo A. Nomtshongwana, "Factors Contributing to Stress among Primary School in South Africa Schools" (Walter Sisulu University , 2014).

that guaranteed incentives for qualified teachers working in rural schools by DBE, that left them stressed. For these reasons, the authors undertook this investigation using qualitative approach.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Increasing evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected teachers and students. In a study conducted in China, researchers identified 35.1% of the participants as experiencing moderate anxiety and 21% as experiencing moderate depression.<sup>13</sup> There was a high level of stress reported by German teachers undergoing lockdowns and teachers who spent more time teaching remotely than those who spent less time doing so reported higher levels of stress.<sup>14</sup> As De La Fuente found in the United Kingdom, most teachers there were very anxious.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, in Chile, the pandemic severely impacted the quality of life for teaching staff and for young women. Changing working conditions could lead to mental health problems in teachers. Teaching in classrooms comes with a new set of challenges every day. A classroom manager's responsibilities include planning and teaching lessons every day.<sup>16</sup>

As part of their responsibilities, teachers also handle various issues that students may present in class. They also include making friends with each other and parents, many of whom have bad experiences with schools and teachers. Teachers are stressed out by classes that include older students and also curriculum changes frustrate them the more. In Waltz's opinion, teachers cannot eliminate the stressors in the classroom, but they can learn and practice techniques to manage them to remain effective. Therefore, even though teachers do not always experience stress, many of them do experience some level of stress at some point during their careers.<sup>17</sup> According to other studies, curriculum change was a major cause of teacher burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. Curriculum changes did not insulate teachers from burnout.<sup>18</sup> Thus, for schools to be successful, teachers must actively participate in the development of the curriculum.

### Stress in South African Schools during COVID-19

When the pandemic broke out, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga was quoted as saying, "As yet these outbreaks are not occurring within our facilities. However, we should prepare for the possibility that they could originate there. These outbreaks can turn into bushfires inside our schools at any time."<sup>19</sup>

Later, due to suspected COVID-19 cases among teachers, learners, and other suspected people, Eastern Cape schools shut down from 28th March to June 2020 and yet again between June and July of the same year. The CHED once shut down a school where the principal was diagnosed with the virus. After a teacher at the Idyoki Primary School in Ugie in the Eastern Cape

---

<sup>13</sup> Yeen Huang and Ning Zhao, "Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Depressive Symptoms and Sleep Quality during COVID-19 Outbreak in China: A Web-Based Cross-Sectional Survey," *Psychiatry Research* 288 (June 2020): 112954, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112954>.

<sup>14</sup> Johannes König, Daniela J. Jäger-Biela, and Nina Glutsch, "Adapting to Online Teaching during COVID-19 School Closure: Teacher Education and Teacher Competence Effects among Early Career Teachers in Germany," *European Journal of Teacher Education* 43, no. 4 (August 7, 2020): 608–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1809650>.

<sup>15</sup> Jesús de la Fuente et al., "Effects of Self-Regulation vs. External Regulation on the Factors and Symptoms of Academic Stress in Undergraduate Students," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (August 26, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01773>.

<sup>16</sup> American Psychological Association, "Teaching Is Fundamental: Ideas for Friends and Spouses Supporting Teachers' Early Career Challenges," 2016, <https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/teacher-stress-brochure.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Macy E Waltz, "The Efficacy of a Stress Management and Self-Care Training on Student Teachers' Stress Levels" (Texas Tech University, 2016), <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/handle/2346/67058>.

<sup>18</sup> Raed Zedan and Jarmas Bitar, "Stress and Coping Strategies among Science Elementary School Teachers in Israel," 2013; M. A. Sobambela, *Investigation of Causal Factors of Teachers' Burnout in Schools* (The Libode District, Eastern Cape, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Angie Motshekga, "Keynote Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Delivered at the Release of 2021 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Results," 2022, <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-angie-motshekga-opening-schools-2022-school-year-11-jan-2022-0000>.

tested positive for a virus on Friday, the school informed all sixty-seven teachers that the school would not reopen the following Monday.

Many teachers were frightened of contracting COVID-19 in schools with many students and staff members from different backgrounds and communities and teachers felt exhausted at the end of the school day because of this. Sunday Times reports that in the Eastern Cape's education sector, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of three pupils, eight teachers (seven were teachers and one a deputy principal) and four non-teaching staff.<sup>20</sup> This situation put many school heads and teaching staff under a lot of duress during the period and various measures were put in place to control the spread of the virus.

### **Consequences of Closing Schools during the Pandemic**

Angie Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education of South Africa, after a period, announced that schools may re-open as early as 1st June or as late as August 2020. In the aftermath of opening a school, the damage caused by fires and burglaries devoured a huge chunk of the recovery time. The schools were provided with preventive measures and guidance on re-opening. A range of individual and environment-level prevention measures were also employed, including allowing no more than fifteen (15) students per class in primary schools, creating homogeneous groups of students and teachers to avoid mixing ('bubbles'), implementing hand hygiene measures, and enhancing cleaning.<sup>25</sup> It seems that teachers were also afraid of contacting with COVID-19. Their fear was made worse with more responsibilities of looking after their students during lunch breaks. This resulted in making them feel strained and exhausted.

In addition to closing schools, COVID-19 outbreaks have occurred throughout the world but were especially severe in developing countries and in rural areas. Around 1.2 billion students were affected by the closure of schools worldwide caused by the COVID-19 virus, according to a UNESCO report.<sup>21</sup> The school closures have also been found to have caused social isolation, lack of nutrition and lack of physical activity. The outbreak of COVID-19 forced teachers to move away from the traditional way of teaching in a short of time, to teach using online teaching without proper planning, and without proper curriculum design to be used in online teaching. It appears that those students especially those from underprivileged families were affected since they were no technological devices they could use, and other places had no network coverage at all.

### **Teaching and Learning During COVID-19**

Schools, during lockdown, were expected to offer a comprehensive curriculum to all students. Online learning became the new way to learn, but many students in rural areas were shut out because of lack of electricity, unavailable or nonexistent network and lack of devices they could use.<sup>22</sup> This made it difficult for teachers to contact them and they began to feel stressed. Nonetheless, teachers kept working. Rural students were left without any assistance when it came to online education. The COVID-19 Educational Program blended traditional schooling with homeschooling, states Wrase.<sup>23</sup> Parents were required to assist students when they were home with tasks from their teachers. As Wildemann and Hosenfeld point out, a great deal of stress is caused by the tasks and feedback that are given to the students by their teachers.<sup>24</sup> In contrast,

---

<sup>20</sup> Prega Govender and Mpumzi Zuzile, "Back to School: As Covid-19 Bites, Calls Mount for Doors to Stay Shut to 6-Million Set to Return," Sunday Times, 2020, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2020-06-28-back-to-school-as-covid-19-bites-calls-mount-for-doors-to-stay-shut-to-6-million-set-to-return/>.

<sup>21</sup> Global Education Monitoring Report, *Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All*, Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All (UNESCO, 2020), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718>.

<sup>22</sup> M. Wrase, *Langsam Vermisse Ich Die Schule ...*, ed. Detlef Fickermann and Benjamin Edelstein (Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830992318>.

<sup>23</sup> Wrase. *Langsam Vermisse Ich Die Schule ...*.

<sup>24</sup> Anja Wildemann and Ingmar Hosenfeld, *Bundesweite Elternbefragung Zu Homeschooling Während Der Covid-19 Pandemie* (Universität Koblenz-Landau, 2020).

teachers reported difficulties maintaining relationships with their students and felt their schools failed to provide them with sufficient advice and support.<sup>25</sup> The factors contributed to the difficulty teachers faced in continuing instruction when most of the education was conducted from the home even in schools unknown. It has been found out that the lack of resources, time, and support are major barriers that prevent teachers from integrating technology into classrooms.<sup>26</sup> Researchers have found that online learning has resulted in fewer students having studying resources or environments during lockdowns that can help their learning.<sup>27</sup> Brodie, McFarlane, and Ally also agreed with this position revealing that most students are left behind since they cannot use electronic devices to learn.<sup>28</sup> During her briefing, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga also acknowledged that very few students are reached and teachers who reach those students have an impact of only 20% of what is done in the classrooms.<sup>29</sup>

### Strategies for Controlling Teachers' Stress

Bush and Middlewood posit that an educator with high stress levels may deny the truth about what constitutes the stress until the situation has passed.<sup>30</sup> There are some palliative measures like smoking, drinking, and overeating that give immediate relief. Other strategies for inspiring staff members include altering the corporate culture, offering peer support and counselling, encouraging physical activity and good eating, and unwinding. By focusing on, supporting, and assisting teachers, educators need to devise plans to break out of the spiteful series of insignificance and extended sick absence. Bush and Middlewood also assert once more that most job strain can frequently become a helpful knowledge by ensuring that demands placed on educators, whether perceived or real, should remain within their capacity and they must be aware of their limits; educators must develop the resources and skills necessary to deal with the stress they have chosen or accepted; educators must develop the resources and skills necessary to deal with the stress they have chosen or accepted. They go on to propose the following leadership strategies for dealing with stress amongst teachers in schools. First, the principal can assist separate teachers set truthful objectives that take limitations and abilities into account. If a specific teacher has created a pattern that is particularly stressful, administrators may have ideas for how to approach the same situation differently. Additionally, schools may schedule time for instructors to take emotional breaths.<sup>31</sup>

A handy solution does not exist for the management of pressure. The combination of changing components that teachers can control and finding support for variables that teachers cannot change might be an effective way to combat pressure. Here are some broad tips for fighting pressure, "Talk with a confided in companion, adore one another; exercise day by day; People should eat more healthily and get 8 to 9 hours of sleep each night, staying away from high-fat foods and fizzy drinks; limit their coffee intake; find out how to refuse non-needs; Make time for rest far from your labor;

<sup>25</sup> Miriam Goetz, "Distance Learning in Der COVID-19 Krise: Ein Praxischeck," *Medienimpulse* 58, no. 02 (June 21, 2020): 21 Seiten-21 Seiten, <https://doi.org/10.21243/MI-02-20-19>.

<sup>26</sup> Tiffani Pittman and Trudi Gaines, "Technology Integration in Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade Classrooms in a Florida School District," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 63, no. 4 (August 3, 2015): 539–54, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-015-9391-8>.

<sup>27</sup> Black S., "The Problem with Stephen Grootes' Views about Online Learning.," *Daily Maverick*, 2020, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/202005-11-the-problem-with-stephen-grootes-views-about-online-learning/>.

<sup>28</sup> M. Brodie, R. McFarlane, and N. Ally, "Learning in the Time of Covid-19: Equitable Support during School Closures Desperately Needed," *Daily Maverick*, 2020, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-21-learning-in-the-time-of-covid-19-equitable-support-during-school-closures-desperately-needed/>.

<sup>29</sup> Nicole Govender, "Knowledge, Perceptions and Attitude of Community Members and Healthcare Workers Regarding the Donation of Breast Milk and Use of Donated Human Milk (DHM) in Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal," 2021, <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/32699>.

<sup>30</sup> Tony Bush and David Middlewood, "Leading and Managing People in Education.," *SAGE Publications (UK)*, 2005, 219.

<sup>31</sup> Bush and Middlewood, "Leading and Managing People in Education.," 219.

reduce trivial activities, set aside sometime for your spouse and kids, and plan mural dates and date evenings; take some quiet time to evaluate your needs and aspirations.”<sup>32</sup>

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Based on Person-Environment Fit theory, this study examined teachers' experiences of stress during COVID-19. To investigate job stress, this framework is widely accepted. According to Ignatius and Onwunaka, Person Environment Fit theory states that whether a situation is stressful for a person is determined by their interaction with their environment.<sup>33</sup> Human behavior is a function of both individual and environment, and the degree to which people are happy, stable, and successful depends on how well their personalities and the environments in which they work fit together. Workplace attributes include an individual's interests, transferrable skills, career values, personality characteristics, career inclinations, self-concept, and sense of self-efficacy. There are many components, including individual's workload expectations, control over their work, tangible rewards and intrinsic rewards of work, relationships among co-workers, fairness at the worksite, and personal and organizational values.<sup>34</sup>

When the individual and the environment are incompatible, there is stress. Additionally, stress can be caused by the mismatch between what is expected of individuals and what they can accomplish. While evidence suggests that stress is a result of complex interactions between individual characteristics and workplace issues, research has not been systematically conducted with a particular focus on gender variables such as gender among secondary school teachers as part of this study.<sup>35</sup>

## **METHOD AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

The qualitative research methods enhance understanding of the situation as they enable the researchers to see and understand the context of decision making and action.<sup>36</sup> The researchers collected data using qualitative methods to gain more in-depth understanding of what is known about the phenomenon, which in this paper is the teachers' stress levels.<sup>37</sup> Since this is a qualitative study, the authors used a case study and observations to collect data which yielded open-ended outcomes with no prior expectations.<sup>38</sup> In addition to observations, the authors conducted individual face-to-face interviews with primary school teachers to gain their perspectives and thoughts on the stressful circumstances they undergo as teachers.

## **SAMPLING AND PROCEDURE**

Within the CHED, fifteen (15) primary school teachers were selected using the purposive sampling technique. In terms of age, participants were on an average between twenty-five (25) and forty (40) years old. In terms of highest qualification, most participants had a postgraduate degree (14%) or an advanced diploma (86%) in education. 100% of the participants were Xhosa speakers at home.

---

<sup>32</sup> Bush and Middlewood, “Leading and Managing People in Education,” 219.

<sup>33</sup> Ignatius O Nwimo and Chinagorom Onwunaka, “Stress among Secondary School Teachers in Ebonyi State, Nigeria: Suggested Interventions in the Worksite Milieu,” *Journal of Education and Practice* 6 (2015): 93–100.

<sup>34</sup> Edwin L Herr and Stanley H Cramer, “Career Guidance and Counseling through the Life Span: Systematic Approaches,” 1984.

<sup>35</sup> Nwimo and Onwunaka, “Stress among Secondary School Teachers in Ebonyi State, Nigeria: Suggested Interventions in the Worksite Milieu.”

<sup>36</sup> Umesh Sharma, “Qualitative Research in Business & Management 2009” Michael D. Myers. *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*. London: Sage 2009.,” *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management* 6, no. 4 (October 2, 2009): 292–96, <https://doi.org/10.1108/11766090910989536>.

<sup>37</sup> A. M. Buka, “Exploring Teaching Practices and Learning Support Strategies Used by Teachers in Inclusive Classes in Primary Schools of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa (An Unpublished Thesis)” (Walter Sisulu University, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> Burke R Johnson and Larry Christensen, *Educational Research Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches Fifth Edition*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014).

All participants were teachers in primary school. By using the purposive sampling technique, these teachers met the pre-selected requirements related to the research question. In each case, the schools were in deep rural areas without adequate resources.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

An interview was conducted with fifteen (15) teachers from fifteen (15) primary schools. In semi-structured interviews, the researchers were able to probe for relevant information and not limited by a set schedule which allowed them to find more interesting information that could be valuable for the study. Participants were interviewed individually (without being influenced by others) to ensure confidentiality and free expression of leadership practices. To explore in-depth perspectives and viewpoints of primary school teachers in the CHED, a thirty-minute interview was conducted face-to-face with each of them regarding the stress experiences they faced in school.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Analyzing data has the goal of interpreting the information gathered. All responses from selected schools regarding teachers' stress experiences during COVID-19 were explored and analyzed by researchers. The first step in the analysis was to generate themes based on the data source. Afterward, researchers constructed new themes by comparing data from different sources. They then classified the data in accordance with the research questions. By doing so, the researchers were able to analyze the data and write about it.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The principal and deputy were given letters of permission and a certificate of ethical clearance from the DBE. Participation in the study was optional due to ethical concerns. The test was designed to pique the attention of respondents. To ensure confidentiality, the names of members and supervisors were omitted from the investigation.<sup>39</sup> The conditions for corporal examination are that all members were given the option of remaining mysterious or anonymous, and the data was treated in the strictest of confidentiality agreements, with all members getting a duplicate of the last order. As a result, the data provided by members were considered legitimate and secrecy was ensured by not letting the members share their names in the questionnaire.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***Online teaching and learning***

Stress was identified as a significant factor by school teachers in different ways. They described online learning and teaching as a source of stress. Moreover, some participants admit to being unaware of how to use technological devices, while others complained that majority of the parents of their students lacked the financial resources to purchase them. Moreover, due to the limited internet network coverage in these areas, it was difficult to reach their students resulting in tiredness and strain. Parents were also emphasised a source of stress to the teachers as the majority were illiterate and could not help their children at home during online teaching and learning which left the teachers with extra work to do.

### ***Social distance***

Teachers reported several challenges following the opening of schools, including social distancing, deep cleansing, and the careful orchestration of school movements. Teachers said it was very frustrating to ensure that the students followed Covid-19 protocols. Most of the teachers stated that instead of teaching and learning they became the security to look out for them, and deal with cases of students who did not comply with COVID-19 protocols.

---

<sup>39</sup> Wm Kubeka, "Disciplinary Measurers at the Moduopo Primary School in Tembisa, Gauteng Province, South Africa after 1994." (Tshwane University of Technology, 2004).

### ***Lack of incentive for teachers***

The participants said they devote a lot of time in serving as committed "teachers" in their schools but are not valued by the Ministry of Education, which only focuses on hammering on their failures. The absence of incentives has been proven to be another cause of teachers' stress. A teacher said, "Yes, I agree that the lack of incentives for teachers is due to the setting, the learners we deal with, and how the department does not support us financially, such as paying us overtime and making us work on Saturdays without pay." According to Nomtshongwana, the main reasons for teacher stress include a lack of resources for students, a lack of connection between instructors and supervisors, a lack of opportunity for progress and promotion, student misbehavior, and inadequate teacher pay.<sup>40</sup> Dorman argues that depersonalization occurs when teachers develop negative attitudes toward students and work-related obligations because of poor school environments.<sup>41</sup>

### ***More workload***

Participants all mentioned that workload was another source of stress at their schools daily. For example, COVID-19 leads to worse problems because during break time they still must ensure that students remained socially distant from each other. They therefore had no time to plan or mark assignments and this resulted in them taking extra workload to their homes. Participants noted that it was stressful to fill the gap for the teachers who had contracted COVID-19 and there was also no help from the DBE which failed to hire teaching assistants. Teacher stress is influenced by both the quality and quantity of workload.<sup>42</sup> One of the most significant concerns classroom teachers face is the fact that full-time teachers work fewer than fifty-three (53) hours per week.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Lack of appreciation for teachers***

Participants expressed dissatisfaction that the DBE has not appreciated and revered teachers as much as it should. For example, one participant explained, "When these students pass, no one speaks of the dedication of teachers, they talk about how hard they work to support the schools, whereas there is really nothing they do."

Additionally, teachers feel underappreciated since the DBE is unaware of how difficult it is to teach students who are unwilling to learn. The teachers were concerned about students who refuse to read their books when they are told that they will take an assessment.

Also, with the publication of the Personal Administrative Measures (PAM) document in the Government Gazette on 12th February 2016, there are some specific roles for principals within the school. However, in some cases, teachers must perform management tasks in combination with learning and teaching. To help teachers feel appreciated in their jobs, educators need to develop strategies for proper management. According to Firestone, schools have obviously neglected to carry out a legitimate framework that would remunerate educators for additional work, resulting in feelings of frustration and evidently leading to demotivation. He also urged for the inclusion of both extrinsic incentives which are attributed to the external motivation theory and intrinsic incentives which are attributed to the internal motivation theory.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Nomtshongwana, "Factors Contributing to Stress among Primary School in South Africa Schools'."

<sup>41</sup> Paul Dorman, "Testing a Model for Teacher Burnout," *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology* 3 (January 1, 2003): 35-47.

<sup>42</sup> Harmsen et al., "Measuring General and Specific Stress Causes and Stress Responses among Beginning Secondary School Teachers in the Netherlands."

<sup>43</sup> Tom W. N. Walker et al., "Plastic and Genetic Responses of a Common Sedge to Warming Have Contrasting Effects on Carbon Cycle Processes," *Ecology Letters* 22, no. 1 (January 22, 2019): 159-69, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.13178>.

<sup>44</sup> William A. Firestone, "Teacher Evaluation Policy and Conflicting Theories of Motivation," *Educational Researcher* 43, no. 2 (March 1, 2014): 100-107, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X14521864>.

### ***Learners' Lack of motivation***

Teachers coaching in schools regarded as underprivileged acknowledged challenges with loss of motivation among their students which stressed them. The field data revealed that it was very difficult to motivate students that were not ready to learn. Most of the time, this category of students failed to concentrate and participate in class activities and that stressed the teachers. The students also exhibited untoward attitudes toward school work, aggression toward teachers, and persistent absenteeism without justification. The authorities have also failed to put in measures to deal with such students effectively. This corroborated the views of Nomtshongwana who states that poor management and support of teachers by the governing body, especially, with the negative attitude portrayed by some students cause teachers' stress.<sup>45</sup> The teachers also stated that one of the causes of stress is when they do not have a large amount of input into decision-making about what must be done to learners. Teacher stress is increased by this single challenge, and this leads to emotional burnout.

### ***Teachers' department of education district support***

A question asked during the interviews was whether the School Management Team or the District of Education could organise support programs to help alleviate teachers' stress. It was agreed by all participants who wanted the DBE to visit their school and hear their problems. They also suggested workshops aimed at discussing how to deal with stress should be held with Education Districts. They added that DBE District Office, especially subject advisers who support teachers fail to support schools because they lack the required knowledge about what they should be teaching.<sup>46</sup> Mentors should be provided by the DBE for new teachers and for those who have difficulties with their work. Inexperienced teachers can benefit greatly from the guidance and encouragement provided by veteran teachers and from sharing their best classroom practices to provide support.<sup>47</sup> Teachers might benefit from keeping a diary. Teachers may be able to change techniques that did not work during the same session in the future to recognize their strengths and shortcomings.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Congeniality and Teamwork***

Teachers in this study reported having difficulty in finishing their syllabus, teaching subjects that they are not familiar with and dealing with stress that resulted from feeling fatigued. There is some consensus among respondents that it is difficult to function without the support of the school management. In contrast, in some schools, there is no teamwork or management support. As schools become more aware and understand stress, they can provide separate and collective programs with the goal of reducing stress, as well as develop organizational changes that will prevent the environment from contributing to teachers' stress. Teamwork at school should decrease teachers' stress and increase their performance. To improve learning and enhance teaching Buka posits that teachers should form teams with the aim of exchanging their expertise on a certain subject.<sup>49</sup> This makes teaching easier and less stressful for teachers. Among the factors that contribute to teachers' stress is the lack of professional relationships among colleagues and inadequate resources. Based on this finding, teacher stress becomes low if the relationship between teachers is congenial.

### ***Social Media***

The data revealed that teachers used social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to form support groups. It is important to have groups like these, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period when people may stay indoors. Furthermore, they reported receiving advice from

---

<sup>45</sup> Nomtshongwana, "Factors Contributing to Stress among Primary School in South Africa Schools."

<sup>46</sup> Nomtshongwana, "Factors Contributing to Stress among Primary School in South Africa Schools."

<sup>47</sup> T. Maqoqa, "Experiences of Teachers in Large Classes in Selected Schools in the Libode Education District of South Africa." (Walter Sisulu University, South Africa, 2017).

<sup>48</sup> Fritz Heider, "Perceiving the Other Person.," in *Social Cognition: Key Readings.*, Key Readings in Social Psychology. (New York, NY, US: Psychology Press, 2005), 33–35.

<sup>49</sup> Buka, "Exploring Teaching Practices and Learning Support Strategies Used by Teachers in Inclusive Classes in Primary Schools of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa."

their colleagues about how to deal with their problems. In other countries, psychological interventions in utilizing ICT have been used to reduce psychological distress.<sup>50</sup> The findings however contradict those of Hidalgo et. al.,. These researchers state that while websites such as Facebook and Twitter can provide information, they can also cause stress and false information.<sup>51</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Even during the COVID-19 epidemic, education was still a crucial responsibility. There were additional reasons that contributed to the teachers' lower psychological health, in addition to the school and education districts' closure, the remote online learning usage, and teachers' inexperience with software for teaching.<sup>52</sup> The data revealed that online teaching and learning causes teachers to experience stress. This outcome is similar with other research investigations that have been conducted in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi, and Namibia which also reported that the teachers and students become frustrated with the transition from in-contact education to distant or virtual instruction.<sup>53</sup> A new dimension of high-quality education has however begun.

Béteille et al., have stated that education requires routine human interaction. In addition, teachers complain of not having enough time to prepare for or adapt to new teaching methods of teaching such as managing virtual classrooms and involving students in new and creative ways of learning.<sup>54</sup> To make online learning and teaching easier, the DBE must supply new materials and technology (computers and tablets) in primary schools. To reduce stress, the DBE and schools should offer in-service training for teachers, who should also educate their pupils on how to utilize the equipment.

The workload of primary school teachers was found to be exhausting and strenuous even though they enjoyed working with the students. There were also teachers who said they were going to leave teaching for other careers. This will result in the Department of Education not fulfilling their vision of making sure no child is left uneducated. This finding agrees with recent research by Prado-Gascó et.al., reporting the stress, exhaustion, and illness experienced by teachers during the COVID-19 era.<sup>55</sup> As reported by Hamilton et. al., twenty-five percent of teachers plan to leave their profession by 2020-2021.<sup>56</sup> Throughout the school year, school leaders should encourage, nurture, and support their teachers, serve as good role models, encourage cooperation, collaborate with colleagues and support empowerment.

To relieve teachers of exhaustion and strain, leaders need to distribute work equally among all staff. The school leaders must make sure that they share the work equally among the employees to ease the workload of teachers.

---

<sup>50</sup> Cyrus S H Ho, Cornelia Yi Chee, and Roger Cm Ho, "Mental Health Strategies to Combat the Psychological Impact of COVID-19 beyond Paranoia and Panic," *Ann Acad Med Singapore* 49, no. 1 (2020): 1–3; Bach Xuan Tran et al., "Reaching Further by Village Health Collaborators: The Informal Health Taskforce of Vietnam for COVID-19 Responses," *Journal of Global Health* 10, no. 1 (June 2020), <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.10.010354>.

<sup>51</sup> Paula Hidalgo-Andrade, Carlos Hermosa-Bosano, and Clara Paz, "Teachers' Mental Health and Self-Reported Coping Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ecuador: A Mixed-Methods Study," *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* 14 (July 2021): 933–44, <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S314844>.

<sup>52</sup> Ute Kaden, "COVID-19 School Closure-Related Changes to the Professional Life of a K–12 Teacher," *Education Sciences* 10, no. 6 (June 19, 2020): 165, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10060165>.

<sup>53</sup> Mutizwa Mukute et al., "Education in Times of COVID-19: Looking for Silver Linings in the Southern Africa's Educational Responses," *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* 36 (December 17, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4314/sajee.v36i1.7>.

<sup>54</sup> Tara Beteille et al., "Three Principles to Support Teacher Effectiveness During COVID-19,," <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/33775>, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Vicente Prado-Gascó et al., "Stay at Home and Teach: A Comparative Study of Psychosocial Risks Between Spain and Mexico During the Pandemic," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (September 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.566900>.

<sup>56</sup> Laura Hamilton, Julia Kaufman, and Melissa Diliberti, *Teaching and Leading Through a Pandemic: Key Findings from the American Educator Panels Spring 2020 COVID-19 Surveys* (RAND Corporation, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR168-2>.

After the opening of the school during COVID-19, teachers also reported that one of the reasons for stress in the school environment was that they had to deal with social distancing and sanitizing students rather than handle their teaching duties. It supports the findings of Alexis, Jones, and Meghan, who affirm that the technique of COVID-19 caused shock and pain among teachers for several months.<sup>57</sup> Social distance was introduced in schools to help prevent or treat cross-infection. This has caused strain on teachers. Manifestations of social distance can lead to cognitive decline, anxiety, and tension.<sup>58</sup> Teachers focused on school safety instead of their sole responsibility of teaching. Consequently, they were constantly observing students to check if they maintained social distance and wore masks. There was also no lunchtime for teachers at their schools. The DBE must employ teaching assistants at schools so that teachers focus only on their main duty of teaching and learning.

It is noteworthy that teachers indicated that a lack of rewards was one of the causes of stress, particularly during this time of COVID-19. The teachers said it is very frustrating when the government of South Africa announced during the COVID-19 pandemic that there would be no salary increment for government employees. It is recommended that during every school year, management teams need to set aside a day for teachers to be rewarded for their efforts with certificates, trophies, and incentives. It is also recommended that teachers' emoluments be proportional to their qualifications. School administrators must have a thorough understanding of dealing with stress, time keeping, conflict management, judgemental call, and human resources management abilities.

The DBE could offer additional assistance to reduce teacher stress in the classroom by collaborating with Teacher Unions to host workshops on how to reduce the stress connected to their lives at school.

Based on the findings, most of the problems in the classroom are caused by students who are not motivated to learn. Neves de Jesus and Conboy reported that teachers face many challenges and are susceptible to stress due to learners' disengagement from school.<sup>59</sup> Learning occurs when learners aim at learning, and teachers are affected by students who do not try to learn.<sup>60</sup> If students do not do any assignments and come to school unprepared, teachers will experience additional stress while trying to motivate these students.

Teachers, especially those who work with learners, need to be involved in the formulation of school policies. It is suggested that parents should take an active role in their ward(s) education by ensuring that their ward(s) do their homework and projects at home. They must motivate their ward(s) at home about the importance of studying.

The study also revealed that teachers utilize social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook to ask their peers for guidance on the issues they encounter every day especially during COVID-19. Teachers sometimes worked together to alleviate each other's stress and some principals were sympathetic toward teachers under stress and were willing to help. The paper also found that the DBE, however, did not provide adequate intervention programmes for managing teacher stress. After reviewing various approaches to managing teacher stress, the paper makes the following recommendations. First, the DBE should go to the schools to assist stressed-out teachers. Again, the leadership in schools must help teachers deal with some of their challenges if they want to see good results in their schools.

According to the findings, teachers manage their stress by collaborating and working in teams. Collaboration may reduce the stress of teachers if co-teaching techniques are used. The researchers recommend that schools and their departments of education establish a working relationship. All students should be encouraged to thrive in school and develop their self-confidence in the classroom

---

<sup>57</sup> Jones and Kessler, "Teachers' Emotion and Identity Work During a Pandemic." Walter Sisulu University, 2014

<sup>58</sup> Guanghai Wang et al., "Mitigate the Effects of Home Confinement on Children during the COVID-19 Outbreak," *The Lancet* 395, no. 10228 (March 2020): 945–47, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30547-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X).

<sup>59</sup> Saul Neves de Jesus and Joseph Conboy, "A Stress Management Course to Prevent Teacher Distress," *International Journal of Educational Management* 15, no. 3 (June 1, 2001): 131–37, <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540110384484>.

<sup>60</sup> Allison M. Geving, "Identifying the Types of Student and Teacher Behaviours Associated with Teacher Stress," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 23, no. 5 (July 2007): 624–40, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.02.006>.

by inviting intrinsic motivation presenters and academic counselors to talk to them about the importance of education.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study successfully examined teachers' experiences of stress during COVID 19 in South Africa. The introduction mentioned that teachers experienced exhaustion and stress after transitioning to online teaching from traditional teaching. This has resulted in increased anxiety among teachers and a higher turnover rate. Managing students' homework at home was difficult due to the large amount of work they had to do and a lack of motivation on their part. This is undoubtedly a topic that merits further research given its numerous effects as well as the article's emphasis on teachers' stress as a concern. To accomplish that, the following objectives were devised: to identify the causes of stress among primary school teachers, and to examine the methods used to overcome it. The importance of this study lies in the fact that unstressed teachers are more optimistic and content. This helps them to maintain a stable, sound, and conducive working environment.

It has been demonstrated in the literature review that teachers worldwide were stressed during COVID-19. Additionally, it showed that online learning had become the new way to learn. However, students found in the rural or remote area were unable to use it because of the absence of electricity, unavailable internet network, and a lack of devices. According to the literature review, teachers require any support they can get to overcome stress.

Purposive sampling was used to select fifteen (15) primary school teachers from the CHED in SA. To gather data from teachers, semi-structured interviews were conducted. According to the data source, authors developed themes to analyze the data. Throughout the course of this study, the ethical code was adhered to.

Findings showed that teacher stress is caused by difficulties in managing online teaching and learning, lack of incentive for teachers, social distance monitoring, more workload, lack of appreciation for teachers, learners' lack of motivation and lack of Department of Education district support. They also used these strategies such as collegiality and teamwork, social media, to formulate support groups to overcome stress during the time of COVID-19. The authors advocate that since teaching is viewed as significant, it is important to give teachers' assets, appropriate help from DBE and structure teaming up with Teacher Unions to have workshops on the most proficient method to lessen the pressure associated with their lives at school. To wrap things up, the open wellbeing framework for educators ought to be freely made available on the website of DBE.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- American Psychological Association Education Directorate. "Teaching Is Fundamental: Ideas for Friends and Spouses Supporting Teachers' Early Career Challenges," 2016.  
<https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/teacher-stress-brochure.pdf>.
- Beteille, Tara, Elaine Ding, Ezequiel Molina, Adelle Pushparatnam, and Tracy Wilichowski. "Three Principles to Support Teacher Effectiveness During COVID-19."  
[Http://hdl.handle.net/10986/33775](http://hdl.handle.net/10986/33775), 2020.
- Black S. "The Problem with Stephen Grootes' Views about Online Learning. ." Daily Maverick, 2020. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/202005-11-the-problem-with-stephen-grootes-views-about-online-learning/>.
- Boshoff, Susanna Maria. "Validation of the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) in a South African Context: The SABPA Study." North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa, 2011.
- Brodie, M., R. McFarlane, and N. Ally. "Learning in the Time of Covid-19: Equitable Support during School Closures Desperately Needed." Daily Maverick, 2020.  
<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-21-learning-in-the-time-of-covid-19-equitable-support-during-school-closures-desperately-needed/>.

- Buka, A. M. "Exploring Teaching Practices and Learning Support Strategies Used by Teachers in Inclusive Classes in Primary Schools of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa (An Unpublished Thesis)." Walter Sisulu University, 2013.
- Bush, Tony., and David. Middlewood. "Leading and Managing People in Education." *SAGE Publications (UK)*, 2005, 219.
- Chung, Gerard, Paul Lanier, and Peace Yuh Ju Wong. "Mediating Effects of Parental Stress on Harsh Parenting and Parent-Child Relationship during Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Singapore." *Journal of Family Violence* 37, no. 5 (July 2, 2022): 801–12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00200-1>.
- Dorman, Paul. "Testing a Model for Teacher Burnout." *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology* 3 (January 1, 2003).
- Duarte, Michael de Quadros, Manuela Almeida da Silva Santo, Carolina Palmeiro Lima, Jaqueline Portella Giordani, and Clarissa Marcelli Trentini. "COVID-19 e Os Impactos Na Saúde Mental: Uma Amostra Do Rio Grande Do Sul, Brasil." *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* 25, no. 9 (September 2020): 3401–11. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232020259.16472020>.
- Falco, Bruna de, Mariana Amato, and Virginia Lanzotti. "Chia Seeds Products: An Overview." *Phytochemistry Reviews* 16, no. 4 (August 9, 2017): 745–60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11101-017-9511-7>.
- Firestone, William A. "Teacher Evaluation Policy and Conflicting Theories of Motivation." *Educational Researcher* 43, no. 2 (March 1, 2014): 100–107. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X14521864>.
- Geving, Allison M. "Identifying the Types of Student and Teacher Behaviours Associated with Teacher Stress." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 23, no. 5 (July 2007): 624–40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.02.006>.
- Girardi, Damiano, Alessandra Falco, Alessandra Piccirelli, Laura Dal Corso, Stefano Bortolato, and Alessandro De Carlo. "Perfectionism and Workaholism in Managers: The Moderating Role of Workload," 2015.
- Global Education Monitoring Report. *Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All. Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All*. UNESCO, 2020. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718>.
- Goetz, Miriam. "Distance Learning in Der COVID-19 Krise: Ein Praxischeck." *Medienimpulse* 58, no. 02 (June 21, 2020): 21 Seiten-21 Seiten. <https://doi.org/10.21243/MI-02-20-19>.
- Govender, Nicole. "Knowledge, Perceptions and Attitude of Community Members and Healthcare Workers Regarding the Donation of Breast Milk and Use of Donated Human Milk (DHM) in Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal," 2021. <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/32699>.
- Govender, Prega, and Mpumzi Zuzile. "Back to School: As Covid-19 Bites, Calls Mount for Doors to Stay Shut to 6-Million Set to Return." *Sunday Times*, 2020. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2020-06-28-back-to-school-as-covid-19-bites-calls-mount-for-doors-to-stay-shut-to-6-million-set-to-return/>.
- Hamilton, Laura, Julia Kaufman, and Melissa Diliberti. *Teaching and Leading Through a Pandemic: Key Findings from the American Educator Panels Spring 2020 COVID-19 Surveys*. RAND Corporation, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA168-2>.
- Harmsen, Ruth, Michelle Helms-Lorenz, Ridwan Maulana, Klaas van Veen, and Marc van Veldhoven. "Measuring General and Specific Stress Causes and Stress Responses among Beginning Secondary School Teachers in the Netherlands." *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 42, no. 1 (January 20, 2019): 91–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2018.1462313>.
- Heider, Fritz. "Perceiving the Other Person." In *Social Cognition: Key Readings.*, 33–35. Key Readings in Social Psychology. New York, NY, US: Psychology Press, 2005.

- Herr, Edwin L, and Stanley H Cramer. "Career Guidance and Counseling through the Life Span: Systematic Approaches," 1984.
- Hidalgo-Andrade, Paula, Carlos Hermosa-Bosano, and Clara Paz. "Teachers' Mental Health and Self-Reported Coping Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ecuador: A Mixed-Methods Study." *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* 14 (July 2021): 933–44. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S314844>.
- Ho, Cyrus S H, Cornelia Yi Chee, and Roger Cm Ho. "Mental Health Strategies to Combat the Psychological Impact of COVID-19 beyond Paranoia and Panic." *Ann Acad Med Singapore* 49, no. 1 (2020): 1–3.
- Hodges, Charles B, Stephanie L Moore, Barbara B Lockee, Torrey Trust, and Mark Aaron Bond. "The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning." *Educational Review*, 2020.
- Huang, Yeen, and Ning Zhao. "Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Depressive Symptoms and Sleep Quality during COVID-19 Outbreak in China: A Web-Based Cross-Sectional Survey." *Psychiatry Research* 288 (June 2020): 112954. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112954>.
- Johnson, Burke R, and Larry Christensen. *Educational Research Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches Fifth Edition*, 2014.
- Jones, Alexis L., and Meghan A. Kessler. "Teachers' Emotion and Identity Work During a Pandemic." *Frontiers in Education* 5 (November 9, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2020.583775>.
- Kaden, Ute. "COVID-19 School Closure-Related Changes to the Professional Life of a K–12 Teacher." *Education Sciences* 10, no. 6 (June 19, 2020): 165. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10060165>.
- Klapproth, Florian, Lisa Federkeil, Franziska Heinschke, and Tanja Jungmann. "Teachers' Experiences of Stress and Their Coping Strategies during COVID-19 Induced Distance Teaching." *Journal of Pedagogical Research* 4, no. 4 (2020): 444–52. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.2020062805>.
- König, Johannes, Daniela J. Jäger-Biela, and Nina Glutsch. "Adapting to Online Teaching during COVID-19 School Closure: Teacher Education and Teacher Competence Effects among Early Career Teachers in Germany." *European Journal of Teacher Education* 43, no. 4 (August 7, 2020): 608–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1809650>.
- Kubeka, Wm. "Disciplinary Measurers at the Moduopo Primary School in Tembisa, Gauteng Province, South Africa after 1994. ." Tshwane University of Technology, 2004.
- la Fuente, Jesús de, Francisco Javier Peralta-Sánchez, Jose Manuel Martínez-Vicente, Paul Sander, Angélica Garzón-Umerenkova, and Lucía Zapata. "Effects of Self-Regulation vs. External Regulation on the Factors and Symptoms of Academic Stress in Undergraduate Students." *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (August 26, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01773>.
- Maqoqa, T. "Experiences of Teachers in Large Classes in Selected Schools in the Libode Education District of South Africa." Walter Sisulu University, South Africa, 2017.
- Means, Barbara, Marianne Bakia, and Robert Murphy. *Learning Online*. Routledge, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203095959>.
- Motshekga, Angie. "Keynote Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Delivered at the Release of 2021 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Results," 2022. <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-angie-motshekga-opening-schools-2022-school-year-11-jan-2022-0000>.
- Mukute, Mutizwa, Jane Burt, Buhle Francis, and Ben De Souza. "Education in Times of COVID-19: Looking for Silver Linings in the Southern Africa's Educational Responses." *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* 36 (December 17, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.4314/sajee.v36i1.7>.
- Neves de Jesus, Saul, and Joseph Conboy. "A Stress Management Course to Prevent Teacher Distress." *International Journal of Educational Management* 15, no. 3 (June 1, 2001): 131–37.

- <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540110384484>.
- Nomtshongwana, Thanduxolo A. "Factors Contributing to Stress among Primary School in South Africa Schools". Walter Sisulu University, 2014.
- Nwimo, Ignatius O, and Chinagorom Onwunaka. "Stress among Secondary School Teachers in Ebonyi State, Nigeria: Suggested Interventions in the Worksite Milieu." *Journal of Education and Practice* 6 (2015): 93–100.
- Oberle, Eva, and Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl. "Stress Contagion in the Classroom? The Link between Classroom Teacher Burnout and Morning Cortisol in Elementary School Students." *Social Science & Medicine* 159 (June 2016): 30–37.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.04.031>.
- Pelser, A.M.F, and C. van Wyk. "Stressors in the Lives of Teachers in the Mahikeng Area, South Africa." *Journal of Psychology* 7, no. 2 (December 25, 2016): 128–36.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09764224.2016.11907853>.
- Pittman, Tiffani, and Trudi Gaines. "Technology Integration in Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade Classrooms in a Florida School District." *Educational Technology Research and Development* 63, no. 4 (August 3, 2015): 539–54. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-015-9391-8>.
- Prado-Gascó, Vicente, María T. Gómez-Domínguez, Ana Soto-Rubio, Luis Díaz-Rodríguez, and Diego Navarro-Mateu. "Stay at Home and Teach: A Comparative Study of Psychosocial Risks Between Spain and Mexico During the Pandemic." *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (September 30, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.566900>.
- Sharma, Umesh. "Qualitative Research in Business & Management." Michael D. Myers. *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*. London: Sage 2009." *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management* 6, no. 4 (October 2, 2009): 292–96.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/11766090910989536>.
- Sobambela, M. A. *Investigation of Causal Factors of Teachers' Burnout in Schools*. The Libode District, Eastern Cape, 2014.
- Tran, Bach Xuan, Hai Thanh Phan, Thao Phuong Thi Nguyen, Men Thi Hoang, Giang Thu Vu, Huong Thi Lei, Carl A Latkin, Cyrus SH Ho, and Roger CM Ho. "Reaching Further by Village Health Collaborators: The Informal Health Taskforce of Vietnam for COVID-19 Responses." *Journal of Global Health* 10, no. 1 (June 2020). <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.10.010354>.
- Walker, Tom W. N., Wolfram Weckwerth, Luca Bragazza, Lena Fragner, Brian G. Forde, Nicholas J. Ostle, Constant Signarbieux, Xiaoliang Sun, Susan E. Ward, and Richard D. Bardgett. "Plastic and Genetic Responses of a Common Sedge to Warming Have Contrasting Effects on Carbon Cycle Processes." *Ecology Letters* 22, no. 1 (January 22, 2019): 159–69.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.13178>.
- Waltz, Macy E. "The Efficacy of a Stress Management and Self-Care Training on Student Teachers' Stress Levels." Texas Tech University, 2016. <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/handle/2346/67058>.
- Wang, Cuiyan, Riyu Pan, Xiaoyang Wan, Yilin Tan, Linkang Xu, Cyrus S. Ho, and Roger C. Ho. "Immediate Psychological Responses and Associated Factors during the Initial Stage of the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Epidemic among the General Population in China." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no. 5 (March 6, 2020): 1729. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17051729>.
- Wang, Guanghai, Yunting Zhang, Jin Zhao, Jun Zhang, and Fan Jiang. "Mitigate the Effects of Home Confinement on Children during the COVID-19 Outbreak." *The Lancet* 395, no. 10228 (March 2020): 945–47. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30547-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X).
- Wildemann, Anja, and Ingmar Hosenfeld. *Bundesweite Elternbefragung Zu Homeschooling Während Der Covid-19 Pandemie*. Universität Koblenz-Landau, 2020.
- Wrase, M. „Langsam Vermisse Ich Die Schule ... “. Edited by Detlef Fickermann and Benjamin Edelstein. Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830992318>.
- Zedan, Raed, and Jarmas Bitar. "Stress and Coping Strategies among Science Elementary School Teachers in Israel," 2013.

## **ABOUT AUTHORS**

Thanduxolo Nomtshongwana is a Doctor Education student at the Walter Sisulu University, Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa. He is also a fulltime professional teacher in Department of Basic Education, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Andrea Mqondiso Buka is currently a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Education in the continuing professional teacher development at Walter Sisulu University, Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa. His research focuses on inclusive education and educational management and policy, especial psycho-pedagogical research.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanduxolo Nomtshongwana expresses his gratitude to God, he would like to thank him for giving him strength, health, and life. Additionally, he would like to acknowledge the contribution of other people who enabled this research to succeed. He is grateful to his supervisor, Dr. Andrea Mqondiso Buka, for his guidance, availability, and willingness to help him; to the primary school teachers in Chris Hani East District, as well as to his colleagues for their support and encouragement as they worked together. He also thanks his family (his wife-Sinoxolo Nomtshongwana and their daughters Mihlali, Ngewele, and Konke) for their patience and support. Despite his late-night studies, lack of family time, and need for financial assistance, they remained patient with him. Wishing them all a joyous and abundant blessing from the good Lord. Thank you.