

**THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY OF EMPLOYEES AT  
THE EDUCATION TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: SECTOR  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY**

**by**

**MENYEZWA NOZIZWE MANDU MENZE**

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**Supervisor: Dr. F.M. Taute**

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**DECLARATION**

I, **Menyezwa Nozizwe Mandu Menze**, declare that the study on “The Impact Of Stress On Productivity Of The Employees At The Education Training And Development Practices: Sector Education And Training Authority” was concluded by me. I also compiled this research report and all sources used are acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

**MENYEZWA NOZIZWE MANDU MENZE**

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**My God, My Guide. I exalt Your Name in echoes.**

**My mother, the inspirer of my life; my husband my life, my children my joy; this for you to be proud, thank you for your love and support.**

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**Mr. Magongo you are indeed my brother, your support and inspiration shall indeed be told down memory lane.**

**To the staff at the ETDP SETA Mr. I. Mabhena, Ms. L. Cindi and Mr. T. Gula, I really appreciate your tireless efforts.**

## **ABSTRACT**

The goal of the study was to investigate the impact of stress on productivity of employees at the Education Training and Development Practices: Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA). According to Dean (2002:38), stress-related illnesses have been a leading cause for low productivity levels in the workplace. Immense pressure at work has led to stress, which makes it the number one factor that has led to illness.

For this study applied research was utilised, as its main goal was directed towards shedding light in as far as the impact of stress on productivity in the organisation was concerned. Thus the study helped to elucidate descriptive information on the impact of stress on employees at the ETDP SETA, and gave specific details about the phenomena in question. Research was conducted within the framework of a survey. No sampling was done, as the total population was very small. The respondents in this study were the 51 employees at the ETDP SETA who were employed during the commencement of the study. Questionnaires were designed and distributed by delegates, of the Head of Division Human Resources to all the sections at the ETDP SETA. From the results obtained it was evident that there were many stress factors that the employees at the ETDP SETA endured, and the enquiry proved that the impact of stress affected productivity negatively. The fact that the majority of the employees thought that the organisation did not care about them was a reflection of huge dissatisfaction that undoubtedly lowered productivity.

## KEY CONCEPTS

Stress

Productivity

Employee

Impact

ETDP SETA

Productivity levels

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk & Schenk (1998:581) work-related stress has been a topic that has received increasing attention, in the area of occupational health, over the last three decades. These authors were of the opinion that the world, especially the world of work and business, has become increasingly subject to fast changing forces like increased competition, the pressure of quality, innovation and an increase in the pace of doing business. The demands on employees grew equally dramatically and this created stress within employees. Apart from stress that arose from the work situation, other sources of stress could relate to personal factors such as relationships with others and use of free time.

Michac (1997:1) specified causes of stress as follows: poor time management, unclear job descriptions, feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, inability to get things done, lack of communication, bad personal relationships, quality and complexity of tasks. In the same breadth, Dean (2002:38), viewed stress-related illnesses as the leading cause for low productivity levels in the workplace. Immense pressure at work has led to stress, which made it the number one factor causing illness. Michac (1997:3) outlined reasons for low productivity as follows; poor training in the company, machine break downs, non-established performance standards, lack of planning and motivation, change, poor atmosphere and environment, inadequate communication at many levels, non-identification with company goals.

The Education Training and Development Practices: Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) being at its infant stage of development, adopted policies that protected the mental health of their employees. However stress was a phenomenon that affected employees within and beyond the workplace. Stress-related illnesses, including constant migraines, bad postures, mental and physical fatigue and a host of other complaints, resulted in high absenteeism in the workplace.

For the researcher it seemed appropriate to contribute information that would equip this organisation to manage their employees' stress levels better. What inspired the researcher to choose the topic will be discussed in detail in the section that follows.

## **1.2. MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE TOPIC**

According to Fouché and De Vos (1998a: 55), mere inquisitiveness as the motivation for research, is a delicate subject, as very few researchers would have the nerve to state that they were stimulated by mere inquisitiveness to undertake a research project. These authors also stated that it could not be entirely true either, as no researcher could afford to be influenced by inquisitiveness only. Other considerations such as usefulness and feasibility had to be part of the picture. Yet it remained a very basic truth that the real researcher and all of the really great researchers of the past were driven by a certain "informed inquisitiveness".

In this particular research, the researcher's interest in the topic was inspired by the patterns of stress-related employees' psychosocial problems she observed in her practise as a social worker. Furthermore, after a session with an employee at the ETDP SETA who raised concern about work-related problems that precipitated his personal problems, the researcher saw a need to gain entry into the organisation. When this employee reported that the

ETDP SETA did not have any counselling services for employees with personal or work-related problems, the researcher became curious about whether their stress had an impact on productivity. This was based on background information given by the employee who thought that his productivity at work was also being affected by his personal problems, as he would lose focus and concentration.

The researcher viewed stress as a dangerous phenomenon that leads to deterioration of people's total functioning, thus this topic, in turn, raised the awareness at the ETDP SETA management on the phenomenon. Furthermore, stress has been an interesting phenomenon to the researcher; her main concern being the trends that she noticed, in some companies, during her practise as a social worker, where most workers were encouraged to treat symptoms of stress, without getting to the core of the stressor.

### **1.3. PROBLEM FORMULATION**

Job stress was considered to be a rising concern in many organisations in South Africa. High levels of stress resulted in low productivity, increased absenteeism and staff turnover and an assortment of other employee problems including alcoholism, drug abuse, hypertension and a host of cardiovascular problems. Another reason for concern over job stress was stress-related worker's compensation claims that rose dramatically (Carell, Elbert, Hatfield, Grobler, Marx and van der Schyf, 1996:418).

Du Brin (1996:97) was also of the opinion that there is no job that is without potential stressors for some people. He further identified some major job stressors that employee's encounter as follows:

- High job demand vs. low job control;
- Work overload or underload;

- Job insecurity and unemployment;
- Video display terminal over-exposure, for example, working with computers; and
- Adverse customer interaction.

The abovementioned stressors also applied to employees at the ETDP SETA as they work in a focus-demanding environment, monitoring and evaluating education and training programmes and practices for the whole of South Africa. The organisation was formed in 2000, as an initiative of the Department of Labour, in an attempt to equip people with skills to succeed in the global market, and to offer opportunities to individuals and communities for self-advancement and to enable them to play a productive role in society, (ETDP SETA Profile, 2000).

In 2002, Mr Zikalala, the then Head of Division Human Resources at the ETDP SETA in Rivonia, Johannesburg, saw a need to expand capacity. This organisation delivers services nationally, using 51 employees. He concurred with the view of the employee, which told the researcher that the ETDP SETA employees were no exception to problems affecting employees elsewhere. He mentioned victims of car hijacking who came to work immediately after the incidence, marital problems that employees managed on their own, child welfare matters, HIV/AIDS-related problems and other terminal illnesses. He also reported his concern over the fact that no study had been conducted along the lines of this research and that it was important for him to have insight into their stress levels and impact on the job. The study helped him devise a strategy to manage stress levels in the working environment. The employees at the ETDP SETA seemed to work in an environment that require high levels of concentration, thus any stress on the job would have a disastrous impact.

In conclusion, stress remained a challenge for the ETDP SETA, as the company did not have a mental health facility for employees with personal and work-related problems. As a result, employees would come to work overloaded with problems that in turn affected productivity negatively. The study explored whether factors including the abovementioned affected the employees at the ETDP SETA.

For the purpose of this study the problem was formulated as follows: The ETDP SETA did not have a mental health facility for employees with personal- and work-related problems in place to address the stress levels of employees.

#### **1.4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

According to De Vos, Schurink and Strydom (1998:7) the terms “goals”, “purpose”, and “aim” have been used interchangeably. Their meaning implied the broader, more abstract conception of “the end toward which effort or ambition is directed”, while “objective” denotes the more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable conception of such “end toward which effort or ambition is directed”. The one (goal, purpose or aim) is the “dream”; the other (objective) is the steps one has to take one by one realistically at grass root level, within a certain time span, in order to attain the dream.

- **Aim**

The aim of this study was to describe the impact of stress on productivity of the employees at the ETDP SETA.

- **Objectives**

The objectives were as follows:

- To collect information on the impact of stress on productivity by conducting a literature study and consulting with experts;
- To investigate stress factors applicable to the employees at the ETDP SETA and their levels of stress;
- To determine how employees at the ETDP SETA handled stress;
- To determine whether employees experiencing stress symptoms met the expected performance standards; and
- To make recommendations, to the ETDP SETA, on the management of the impact of stress on productivity.

## **1.5. HYPOTHESIS**

According to De Vos (1998:116) research always commenced with one or more questions or hypothesis. Questions are posed about the nature of real situations, while hypothesis are statements about how things can be. Grinnell (1997:91) believed that a descriptive study might begin with the idea that X, the independent variable, may be related to Y, the dependant variable. A hypothesis is an answer to a specific research question before a research study has been conducted to test whether the answer is true or not. Grinnell further emphasised that it was not just any statement but a statement that could be proved or disapproved by comparison with objective facts.

De Vos (1998:116) differentiated two criteria for good hypothesis statements as follows:

- Hypotheses are about statements about the relations between variables.
- Hypotheses carry clear implications for testing the stated relations.

De Vos further noted that these criteria meant that the hypothesis statements contained two or more variables that were measurable or potentially measurable and that they specified how the variables were related. For this study not much was known about the stress levels of the employees except speculated information given by one of the employees.

The hypothesis for the study was as follows, “high stress levels had a negative impact on productivity of employees at the ETDP SETA”.

## **1.6. RESEARCH APPROACH**

Leedy in De Vos, Schurink and Strydom (1998:15) stated that all research methodologies rested upon a bedrock axiom: the nature of the data and the problem for research dictated the research methodology. All data, all factual information, all-human knowledge, ultimately reached the researcher either in words or numbers. Leedy subsequently identified qualitative research methodology as having dealt with data that was principally verbal, and quantitative research methodology as having dealt with data that was principally numerical.

Grinnell and Richard (1997:67) saw the distinction between the two approaches being that the qualitative approach to research acquisition was expansive in its inquiry to social work problems, whereas the quantitative approach was intentionally limited.

Mouton and Marais in De Vos, Schurink and Strydom (1998:15) saw the quantitative approach as that approach to research in the social sciences that was more highly formalised as well as more explicitly controlled, with a range that was more exactly defined, and which in terms of the methods used, was relatively close to physical sciences.

This study utilised a quantitative approach because the investigation process was done in a manner that concentrated on measurement of data.

### **1.7. TYPE OF RESEARCH**

The type of research was largely influenced by the research goal. According to Fouché and De Vos (1998:69) when a researcher is only interested in adding to the knowledge base of the social work profession he undertakes a basic research. On the other hand, Rothman and Thomas (1994:3) viewed applied research as targeted to address the application of research in practice. Applied research was directed towards shedding light on or providing possible solutions to practical problems. It also included learning more about the relevant target behaviour or potential clients and client systems, relevant intervention behaviour, and the relevant behavioural, social, contextual and environmental conditions. Rothman and Thomas (1994:4) termed this research as an intervention research and differentiated between three main types which were as follows:

- Empirical research to extend knowledge of human behaviour relating to human service intervention – referred to as intervention knowledge development.
- The means by which the findings from intervention knowledge development research may be linked to, and utilised in, practical application – referred to as intervention knowledge utilisation.

- Research directed towards developing innovative interventions – referred to as intervention design and development.

For this study applied research was utilised, as its main goal was directed towards shedding light in as far as the impact of stress on productivity in the organisation was concerned. Based on the above facts by Fouché and De Vos, the researcher was of the opinion that the study was focused on extending knowledge of human behaviour relating to human service intervention.

## **1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Babbie (1992:89) saw research design as addressing the planning of scientific inquiry and designing a strategy for finding out something. He further emphasised the need to determine what was being analysed and observed. Thyer in Fouché and De Vos (1998c:123) viewed a research design as a blueprint or detailed plan for how a research study was to be conducted. Huysamen in Fouché and De Vos (1998c:124) refined the definition by specifying that this plan or blueprint offered the framework according to which data are to be collected to investigate the research hypothesis or questioning in the most economical manner.

Babbie (1992:107) saw the most common and useful purpose of research being exploration, description and explanation. Babbie also emphasised that a descriptive study was used when a researcher observed situations, events and then described what was observed.

In this study a descriptive research was used based on Grinnell (1997:109) who believed that descriptive questions usually elucidated the “what”, “when” and “how” of a situation at a descriptive level. These questions described the

phenomena but did not go much further in their enquiry or analysis. Thus this study helped to elucidate descriptive information on the impact of stress on employees at the ETDP SETA, and gave specific details about the phenomena in question.

## **1.9 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND STRATEGY**

Mouton (1996:133) distinguished between two distinctive research strategies in social research that he referred to as a general and contextual strategy. In general strategy social objects or phenomena were studied for their interest as representative examples of a larger population of similar objects or phenomena. In a contextual strategy, researchers studied phenomena because of their intrinsic and immediate contextual significance.

According to De Vos and Fouché (1998a:100) the “where” and “how” questions of gathering information referred to information about the data collection methods that researchers intended using; the data analysis procedures they intended implementing; and the limitations inherent in their plans. Moss in De Vos and Fouché (1998a:100) emphasised that a detailed description of the data-gathering procedures for the planned investigation was needed. This description covered the specific techniques employed, the specific measuring instruments utilised and the specific series of activities conducted in making the measurements.

De Vos and Fouché (1998b:89) defined a questionnaire as an instrument with open- or close-ended questions or statements to which the respondent would react to. Based on the view of Fouché (1998:156), the researcher worked according to an economic principle that enabled respondents to communicate as much information as possible in the briefest possible time. Open- and

close-ended questions were used in the questionnaires. There is research that has been done previously on the impact of stress on productivity of employees; however what the researcher in this study wanted to find out was the impact of stress on productivity of the ETDP SETA employees.

Questions were put on summated rating to provide variety to the structure of questions. Babbie (1992:147), also saw the advantage of utilising close-ended questions that provided greater uniformity of responses, which were easy to process, hence closed-ended questions were used for the study. To maximise cooperation and a high response rate, the researcher utilised guidelines in constructing a questionnaire as outlined by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:115).

De Vos and Fouché (1998b:89) distinguished between different kinds of questionnaires such as mailed, telephonic, personal, group and questionnaires delivered by hand. For the purpose of this study, hand delivered questionnaires was utilised.

Data captured through the questionnaires were analysed. According to De Vos and Fouché (1998c:203) data analysis means the categorisation, ordering, manipulating, and summarising of data to obtain answers to research questions. The purpose of analysis was to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems could be studied, tested and conclusions drawn. Interpretation took the results of analysis, made inferences pertinent to the research relations studied and drew conclusions about these relations. The researcher who interpreted research results searched them for their meaning and implications.

### **1.10. PILOT STUDY**

Strydom (1998a:179) was of the opinion that a pilot study can be viewed as the “dress rehearsal” of the main investigation. It was similar to the researcher’s investigation but on a small scale.

The following were the components of a pilot study:

- **Literature study**

Babbie (1992:110) was of the opinion that a literature review should be able to address the following questions:

- What others said about this topic;
- What theories address it and what they said;
- What research had been done previously;
- Were there consistent findings or did past studies disagree; and
- Were there flaws in the body of existing research that could be rectified?

According to Strydom (1998a:180) the researcher could obtain information from existing research reports on the suitability of certain subjects, procedures and obstacles he would encounter in his own investigation. For the purpose of this study the researcher utilised academic journals, Encyclopaedia, textbooks, dictionaries, abstracts, indexes, public documents and interlibrary loans utilising the Academic Information Centre at the University of Pretoria. The Internet and health-related magazines stored at Kempton Park Library, where the researcher resided, were also utilised together with books and reports made available by the ETDP SETA, for the purpose of the study.

- **Consultation with experts**

Cilliers in Strydom (1998a:180) believed, that in spite of the wealth of literature that may exist in any discipline, it usually represented only a section of the knowledge of people involved in the field. For the purpose of the study, the following experts were consulted:

- **Mr. Mabhena, Head of Human Resource Division at the ETDP SETA in Rivonia.**

Mr Mabhena assisted with the demography and infrastructure of the organisation. He reported that the organisation did not have a Wellness Programme and it had always been difficult for him to manage employees that came to him with personal- and work-related problems. He believed that stress was part of human functioning and the employees at the ETDP SETA were not an exception to that. As the Head of Human Resources, Mr Mabhena reported to have witnessed how stress disrupted job performance. He, however, acknowledged that some people preferred to work under pressure. He mentioned keen interest in this research on the impact of stress on productivity, as he believed that it would assist him in the process of outsourcing a Wellness Programme.

- **Mrs. Mgwebi, Deputy Director: Human Resource Generalist at the National Office of the Department of Environmental Affairs in Pretoria.**

Mrs Mgwebi believed that stress disabled peoples optimal functioning in the work place. She observed a pattern of absenteeism in sick leave with employees under her management after assignments requiring a lot of concentration and energy. She reported that it was important for people to replenish their energies so that they would not burn out.

- **Dr Madyibi is a Deputy Director with the Department of Agriculture managing Veterinary Services in the North West Province.**

Dr Madyibi reported that the main stressor for the Department's employees was the long distance that people need to travel around the province monitoring veterinary services. The impact that traveling had was sometimes reflected in the poor quality of the reports they produced and lost productivity as they took more time than they were supposed to take to make their trips bearable in the rural North West Province.

- **Ms N Majija is a Technician and a Production Supervisor at Metro Rail in Johannesburg.**

Mrs Majija reported difficulty in managing the production of employees whose sole responsibility was to monitor technical faults on the train rails. The number of faults an employee managed to repair within a given time, and the promptness of reporting those faults to the office, measured an employee's performance. Ms Majija reported that she observed some of her supervisees reported sick on Mondays and had always wondered what triggered that behavior because it formed a pattern.

- **Mr Nhlanhla Qwabe is a Human Resource Director at Nike South Africa, head office in Midrand.**

Mr Qwabe was of the opinion that stress has become a reality in our daily living. He believed that nowadays employees spend more time at the office than any other place; therefore, it would make sense that the content of our work environment and the people who we work with could add significant amounts of stress to our lives. Apart from the physical problems, work-related stress could lead to poor job performance, accidents, termination and violence. South African companies lost a

significant amount of money annually in stress-related accidents, lost productivity, absenteeism and medical aid costs. Many employees have become so accustomed to being in a permanently “fast-forward” mode, that they did not even realise they were significantly stressed out. He reported that employees put immense pressure on themselves to perform at their best. Internal factors that caused work-related stress included having unrealistic expectations of themselves, of the job, and being unaware of their limitations and shortcomings, taking on too much and then feeling guilty for not being able to finish the job.

- **Feasibility of the study**

According to Strydom (1998a:180), apart from the study of relevant literature and interviews with experts, it was also necessary to obtain a picture of the real practical situation where the prospective investigation was executed. At this stage the pilot study addressed the goals and objectives, resources, research population, procedures of data collection, the data gathering, the field workers, and possible errors, which occurred. The author also emphasised that this aspect of the pilot study alerted a prospective researcher to possible unforeseen problems that emerged during the main investigation.

The company that was researched was situated not far from where the researcher resided resulting in minimal expense on travelling and time spent on the road. Written permission was received from Mr Mabhena, the Head of Human Resource division to conduct the study, after waiting for a period of four months for approval by the CEO who was in the process of being employed at the commencement of this study. The researcher incurred costs in telephone calls, meetings and travelling, as she had to persuade the Head of Human Resource Division to seek for an alternative while the company was awaiting the employment of a new CEO.

The researcher also incurred costs in the duplication of questionnaires, as the Head of Department did not get feedback from the initial batch of questionnaires that was distributed at the inception of the study. Thus an added expense in reduplicating the questionnaires incurred.

The organisation also incurred costs when questionnaires were distributed, with assistance from their personnel during working hours. Questionnaires were filled in during office hours and the researcher spent time waiting for some respondents responses as she wanted to maximise the response rate.

- **Pilot testing of the questionnaire**

According to Singleton, Straits and McAllister in Strydom (1998a:178) the pre-testing of a measuring instrument consisted of trying it out on a small number of persons having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents. It took all heterogeneous factors into consideration. Strydom (1998a:179) further viewed it as a dress rehearsal of the main investigation.

According to Strydom (1998a:183) pilot testing was valuable for refining the wording, ordering, layout, filtering and in helping to prune the questionnaire to a manageable length. Strydom (1998a:183) saw the main value of pilot testing so that modifications could be made to the questionnaire prior to the main investigation. The result was almost always an improved questionnaire and a more meaningful main investigation.

Strydom (1998a:184) further reiterated that pilot testing could also give a clear indication whether the selected procedure was the most suitable for the purpose of investigation. If the selected procedure appeared to be unsuitable during the pilot testing, another procedure could be selected and a second or even a third pilot testing undertaken, until the researcher was satisfied.

For the ETDP SETA, pilot testing of the questionnaire was done with two respondents in the company. To ensure validity of the actual study, respondents involved in the pilot test were not involved in the actual study.

No changes were made in the questionnaire; therefore the same questionnaire was used in the main study.

### **1.11 RESEARCH POPULATION, BOUNDARY OF THE SAMPLE, AND THE SAMPLING METHOD**

- **Research population**

Mark (1996:104) defined a population as the collection of all individuals, families, groups, organisations, communities and events that the researcher was interested in finding out about. Babbie (1992:198) defined a study population as the aggregation of elements from which the sample was actually selected. Strydom and De Vos (1998:190) defined population as a set of entities for which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher were represented.

For the purpose of this study, the population was the 51 employees, which were under the employ of the ETDP SETA during the commencement of the study. This excluded employees who became respondents in the pilot testing of the questionnaire.

- **Boundary of the sample**

Arkava and Lane in Strydom and De Vos (1998: 191) defined a sample as the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:86) defined a sample as a subset of the whole population, which is actually investigated by a researcher and whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population.

- **Sampling method**

No sampling was done in this study, as the total population was very small. The respondents for this study comprised of 51 employees at the ETDP SETA.

## **1.12 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Strydom (1998b:24) defined ethics as a set of moral principles, which is suggested by an individual or group, and subsequently widely accepted that offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistance and students.

The study was undertaken based on the following classification of ethical issues as outlined by Strydom (1998b:25-32):

- **Harm to respondents**

The respondents were informed beforehand about the potential impact of the study. According to Strydom (1998b:25), the more concrete harm that respondents could experience is, for example, with regard to their family life,

relationships or employment situation. The fact that negative behaviour could be recalled to memory during the investigation would be the beginning of renewed personal harassment. Special caution was taken with employees at the ETDP SETA, as the organisation did not have an occupational social worker or Employee Assistance Practitioner to deal with the negative impact of thoughts and emotions that would arise. The researcher provided a resource list that could be used by employees that needed help.

- **Informed Consent**

Strydom (1998b:25) was of the opinion that obtaining informed consent implied that all possible or adequate information on the goal of investigation, the procedures which were followed during the investigation, the advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents were exposed to, and the credibility of the researcher, were rendered to potential subjects or their legal representatives. For this study, the goal was specified and as hand delivered questionnaires were utilised, the researcher received physical contact with the respondents and clarified whatever questions they had at inception.

- **Deception of respondents**

Strydom (1998b:27), described deception of subjects as deliberately misrepresenting facts in order to make another person believe what was not true, violating the respect to which every person is entitled.

The study undertaken at the ETDP SETA was an academically influenced investigation that was guided by research theory. The researcher was accountable to the research committee of the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria and had an obligation to comply with research ethics.

- **Violation of privacy**

According to Sieber in Strydom (1998b:27) privacy was that which was not intended for others to observe or analyse. The researcher ensured that the respondent's identities were kept anonymous and confidential by not asking them to put their names on the questionnaires.

- **Actions and competence of researcher**

Strydom (1998b:30) emphasised that researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation. For this study the researcher acquired the necessary knowledge in research theory from the University of Pretoria, Social Work and Criminology Department, and was thus skilled to undertake the research.

- **Release or publication of findings**

Strydom (1998b:32) summarised what was expected of a researcher, in terms of release or publication of findings as follows:

- The final written report must be accurate, objective, clear, and unambiguous and contain all essential information;
- All forms of emphasis or slanting to bias the results are unethical and must be avoided;
- Plagiarism is a serious offence; therefore all due recognition must be given to resources consulted and people who collaborated;
- Shortcomings and errors must be admitted; and

- Subjects should be informed about the findings in an objective manner without offering too many details or impairing the principle of confidentiality.

The researcher complied with the above ethical considerations when releasing the findings of the study. The findings were published according to the expectations and requirements for a mini dissertation set by the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria.

- **Restoration of respondents**

Debriefing sessions, during which respondents would get an opportunity after the study, to work through their experience and its aftermath, was one way in which the researcher could assist respondents and minimise harm (Strydom, 1998b: 33). The researcher waited for the majority of the respondents to fill in their questionnaires and none of them required debriefing.

### **1.13 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

- **Employee**

The Labour Relations Act (1998:211), defined an employee as any person, excluding an independent contractor, who works for another person or for the State and who receives, or is entitled to receive remuneration, and any other person who in any manner assist in carrying on or conducting the business of an employer. Crowther (1999:378) defined an employee as a person who works for somebody or for a company in return for wages. The researcher defined an employee as a person that works for an employer and gets a salary in return for the work he or she has done.

- **Stress**

Carrel, *et al.* (1996:418) defined stress as a discrepancy between an employee's perceived state and desired state, when the employee considered such a discrepancy important. Stress influenced an employee's psychological and physical well-being, as well as the employee's efforts to cope with the stress by preventing it. Du Brin (1996:442) defined stress as an internal reaction to any force that threatens to disturb a person's equilibrium. The researcher viewed stress as a state of psychological and physical discomfort induced by a threat in a person's environment.

- **Productivity**

According to Cronje, Neuland, and Van Reenen (1989:418) the term productivity refers to the relationship between a specific output and the input that has been made to obtain that particular output and is therefore a criterion of an enterprise's efficiency in its production of goods and services. Du Brin (1996:306) defined productivity as the amount of quality work accomplished in relation to the resources consumed. The researcher defined productivity as the ability to produce work according to the expected standards or beyond the expected standards of the employer.

- **The ETDP SETA**

The Education Training and Development Practices, Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) is one of the 25 Sector Education and Training Authorities charged with implementing the National Skills Development Strategy (Corporate Profile, 2000).

The ETDP SETA is an organisation charged with the task of monitoring and evaluating education practices in South Africa.

- **Impact**

Hawkins (1998:221) defined impact as an influence or effect. In the Webster Dictionary of the English Language (1985:642) impact is defined as the notable ability to arouse and hold attention and interest.

The researcher viewed impact as the intensity with which something happens.

- **Productivity Levels**

Hawkins (1998:348) defined productivity level as a measure of the efficiency of production. High labour productivity means each worker produced a lot of output.

The researcher viewed productivity levels as the overall amount of productivity by employees.

## **1.14 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT**

Chapter 1: Introduction and research methodology.

- Chapter 2: Literature study on the nature of stress and the impact thereof on productivity in the workplace.
- Chapter 3: Empirical study, analysis, and interpretation on the impact of stress on productivity levels of the ETDP SETA employees.
- Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations for the study of study.

### **1.15 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The research tool had open-ended questions, which made the analysis of the results lengthy and complicated. The delay in obtaining feedback was attributed to the researcher's lack of insight into the organisational dynamics, which resulted in time wasted in bargaining for feedback.

### **SUMMARY**

The research method utilised in this study was suitable for a working environment as the majority of the questions were closed-ended, thus saving the ETDP SETA's time. The majority of the employees worked on tight deadlines, and anything that was not in their line of focus did not get priority, hence the researcher had to wait for the questionnaires to be filled in her presence.

To provide a theoretical view on the study the following chapter will give insight on the nature of stress and the impact thereof on productivity in the workplace.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE NATURE AND IMPACT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter of the study will provide in-depth insight on the nature of stress and the impact thereof on productivity. Opinions from different authors will be utilised to provide a better theoretical understanding of the nature of stress, its causes, and then the impact it will have on productivity.

#### **2.2 NATURE OF STRESS**

One believes that stress is a complex phenomenon because it is not tangible so it cannot be overtly touched. According to Bowing and Harvey (2001:369), stress occurs with the interaction between an individual and the environment, which produces emotional strain affecting a person's physical and mental condition. Stress is caused by stressors, which are events that create a state of disequilibrium within an individual. These authors also stated that the cost of too much stress on individuals, organisations, and society is high. Many employees may suffer from anxiety disorders or stress-related illnesses. In terms of days lost on the job, it is estimated that each affected employee loses about 16 working days a year because of stress, anxiety or depression.

According to Ritchie and Martin (1999:175), for years stress was described and defined in terms of external, usually physical, forces acting on an individual. Later it was suggested that the individual's perception of, and response to, stimuli or events was a very important factor in determining how that individual

might react, and whether or not an event will be considered stressful. These authors further contended that most researchers acknowledged that both external and internal factors affect stress. They viewed stress as a response to external or internal processes, which reach levels that strain physical and psychological capacities beyond their limit.

According to Blumenthal (2003:5), for thousands of years, the bodies of cavemen / women were primed to deal with the harsh rigors of their environment. In the face of danger a rush of adrenaline would prepare cave dwellers to either "fight" or "run" for their lives. In the face of adversity, muscles and nerves were charged for sudden movement, heart rates would increase, blood would course through the veins with sugar released into the blood stream. The "fight or flight" response would ready them for action: powerful hormones epinephrine and norepinephrine, released by the adrenal glands, endowed humans with enhanced alertness, strength and energy. Thousand of years later humans live in the same bodies and possess the same human brains but in a world with completely different stressors and hassles. While few humans may face danger from wild animals and unsuccessful hunting, urban life is equally demanding. The urban environment is rife with stressors (such as pollution, noise, violence, traffic) that stimulate the nervous system into a flight or fight response but it is only in rare instances that an aggressive or vigorous physical response is appropriate.

Scientists and medical practitioners agreed that the accumulation of stress products in the body, over a prolonged period, can be devastating and could play a crucial role in degenerative processes like ulcers and cardiac diseases. Chronic distress would reduce a person's overall physical, mental and spiritual well-being. It is not uncommon for a person, who is stressed, to experience a loss of appetite, disturbed sleep patterns, excessive and disturbed feelings of anxiety, fear, negativity and even deep depression, as well as being subject to a variety of physical symptoms (nausea, high blood pressure) and complaints like

irritable bowel syndrome, cardiac problems and flu. An overload of stress reduces effectiveness and is highly immune-suppressive.

Blumenthal (2003:5) viewed stress as anything that upsets people's ability to maintain critical variables (which can be social, psychological, spiritual or biological in nature) within acceptable limits. The experience of stress involves an event that is demanding or resources as well as the subjective feeling of distress experienced in its face. An event could be experienced as stressful if people appraised (evaluated) it as distressing. Whether an event is experienced as stressful depends on a person's psychosocial orientation with things like culture, spirituality, values, beliefs and past experiences influencing the appraisal. Events that are appraised as being overwhelming, threatening, unsatisfying or confliction are more likely to be experienced as stressful.

Blumenthal (2003:10) differentiated different effects of stress as follows:

- Subjective effects: Stress leads to anxiety, depression, frustration, fatigue and low self-esteem.
- Behavioral effects: Stress leads to accident proneness, substance abuse, impaired speech, restlessness and forgetfulness.
- Cognitive effects: Stress affects our thought process, leading to a difficulty or fear of making decisions, forgetfulness, hypersensitivity, mental blocks and difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly. This may be intensified by substance abuse.
- Physiological responses: Begin in the brain and spread to organs throughout the body. Catecholamine from the adrenaline medulla causes the kidneys to raise blood pressure and the liver to release sugar into the blood stream. The pituitary gland stimulates the release of corticosteroids, which helps to resist stress but, if in the system for a prolonged period of time, suppresses the immune system. These responses are adaptive for dealing with stress in the form of "fight or

flight” but this response is rarely useful in urban work, instead the accumulation of stress products in the body is immuno-suppressive playing a part in degenerative processes and disease.

- Effects on health: Prolonged exposure to stress has profound and detrimental effects on health. Among possible complications stress may exacerbate or play a role in causing ailments like asthma, amenorrhea, coronary heart disease, chest pains, diarrhea, dyspepsia, headaches, migraines, diabetes mellitus, ulcers and decreased libido. In a world where AIDS is frighteningly prevalent people need to be aware that stress is immuno-suppressive. HIV breaks down a person’s immune system, which leaves them vulnerable to potentially fatal infections and diseases.

### **2.3 CAUSES OF STRESS**

One is convinced that the workplace may influence its employees’ stress levels in different ways. In the following paragraphs different causes of stress in an organisation will be discussed.

- **Role ambiguity**

According to Johns (1996:470) there is substantial evidence that role ambiguity can provoke stress. Lack of direction can prove stressful, especially for people who are low in their tolerance for such ambiguity.

- **Role conflict**

Luthans (2002:408) differentiates three major types of role conflict. One type is the conflict between the person and the role. For example, a production worker

and a member of a union are appointed to head up a new production team. This new team leader may not really believe in keeping close control over the workers and it would go against this individual's personality to be hardnosed but that is what the head of production would expect.

A second type of *intrarole* conflict creates contradictory expectations about how a given role should be played. Finally, *interole* conflict results from differing requirements of two or more roles that must be played at the same time. For example, work roles and non-work roles are often in such conflict.

Luthens (2002:408) is of the opinion that although all the roles that men and women bring into the organisations are relevant to their behavior, in the study of organisational behavior the organisational role is the most important. Roles such as digital equipment operator, clerk team leader, sales person engineer, systems analyst, departmental head, vice president and chairperson of the board often carry conflicting demands and expectations. This author further stated that recent research evidence showed that such conflict could have a negative impact on performance and also be affected by cultural differences.

Thompson and Mc Hugh (1995:276) further propagated that where competing role expectations, for example, those that take part in determining an individual's intra-organisational; and extra-organisational roles cannot be fulfilled; that this is known as role conflict. Such conflicts may originate in role over-load or under-load, where the demands of a role are greater or lesser than expected. These authors further stated that role conflicts generally exist between differing expectations from the various parts of a person's role set-those persons and groups who expect things of people – and are inevitable with the level of pressure that most people are exposed to in or out of work since a person can not always fulfill the demands of all their roles. In addition people may experience role conflicts between external role demands and personal values and beliefs; or between external role demands and personal

values and beliefs; or between a person's gender, ethnic or skilled identity and their treatment by other workers or by management.

- **Role overload**

In Desseler (2000:580), role overload was significantly associated with unsafe behaviors. Similarly, other researchers have suggested that as work overload increases, workers are likely to adopt more risky work methods.

Johns (1996:465) emphasised that role overload would be a most common stressor for managers especially in today's downsized organisations.

Similarly role underutilisation would occur when employees are allowed to use only a few of their skills and abilities. The most prevalent characteristic of role underutilisation is monotony, where the worker performed the same routine task over and over.

Anderson and Kyprianou (1994:83) are also of the view that stress can be caused by too much or too little work, time pressures and deadlines, too many decisions to take, fatigue and from physical strains of the work environment. These authors further stated that the most researched factors relating to the job itself would be working conditions.

- **Role Stress**

According to Thompson and Mc Hugh (1995:339) the psychological pressures on individuals have been well documented, not in terms of pressures to mould identity, but in terms of the intrapsychic conflicts they can produce. Interpersonal conflicts and conflicts between role expectations have been seen

as causative factors in producing anxiety and stress. According to Thompson and Mc Hugh (1995:339) an example of the conflicts, which fulfilling a role may induce, is seen in Hochschild's (1983) notion of emotional labour. Hochschild characterised emotional labour as a covert source, like money or knowledge or physical labour, which companies need to get the job done. This was originally identified in occupations where individuals had to manage their emotions in order to save the commercial purpose of the enterprise. Recent writings on emotional labour have extended such notions to the full range of behavior in work organisations. Using flight attendants and bill collectors, Hochschild (1983) showed how people were constrained to maintain emotions in their work – friendliness for the stewardess; suspension of trust and sympathy for the debt collector, which only relate to the requirements of the job.

These authors also stated that in situations where management attempted to mould the social identities of individuals and groups into images consonant with commercial demands, people often became estranged from their own feelings. As an interdependent process, emotional labour required both the collaboration of the client and the adjustment of personal feelings to accommodate the client demands. For the emotional labourer, identification with the job itself would lead to difficulties in making constant adjustments to situations and considerable socio-emotional costs may be incurred. Work in the caring professions required that people identify closely with their work and that they exercised self-control over their role-based work.

Thompson and Mc Hugh (1995:340) further propagated that the problem with role-based stress, as an explanatory concept, is that it had the effect of portraying the process as natural and individually based, instead of as a product of the historically produced conditions of work. They also noted that management is usually aware of the negative effects that such pressures have on employee morale and yet would not want to completely remove backlogs of work as it would portray their sections as overstuffed and on occasions would leave people with little or nothing to do.

Ritchie and Martin (1999:180) further emphasised the following working conditions as a source of stress for employees:

- **Money and tangible rewards**

According to Ritchie and Martin (1999:180) someone who scored high on the need for tangible rewards, including money, and who worked in a job that was badly paid, would probably feel aggrieved. If they were not able to move jobs to a better paying one, they will probably resent their employer and take various measures to make themselves more comfortable. One possibility is to cheat: overtly stealing to have time off the working day and extending breaks, from acts of minor sabotage to just not doing tasks as well as they are able. The problem here is both for the employer and for himself or herself. They would be minimising effort as a punishment to the employer.

On the contrary, if someone scored low on the need for tangibles, they would suffer stress as a result of being paid highly, but may suffer if the company used money as a substitute for other beneficial job features. A very good salary for a boring and trivial job did not compensate for long with regards to professional and managerial work. Ritchie and Martin (1999:180) further maintain that people suffered stress if they felt overpaid. Guilt would cause them discomfort, but their behavior may be adjusted to avoid this. The first likely result is busyness and over justification of their work. Anyone who spent time complaining about how they were overloaded would probably be under-occupied.

- **Physical Conditions**

Ritchie and Martin (1999:180) also propagated that someone with a high score on the need for good working conditions would probably suffer stress if they

worked in a draughty, dingy office with a lot of noisy machinery and telephones. These authors further stated that for low scorers on this factor, no one seemed to suffer stress as a result of excellent working conditions.

- **Structure**

According to Ritchie and Martin (1999:181) those who scored high on the need for structure, and did not get it, tended to suffer stress in the form of anxiety. This could be mild, from a vague desire to know more about a task they have been asked to do, to severe, such as a generalised confusion over too wide a choice of options. Unfortunately, someone who would have a high need on this factor would rarely be able to rescue themselves. Furthermore, people low on the need for structure, suffered stress when structure was imposed upon them. A job with not only well-defined procedures, but also constraining and limiting rules, where the slightest deviation is prohibited, would cause them serious problems. Their lack of need for structure had an obverse of great importance: a need for freedom. If they were not allowed any leeway, they may repress their need for freedom, suffering frustration. Any form of conflict uses energy, and internal conflicts use it up doubly as the individual would devote energy to planning escape and then to recognise the possible adverse consequences of obtaining freedom, up to dampening down the desire.

- **People contact**

Ritchie and Martin (1999:182) are of the opinion that a stressful situation for someone high on need for contact with others is where they are forced to work alone for long periods. Where satisfaction is gained from the presence and approval of others, isolation would become a form of sensory deprivation.

Conversely, people very low on the need for contact with others would suffer stress if placed in working circumstances which require extensive social interaction. The mere presence of others would not pose a problem and a low score on this factor will not indicate that the person is a recluse or is suitable only for isolated working. It is the behavior of others that may be a crucial issue. If they are not just present, but overactive in engaging the time and energy of the low scoring person, then they will probably be perceived as intrusive and irritating. Low scorers do like what they call “idle gossip”, for them talk should be about work.

- **Relationships**

People, high on the need for relationships, work best in stable work teams where they can get to know each other well. It might be stretching the measure too far to suggest that someone high on this factor would suffer stress if they were working with a large number of others in circumstances, which did not allow relationships to form, but it is probable that they will not work as well as they might.

On the contrary, someone low on relationships need might suffer stress if placed in close proximity with other employees. It is more likely that they would avoid the problem of enforced intimacy by engaging in as few interactions as possible with others and by distancing themselves mentally, if not physically by various means. There are many people who do not like the idea that those relationships at work should be anything other than formal and strictly work related, even to the point of outside life not being discussed.

- **Recognition**

People who need recognition strive to get it and the higher the need the less discriminating they are about how they do so. For them stress levels rise if their behavior seems to elicit no response from the boss. No response at all is perceived as worse than negative response. The worst fear is that of a vacuum, the black hole, into which efforts and energy pass and from which nothing emerges.

Low scorers on this factor do not experience stress when they are noticed or praised. They would suffer stress if they are subjected to public praise or put into the spotlight and required to perform in some way with the attention of others upon them. Many such people have internal value systems and inbuilt self-confidence that allows them to validate their own actions.

- **Achievement**

High scorers on the need for achievement are uncomfortable in situations where there are no clear objectives and they are prevented from forming their own. Such situations occur where organisations have vague aims and where much politicking replaces the achievement drive. High achievers also feel stress when the targets they were encouraged to go all out for are suddenly changed, especially if the reasons seem impulsive.

Those scoring low on the need for achievement may not suffer stress working in a job where there is pressure to achieve targets, but will be less than enthusiastic about them. This lack of enthusiasm may cause stress as their boss tries to find other motivators, possibly negative.

- **Power and influence**

A need to influence others when frustrated will probably arise from situations where some one feels that their opinions are of no account or that they are powerless to affect either the circumstances of their work or the decisions made by others. These may range from minor irritations of dealings with petty bureaucracy to more serious cases where their wishes and needs appear to be irrelevant.

For those low on power drive, stress can come from being in situations where they have responsibility for others. An example is having staff reporting to you where the successful performance of your job depends on theirs.

- **Variety and change**

Ritchie and Martin (1999:185) believed that people high on the need for stimulation, variety and change could suffer frustration of boredom easily. Even interesting jobs entail some chores and routine tasks. People high on this factor avoid stress by not doing the boring bits; sometimes to their cost later as the chores pile up and eventually require a long stretch of hard work to clear backlog. Managers who try to push such people into doing their fair share of the routine work have set themselves one of the most energy-consuming tasks an organisation offers. It will probably fail, unless continuous amounts of heavy pressure are applied.

Low scorers on the need for change and variety are stressed from having large or successive changes provide more stimulation than they can cope with. The problem for them is how to stay in a comfortable rut when the world seems to conspire to get them out of it. All forms of change can cause problems, from

domestic upheaval (moving houses, people changing their ways of working or routines) to changes at work (reorganising, new processes and procedures, people leaving jobs or arriving as new team members). Stress results from successive changes as a person would try to adjust to each new situation, consolidating time after time only to be disturbed again. It seems to be less stressful to make one large change. Acceptance, settlement and reorientation are then achieved more quickly.

- **Creativity**

Ritchie and Martin (1999:186) viewed those high on the need to be creative would obviously feel under stress in jobs where there is no freedom to think with an open mind or even to consider new ideas.

Low scorers may feel pressurised if put into situations where creativity is required, but are not likely to suffer as long as their lack of performance will act as the cure.

- **Self-development**

Someone scoring high on self-development, the need for autonomy and a chance to grow in the job is stressed by tasks that allow little leeway. Rigid and prescribed jobs in certain organisational cultures, such as those which do not encourage initiative or which reward dependence, would cause discomfort. A manager whose style is autocratic, allowing an employee few opportunities to influence their own work, or even to express views about how it should be done, would probably wonder why they obtain poor performance from someone with a high need for this factor.

Low scorers on this factor did not suffer stress or manifest problems if offered a chance to control and influence their work and to develop within the job: they will not likely take advantage of the offer, unless it caused them no effort.

- **Interest and usefulness**

According to Ritchie and Martin (1999:186) high scorers on interest and usefulness must be very high to exceed a mode of 41 and a median of 43 for the need for intrinsically interesting, useful and rewarding work, and if in jobs where instrumentality reigns, are likely to be alienated and stressed. Jobs without interest to them and with no obvious good or useful elements or outcomes will impinge heavily on such people. If unable to leave, they will be disruptive, if intelligent and bored; apathetic, if conscientious; and depressed or absent on sick leave, if unable to openly rebel; either because of fear of job loss or as a salve to their consciences.

Those scoring low have little problem. If they have an interesting and rewarding job thrust upon them, it is unlikely to cause them stress.

Garrison and Bly (1997:420) view more prominent causes of stress in the work place as follows:

- **Organisational and Personal Change**

Garrison and Bly (1997:420) are of the opinion that a place that one has in a hierarchy can itself be a source of stress. A more radical source of stress develops when organisations decide to change hierarchy. The changes toward participatory management, total quality management, self-management reflects the larger concern with change that makes the organisation more competitive.

These changes include downsizing, new plant development, restructuring work, new product development, and changes in pay systems, corporate buyouts and many other organisational transactions. Many of these changes accompany threats of job loss for many employees.

- **Technology**

Garrison and Bly (1997:421) stated that robotics, computers, faxes, video-displays all have their stresses. Learning about these machines that carry out work means acquiring skills to run them and repair them. Computers and all the new communication technology involve high-speed transmission and processing of information. Using computers and word processors has even added for many people the stress of looking at a video monitor for much of the day. These authors further note that the intense anxiety about technology can be debilitating in many kinds of jobs, from secretarial positions to warehouse management, from assembly line worker to the accountant.

- **Career Challenges**

Organisations have become flatter, meaning that power and responsibility now radiates throughout the organisation. The work force has become more diversified. Jobs and careers get scarcer. For the person who had been determined to rise through an organisation, the challenge had recently become greater. Opportunities to learn new skills are now becoming requirements. Staying the same is quickly becoming an inadequate approach to work. With the flatter organisation and the movement of power and control further down the hierarchy, the role ambiguity for the worker is now greater. The definition of responsibilities that moves beyond a simple task based job to a description that includes interpersonal processes and group decision-making does not

necessarily make the role of a job clearer. As employees are asked to participate their identity will continue to be vague or ambiguous.

- **Personal Control**

Johns (1996:63) was of the opinion that a person's locus of control has an influence over individual's reaction to a stressor. According to Johns people with internal locus of control believe that they control their own behavior, while people with external locus of control believe that their behavior is controlled by luck of fate or powerful people. These two authors' concur in opinion of how individuals react to locus of control. Johns (1996:463) was of the opinion that people with external locus of control are more likely to feel anxious in the face of potential stressors. He attributed that to the fact that most people like to feel in control of what happens to them, and people with external locus of control feel less in control. People with internal locus of control are more likely to confront stressors directly because they assume that this response will make a difference.

Luthans (2002:403) also propagated that people's feelings about their ability to control the situation are important in determining their level of stress. This author further stated that studies have shown that if employees are given a sense of control over their work environment, such as being given a chance to be involved in the decision making process that affects them will reduce their work stress.

- **Personality Type**

Johns (1996:464) stated that individuals who exhibited the type A behavioural patterns tended to be aggressive and ambitious. Their hostility was easily aroused and they felt a great sense of time urgency. They are impatient,

competitive and preoccupied with their work. When compared to type B individuals, type A people report heavier workloads, longer hours and more conflicting work demands. Thus type A personalities would likely exhibit adverse physiological reactions in response to stress. These include elevated blood pressure, elevated heart rate and modified blood chemistry.

Garrison and Bly (1997:423) also acknowledged that type A personalities showed hard-driving, relentless work-oriented behavior. People who exhibit behavior identified with type A personalities are restless, highly competitive and focused on achievement. These authors further stated that type A individuals are aggressive, impatient and their behavior shows tense muscle tone, rapid speech patterns and quick movement.

## **2.4 REACTIONS TOWARDS STRESS**

Johns (1996:470) categorised reactions of people who would experience organisational stress. These reactions were divided into behavioural, physiological and psychological responses, which will be discussed in depth in the following paragraphs.

- **Behavioural Reactions to Stress**

Behavioral reactions to stress are overt activities that stressed individuals use in an attempt to cope with stress. According to Johns (1996:470) one of the positive reactions to stress would be problem solving; which is directed towards terminating the stressor or demanding its potency. Problem solving is reality oriented, and while it is not always effected in combating the stressor, it revealed flexibility and realistic use of feedback. The author put examples of problem solving as; delegation, time management, talking it out, asking for help and searching for alternative.

Withdrawal from stressors was seen by Johns (1996:472) as one of the most basic reactions to stress. In organisations, this withdrawal took the form of absence and turnover. The author further stated that the use of addictive substances; for example smoking, drinking and drug use represented the least satisfactory behavioural response to stress for the individual and the organisation. These activities failed to terminate stress episodes and they left employees less physical and mentally prepared to perform their job.

- **Turnover and absenteeism**

Mathis and Jackson (2000:655) indicated that turnover and absenteeism represent convenient forms of withdrawals from a highly stressful job. Results of several studies indicated a fairly consistent, if modest, relationship between stress and subsequent turnover and absenteeism. In many ways, withdrawals represented one of the easiest ways employees had of handling a stressful work environment, at least in the short run. Indeed turnover and absenteeism may represent two of the less undesirable consequences of stress particularly when compared to alternative choices such as alcoholism, drug abuse or aggression.

According to Luthans (2002:414) there is evidence over the years of research indicating a relationship between stress and absenteeism and turnover. For example, workers would experience stress and react by getting drunk and staying away from work the next day with a hangover. They then felt bad about drinking and that they were letting every one down the morning after and eventually would quit or get fired. In the meantime the absenteeism rate climbed where the turnover rate subsequently increased. This became very costly to the organisation of filling in for absent workers and replacing those who had left. Staying away from a job that caused stress or quitting the job is a flight reaction to the situation.

- **Alcoholism and drug abuse**

According to Mathis and Jackson (2000:655) it has long been known that stress is linked to alcoholism and drug abuse among employees at all levels in the organisational hierarchy. These two forms of withdrawals offer a temporary respite from severe anxiety and severe frustration. They further noted that both alcohol and drugs were used by a significant proportion of employees to escape from the rigors of a routine or stressful job.

According to Carrol and Walton (1994:265) recognition of the phenomenon of stress resulted in a smaller body of research into how individuals cope. Coping strategies could be both individual and organisational. Understanding the coping mechanism and its importance have been suggested by several theorists, who stated that coping behaviours would minimise the impact of stress and help alleviate the possible negative consequences. This author quoted Lieter (1991:124) who went further and suggested that prolonged maladaptive coping may ultimately induce a chronic, highly debilitating form of stress known as burn out.

- **Physiological reaction to stress**

According to Garrison and Bly (1997:412) stress mobilises energy for action. It prepares the human body's defense to ward off infection and repair physical damage. These authors also stated that an individual's response to stress may differ over the course of stress response, but each person began with the same physiological response. The physiology of stress responses places yet another demand on the body and mind of the person experiencing stress.

- **Psychological reactions to stress**

Psychological reactions to stress involve emotions and thought processes, rather than overt behaviour, although these reactions were frequently revealed in the individual's speech and actions (Johns, 1996:472).

The psychological reaction was illustrated by Frost (2003:19) who alluded that a man who is emotionally abused by a boss, shaken by the news of a lay off or told he has cancer, will find that such hijacking will immediately disrupt a creative work groove as he struggles to process his flood of reactions. If in addition the responses of the people around him are less empathetic, he'll be left with few resources other than flight or fight through which to resolve his dilemma. Pain that is mishandled is likely to lead to grief. People whose pain is left untreated will avoid future situations that resemble the pain-inducing incident. When people are hurting, when they are shocked by what happens to them or by what they hear about themselves from others, they become disconnected from hope and from a sense of belonging to a supportive community. They may subsequently enter a phase of denial followed by anger and depression. The immediate reactions are likely to be confusion, disbelief and shaken confidence. People burdened by those feelings cannot easily attend to their normal day to day tasks and responsibilities.

According to Arnold Lazarus, a leading psychologist, as quoted by Garrison and Bly (1997:414), there are several stages that relate to how an individual perceives the stress. The first step is to determine the nature of the demand whether it is positive or negative. If the stress is negative, can it be harmful, is it threatening or is it a challenge.

In response to the demand the individual then attempts to decide if he/she has the skills to manage stress. If the stress is an alarm followed by the announcement of an accident one must think about one's coping and

management skills. In responding to stress, the effects individuals will experience can be physiological, emotional, behavioral, and mental. Thus preparation makes stress easier to handle, even if it involves learning what to do when individuals do not have the skills to cope with problems.

Lazarus in Garrison and Bly (1997:415) further suggested that the negative effects of stress arise when there is a gap between the challenges perceived to exist in a situation and perceived skills for dealing with the situation. The greater the gap, the greater the harmful effects of stress.

The most common psychological reaction to stress is the use of defense mechanisms, which are as follows:

- Rationalisation: This involves attributing socially acceptable reasons or motives to one's actions so that they will appear reasonable and sensible to oneself.
- Projection: Involves attributing one's own undesirable ideas and motives to others so that they seem less negative.
- Displacement: Involves directing feelings of anger at a "safe" target rather than expressing them where they may be punished.
- Reaction Formation: Involves expressing oneself in a manner that is directly opposite to the way one truly feels, rather than risking negative reactions to one's true position.
- Compensation: Involves applying one's skills in a particular area to make up failure in another area.
- Repression: Involves preventing threatening ideas from becoming conscious, so that the stressor need not be confronted.

According to Garrison and Bly (1997:415) when defense mechanisms were used occasionally to temporarily reduce anxiety, they appeared to be a useful reaction. However, when they became a chronic reaction to stress, the picture changed radically. The problems stemmed from the very character of defense mechanisms; they simply did not change the objective character of the stressor, and the basic conflict or frustrations remained in operation.

According to Thompson and McHugh (1990:281) in studying stress at work, researchers must not forget the person who feels the emotions and strain produced. Though organisations were seen as emotional arenas, the persons within them were presented as emotionally anorexic, their emotions reduced to managerial control variables, the feelings of being organised, doing work and organising were hard to detect. At the same time stress came out as an issue in that counseling is at least provided by some and also to the extent that theirs was tacit acknowledgement that being sick or off work for reasons was acceptable up to a point. If negative consequences of stress are our body's way of telling us to slow down, then stress management is the organisation's way of telling us to keep up.

According to Steers (1991:564) severe frustration can also lead to overt hostility in the form of aggression toward other people and inanimate objects. Aggression occurred when individuals felt frustrated and could not find acceptable legitimate remedies for the frustration. Aggression was subdued when employees anticipated that they would be punished if the peer group disapproved.

The same factors that lead to increased incidence of aggression and bullying may often lead to decreases in employee performance or costly acts directed against the organisation. Clearly, the costs associated with unfair treatment can assume astounding levels in both human and financial terms.

## 2.5 THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON THE ORGANISATION

Starting a new job would likely to be very stressful if the person felt inexperienced, unable to cope with workload, uncomfortable around their bosses or colleagues and unstimulated by their work. On the other hand, a person entering an area of work where they felt competent, supported by their colleagues and stimulated, would be more likely to experience the change as challenging than stressful.

According to Luthans (2002:399) besides the potential stressors that occurred outside the organisation, there were also those that were associated with the organisation. Although an organisation is made up of groups of individuals, there are also more macro level dimensions, unique to an organisation that contains potential stressors.

DCS gaumail (2003:2) is of the opinion that at the organisational level, research has found that work-related stresses may be responsible for organisational outcomes such as decline in performance, dissatisfaction, lack of motivation and commitment, and an increase in absenteeism and turnover.

Desseler (2000:586) alluded that there were two main sources of job stress; environmental and personal. According to this author a variety of external environmental factors could lead to job stress. These included work schedules, place of work, job security, route to and from work and the number and nature of clients. Even noise, including people talking and telephones ringing, contributed to stress. This author, however, noted that individuals reacted differently even if they were at the same job, because personal factors also influenced stress.

The author also noted that stress is not necessarily dysfunctional; some people work well only when under a little stress and find they are more productive when a deadline approaches.

Dessler (2000:587) was of the opinion that for organisations job stress consequences included reductions in the quantity and quality of job performance, increased absenteeism and turnover, increased grievances and health care costs. A study of 46,000 employees concluded that stress and depression may cause employees to seek medical care for vague physical and psychological problems and can in fact lead to more serious health conditions. The health care costs of the high-stress workers were 46% higher than those of their less stressed co-workers.

According to Levin-Epstein (2002:2) stress on the job took its toll on nonprofits: lost time from work, deflated productivity, low staff morale, turnover and higher health care costs.

According to Anderson and Kyprianou (1994:81) in the United States of America, Britain and many other European countries, about half the deaths each year for both men and women, were due to cardiovascular diseases. The factors associated with high risk of heart diseases included cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and blood sugar levels and excess body weight. These authors further stated that a number of studies have indicated that social and psychological factors may account for much of the risk, and this has promoted research into factors in the work situation that may increase susceptibility to heart disease. Among the factors that have been shown to influence such susceptibility are dissatisfaction at work and occupational stress.

Anderson and Kyprianou (1994:81) further quoted Lazarus who defined stress referring to a broad class of problems differentiated from other problem areas because it deals with any demands which tax the system; a psychological system, social system or a physiological system, and the response of that

system. The definition further argued that the reaction depended on how the person interpreted or appraised the significance of a harmful threatening or challenging event. These authors concluded that stress was thought to occur from a misfit between the individual and his or her environment: an imbalance in the context of an organism-environment transaction. They further stated that stress in itself was not abnormal; nobody lives wholly free from it. It was clear that far from all individuals who are exposed to do the same work, conditions develop abnormalities of either a physical or a psychological character. It is only when stress is irrational, unproductive and persistent that it may be a symptom of psychological and physiological illness.

Favreau as quoted by Levin-Epstein (2002:2) said that stress-related problems should be talked at three levels: individual, organisational and social. On the individual level she noted that employees can become more responsible for their own well-being by recognising unhealthy emotional and work patterns before they reach crisis proportions. At an organisational level, employees need to be aware of the workplace structures that may contribute to burn out and take a creative approach to instituting changes that can prevent and relieve stress. The social environment within which employees operate often contributes to the problem.

Levin-Epstein (2002:2) also noted the most common indicators of stress as feeling overwhelmed and burn out. Emotional and physical exhaustion often accompany such feelings, he further emphasised that employers, as implementers of stress-endangering policies and procedures, should help employees manage their stress especially if it affects job performance.

Carol and Walton (1997:263) propagated that the concept of job related stress has been acknowledged and described by many theorists (Maslash 1976; Cooper 1988; Cox 1991). Cox and Howarth (1990:109) as quoted by Carol and Walton (1997:263) viewed the concept of work related stress as one that offers an economy of explanation in relation to the complex perceptual and cognitive

process that underpins people's interactions with their work environment and their attempts to cope with the demands of that environment. These authors further state that people's ability to cope with stress is dependent upon their own perceptions of their abilities to cope and their coping in other aspects of their lives. Work related stress often comes about because of changes in the work place and how it is structured, often described as moving the goal posts, rather than the stress associated with a particular type of work.

Carol and Walton (1997:264) further defined work related stress as the psychological state that represents an imbalance or mismatch between people's perceptions of the demand on them and their ability to cope with these demands.

Bowin and Harvey (2001:370) summarised factors leading to stress in the work place as follows:

- Little control of the work environment;
- Lack of participation in decision-making;
- Uncontrolled changes in policy;
- Sudden reorganisations and unexpected changes in work schedules;
- Conflict with other people (subordinates, superiors, peers) and other departments;
- Lack of feedback;
- Not enough time to do expected duties; and
- Ambiguity in duties.

According to the DCS gaumail (2003:1) the new political dispensation of South Africa has dawned. Organisations exposed to the altered dynamics of their environment will have to make adoptions and changes so as to continue along

the path of competitiveness, effectiveness and survival. The stressors of South African corporate environment demand the workings of a more integrated workforce, effective conflict handling, international competition, surviving time and group pressure and achieving greater economic growth.

DCS Gaumail (2003:15) further emphasised that no individual or group can be taken out of cultural context. Ethnicity, political and economic conditions are important antecedent factors that could contribute to an individual's experience of stress. In South Africa, the apartheid legacy still has a negative affect on many of those groups who have been historically disadvantaged. Both systems and situations need to be considered when addressing the subject of stress.

According to Frost (2003:14) the frequency with which hardworking, valuable employees have negative experiences in the workplace or hear bad news that leaves their hopes dashed, their goals derailed, or their confidence undermined. The sources of the pain vary, but much of it comes from abusive managers, unreasonable company policies, disruptive coworkers or clients, or from poorly managed change. It is a by-product of organisational life that can have serious negative effects on individuals and their organisations, unless it is identified and handled in healthy and constructive ways.

Frost (2003:14) is of the opinion that this kind of pain shows up in people's diminished sense of self worth and lost confidence and hope. It is destructive to performance and morale. The tangible consequences include lost profits resulting from things like diminished productivity or worse mass exodus.

Frost (2003:15) is also of the opinion that apart from quitting, which carries its own set of costs to the company, acts of revenge, sabotage, theft, vandalism, withdrawal behaviors, spreading gossip or generally acting cynical or mistrustful can all represent direct or indirect costs to the organisation.

According to Thompson and Mc Hugh (1990:277) costs are examined socially in terms of rates of heart disease, mental disorder and social dysfunction and in workplace through effects on job satisfaction, performance and absenteeism rates, and more recently in the costs of compensation claims and health insurance.

These authors are also of the opinion that typologies of sources of stressors and the forms of pathological end-state to be encountered, account for much of the modern stress literature. This tends to emphasize the amount of productivity lost due to stress, its inevitability and the benefits for the enterprise of managing stress.

In conclusion, Frost (2003:16) believed that when organisational leaders recognise emotional pain when it occurs and act to intervene, potentially lethal situations in the workplace could be reversed.

## **2.6 THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY**

Mathis and Jackson (2000:75) suggested that to measure organisational human resource productivity one has to consider unit labour cost, or the total labour cost per unit of output.

The authors further stated that an individual performance depends on three factors which are; ability to do the work, level of effort and support given to that person. The relationship of these factors, widely acknowledged in management literature, is that performance (P) is the result of ability (A) times effort (E) times support (S) that is:  $P=A \times E \times S$ . Performance is diminished if any of these factors are reduced or absent. They further emphasise that quality of

production must also be considered as part of productivity because one alternative might be to produce more but a lower quality.

Simply put by Chase and Aquilano (1995:758), productivity is measured in terms of outputs per labour hour. However this measurement does not ensure that the firm will make money (for example when extra output is not sold but accumulates as inventory). To test whether productivity has increased, the following questions should be asked: “Has the action taken increased output or has it decreased inventory?” “Has the action taken decreased operational expense?” This would then lead to a new definition which is: Productivity is all the actions that bring a company closer to its goals.

Mathis and Jackson (2000:655) defined productivity as a measure of the quantity and quality of work done considering the cost of the resource it took to do the work. Steers (1991:563) is of the opinion that it is useful from a managerial standpoint to consider several forms of counter productive behavior that are known to result from prolonged stress.

Thompson and Mc Hugh (1995:277) are of the opinion that when specifically regarding stress in the workplace, contemporary accounts of the stress “process” often follow the notion of stress as resulting from a misfit between an individual and their particular environment, where internal or external factors push the individuals adaptive capacities beyond his or her limit.

However, no two people react to the same job in the very same way, because personal factors also influence stress. For example, type A personalities; people who are workaholics and who feel driven to be always on time and meet deadlines, normally place themselves under greater stress than do others (Dessler 2000:586). This is further reiterated by Bowin and Harvey (2001:369) who emphasised that people can not completely separate their work and personal lives, the way people react and handle stress at work is a complex issue.

According to Blumenthal (2003:7) an inverted U-type curve has been used to depict the effect stress has on performance. It can be shown that, as stress increases, so does the performance. However if stress continues to increase beyond an optimal point, performance will peak and start to decline. This shows that stress is necessary to enhance performance but once it reaches a level of acute discomfort, it is harmful and counterproductive.

Blumenthal (2003:10) went on to argue that excess stress is harmful, destructive and detrimental to human well-being and productivity. Stress can have an impact on an individual's well-being by causing dysfunction or disruption in multiple areas. This dysfunction extends into the organisational world and leads to decreased productivity.

According to Garrison and Bly (1997:418) corporations have become acutely aware of the problems caused by stress. The illnesses associated with stress are costly, and they can debilitate a valuable worker. When stress is not handled well, absenteeism, turnover, and medical compensation increase and productivity decreases. Garrison and Bly (1997:420) further stated that the workplace is special only because so much of our time is spent at work. To achieve a peak of performance, stress should be managed effectively, with the negative effects of stress minimized.

Garrison and Bly (997:420) viewed more prominent cases of stress in the workplace being the following:

- **Overload**

Overload has two forms; an excessive amount of work and work for which an individual is ill prepared. One way of interpreting the challenge of increasing productivity is to understand that it means each individual will accomplish more

than before. On an assembly line, the goal of increased productivity means that the total time to complete a product is reduced and overload is experienced in the form of the endless flow of work. French and Caplan in Anderson and Kyprianou (1994:85) differentiated between quantitative (too much) and qualitative (too difficult) overload. They suggested that both qualitative and quantitative overload may produce at least nine different symptoms of psychological and physical strain such as:

- Job dissatisfaction;
- Job tension;
- Lower self esteem;
- Feelings of being under threat;
- Embarrassment;
- High cholesterol levels;
- Increased heart rate;
- Skin complaints; and
- More smoking.

- **Time Pressure**

Garrison and Bly (1997:420) suggested that, with the productivity demand comes the time pressure of getting the product completed or the service delivered in an ever-shorter time frame. These authors also stated that customers demand speed and quality and competitive organisations must deliver on both. As employees become more involved, they too will recognise the priority that time has in the workplace.

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

The majority of authors in the review of literature reflected stress as posing threat to productivity and also costing organisations immensely. However some also acknowledge that some people work productively under pressure and that individuals react uniquely to similar stressors.

In the following chapter the results of an empirical study that was conducted at the ETDP SETA will be tabled and analysed. That will give insight into whether stress has an impact on the productivity of the employees at the ETDP SETA.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **EMPIRICAL STUDY, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter research results gathered from the empirical survey at the ETDP SETA in Rivonia as well as an analysis and interpretation of the data will be presented. The data assisted the researcher in delineating the actual facts of the impact of stress on employees.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

##### **3.2.1. Research approach**

A quantitative approach of investigation was used in the study, which in turn helped to save time as the study was conducted during working hours. Open ended questions were also refined into quantitative data which became numbers that were interpreted to formulate meaning.

##### **3.2.2. Type of research**

The researcher used applied research, as the main goal of the study was directed towards shedding light in as far as the impact of stress on productivity in the organisation was concerned.

### **3.2.3. Research design**

The study was a descriptive study; it helped to elucidate descriptive information on the impact of stress on employees at the ETDP SETA, and gave specific details about the phenomena in question.

### **3.2.4. Research procedure and strategy**

The questionnaire was developed, after a review of literature on stress and the impact thereof on productivity, and used as a measuring instrument for a survey amongst the employees at the ETDP SETA in Rivonia. Emphasis on honesty in filling out the questionnaire was put to ensure validity of the results (Mahlahlane, 2003).

The questionnaire was pilot tested on two employees who did not form part of the main study. The procedure that was followed during the pilot testing was duplicated during the actual collection of data. A combination of closed ended and open-ended questions was used in the questionnaire. With regard to the closed ended questions care was taken to furnish all the possible options from which respondents could indicate their choice by making an "X" in the column provided. Some questions provided the opportunity for other responses and thus enabled the respondents to give their own responses.

Written permission to conduct the study at the ETDP SETA was requested and subsequently granted (see Annexure A).

The researcher utilised the list of the total population of 51 employees that were in the employ of the ETDP SETA when the study was initiated. The

researcher distributed the questionnaire personally with assistance of the Human Resources Director and his two delegates.

### **3.2.5. The sample**

No sampling was done in this study, as the total population was very small. Thus the respondents for this study composed of the 51 employees at the ETDP SETA that were in employ when the research was initiated.

### **3.3. PRESENTATION OF DATA**

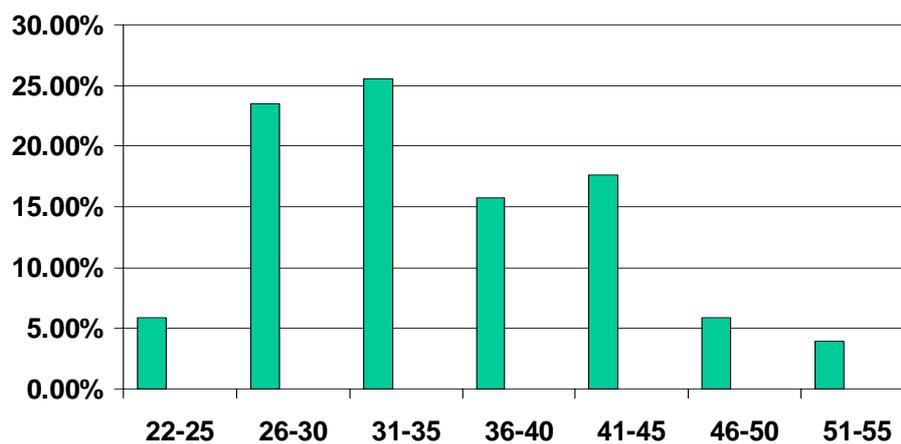
Data gathered from the respondents were collated and analysed for presentation in this section. The research findings are presented in the same sequence as that of the questionnaire (see Annexure C). Throughout this section the research findings are presented in the form of figures and tables followed by a discussion of the information as presented. Epi info, Version 6 was used to capture and analyse data.

## SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The aim of this section was to draw a profile of the employees that participated as respondents and to gather data on the personal details of the respondents.

### The age distribution of respondents

**Figure 1: Age of respondents**



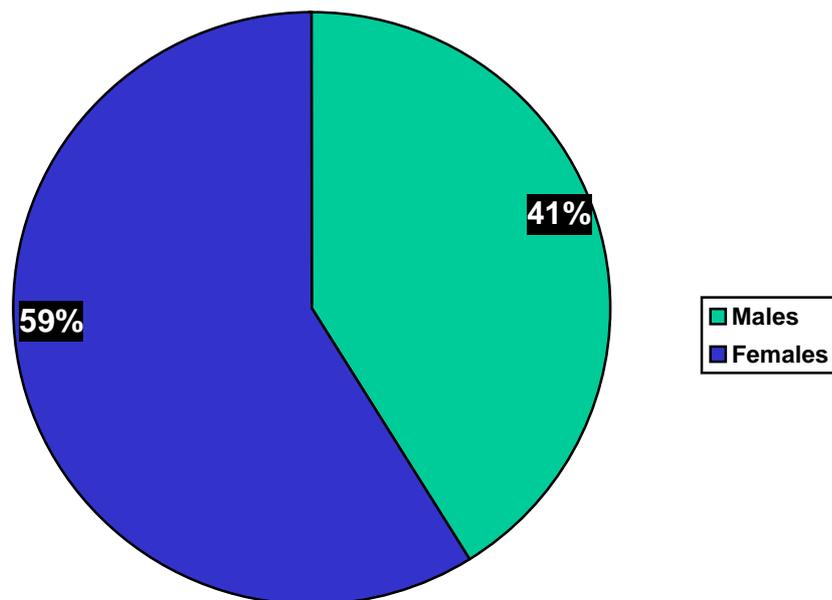
The distribution shows that the age of the respondents ranged between 22 and 55 with the majority of the respondents (26%) falling within the age 31-35. This table also reflects that the majority of respondents are younger in age; ranging between 26 and 35. Figure 2 also shows that the majority are females, ranging between 26 and 35 years of age.

**Table 1: Cross tabulation of gender and age**

	<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
22-25	1	2	3
26-30	4	8	12
31-35	5	8	13
36-40	2	6	8
41-45	5	4	9
46-50	2	1	3
51-55	1	1	2
61-65	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>51</b>

## The gender of respondents

Figure 2: The gender of respondents



According to Figure 2 above, the number of females who participated in this study is relatively high and accounted for 59% of the respondents and is an indication that there are more females than males at the ETDP SETA. Table 1 reflects that females are not only in the majority but also younger in age.

According to Frost (2003:95) female response to stress triggers hormones that support care giving rather than fight or flight behavior. However the author suggested that not all women responded to stress this way.

Therefore the fact that Table 23 reflects that the majority (71%) of respondents reported that their success in their jobs depended on hard work might be related to the fact that women are in the majority.

**Race distribution****Table 2: Race Distribution**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Black	41	80.4
White	5	9.8
Colored	1	2.0
Indian	4	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3: Cross tabulation of age and race**

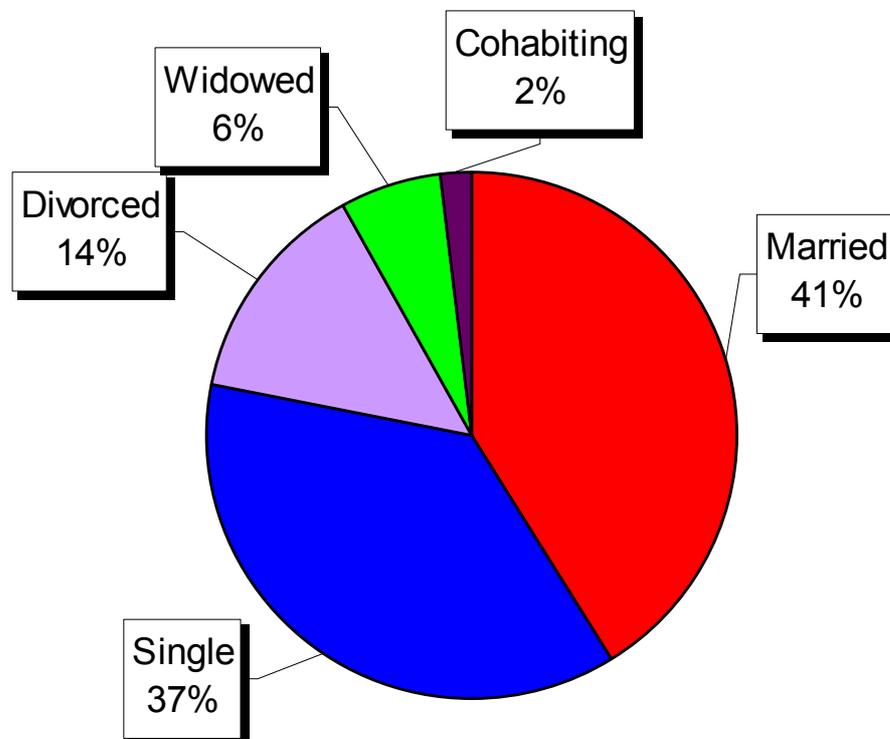
<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Coloured</b>	<b>Indian</b>	
22-25	4	0	0	0	4
26-30	11	1	0	1	13
31-35	10	1	0	2	13
36-40	7	1	1	0	9
41-45	6	2	0	1	9
51-55	2	0	0	0	2
56-60	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 2 above indicates that the majority of the respondents (80%) are black employees. The cross tabulation, Table 3 also reflects that blacks who are in the majority range between the ages of 26 and 45.

According to the DCS gaumail (2003:15) no individual or group can be taken out of cultural context. Ethnicity, political and economic conditions are important antecedent factors that could contribute to an individual's experience of stress.

### The marital status of the respondents

Figure 3: Marital status



The distribution shows the majority of respondents (41%) are married. According to Swanepoel, *et al.*, (1998:581), apart from stress that arises from the work situation, other sources of stress may relate to personal factors such as relationships with others and the use of free time. However this study has not been able to determine any correlation between the employee marital state and their stress levels.

### The length of employment at the ETDP SETA

**Table 4: Length of employment**

Length	Frequency	Percentage
0-12 months	5	9.8
1-5years	45	88.2
5 years +	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of respondents (88%) reported length of service between 1-5 years. This is an indication that the ETDP SETA is a fairly new organisation and that on its own may be an additional stress factor as new organisations need a lot of alignment.

### The Department that the respondents are employed in

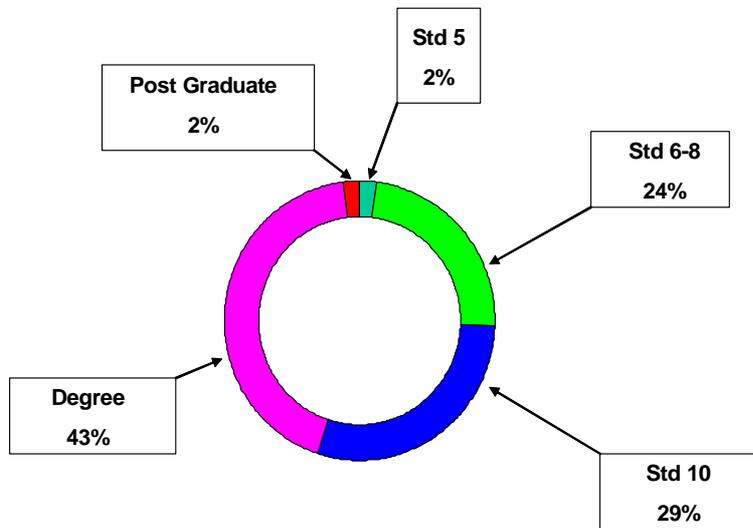
**Table 5: Department**

Department	Frequency	Percentage
Quality assurance	15	29.4
Grants	5	9.8
Constituency support	13	25.4
Strategic support	8	15.7
Learnerships	8	15.7
Communication	1	2.0
CEO Division	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 indicates that 29% of respondents work in quality assurance, which is one of the focus demanding Departments as they analyze delivery of quality practices by service providers.

### 3.4.1.8 The highest qualification

Figure 4: Qualifications



Forty-three of employees have tertiary qualifications of which 2% are postgraduates.

**Respondents work level****Table 6: Work level**

<b>Work level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No people reporting	34	66.7
People reporting	6	11.7
Tertiary qualification required	10	19.6
Short course required	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6 reflects that the majority of the respondents (67%) are production workers with no people reporting to them.

The interpretation can be made that a younger workforce can be associated with high energy levels and both positive and negative distress, which may either, be good or bad for productivity.

## The home language

**Table 7: Language**

Language	Frequency	Percentage
Afrikaans	1	1.9
English	8	15.7
Ndebele	2	3.9
N Sotho	3	5.9
S Sotho	3	5.9
Swazi	2	3.9
Tsonga	7	13.7
Venda	13	25.5
Xhosa	9	17.6
Zulu	2	2.0
Setswana	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is interesting to see that 26% of the respondents are Venda speaking followed by Xhosa speaking employees (18%). Black employees account for 80% of the respondents with 26% being Venda speaking. Thus looking at the ETDP SETA environment there are majority and minority population dynamics, which might have a positive or negative influence on employees.

According to the DCS gaumail (2003:16) the Person–Environment fit conceptualises stress in a demand capability discrepancy in which a stress response occurs due to perceived environmental demands exceeding the individual’s perceived response capability. The interpretation can be made that language plays a vital role to a person’s adjustment in any environment.

**SECTION B: DETERMINING STRESS LEVELS OF THE RESPONDENTS**

**Determine whether employees think that the ETDP SETA cares about its employees.**

**Table 8: Determining whether the ETDP SETA cares**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	11	21.5
No	34	66.7
No response	6	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of the respondents 67% reported that they do not think that the ETDP SETA cares about its employees.

According to Frost (2003:14) the costs of employee's frustration and anger can prove even more serious. When people believe that they have been treated unfairly (especially by their supervisors) they can turn on their organisations, attempting to even the score at the cost to the organisation. Apart from quitting, which carries its own set of costs to the company, acts of revenge, sabotage, theft, vandalism, withdrawal behaviors (withholding effort), spreading gossip or generally acting cynical or mistrustful, can all present direct and indirect costs to the organisation. Dissatisfaction with management leads to reduced loyalty, and once that loyalty has been destroyed; an employee is more likely to commit an act of sabotage.

If 66.7% of the respondents think that the ETDP SETA does not care for their employees that calls for reason for concern, as dissatisfaction with management leads to reduced loyalty that could lead to acts of sabotage (Frost 2003:4).

### Determine whether employees like working for the ETDP SETA

**Table 9: The exploration of whether respondents like working for the ETDP SETA**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Always	11	21.6
Sometimes	32	62.8
Seldom	4	7.8
Not at all	4	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From table 9 it is evident that 63% of the respondents reflect doubts on whether they like working for the ETDP SETA as they indicated that they “sometimes” like working for this organisation. There could be a correlation between the response above on table 8 and table 9. However 22% is confident about its need to work for the ETDP SETA as only four respondents are totally unhappy.

**Table 10: Cross tabulation of age and whether respondents like working for the ETDP SETA**

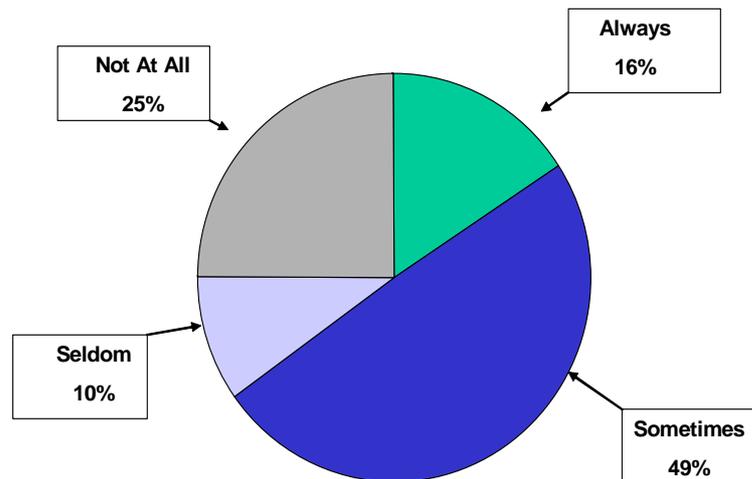
Age	Do you like working for the ETDP SETA?				Total
	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Not at all	
22-25	0	2	0	1	3
26-30	3	6	1	2	12
31-35	1	10	1	1	13
36-40	3	5	0	0	8
41-45	0	7	2	0	9
46-50	3	0	0	0	3
51-55	1	1	0	0	2
No Response	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>51</b>

In table 10 the responses were cross tabulated against age and the respondents who sometimes do not like working for the ETDP SETA range between the ages 26 and 35.

According to Frost (2003:16) when organisational leaders recognise emotional pain when it occurs and act to intervene, potentially lethal situations in the work place can be reversed. Therefore the organisation may still have a chance of influencing the respondents that “sometimes like working for the organisation”, if prompt intervention could be made.

## Determining satisfaction with the working environment

**Figure 5: Satisfaction with the work environment**



Respondents that confidently reported satisfaction with the working environment are relatively low (16%), and it was compared to those who reported not to like working for ETDP SETA (8%), in Table 9 on the previous page. These two responses may be correlated; it could be the same respondents who reported not to like working for ETDP SETA that are not satisfied with their working environment. However negative emphasis on “sometimes not satisfied with the work environment” seems to be stronger (49%) as reflected by figure 5.

According to Thomson and McHugh (1995:276) contemporary accounts of the stress “process” often follow the notion of stress as resulting from a misfit between an individual and their particular environment. Thus this gives an opportunity for the organisation to explore this problem further.

**Determine whether employees have control over their jobs****Table 11: Determining whether employees have control over their jobs**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always	8	15.7
Sometimes	20	39.2
Seldom	12	23.5
Not at all	9	17.7
No responses	2	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Only 39% of the respondents report to sometimes have control over their jobs. However 18% report not to have control at all over their jobs and on the contrary 16% confirm to have control over their jobs. The interpretation can be made that lack of control over one's job may induce frustration and anxieties due to uncertainty, thus leading to distress.

**Exploring work pressure****Table 12: Exploring work pressure**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	38	74.5
No	11	21.5
No response	2	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The response rate of 75% of the respondents reporting to work under pressure may be a reflection on the organisational mood; that expectations on delivery are high. However about 22% of the respondents reported not to be working under pressure.

Blumenthal (2003:7) is of the opinion that events that are appraised as overwhelming, threatening, unsatisfying, or conflicting are more likely to be experienced as stressful. Thus the organisation has a challenge of helping the employees manage their work pressure better.

**Determine whether employees have adequate information about their role at work.**

**Table 13: Exploring role clarity**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always	13	25.4
Sometimes	23	45.1
Seldom	11	21.6
Not at all	3	5.9
No responses	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 13, only 6% of respondents reported not having adequate information about their roles and the majority of the respondents (45%) report that they sometimes have adequate information about their jobs while 25% of the respondents are always clear about their roles. Thompson and McHugh (1995:276) propagated that where the demands of a role or roles are unclear and norms and standards of social comparison are lacking, people may experience role ambiguity. The interpretation can be made that if 25% of the respondents are always clear about their role at work, it means that they won't be subjected to role ambiguity as a cause for their stress at work. At the same time if 45% of the respondents sometimes don't "have adequate information about their role at work" they may be inclined to experience stress due to role ambiguity. However the 21% that is seldom clear about their role is in a more threatening position that could cause them to have role ambiguity and stress subsequently. About 70% of the respondents can conclusively be seen as being threatened by role ambiguity as a cause for stress.

**Determine whether job expectations are in contradiction with each other****Table 14: Contradiction in job expectations**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always	13	25.4
Sometimes	23	45.1
Seldom	11	21.6
Not at all	3	5.9
No responses	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In Table 14, 25% of the respondents reported that their roles are always in conflict with each other and 45% reported that sometimes their roles are in contradiction with each other. According to Thompson and McHugh (1995:276) role conflicts generally exist between differing expectations from the various parts of a person's role set, for example those people expecting delivery; and inevitable with the level of pressure that most of us are exposed to in or out of work since a person can not fulfill the demands of all their roles.

The interpretation can be made that if 25% of the respondents report that their "job expectations are always in contradiction with each other", it could be concluded that they are more prone to job stress. The 45% whose job expectation is sometimes in contradiction with each other may also be prone to stress due pressure of delivery regardless of the contradiction in their work. However 22% reported to seldom have job expectations which are in contradiction with each other, and that is a good indication that they are most of the time comfortable about what is expected of them at work thus

minimising the possibility of stress that is caused by job expectations that are in contradiction with each other.

Nevertheless the majority of the respondents (70%) who reported to “always” and “sometimes” have job expectations that are in contradiction with each other are more likely to experience job stress.

### **Determine whether employees are asked to do more than their ability permits**

**Table 15: Assessing whether employees are asked to do more than their ability permits**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	14	27.5
No	33	64.7
No response	4	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In Table 15, the majority of the respondents (65%) report that they are not being asked to do more than their ability permits. It is comforting to note that the majority of respondents accept this responsibility regardless of the work pressure they have reported in Table 12. However 28% of the respondents think that they are being given more than their ability permits. The responses are elaborated in Table 16 below. It is also interesting that regardless of the high work pressure (75%) in Table 12, 41% of the respondents in Table 16 think that their ability is stifled.

**Table 16: Elaboration on whether employees are asked to do more than their ability permits**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
My ability is stifled	21	41.1
As HOD I'm highly pressurised there's not enough time	1	1.9
But I do more than my position requires	4	7.8
Don't feel in control: no consistency	1	1.9
I complete the job that is given to me in a day	1	1.9
I could do more if allowed to	3	5.9
I enjoy challenge and do not mind being challenged	1	1.9
My ability permits but there is a lot of work	1	1.9
My job requires 3 people and I'm one and overworked	1	1.9
My qualifications and my ability suits my job	1	1.9
My skills and knowledge is not fully utilised	1	1.9
Need more leeway to take decisions	1	1.9
No	1	1.9
Expectations not clear	2	3.9
No strategic direction given	1	1.9
Not enough experience given	1	1.9
Given job not challenging	1	1.9
Put in situations without adequate training	1	1.9
Sabotage my ability because they don't plan and decide	1	1.9
Sometimes I do other jobs	1	1.9
No response	5	9.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Determine whether employee skills are utilised to their satisfaction****Table 17: Skill utilisation to employee's satisfaction**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	15	29.4
No	31	60.8
No response	5	9.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In Table 17, 61% of the respondents reported that their skills are not utilised to their satisfaction. The interpretation can be made that this may be due to a combination of factors, when it is considered that this organisation has a young female dominated workforce, the majority (45% in Figure 4) of who have tertiary qualifications; may have ambitions of gaining work experience and climbing the corporate ladder.

According to Ritchie and Martin (1999:186) employees with a high need for interest and usefulness at work when put in jobs where instrumentality reigns, are likely to be alienated and stressed. Jobs without interest to them and with no obvious good and or useful elements or outcomes will impinge heavily on such people. If unable to leave they will be disruptive, if intelligent and bored they will be apathetic and conscientious they will be depressed or absent on sick leave.

This variable becomes extremely important for a growing organisation like the ETDP SETA if the majority reports that their skills are not fully utilised as it may lead to lowered productivity.

Table 18 below elaborates on the details of skill underutilisation.

**Table 18: Elaboration on skill utilisation to employee satisfaction**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No	23	45
Under-utilised	16	31
Have outgrown my job	1	2.0
I am excluded in projects where I can contribute	2	4.0
I'm asked to do what has been given to me	1	2.0
I'm satisfied with my work my skills are utilised	2	4.0
Most of the time my work is challenging and interesting	1	2.0
Noise disturb my skill utilisation	1	2.0
Not treated as middle management	1	2.0
Overqualified for my job	1	2.0
Yes	2	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In Table 18, 45% of the respondents reported that their skills are not utilised to their satisfaction, with 31% reporting that they are under-utilised. The interpretation can be made that these employees may suffer stress due to underutilisation, more especially that the majority (59% Figure 2) is young women at production level (Table 6). However there seems to be a contradiction as the majority (61% in Table 17) of employees report that their skills are not utilised to their satisfaction, at the same time in Table 12, 75% have reported to work under pressure.

**Determine whether employees participate in decision making****Table 19: Exploring whether employees participate in decision-making**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	15	29.4
No	34	66.7
No response	2	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This table reflects that 67% of the employees report not to participate in decision making. Harvey (2001:370) is of the opinion that lack of participation in decision making is one of the factors leading to stress. The respondents have elaborated more in Table 20.

**Table 20: Elaboration of whether employees participate in decision-making.**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	41.0
43% of the time we are consulted	1	2.0
No they have attitudes, they don't delegate nor share	1	2.0
They are biased at my junior position	2	3.9
Decision making is for managers	10	19.6
Don't know	1	2.0
Given instructions to carry out tasks	1	2.0
In workshops and meetings our views are taken	1	2.0
My suggestions are ignored	1	2.0
Not at all	3	5.8
Rarely	1	2.0
Sometimes	4	7.7
They think there's nothing constructive we can add	1	2.0
We are asked to input in policy issues	1	2.0
We now and then have a meeting	1	2.0
We sit together as a unit, weigh options and agree	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 19 reflects that the majority of the respondents (67%) report not to participate in decision making and 29% report to participate in decision making. However Table 20 reflects a variation (41%) on the respondents that report to participate in decision making. The cause of this variation is not clear. However a lot of the open ended responses in Table 20 reflect an inclination towards non-participation in decision making.

**Determine whether employees get into conflict with each other****Table 21: An enquiry into whether employees get into conflict with each other.**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	15	29.4
No	34	66.7
No response	2	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 21 gives a clear indication that the majority (67%) of respondents do not get into conflict with each other. However 29% confirm getting into conflict but their open ended responses reflect employee's positive regard for good collegial relations.

According to Ritchie and Martin (1999:182) people with the need for relationships work best in stable work teams where they can get to know others well.

**Table 22: An elaboration into whether employees get into conflict with each other.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	30	58.8
No responses	1	2.0
People have attitudes	1	2.0
Avoid conflict always	4	7.8
Conflict over turf & divisions have cross purposes	1	2.0
Resolve like adults	1	2.0
Employees bring unauthorised documents	1	2.0
Keep away from gossip	1	2.0
Lack of communication	1	2.0
Let go of conflict because I respect older colleagues	1	2.0
Nature of jobs requires addressing issues	1	2.0
Nothing out of control resolved usually	1	2.0
Resolved	1	2.0
Seldom	2	3.9
Sometimes	3	5.8
When my role as a junior is undermined	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

There seems to be a variation in responses between Tables 21 & 22 on whether employees get into conflict with each other. Table 21 reflects that 29% of the respondents get into conflict with each other and when the same respondents are asked to elaborate further on the same question in Table 22 the respondents reflected that 61% of the respondents get into conflict. The cause for this variation could not be detected. Nevertheless the respondents who felt that they do get into conflict with each other are in the majority (61%)

when also considering that most open-ended responses reflect an indication that the respondents get into conflict with each other.

### Employee's locus of control

**Table 23: Exploring locus of control**

Does success in your job depend on	Frequency	Percentage
A supportive supervisor	32	62.7
Hard work	36	70.6
Supportive subordinates	15	29.4
Luck/ fate	0	0
The Creator	9	17.6
None of the above	2	3.9
All of the above	2	3.9

The respondents were given a multiple choice of questions and Table 23 reflects the total number of responses given to each question. Sixty-two percent of the respondents are of the opinion that their success in their jobs depend on a supportive supervisor. The interpretation can be made that that job maturity is one of the factors that determines reliance or non reliance on supervision. The fact that the respondents on this question showed reliance on supervisors for their job success may be linked to the fact that the organisation is relatively new and with the majority of its employees being younger in age.

Seventy-one percent of the respondents reported that success in their jobs depended on hard work. According to Blumenthal (2003:13) a sense of power

and control has been shown to contribute or reduce stress. People with intrinsic sense of control or personal responsibility (that is those who have a sense of being able to make changes in their environments) are generally less stressed than those who believe they have no control. This author also propagates the theory of personality types, maintaining that the type A person is hard driving, conscientious, aggressive, ambitious, competitive, shows an over commitment to productivity and is filled with a sense of time urgency and impatience, multitasks, has poor relationships and little concern for others. For respondents who believe that their success depends on hard work may be having a sense of power and control over their situation.

Only 29% of the respondents on this question believe that their success depends on supportive subordinates. This may be related to the fact that 66% of employees have no people reporting to them. However this becomes a good reflection of positive regard that supervisors have for their supervisees.

There was no response to the question of whether the respondents believed that “success on their jobs depended on fate or luck” and that may be a reflection that they believe their success is influenced by their own efforts.

Only 18% of the respondents reported that their success depended on the Creator. That may also be a reflection that the respondents believe that their success was influenced by their own efforts.

According to Blumenthal (2003:7) whether an event is experienced as stressful depends on a person’s psychosocial orientation with things like culture, spirituality, values and beliefs.

Only 4% of the respondents believe that their success does not depend on hard work and focus, supportive supervisor, supportive subordinates, fate, Creator.

Four percent of the respondents also believed that success in their job jobs depended on all the mentioned factors.

From the responses in Table 23 the interpretation can be made that 38% of the respondents have internal locus of control and they may be less susceptible to stress as they believe that they are in control of their circumstances.

### **Personality types of employees**

**Table 24: Enquiry into whether employees are competition driven**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	41	80.4
No	7	13.7
No response	3	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 25: Cross tabulation of age versus competitiveness**

Age	Are you highly competitive			Total
	Yes	No	No response	
22-25	3	0	0	3
26-30	10	1	1	12
31-35	10	2	1	13
36-40	7	0	1	8
41-45	7	2	0	9
46-50	2	1	0	3
51-55	1	1	0	2
No response	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>51</b>

According to Table 24, 80% of the respondents reported that they are highly competitive. Thompson and McHugh (1995:278) also propagate the personality type theory; they are of the opinion that traits associated with type A behavior includes achievement orientation, status insecurity, time urgency, competitiveness and aggression. Type A behavior patterns have been labeled coronary prone behavior due to the correlation with increased rates of coronary heart disease.

There are many factors that may have influenced the competitiveness of respondents as the majority of the respondents are young women who by virtue of their youth are competitive. Table 25 is a cross tabulation age versus competitiveness of the respondents. The respondents that reported to be competitive range between 26-35 of age (39%). Between the age ranges of 36-45 there were 27% respondents that reported to be highly competitive. The

interpretation can be made that the ETDP SETA is generally a young organisation (established in 2000) with employees that are relatively young. The fact that the majority of the respondents (80%) reported to be competitive may be an indication that they are influenced by the active nature of the youth. It may also be due to the fact that they are still at the beginning (ages 26-35) or peak (ages 36-45) of their careers and as people who have an internal locus of control (table 23) they would like to influence their success.

**Table 26: Enquiry into whether employees are relaxed at work**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	20	39.2
No	26	51.0
No response	5	9.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In Table 26, 51% of the respondents reported that they are not relaxed people at work. Open ended responses below reflect that the majority have to deal with work overload and pressure which makes it difficult for them to relax.

Anderson and Kyprianou (1994:85) differentiated between quantitative (too much) and qualitative (too difficult) overload. They suggest that both qualitative and quantitative overload may produce at least nine different symptoms of psychological and physical strain such as: Job dissatisfaction, job tension, lower self esteem, feelings of being under threat, embarrassment, high cholesterol levels, increased heart rate, skin complaints, more smoking.

The fact that 51% of the respondents are not relaxed at work may be an indication of the organisational mood of high volume delivery expected from

employees. However 39% reported that they are relaxed at work and based on the open ended responses that may be a combination of planning, experience and personality.

**Table 27: An elaboration of whether employees are relaxed at work**

<b>Are you most of the time a relaxed person at work</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	14	27
Highly impossible, I'm the only person in my section	1	2.0
Anxious	3	5.9
But pressure becomes an obstacle	5	9.8
By nature advanced planning helps	2	3.9
Capable of maintaining constant mood, I don't panic	1	2.0
Deadlines I stress, if not I relax	1	2.0
Dealing with learners and providers is stressful	2	3.9
Decision making is slow , no point getting stressed	2	3.9
Depending on workload normally not relaxed	2	3.9
Do not allow stress to put me under pressure	1	2.0
Due to work load it is difficult to relax	4	7.8
Especially when my seniors trust me in my job	1	2.0
I'm cooperative and more of a team player	1	2.0
I'm always busy	1	2.0
If task is challenging	1	2.0
I'm always expected to be on my toes	1	2.0
I'm not the hysterical type	1	2.0
Make sure I understand what to do and why	1	2.0
Most of the time	1	2.0
My job requires urgent attention and excellent organisational skills	1	2.0
No	2	3.9
Not really	1	2.0
Only when restricted in performing duties	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

The interpretation can be made that if the majority of the respondents reported not to be relaxed at work that could be linked to the fact that the majority (80%) is highly competitive. The majority of the respondents could be seen as the Type A personality. For example, type A personalities; people who are workaholics and who feel driven to be always on time and meet deadlines, normally place themselves under greater stress than do others (Desseler, 2000:586).

## **SECTION C: IMPACT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY**

### **How employees deal with their problems**

**Table 28: When you have a problem at work what do you do**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Consult your supervisor	35	68.6
Seek professional help	2	3.9
Stay away from work	2	3.9
Discuss it with a colleague	23	45.1
Do you do all of the above	3	5.9
Do none of the above	2	3.9

The majority (69%) of the respondents indicated supervisory involvement as an option for problem resolution at work. The interpretation could be that the majority of employees experience problems at work and they do not seek professional help but rely on supervisors. The ETDP SETA does not have a Wellness Programme and this could be one of the factors why the employees do not access professional help as they have never received guidance to that effect.

The number of respondents that discuss their problems with their colleagues is still high at 45.1%.

It is interesting to see that the problems that employees reported (75% felt pressurised at work in Table 12, 61% reported that their skills were under-utilised in Table 17, 67% reported not to take part in decision making in Table 19, in table 14, 25% reported to have job expectations that are always in contradiction) do not lead to absenteeism. According to Blumenthal (2003:11) the cost of stress to an organisation include lost day's work, hospitalisation, and absence on sick leave. However the ETDP SETA has not reflected an inclination towards these patterns of absenteeism.

Only 6% of the respondents reported to take all the options in Table 28 when confronted with problems at work.

**What employees do when they feel tense at work****Table 29: What employees do when they feel tense at work**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Take a smoke brake	6	11.8
Workout with exercise	1	2.0
Take alcohol after work	13	25.5
Confront the problem	29	56.9
Take time out	8	15.7
Take it out on someone	2	3.9
Do none of the above	3	5.9

Table 29 reflects that respondents that take a smoke break when they are tense at work are in the minority, only 12%. That may be an indication that the majority of the employees are non-smokers and thus a good investment for the company.

Only 2.0% of the total respondents work out with exercise when they feel tense at work. This is not an indication of a healthy lifestyle which one associates with less stress.

The majority of the respondents in the multiple choice questions did not choose the option of alcohol utilisation as a way of minimising tension after work, thus it can be interpreted that 79% of the respondents do not use alcohol to release stress. That also adds good value to the organisation. However 26% of the respondents use alcohol. The majority of the employees, 57% reported to confront the problem, and that is also good for problem

resolution. Only 16% of the respondents take time out when they feel tense at work. This may be an indication that there is minimal absenteeism on the job.

Table 29 above reflects that the majority of the respondents do not take out their tension on some one when they feel tense at work. According to Blumenthal (2003:11) stress causes agitation, annoyance and aggression, which in turn lead to poor individual relations and conflict between employees. However that is not the case at the ETDP SETA.

This table reflects that the majority of the respondents did not choose this multiple question. Only a few respondents 6% reported to do none of the above.

### Exploring whether employees feel a sense of helplessness at work

**Table 30: Do you feel a sense of helplessness at work**

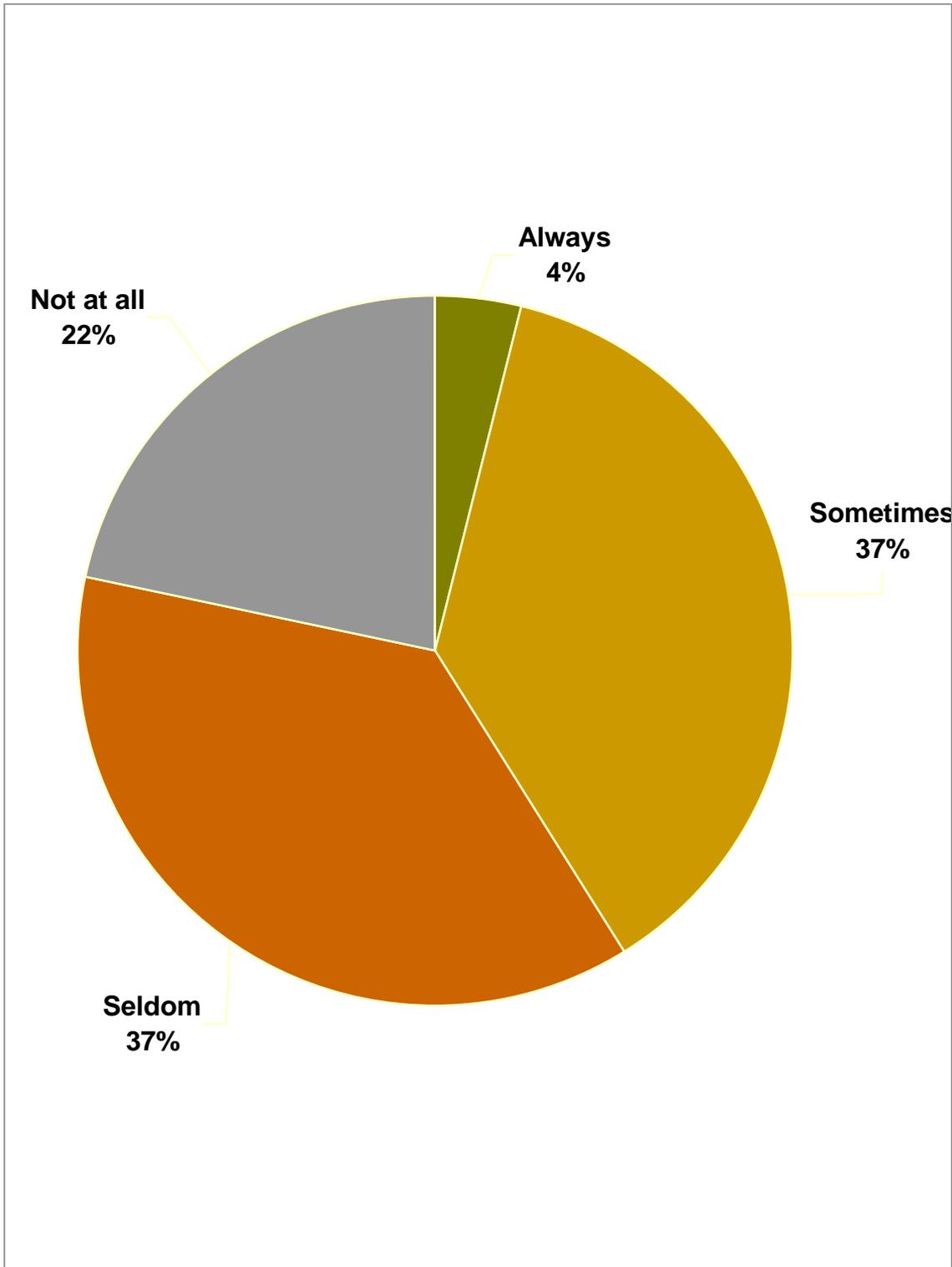
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always	8	15.7
Sometimes	34	66.7
Seldom	2	3.9
Not at all	7	13.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents on this question indicated mixed responses with the majority (67%) indicating that they sometimes feel helpless at work. Feelings of

helplessness induce depression and anxiety. According to Frost (2003:19) pain that is mishandled is likely to lead to grief. People whose pain is left untreated will avoid future situations that resemble the pain-inducing incident. When people are hurting, when they are shocked by what happens to them or by what they hear about themselves from others, they become disconnected from hope and from a sense of belonging to a supportive community. They may subsequently enter a phase of denial followed by anger and depression. The immediate reactions are likely to be confusion, disbelief and shaken confidence. People burdened by those feelings cannot easily attend to their normal day to day tasks and responsibilities.

**Late coming**

**Figure 6: Come late for work**



Late coming is a visible phenomenon at the ETDP SETA, as 37% of the respondents sometimes come late for work and 4% always come late.

However 37% seldom come late, while 22% report not to come late at all. The interpretation may be that those who come late are quite sizable and might influence productivity negatively.

### Absenteeism

**Table 31: Stay away**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	32	62.7
No	11	21.6
No response	8	15.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 32: Elaborating on stay away from work**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Annual leave or not at all	15	29.4
It depends on my health status	7	13.7
Few times	2	3.9
I don't stay away from work	4	7.8
I only have 3 and half days in two years	1	2.0
Less	3	5.9
Not often	5	9.8
Not reached that point as yet	2	3.9
Once or twice a month	2	3.9
Once or twice a month depending on situation	1	2.0
Scheduled vacation	3	5.9
Sick or annual leave	4	7.8
When I'm frustrated	2	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 31 reflects that 63% of the respondents reported to stay away from work. Table 32 has open ended responses that mostly report different reasons that lead to people staying away from work. According to Mathis and Jackson (2000:655) turnover and absenteeism represent convenient forms of withdrawals from a highly stressful job. The interpretation could be that the employees stay away from work as way of withdrawing from a stressful job.

**Table 33: Cross tabulation of age vs. staying away from work**

Age	Do you stay away from work			Total
	Yes	No	No response	
22-25	3	0	0	3
26-30	11	1	0	12
31-35	8	2	3	13
36-40	6	1	1	9
41-45	0	6	3	9
46-50	2	0	1	3
51-55	1	1	0	2
No response	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 33 reflects that the majority of people that stay away from work are between ages 26-35. This is the same age group that reported to be highly competitive and also don't feel cared for. The interpretation could also be that the employees stay away from work as way of withdrawing from a stressful job.

## Exploring thoughts on leaving the job

Table 34: Inclination to leave the job

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	88.2
No	6	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 35: Cross tabulation vs. thoughts of leaving the job

Age	Have you ever thought of leaving this job		Total
	Yes	No	
22-25	2	1	3
26-30	11	1	12
31-35	12	1	13
36-40	7	1	8
41-45	9	0	9
46-50	2	1	3
51-55	1	1	2
No response	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 34 reflects that the majority (88%) of the respondents have thought of leaving the job. Only 12% are confident that they don't have thoughts of

leaving the job. The interpretation is that the responses are a reflection of employee dissatisfaction with the organisation. Frost (2003:14) propagated that emotional pain exists in every organisation. This author is of the opinion that the sources of the pain vary, but much of it comes from abusive managers, unreasonable company policies, disruptive co-workers or clients, or from poorly managed change. The tangible consequences include lost profits resulting from diminished productivity or worse mass exodus.

The cross tabulation Table 35 of age versus leaving the job reflects that the majority ranges between ages 26-35 and it is also the same age range that has reported to often stay away from work. The interpretation could be that this age group could be a threat to organisational stability because if they loose them they will loose the most productive age group.

### Exploring alcohol utilisation by employees

**Table 36: Use of alcohol**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Every day after work	1	2.0
On weekends	6	11.8
1-3 times a week	4	7.8
Not at all	36	70.6
No responses	4	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 37: Cross tabulation of age vs. use of alcohol**

Ages	How often do you use alcohol					Total
	Everyday after work	Weekends	1-3 times a week	Not at all	No response	
22-25	0	1	0	2	0	3
26-30	0	3	2	6	0	11
31-35	0	0	1	12	0	13
36-40	0	0	0	5	1	6
41-45	0	1	1	7	3	12
46-50	1	0	0	2	0	3
51-55	0	0	0	2	0	2
No response	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 36 above reflects that 2.0% of the respondents take alcohol every day after work. About 12% of the respondents take alcohol on weekends while 8% use alcohol 1-3 times a week. However the majority (71%) of the respondents do not use alcohol at all.

The interpretation could be that if the majority of the employees do not use alcohol, the organisation does not loose productivity due to alcohol abuse. According to Mathis and Jackson (2000:655) it has long been known that stress is linked to alcoholism and drug abuse among employees at all levels in the organisational hierarchy.

## Exploring supervisory support

**Table 38: Does your supervisor attend to your work problems**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always	17	33.3
Sometimes	19	37.3
Seldom	5	9.8
Not at all	4	7.8
No responses	6	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 38 above reflects that 33% of the respondents reported that their supervisors always attend to their work problems. This may be correlated to Table 28, where 67% of the respondents in a multiple choice of questions chose that when they have a problem at work they consult their supervisor. This may be a reflection of good supervisor – supervisee relations, which one believes is a component of a healthy organisation.

## Exploring effects of stress

**Table 39: Do you suffer from the following ailments**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Influenza	6	11.8
Headache	21	41.2
Fatigue	10	19.6
From depression	7	13.7
Stress	15	29.4
None of the above	9	17.6
All of the above	5	9.8

Table 33 reflects that 12% of the respondents reported that they suffer from common influenza. While 41% reported to suffer from headaches, 20% reported to suffer from fatigue. Twenty nine percent of the respondents reported to suffer from stress and 14% depression while 10% suffer from all the ailments.

According to Blumenthal (2003:10) prolonged exposure to stress has profound detrimental effects on health. Among the possible complications that stress may exacerbate are asthma, coronary heart disease, chest and back pains, diarrhea, headaches, migraines, insomnia, diabetes mellitus and ulcers.

Fearing (2000:144) is of the opinion that depression strikes employees of all races, economic groups and professionals. It causes them to lose motivation, energy and interest in day to day work and life. This author also

reports that depression carries stigma and discourages disclosure among employees. Thus the ETDP SETA has a challenge of educating the employees about depression, as it costs the organisation billions (Fearing, 2000:143).

**Table 40: Cross tabulation of age vs. suffering from headache**

<b>Do you suffer from headaches</b>				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Total</b>
22-25	1	0	2	3
26-30	6	0	6	12
31-35	6	0	7	13
36-40	3	1	4	8
41-45	5	0	4	9
46-50	0	0	3	3
51-55	0	0	2	2
No response	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>51</b>

The cross tabulation Table 40 above reflects that the majority of headache sufferers range between 26-35 years of age. This is the same age range where 80% of the respondents reported to be highly competitive in Table 24.

Thus there may be a correlation between the headache they suffer and the competitiveness as these are factors which are directly linked with causes of stress.

## Exploring employee concentration problems

**Table 41: Do you have concentration problems when performing your duties**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	1	2.0
Sometimes	12	23.5
Seldom	16	31.4
Not at all	21	41.1
No responses	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

Twenty-four percent of the respondents reported that they sometimes experience concentration problems when performing duties, while 41% reported not to experience concentration problems at all. Only 2.0% respondents reported to always have concentration problems while 31% reported that they seldom have concentration problems.

Blumenthal (2003:10) is of the opinion that stress affects our thought process leading to a difficulty or fear of making decisions, forgetfulness, hypersensitivity, mental blocks and difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly.

The interpretation could be made that if the majority (41%) of the employees do not have concentration problems it could be that stress has not affected their concentration.

### Exploring employee performance feedback

**Table 42: How was your performance feedback for the past four months**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Excellent	10	19.6
Good	6	11.8
Average	5	9.8
Poor	29	56.8
No responses	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the employees at the ETDP SETA, the organisation did not have a performance measuring tool thus the definition of performance evaluation differed from office to office. The majority of the respondents (57%) reported that their performance feedback was poor in the previous four months when the study was conducted. On the contrary 20% of the respondents reported that their performance feedback was excellent, and 12% reported that it was good.

Ritchie and Martin (1999:179) believe that stress impairs performance. There may be a correlation between work pressure that has been mentioned in the previous paragraphs and the 57% poor performance of respondents.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

The data collection tool that has been utilised to gather information on “the impact of stress on productivity of employees at the ETDP SETA“ has collected results that have been interpreted to establish the validity of the hypothesis which read as follows: “high stress levels have a negative impact on productivity of employees at the ETDP SETA”. From the facts that were gathered the hypothesis proved to be valid.

In the following chapter, conclusions and recommendations will be made based on the interpretation of the results.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to describe the impact of stress on productivity of the employees at the ETDP SETA.

The objectives were as follows:

- To collect information on the impact of stress on productivity by conducting a literature study and consulting with experts;
- To investigate stress factors applicable to the employees at the ETDP SETA and their levels of stress;
- To determine how the employees at the ETDP SETA handle stress;
- To determine whether employees experiencing stress symptoms meet the expected performance standards; and
- To make recommendations to ETDP SETA on the management of the impact of stress on productivity.

Based on the research data presented in chapter three, certain conclusions and recommendations will be made in this chapter. This chapter is structured along the same lines as the sections found in the questionnaire and in each section the researcher will firstly focus on the conclusions whereafter certain recommendations will be presented.

## 4.2 BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The majority of the employees are young black females ranging between the ages of 26-35 who are at production level and are still fairly new in the organisation. Most of the employees have tertiary qualifications.

## 4.3 STRESS LEVELS OF THE RESPONDENTS

- **Conclusion**

- There is evidence to the effect that the majority of employees reported to work under pressure and that they feel uncared for by the organisation. Thus stress is a factor that the employees at the ETDP SETA endure.
- The majority of the employees have issues with the organisation; ranging from perceived non-care by the organisation to feelings of being underutilised.
- The majority of the employees think that the ETDP SETA does not care for its employees and they sometimes do not like working for the organisation.
- The majority of the respondents range between the age 26 and 35, implying that the lowered positive regard against the organisation might be age related.
- The fact that the majority of the employees indicate to "sometimes" like working for the ETDP SETA is reason to believe that those employees will endure stress.
- There must be a misfit between the employees and their working environment as there is a minority of the employees who indicated that they are not at all happy with their working environment.
- The majority of the employees reported not to participate in decision making and that could be one of the factors leading to stress.

- The majority of the employees have seldom or no control over their jobs. When employees feel they do not have control over their jobs they may be stressed. As the majority of the employees have tertiary qualifications and are highly competitive it can be concluded that their specialized knowledge is stifled by the lack of control over their jobs and the frustration they endure may lead to distress.
- There seemed to be too much work pressure for the majority of the employees. One concluded that the employees at the ETDP SETA may experience both distress (strain) and eustress (healthy stress that leads to peak performance) which in certain circumstances may increase productivity and in certain instances inhibit productivity.
- The majority of the employees displayed Type A personality traits as they reported to be highly competitive, not relaxed at work and believed that their success depended on hard work. Thus the majority of the employees could be seen as being more prone to stress which may in the long run hamper their health and productivity.
- The employees at the ETDP SETA are vulnerable to stress. Employees whose job expectations that in contradiction with each other and whose roles are ambiguous are bound to be frustrated and stressed. Furthermore those who feel that their skills are under-utilised will also endure frustration that leads to stress.

- **Recommendations**

- The organisation must conduct a needs assessment for an Employee Assistance Programme.
- Management must conduct an analysis of the organisational mood and climate by assessing the reasons why the employees think the ETDP SETA does not care about its employees and what can they do to change it.

- The supervisors and managers need to explore the causes of the dissatisfaction of employees within the working environment.
- Supervisors must assess the level of their subordinates knowledge and skills and whether they will be able to meet their deadlines. They must agree on a performance contract, so that they can give employees with job maturity, control over their jobs.
- The ETDP SETA must invest in a stress management strategy that will help increase productivity.
- Time management training should be given to employees on a continuous basis.
- Managers should invite employees, who think that they are being given jobs that are in contradiction with each other, and clarify their roles.
- Managers should facilitate an employee skills audit that will help to place employees that feel underutilised.
- Managers should revise their decision making strategy.

#### 4.4 IMPACT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY

- **Conclusions**

- Stress had an impact on productivity. The majority of employees reported that they sometimes felt helpless and a sizable number between the ages of 26 and 36 reported to have ailments that were symptomatic of stress thus the negative health had a bad impact on productivity.
- The majority of employees reported to have had poor performance feedback and that was also an indication that productivity had been affected by stress.
- The majority of employees sometimes stayed away from work and some reported late for duty. This is an indication that productivity was hampered by their absenteeism.
- The majority of employees who were young and highly competitive were in danger of burning out because of the work related frustrations they experienced.
- The majority of the employees had thoughts of leaving the ETDP SETA, which could affect their commitment to productivity.
- There was evidence of good supervisor–subordinate relations. The majority of respondents reported that they do not use alcohol after work; there was very little interpersonal conflict, which could create a good mood for productivity.

- **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that management introduce stress management techniques at the ETDP SETA.
- An Employee Assistance Programme has to be introduced for early identification and intervention on problems so that productivity levels do not decrease.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

The aim of the study was to describe the impact of stress on productivity of the employees at the ETDP SETA. The results from this study showed that the negative factors that distressed employees had a negative impact on productivity. The factors that were identified and analysed in Chapter 4, included the ages of the respondents cross tabulated with gender, race, determining the stress levels of the respondents, and the impact of stress on productivity.

It is clear from the vast amount of factors identified, reported and quantified and through the literature review and the empirical study that the goal of the study was achieved. This also served to prove that stress had a negative impact on productivity at the ETDP SETA.

The following objectives of the study were achieved:

- Literature on the impact of stress on productivity was reviewed and views of experts on the subject matter were recorded;

- Investigation of the levels of stress of the employees at the ETDP SETA were conducted;
- The investigation determined how the employees handled stress. However it was difficult to determine whether the employees that were experiencing stress met their performance standards as the organisation did not have a performance measuring tool; and
- Recommendations were made to the ETDP SETA on the management of the impact of stress on productivity.

From the information contained in this report it can be concluded that the hypothesis formulated as “high stress levels have a negative impact on productivity of employees at the ETDP SETA” has been proven right. There has been many stress factors that the employees at the ETDP SETA endured, and the enquiry proved that the impact of stress affected productivity negatively. The fact that the majority of the employees thought of leaving their job at the ETDP SETA, and felt that the organisation did not care about them was a reflection of huge dissatisfaction that undoubtedly lowered productivity.

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**ANNEXURE A**

To: Ms M.N. Menze  
44 Mynhardt Street  
Birchleigh North Ext 3  
10 September 2005

Dear Ms Menze

Following the application to conduct research on the Impact of Stress on Productivity of Employees at ETDP SETA, it is a pleasure to inform you that permission has been granted to go ahead as per your application.

The SETA would grant the permission on condition that the results of your research will be made available for internal utilization.

Please note that your reference at the SETA will be through the Human Resources office in Rivonia.

We wish to take this opportunity to wish you well.

Yours truly,

ITUMELENG MABENA

HOD Human Resources

ETDP SETA

**ANNEXURE B**

**INFORMED CONSENT**

Participant's Name -----

Date -----

Principal Investigator: M.N. Menze  
Institution: University of Pretoria  
Address: Department of Social Work  
University of Pretoria

INFORMED CONSENT

1. Title of Study: The Impact of Stress on Productivity of Employees at the Education Training and Development Practices, Sector Education and Training Authority.
2. Purpose of the study: I will be asked to fill in a questionnaire that will determine the impact of stress on productivity of employees at the Education Training and Development Practices, sector Education and Training Authority.
3. Procedures: I will be asked to fill in a questionnaire, which will be distributed by the Human Resource delegate and return them to the Human Resource delegate after completion.
4. Risks and Discomforts: There are no known risks associated with this study, although the questions may arouse emotional discomforts and have an emotional impact on me.
5. Benefits: The questions will help me understand the impact of stress on my productivity. My answers combined with those of my colleagues will also help the ETDP SETA Corporate service in Human Resource planning.
6. Participant's Rights: I may withdraw from participating in the study at any time.
7. Financial Compensation: I will not be compensated for my participation in the study.
8. Confidentiality: The questionnaire that I will complete will remain anonymous. I understand that the results study may be published in a professional journal or be made available for Human Resource utilization.
9. If I have questions or concerns I can call Dr Taute at (012) 420 4847

I understand my rights as a research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

-----  
Subjects Signature

-----  
Date

-----

Investigator's Signature

**ANNEXURE C**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Thank you, for your willingness to complete the questionnaire. Please respond to each question as honestly as possible, because only then can we address your real challenges with regard to stress.

Remember, at all times each question refers to a study on the impact of stress on productivity.

The question has been divided into three sections. Sections A consist of questions on biographic information. Section B requires information that will determine your stress levels and section C relates to the impact of stress on productivity.

**Section A**

Make a cross in the appropriate block(s).

Example:

Is this your first survey	
1 <sup>st</sup> survey	x
2 <sup>nd</sup> survey	

This is your first survey

**Section A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

1	Age	
	21-25	
	26-30	
	31-35	
	41-45	
	46-50	
	51-55	
	56-60	
	61-65	
2.	What is your gender	
	male	
	Female	
3.	What is your race	
	Black	
	White	
	Colored	
	Indian	
	Other	
4.	What is your marital status	
	Single	
	Married	
	Divorced	
	Widowed	
	Cohabiting	
5.	How long have you been employed at ETDP SETA.	
	0-12 Months	
	1-5 years	
	Longer than 5 years	
6.	In which Department do you work in	
	Quality assurance	
	Grants	
	Constituency support	
	Strategic support	
7.	What is your highest qualification	
	Standard 5 and lower	
	Standard 6-8 or N1-N2	

Standard 10 or N3/T1	
Degree or N6/T6	
Postgraduate	
8. What is your work level	
Employee with no people reporting to me	
Employee with people reporting to me	
Practice an occupation for which tertiary qualification is required	
Practice an occupation for which only a short course is required	
9. What is your home language	
Afrikaans	
English	
Ndebele	
N Sotho	
S Sotho	
Swazi	
Tsonga	
Venda	
Xhosa	
Zulu	
Setswana	
Other	

**SECTION B: DETERMINE YOUR STRESS LEVELS**

1. Do you think ETDP SETA cares for its employees	
Yes	
No	
2. Do you like working for ETDP SETA	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
3. Are you happy with your working environment	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
4. Do you think you have control over your job	

Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
5. Do you work under pressure	
Yes	
No	
6. Do you have adequate information on your role at work	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
7. Do you think your job has expectations that are in contradiction with each other.	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
8. Do you think that you are being asked to do more than your ability permits? Elaborate	
9. Are your skills utilized to your satisfaction? Elaborate	
10. Are you allowed to participate in decision making? Elaborate	
11. Do you get into conflict with other people at work	
12. What does success on your job depend on	
Hard work and focus	
Supportive supervisor	
Supportive subordinates	
Fate/ Luck	
The Creator	
None of the above	
All of the above	
13. Are you highly competitive at work (workaholic, always have an intense sense of urgency, highly driven to achieve goals).	
14. Are you most of the time a relaxed person at work. Elaborate	

**SECTION C: IMPACT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY**

1. When you have a problem at work do you:	
Consult your supervisor	
Seek professional help	

Stay away from work	
Discuss it informally with a colleague	
All of the above	
None of the above	
2. What do you do when you feel tense at work	
Take a smoke break	
Take alcohol after work	
Work out with exercise	
Confront the problem	
Take time out	
Take it out on some one (colleague/ family)	
None of the above	
3. Do you experience a feeling of helplessness at work	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
4. Do you come late for work	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
5. How often do you stay away from work	
6. Have you ever thought of leaving this job	
Yes	
No	
7. How often do you use alcohol	
Everyday after work	
On weekends	
1-3 times a week	
Not at all	
8. Does your supervisor attend to your work problems	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
9. Which of the following ailment do you suffer from	

Common influenza	
Head ache	
Fatigue	
Depression	
Stress	
None of the above	
10. Do you have concentration problems when performing your duties	
Always	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Not at all	
11. How has your performance feedback been for the past four months	
Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	

Thank you for your cooperation.

SM Grobler  
1118a Marina Street  
Booyesen  
0082

Thursday, April 26, 2007

**To Whom It May Concern:**

This is to confirm that Ms SM Grobler edited the following document for Mrs Menze:

**THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY OF EMPLOYEES AT  
THE EDUCATION TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: SECTOR  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY**

---

**SM Grobler (ms)**