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Declaration

I, Justine Wickinson Makasa, do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree by anyone else at the University of Zambia or at any other University for the purpose of acquiring a degree.

Signed: -----

Date: -----

Certificate of Approval

This dissertation of Justine Wickinson Makasa has been approved as fulfilling the requirements for the award of the master degree in Education with Education Psychology.

Examiners' signature

Date

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Abstract

The objectives of the study were to identify the sources and patterns of stress among basic school teachers and to compare the severity of stress among basic school teachers based on gender. The study further investigated the coping mechanisms adopted by teachers to deal with stress. The study adopted a survey methodology.

Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions were used to collect data. One hundred and fifty teachers were randomly selected in 15 basic schools in Lusaka Urban districts. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS Version 16. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis techniques. The study covered only Lusaka Urban Basic Schools thus limiting the scope and extent to which the findings could be generalized.

The study has established the existence of stress among basic school teachers in Lusaka urban district. The findings have revealed that there were four major categories of stressors among Basic School teachers, namely: poor conditions of service such as lack of accommodation, low salaries, and difficulties of getting entitlements; poor school climate, for example, discriminatory tendencies among school managers; heavy workload, for instance handling overcrowded classes and handling of more than one session; low esteem among staff (including lack of recognition from the general public, work not rewarding, and lack of regard for qualification). The findings of this study suggest that the greatest sources of stress among teachers in Lusaka region were conditions of service especially those related to emoluments, for example, low salaries and lack of accommodation. Another major source of stress suggested by the study was work related situations, involving interruptions to school programs, heavy workload, and overcrowded classes and so on

The major coping strategies used by teachers included engaging in extra activities to raise money to meet accommodation costs, and soliciting for support from peers to deal with discriminatory tendencies by administrators. The implication of these findings is that teachers will exhibit multiple symptoms such as absenteeism, frequent permissions, low working morale just to mention but a few all of which will affect pupil performance.

The study therefore recommends that the Government of the Republic of Zambia should improve teachers' condition of service and working environments. It is further recommended that basic school teachers should be provided with extra curriculum activities and internet facilities to keep them entertained.

Dedication

To my children, Chomba, Namundu and Singoyi Makasa, there is no better sovereigner that I can present to you for giving me a chance to share my fears, happiness, dreams and hopes. I challenge all of you to emulate me and beat this record and I am confident you will.

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