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EXPLORING OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES RENDERED AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS FOR TEACHERS IN VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO

A report on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

In partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree Master of Arts in Occupational Social Work

By

FHATUWANI JOSEPH LIGEGE

March, 2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own original work and I have referenced all the original sources that I have used. This research report has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination.

FHATUWANI JOSEPH LIGEGE DATE: 15 MARCH 2016

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“Ndi Mishumo ya tshilidzi”
It`s the works of Grace

ABSTRACT

Due to the lack of direct access to Human Resource (HR) offices, most public schools are usually neglected with regards to issues of health and occupational services. Teachers are faced with occupational challenges, such as stress, physical and mental health issues, increased work load, long working hours, unrealistic deadlines, inadequate remuneration, HIV/AIDS, poor personal financial management and relationship problems. Therefore, this requires teachers to have access to professional occupational services which aim to support and enhance their wellbeing when required. The research study explored on occupational services rendered at rural public high schools for teachers in Limpopo. The qualitative research approach and a case study research design were utilised. A type of non-probability sampling, purposive sampling also known as a judgemental sampling was used to select the research participants. The sample consisted of 19 teachers from two public high schools, who participated in three focus groups. With the various findings from the study and identifying challenges in the various schools, it is evident that the Department of Education, Limpopo needs to prioritise the provision of occupational health services to teachers in the rural areas. Such services are anticipated to enhance the wellbeing of teachers, which is further hoped, that learners will benefit from quality education as provided by teachers, impacting positively on the year end outcomes.

Keywords: occupational health services, occupational stressors, teachers, public secondary schools, occupational social work, occupational social worker, rural

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	**i**
Acknowledgements	**ii**
Abstract	**iii**
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and overview	**1**
1.1 Introduction	**1**
1.2 Statement of the problem and rationale for the study	**1**
1.3 Purpose of the research	**4**
1.4 Overview of research methodology	**4**
1.5 Definition of concepts	**4**
1.6 Limitations of the research study	**6**
1.7 Organisation of the report	**6**
CHAPTER TWO: Literature review and theoretical framework	**8**
2.1 Introduction	**8**
2.2 Defining occupational health services	**8**
2.3 Employee wellness legislation	**10**
2.4 Conceptual framework for South Africa occupational services	**11**
2.5 Theoretical framework underpinning the study	**13**
2.6 Occupational social work	**14**
2.7 Occupational stressors	**16**
2.8 Support structures	**21**
2.9 Summary	**23**

CHAPTER THREE: Research methodology **24**

3.1 Introduction **24**

3.2 Research questions **24**

3.3 Primary aims and secondary objectives of the research **24**

3.4 Research strategy **25**

3.5 Population, sample and sampling procedures **26**

3.6 Research instrument **27**

3.7 Pre-testing of the research tool **27**

3.8 Method of data collection **28**

3.9 Method of data analysis **29**

3.10 Trustworthiness of the study **31**

3.11 Ethical consideration **33**

3.12 Summary **35**

CHAPTER FOUR: Presentation of analysed data and findings **36**

4.1 Introduction **36**

4.2 Demographic profiles of participants **36**

4.3 Key themes emerging from collected and interpretative approach to data **37**

4.4 Discussion of findings **38**

4.5 Summary **47**

CHAPTER FIVE: Main findings, conclusions and recommendations **48**

5.1 Introduction **48**

5.2 Summary of the main findings **48**

5.3 Conclusion **51**

5.4 Recommendations **51**

REFERENCES **53**

APPENDICES **60**

Appendix A: Approval letters

Appendix B: Participants information sheet

Appendix C: Consent form for participating in the study and audio taping

Appendix D: Focus group guide

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness

Table 2: Demographic profile of participants

Table 3: Themes and sub-themes

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for employee health and wellness in the public service, 2009

Figure 2: Occupational social work practice model, 2009

Figure 3: Analysing steps

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CSTL	Care and support for effective teaching and learning
DoE	Department of Education
DOH	Department of Health
DPSA	Department of Public Service Administration
DSD	Department of Social Development
EH&W	Employee Health and Wellness
EHWP	Employee Health and Wellness Programme
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organisations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OHS	Occupational Health Services
SACE	South Africa Council for Educators
SACPSS	South Africa Council for Professional Social Services
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAPS	South Africa Police Services
SHERQ	Safety Health Environment, Risk & Quality
STP	Spielberger State Trait
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Occupational services appear to be an important service required by most employees but specifically within the educational environment, seeing that these services are aimed at addressing health, wellness and productivity matters in the workplace. This chapter seeks to explain the statement of the problem and rationale for the study and the purpose of the study. A brief overview of methodology applied will be presented and key concepts will be explained. This will be followed by an outline of the structure of the research report.

1.2 Statement of the problem and rationale for the study

The wellness and health of teachers have not been taken into consideration until late in the current millennium. According to the statistics presented by WHO Global Plan of Action, it is evident that most educational sectors do not take into account of teachers` health within their work environment (WHO, 2013) thus many teachers would not be informed about occupational and wellness services. According to the report, being informed about occupational services differs depending on the level of education that teachers have, for example approximately 84% of teachers were sceptical regarding issues of teachers` health and wellness; 42% to a certain extent were knowledgeable and the other 42% had no knowledge regarding teachers` health and wellness services on secondary school levels (WHO, 2013).

Recently, various media sources, such as newspaper articles in the Sunday Times (2015, February 15), Mail & Guardian (2006, November 07), and News24 (2015, March 28; 2015, March 30) reported that teachers are faced with numerous challenges within their work environment, such as interactions with their learners, lack of resources and personal challenges, especially in Limpopo rural areas.

Recently, a new development in the Department of Education has been to introduce teaching and learning support for teachers and learners. In 2010, the Department of Education and MIET Africa compiled a national support pack for care and support for effective teaching and learning (CSTL). According to Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa (2010, p.5), the document is seen

to be “essential [towards] addressing barriers to education for children in South Africa”. It has been noted that teachers are vulnerable within their working environments affecting their wellbeing in numerous ways. According to 2004 Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) study as cited in the Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa (2010), most teachers face various challenges such as increased workload, the lack of career development, increased stress-related illnesses, and inadequate remuneration. “Many South African teachers face the daily reality of teaching large classes, as well as coping with added pressure of curriculum reform and high performance expectations, with limited resources and support” (Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa, 2010, p. 17). Therefore, it is apparent that teachers need professional occupational services with the aim to support and enhance their wellbeing.

Lately, there has been an increase in interest in occupation challenges resulting in the increase of stress levels experienced by teachers within the education system. Brunsting and Sreckovic (2014) have noted how issues of continued stress could contribute towards burnout which is caused by various issues that teachers might experience. Some of these issues are for example, role conflict, role ambiguity, and the lack of administrative support in the work environment. Wang, Lin and Cao (2009) also outlined sources of work stress for educators which include workload, student affairs and interpersonal relations. They further argue that the development of work stressors is based on eight factors, such as leadership and management, workload, interpersonal relationship and occupational development. Furthermore, Marchand and Blanca (2011) acknowledged that occupation and work organisation can be seen to play a major role towards the development of chronic psychological distress. Thus, various authors acknowledge that stress is a major concern in the education sector which further affects teachers’ wellbeing.

In addition, various studies have identified challenges faced by teachers with different roles in particular schools. This includes teachers working in special schools (Musengi, Ndofiredi & Shumba 2012); science teachers teaching outside their science specialism (Mizzi, 2013); challenges faced by project competition participants and their advisors/teachers (Demirel, Baydas, Yilmaz, & Goktas, 2013); sustainable development education towards challenges faced by geography teachers (Corney, 2006) and the response to learners` diversity regarding to disability, giftedness and special talent (Cardona, 2008). Such challenges might be seen to present themselves as problems affecting for example, productivity and motivation. Hence, there is a need to research

underlying challenges and possible interventions to assist teachers through providing relevant occupational services.

A considerable amount of literature has been published about teachers` wellness and in most cases the articles found stress and burnout to be most prevalent amongst teachers in the work environment. More attention has been given to understanding issues of stress, fatigue and social support in the work and family context and how psychological distress has an impact on the employee (Goldsmith, 2007; Marchand & Blanc, 2011). It is argued by Brunsting & Sreckovic (2014), Wang et al. (2009), Tucker, (2010) and Brown & Roloff, (2011) that factors like burnout, stress, adaptation to extra roles and occupational commitment towards the teaching profession might also be seen to impact negatively on teacher`s productivity and commitment. However, hardly any research has been done to explore how the limited or lack of occupational services provided in the context of rural schools can contribute towards burnout and other occupational challenges amongst teachers.

Occupational services are important for each and every workplace be it public, private or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Thus, a good occupational health service will help prevent unintended health and social problems in the work environment (Department of Health, 2003). Therefore, if occupational health services (OHS) are well integrated into organisations, it is likely to be cost beneficial to all stakeholders involved. According to the Department of Health booklet for Occupational Health Services (2003) “setting up well-managed OHS makes good economic sense. The reduction in cost due to preventing occupationally related injuries and diseases would more than offset the budget required” (p. 10). Thus, this requires research to explore occupational services provided by the Education Department to rural schools in Limpopo.

Worldwide, numerous studies to contribute towards the studied phenomena have been conducted, however the role of occupational social work within the education system have not been explored and described substantively. Thus, it is anticipated that the research findings will contribute towards expanding the knowledge of occupational social work as a profession and the possible contributions there are to be made to enhance the wellbeing of teachers in the rural areas and to inform specific programmes and polices related to the wellbeing of teachers in rural secondary public schools.

1.3 Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to explore occupational services rendered at rural public high schools for teachers in Limpopo. The study was influenced by the various challenges that teachers are faced with as individuals and within the workplace. It is important to note that Department of Education has transformed, which has its unanticipated challenges, relating to a number of factors, ranging from infrastructures, change in curriculum, chronic conditions infecting/affecting teachers and many other challenges that come with the profession currently.

1.4 Overview of research methodology

The research study explored occupational services rendered at rural public high schools for teachers in Limpopo. The qualitative research approach and a case study research design were utilised. A type of non-probability sampling, purposive sampling also known as a judgemental sampling was used to select the research participants. The sample consisted of 19 teachers from two public high schools, who participated in three focus groups. The sample consisted of both male and female, who have more than two years teaching experience within Vhembe district. The data was analysed through the thematic content method. This includes a focus on addressing trustworthiness of the study and ethical consideration.

1.5 Definition of key concepts

1.5.1 Teacher/Educator

According to the National Education policy Act 27 of 1996, an educator is “any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution or assisting in rendering education services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department”. Similar to the National Education Policy Act, the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 stipulates that an educator is a person who teaches, educates and trains individuals in various institutions or provide professional educational services. In addition the South Africa Council for Educators (SACE) Code of Professional Ethics defines an educator as someone who has “provisionally registered with the council” (2000). Furthermore, Hornby in the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, states that a teacher is “a person whose job is teaching, especially in a school” (2011, p. 1532). The definition is

similar to that of an educator, however for this particular research; the word teacher will be used throughout the report.

1.5.2 Public secondary school

A public secondary school also known as a government school or high shcool can be understood as a school that is governed and supported by the government (South Africa schools Act 84 of 1996; Power, 2016). This particular institution caters for learners from grade 8 to grade 12.

1.5.3 Occupational social work

According to Straussner (1990) occupational social work has been defined as a "specialized field of social work practice which addresses the human and social needs of the work community through a variety of interventions which aim to foster optimal adaptation between individuals and their environments" (p. 2).

1.5.4 Occupational social worker

According to the Department of Social Development, Social Service Professions Act, 1978, an occupational social worker is an individual who has registered with the South African Council for Professional Social Services (SACPSS) and has an appropriate Master's degree as approved by the council and at least two years appropriate and evidence practice within occupational social work services.

1.5.5 Occupational stressors

Scholars define occupational stressors in many ways. For this study the definition that is deemed to be appropriate is that of Naude and Rothmann (2006) who describe occupational stress as "a series of factors that have their beginnings in one's actual surroundings and that conclude with the individual`s reactions" (p. 66).

1.5.6 Occupational health services

International Labour Organisations (ILO) has defined occupational health services as services aimed at "protecting the workers against any health hazards which may arise out

of the work, or conditions in which it is carried on" (Department of Health, 2003, p. 9). This includes services aimed at the employee's physical and mental adjustment in relation to their description; in addition the definition includes the maintenance of physical and mental wellbeing of all employees (Department of Health, 2003).

1.5.7 Rural areas

According to the Rural Development Framework (1997), "rural areas are defined as the sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources, including the villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas. [This] includes former homelands created by the apartheid removals".

1.6 Limitations of the research study

The study has encountered various limitations. First limitation is due to the use of focus groups where group dynamics arise, further influencing group responses (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). In such a case, one participant has an influence on other participants' responses. The second limitation includes analysing of focus group data which has been challenging, since there were numerous responses from all participants at one and the same time. Therefore such a challenge might have also affected the outcomes of the findings Greeff (2011). Due to the minimal understanding, knowledge and being informed about occupational services provided by the Department of Education, Limpopo; this might have influenced the response of participants. Such a limitation might have had a negative impact towards the analysis and reporting of the research findings.

1.7 Organisation of the research report

Chapter One outlines the statement of the problem and rationale of the study. The purpose of the research study is briefly highlighted and an overview of the research methodology used is presented. The key concepts are described and the structure of the report is explained.

An overview of reviewed literature is presented and the theoretical framework of the research study is described in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three outlines and explains the research methodology employed during the research study. The collected data will be presented and analysed in Chapter Four and the main findings, conclusion and recommendations will be addressed in chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Understanding concepts and definitions is a critical component of research. Therefore, the literature review chapter seeks to outline occupational challenges and define concepts such as occupational health services, employee wellness legislature, conceptual framework for South African occupational services, occupational social work, occupational stressors, support structures and the theoretical framework which will guide the research.

Approximately two million employees have lost their lives due to occupational accidents and illness such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS) and other chronic illnesses. This further has implications on work productivity, social and economic development. The Department of Labour South Africa as citied by Sieberhagen, Rothmann and Pienaar, stipulates that "accidents and illness account for 4% of the cost of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually. Small-and medium-size enterprise account for 90% of those enterprises where poor working conditions are prevalent" (2009, p. 18). This is not different to any of the government departments in South Africa, such as Department of Education where educators are faced with death due to chronic illness (Gauteng Provincial Government, EHWP Annual Risk Report, 2012/2013). Naidu as cited in Sieberhagen et al. (2009) stipulates that teachers especially in high school are mostly vulnerable to high levels of stress as compared to junior levels. Thus as a result, there are a high number of resignations from educators, leaving the education sector more vulnerable. The remaining teachers become challenged with added work, which might further lead to burnout, stress, depression and other occupational challenges.

2.2 Defining occupational health services

Globally, occupational services for employees have been influenced by various developments within the work environments in different organisations and this led to the development of different strategies by organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO). These include WHO Global Action Plan on workers' health, International Labour Organisations (ILO) and Decent Work Agenda in Africa (DPSA, 2008).

The South African public departments and stakeholders are currently implementing and continuously promote employee health and occupational services, for example through the contribution from several employment health and wellness Indaba's and public services (DPSA, 2008). For a clear understanding of the concept, there is a need to define and understand occupational services. Occupational services and employee wellness are discussed in detail in the Employee Health and Wellness conceptual framework.

Documents and policies have outlined their objectives and missions towards promoting healthier working conditions for employees. The Decent Work Agenda in Africa with the guidance of ILO further aims to improve occupational safety, health and compliance towards laws regulating working conditions (International Labour Office, 2007). Various organisations and structures define occupation services differently, seeing that occupational services include all services that an employee might need, not necessarily only health related services. According to the ILO as cited by South African Department of Health occupational services, occupational health services are defined as "protecting the workers against any health hazards which may arise out of the work, or conditions in which it is carried on" (2003, p. 9). Occupational health services include the employee's physical and mental adjustment in relation to their job description, and the maintenance of physical and mental wellbeing of all employees (Department of Health, 2003). This includes the need to address issues related to promotion of wellness, prevention of occupational injuries and diseases, special programmes and employee assistance programmes (EAP). Although the EAP model was previous used, DPSA has adopted a comprehensive model which will be discussed in 2.5.1.

With the growth of the capitalistic world, more individuals and communities participate in the economy and need to make a living, requiring individuals to find jobs. According to the WHO Global Plan of Action on workers' health, "half of the world's people are economically active and spend one third of their time at work" (2013, p. 8). Due to the lack of access to employee occupational health services many employees becomes prone to health and wellbeing challenges. As a result many individuals might fail to participate in their desired employment as healthy employees that affect productivity levels as well (WHO, 2013). To further support employees, there is a need to implement policies which will guide working environments regarding wellness issues.

2.3 Employee wellness legislation

Employee health and wellness programmes have been driven and influenced by numerous policies on international and local levels. Firstly, WHO global plan of action on workers' health seeks to implement and devise policies around workers health (2013). Secondly, the constitution of the ILO saw the need to address various issues within the workplace like the protection of employees from work sickness, disease, and injury arising from a particular workplace (2010). This is commonly addressed under the health and wellness programmes. Thirdly, Decent Work Agenda in Africa`s document seeks to implement decent work place policies which would reduce poverty and empower employees on the basis of promoting better, safer and healthier working conditions (2007). Furthermore, in protecting the educator during incapacity and misconduct, the Employment of Educator`s Act of 1998, stipulates that the employer should establish a base of support which can be either aimed at psychological wellbeing or as capacitating the teacher through training. Lastly, South African acts and policies such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 seek to promote human dignity and achieve equality and advance human rights. This includes the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1997 (Act no. 75 of 1997) and Occupational Health and Safety Act 1993 (Act no. 88 of 1993). These are just a few; however all the stipulated acts and policies seek to protect and regulate programmes thus guiding occupational services provided by Public Services Department.

By providing and implementing measures to help support employees, the legislature aims to ensures that occupational services are rendered to all employees despite their location (Sieberhagen et al., 2009). Although different countries prioritise various safety and health issues, appropriate policies should be in place to address issues of health and wellness in the workplace. However Sieberhagen, et al. (2009, p. 18) postulate that "Health and safety aspects are covered by occupational health and safety legislation, but legislation regarding employee wellness still lacks to a large extent". It is evident that developed countries focus more on psychosocial stressors, whilst developing countries focus on risky occupations and heavy physical work (Sieberhagen, et al., 2009). In different ways, occupational challenges can be seen as threats to employees, organisations and the country, thus there is a need to continue negotiating for appropriate implementation of wellness programmes by the government, which can be achieved through policy and legislature. In this case, the government should be a major role player in driving legislature

which seeks to promote and protect health and wellness programmes and provide standard supportive infrastructure especially in rural areas (Sieberhagen, et al., 2009). An example of providing appropriate infrastructure is the design of conceptual frameworks which will be discussed in section 2.5.

2.4 Conceptual framework for South Africa occupational services

The South African Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) have an employee health and wellness framework which seeks to outline the different pillars of the occupational health services (DPSA, 2008). The vision of the conceptual framework is to "maintain healthy, dedicated, responsive and productive employees within the public service who can add value within public service organizations" (2008, p. 12). This particular framework seeks to guide all public service organisations which include the Department of Education. Hence the framework acknowledges that employees are confronted with occupational stressors which impact negatively on service delivery.

2.4.1 Public services Employee Health and Wellness framework

All departments in South Africa are guided by and need to adhere to the 2008 Employee Health and Wellness (EH&W) framework as provided by public services currently known as DPSA. Below is a conceptual framework for the EH&W.



Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the employee health & wellness in the public services, 2008

Although the department of Education Limpopo does not have its specialized, specific occupational health service model, the department adheres to the EH&W framework. The framework is designed at national level, thus provinces are required to adopt the structure in providing services to departments within its jurisdiction. It is stipulated that the vision of the EH&W "framework is to provide programmes that can develop and maintain healthy, dedicated, responsive and productive employees within the public service who can add value within public service organisations" (DPSA, 2008). However, it is critical to understand that any professional working with the government`s wellness programme, whether trained as occupational social workers or EAP specialists, will have to be guided by the framework towards implementing services. Therefore, all public service structures such as the Department of Education are expected to follow the framework as outlined in figure 1, which is still utilised and relevant even in 2016.

The framework consists of four pillars, namely:

- HIV and AIDS, and Tuberculosis (TB) management;
- Health and productivity management;
- Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality (SHERQ) management;
- Wellness management.

  (DPSA, 2008, p. 11)

All four pillars are aimed at "building and maintaining a healthy workforce for increased productivity and excellent service delivery for the benefit of employees and their families" (DPSA, 2008, p. 13). Hence, the Department of Education, Limpopo should seek to implement the same framework within the districts and rural schools.

The first pillar, HIV and AIDS and TB management, seeks to address issues of prevention, treatment care and support, which incorporates human and legal rights and access to justice (DPSA, 2008). The objectives came through a realisation that HIV was one of the major challenges in South Africa, infecting and affecting employees thus impacting negatively on productivity and excellent service delivery. The focus of the second pillar, health and productive management, is on addressing issues of disease management, mental health and productivity; and occupational health education and promotion, which includes injury on duty in the work place. These have implications for employee's medical aid costs, high absenteeism and low productivity at work (DPSA, 2008).

The third, SHERQ pillar, has sub pillars, namely occupational health and safety, environmental management, risk and quality management (DPSA, 2008). This pillar requires the organisation's executive leadership to take responsibility for providing a safe environment for all employees and reducing injury risks. This is not the case in some departments such as Department of Education, especially in rural areas where infrastructure might not be well maintained (Nicolson, 2013). The fourth pillar focuses on wellness management which seeks to promote quality of work life. The sub-objectives of this pillar are to promote "individual wellness, organisational wellness and work life balance" (DPSA, 2008, p. 32). This covers issues related to physical wellness and individual psycho-social issues.

Besides the conceptual framework for employee health & wellness in the public services being discussed, theoretical models underpinning the study and various models which have been used in South Africa to address employee health and wellness challenges will be discussed in the following two sections.

2.5 Theoretical frameworks underpinning the study

The systems and ecological theories are relevant frameworks for the research study because the systems theory focuses mainly on the social aspect as opposed to counselling and psychotherapy. Systems theory requires professionals "to think about the social and personal elements in any social situations as well as and at the same time as, seeing how those elements interact with each other is integrated into a whole" (Payne, 2005, p. 142). Similarly, ecological theory views social problems and psychosocial challenges (Payne, 2005) as contributing to human wellness and cannot be ignored in the helping process. Therefore, once a teacher is faced with challenges in various aspects such as personal, family and in the work place, that one aspect can impact negatively on other systems. Smeeton (2013) acknowledges how systems such as families and peer groups have an influence on an individual`s life. This can either be positive or negative depending on the outcomes of the interaction. Furthermore, Engelbrecht (2014) suggests that system theory in management should be viewed as interrelated and having influence on the other systems within the organisation. Using systems and ecological theory would therefore be useful in terms of understanding how different systems contribute towards the social and psychological aspect affecting teacher`s wellness and work productivity.

In understanding teachers' and learners' challenges in schools, the Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa adopted the ecological systems approach. This particular system takes note of the different multiple sources which influence an individual positively or negatively, such as interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, socio-economic states, community and societal structures (Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa, 2010). Using systems and ecological theory, one would attempt to understand how different systems contribute towards the social and psychological aspect affecting teachers' wellness and work productivity. This is similar to what has been mentioned in systems theory, thus the theory becomes relevant in understanding how social problems and psychological challenges have an impact on human wellness. These theories support evidence that occupational services should be provided to teachers since they experience challenges in various systems.

2.6 Occupational social work

The origin of occupational social work and the different theoretical approaches and models have been well documented over the years, and appear to still be relevant for current practice. Occupational social work originated in the United States before the end of the last millennium with the intention of assisting industrial employees after the world wars (Du Plessis, 1990). American theories and models have played a part in influencing South African practice. Alluding to what Du Plessis stipulated, in the mid-1960's occupational social work evolved and was concerned with employees and work organisations. Occupational social work has been defined as a "specialized field of social work practice which addresses the human and social needs of the work community through a variety of interventions which aim to foster optimal adaptation between individuals and their environments" (Straussner.1990. p. 2). The ecological approach as a conceptual tool has been used in context to assist the social work profession and most importantly the occupational dimension. This includes the response to individual challenges and problems arising from the work environment. The definition takes into account human beings both in the work place and outside the work environment. The occupational social work practice has various models which can be used to guide the practitioner, such as the occupational social work practice model by Van Breda and Du Plessis.

Below is diagram, presenting the occupational social work practice model.



Figure 2: Occupational social work practice model, 2009

In essence, the model presented by Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009) was developed in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to help guide social work practitioners as they worked with employees facing occupational challenges. Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009) postulate that occupational social workers can approach interventions from a promotive, restorative, work-person and workplace perspective. Thus, the model might be relevant to assist employees within the Department of Education.

Position (1) of the model above, *restorative interventions*, position has been identified as the traditional form of social work, since the practice is based more on the individual's needs and challenges. "Restorative interventions entail rendering a problem solving service to clients aimed at restoring their problem solving and coping capacities"(Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009. p. 324). Therefore, teachers could use this method as a way to deal with challenges which do not require professional help thus far. Furthermore, Du Plessis as cited in Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009) identified the position to focus on the 'employee-as-person' which acknowledges that an individual is a human being outside the work place with other roles such as being a father, mother or care giver.

Position (2) in the model, *promotive interventions*, focus mainly on the individual's problems, by enhancing the social functioning and promoting the wellbeing of clients, which can be attained through the use of prevention and educational methods (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009). The practitioner would therefore be expected to create awareness campaigns and educational material to help promote social functioning and teachers' wellbeing.

Position (3) of the model, *the work-person interventions*, provides services to individuals regarding matters arising from the work environment. Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009) identified the position as a shift from employee-as-person to person-as-employee with a specific focus on the workplace and the emerging challenges. Such challenges would hence include stressed managers, diversity issues, retrenchment, which impacts on teachers functioning within the workplace.

Position (4) is *work place interventions*. According to Googins and Davidson as cited in Van Breda & Du Plessis, (2009) the organisation in this position is identified as the client specifically focusing on the macro level of practice as compared to the three other positions. In this case, the various schools and the Department of Education would be the clients, where specific programmes are designed to enhance the institutions. Such a model can be utilized together with the public services employee health and wellness framework.

It is notable that the Department of Education, Limpopo has a wellness framework which was formulated at a national level. All departments at a national and provincial level are expected to adhere to the framework, thus it is important for departments to implement such services at grassroots level. Although, DPSA has a framework, the occupational social work practice model as designed by Van Breda can be adopted since it has been proved to yield positive results in the SANDF (2009) which is a governmental institution.

2.7 Occupational stressors

A considerable amount of literature has been published on stress and the work environment. According to Chen, Siu, Lu, Cooper and Philips (2009), work stressors were associated with depression and other mental disorders. There is a lack of resources and limited support for stress and mental health problems of employees (Gray-Stanley, Muramatsu, Heller, Hughes, Johnson & Valles, 2010).Therefore one has to note that occupational stress can be a result of demands from different systems, starting from the family to the work place.

Most employees are facing various challenges that are affecting their wellness and health within the workplace. Stress is one of the common results related to unattended health and wellness issues. According to MacDonald (2005) stress has not been recognised as a medical condition, thus, stress can also be seen as a stimulator towards improved work productivity depending on the type of stress. However MacDonald (2005, p. 18) argues that "if stress is intense, constant and/or endured over a lengthy period of time it can lead to physical or mental illness". Occupational stress is defined as "a series of factors that have their beginnings in one's actual surroundings and that conclude with the individual`s reactions" (Naude and Rothmann, 2006. p. 66). This is further supported by Spielberger State- Trait (STP), which acknowledges that the body and mind get aroused through psychological and physical demands from the work environment (Naude & Rothmann, 2006; MacDonald, 2005).

Common cases of work stress have been identified; nonetheless these may differ according to the work environment. Identified examples of work stress include heavy workloads added to unrealistic deadliness, long working hours, the lack of appropriate training, nature of work and poor management support (MacDonald, 2005). Particular to South African teachers, there are various work related stresses which contribute to teachers' vulnerability and attrition. It has been reported that 55% of teachers have been seen to have lost their interests in the teaching profession due to various work stressors such as "inadequate remuneration, increased workload, lack of career development and professional recognition, dissatisfaction with work policies, job insecurity and lack of choice on where they wished to work" (Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa, 2010, p. 18). Such work stress could lead to various reactions and symptoms. Presented symptoms include less productivity, increased absenteeism, increased use of substance abuse and energy boosters like caffeine, and unexplained physical pains. (MacDonald, 2005). .

Beehr and Newman, as cited in Wang et al. (2009) also identify possible stressors such as role demands, job demands, external demands and organisation characteristics. Sulsky and Smith (2005) used the terms micro-level work and contemporary stressors which encompasses issues of change management, work and family conflicts and new developments. Such elements could be stressful to employees, further impacting negatively on their wellbeing and work. Although the working environment might contribute to the individual stressors, it is important to note that "stressors may come not only from the work itself, but also from society, colleagues or family

members, or parents of the student" (Wang et al., 2009). Therefore, one would thus link the findings with systems theory which acknowledges that people are affected by various systems since they do not live in isolation.

Following a visit to the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, the report of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education (2012) states that these particular provinces were challenged with various issues like lack of advisors to support teachers, shortage and utilisation of teachers to teach critical subjects like mathematics and science and delays with regards to the delivery of text books. Furthermore, the department has been faced with a shortage of staff due to the termination of temporary contract teachers. The lack of sufficient training on Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) grade 10 (2012) was identified as an additional stressor which has been seen to affect employee wellness and productivity. Common challenges faced by the schools and teachers in Limpopo public schools include poor infrastructure, which puts teachers and learners at risk of being injured. According to Nicolson (2013) it has been reported that the Department of Education Vhembe district has failed to fix infrastructure such as classrooms and toilets. This is similar to what has been outlined in the 2010 Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa report. Hence it would be important to provide occupational services addressing the various challenges faced by teachers in rural public schools.

HIV and AIDS is a chronic illness which has been a challenge in the workplace and clearly affects productivity. According to the South African Institute of International Affairs as cited by Sieberhagen et al (2009, p. 20), "almost one-quarter of the economically active population is HIV positive, which contributes to high labour turnover rates and lower worker productivity". Furthermore, this contributes to high levels of absenteeism and increased use of employee benefit programmes, such Medical Aid schemes, which becomes costly to both the employer and employee (Sieberhagen et al., 2009). Therefore, it is evident that HIV/AIDS is one in many other chronic illnesses which further contributes to absenteeism and low productivity in education. Through the identification of various occupational stress, the Employment of Educator`s Act of 1998 notes that there might be a chance that educators are in state of incapacity and misconduct, therefore the employer needs to assess such a state and offer support. This is however not the case for most teachers in the rural school.

Some of these stressors will be described in more detail below.

2.7.1 Work overload and curriculum change

There are numerous stressors which contribute to employees' productivity and stress levels. Marchand and Blanc (2011) identified that stress was embedded within the macro social structures, structures of daily life including agent personality, and psychological traits. Furthermore Gray-Stanley et al., (2010) stipulates that work overload has been seen to contribute to high levels of depression in the work place; this can also be influenced by the lack of organisational resources which are meant to help employees. It is therefore recommended that support assistance be provided to employees who might be overwhelmed by the workload. Some high school teachers in China have been reported to suffer from stress due to their intense focus on assisting students to qualify for higher education, this process has been seen to harm teacher`s health, which might further have an effect to learns due to the counter transferring effect (Wang et al., 2009).

In most cases education systems will change their curricula or develop innovations with the intention to align education structures with the global developments. The United Nations (UN) endorsed the need to have education for sustainable development aimed at addressing challenges faced by society (Corney, 2006). Therefore, countries who are part of the UN are forced to adopt and change curricula by adhering to the UN`s vision and mission. Due to such an endorsement various schools find it difficult to implement sustainable education thus curriculum change becomes a challenge. The UN works on a global scale, thus some of the local schools find it challenging to work on similar scale due to various things such as lack of resources and low level experience, which further demotivates teachers (Corney, 2006).

Through the teaching career, some teachers take up managerial roles and positions. "As a manager, the teacher has several roles which can be noticed in comparison with the general activities of a manager and which can be transposed in specific management tasks, like: forecast-planning, organization, control, evaluation, consulting and decision" (Toader, Sambotin, Hurmuzache, Criste, Martin & Dumitrescu, 2014, p. 250). Therefore, managerial positions present themselves with added work and more responsibility such as controlling, evaluating and consulting.

2.7.2 Occupational development, promotion and remuneration

With few promotional levels in the school setting, it becomes difficult for teachers to get promoted through additional development. "Occupational development and promotion, refers to the stress

experienced by a teacher as a result of a perceived lack of opportunity to further his or her career prospects within the school for which he or she works" (Wang et al., 2009, p. 464). As a result of the lack of promotion and occupational development, teachers remain unmotivated and this can be seen to impact productivity negatively. Sieberhagen et al. (2009) refer to inadequate salaries for educators which further contribute to the demotivation of teachers and other professionals. Therefore, due to inadequate remuneration, teachers find themselves in financial problems, further affecting teacher`s wellness.

2.7.3 Depression and Stress

Depression in the workplace is prevalent due to various causes such as work stress, increased workload and other related work environment challenges. Ainsworth (2000) defines depression as a potential disabling illness which can be caused by various factors such as loss, abuse, life stressful events and low socioeconomic status as experienced by individuals or groups. It is postulated that depression in the workplace in China, cost approximately 51, 370 Renminbi which is equivalent to $6,264 million (Chen et al., 2009). It appears that the majority of work related challenges are caused by depression and other psychological challenges, therefore it would be important to find ways which will help reduce harmful effects of stress and depression. It is postulated by Stanley, Muramatsu, Heller, Hughes, Johnson, & Ramirez-Valles (2010) that employees who experience stress will be more likely to reach a state of depression. Furthermore Chen et al (2009, p. 432) argue that "Coping with work stress has become a crucial factor in enhancing mental health in the workplace which in turn may boost performance". Failure to cope with challenges affects individuals at various levels such as the physical or psycho-social aspects. Dunham as cited by Wang et al "define stress as a behavioural, emotional, mental and physical reactions caused by prolonged, increase, or new pressure that are significantly greater than the availability of coping strategies" (2009, p. 460). In the context of teachers, stress has negative impacts on self-esteem and wellbeing. Thus it is important to address mental health issues in the workplace through various mechanisms such as developing coping strategies and encouraging the use of support structures. In addition, stress has been regarded as a major risk in South Africa, which was further reinforced by the evidence as provided by various Medical Aid schemes, since stress is categorised as one of the top ten most treated conditions (Sieberhagen et al., 2009).

Organisational structure is one of the predicator which determines the level of stress types. Widerszal-Bbazyl et al. as citied in Chen et al., (2009, p. 434) reported that "being private- or state- owned was a predictor of certain sources of stress connected insufficient organizational support and excessive workload which were high in state enterprises". This is further supported by Marchand and Blanc (2011) who stipulate that the organisational structure is the first point in terms of understanding mental health and chronic psychological distress problems. Hence government institutions such as schools are faced with various challenges. Naidu as cited in Sieberhagen et al. (2009, p. 20) confirms that "educators (specifically in secondary schools) in South Africa also seem to experience high levels of stress". Apart from depression and stress; injury on duty has been identified as one of the aspect which affect employees, further costing South Africa at least R4.7 billion a year (Sieberhagen et al., 2009). Such injuries at work can be linked to safety and other occupational stressors as identified in SHERQ management.

2.8 Support structures

In most case that teachers are not supported socially through structures such as communities and society in general, including welfare structures (Wang et al., 2009). However, some people use different methods as support structures in dealing with stress and depression. The role of social support has been well researched regarding occupational stress and how it can be used to decrease stress levels (Haly, 2009). Therefore, access to formal or informal support can be seen to be useful in addressing stress. It was thus identified that informal social support has important implications for individuals and the organisation, and if utilised appropriately could increase job satisfaction and commitment (Chen et al., 2009). Informal support in this particular case refers to voluntary help which can be provided to individuals by people around such as co-workers, family members or neighbours. Such support can be seen as emotional and instrumental, factored by empathy and emotional caring (Chen et al., 2009; Haly, 2009).

In addition, availability of support structures reduces the chances of feeling depressed and feeling hopeless in the work environment. It was further found that workers with access to support were less likely to experience depression hence support systems can be seen to play a critical role in the workplace (Stanley et al., 2010). The debate still continues regarding whether the work space and family related issues could co-exist or conflict with one another. It is stated that work and family issues are usually difficult to balance (Goldsmith, 2007), which might further be stressful to the

teachers. With this regard, family support is seen to reduce stress amongst teachers. Therefore it is evident that formal or informal support structures play a crucial role in enhancing one's wellbeing. In some studies social support was seen to be associated with weakness and incompetence, which seemed to hinder some employees from seeking social support (Deelstra, Peerters, Schaufeli, & Stroebe, 2003).

Trade unions have been seen to play a vital role in supporting employees in the workplace. According to Labour Relations Act 1995, as cited by Abramowitz, trade unions are "an association of employees whose primary purpose is to regulate relations between employees and employers including any employer's organisations" (2010, p. 8). Such purpose has been achieved by "negotiating not only for decent wages, but benefits such as medical, housing, pension and so forth which all contribute to improving the living standards of working people" (Mwilima, 2008, p. 11). It is further important to note that trade unions have different mandates depending on their roles, such as welfare unions, community unions or political unions and are dependent on the circumstances. In some instances, trade unions have been involved in the liberation struggles especially within colonised states (Mwilima, 2008). The role extends to acting as mediators and supporting all members during challenges. This is the case as well with South African teacher`s trade unions, where teachers are represented and supported whenever there is a need.

Apart from the use of trade unions as support structures, some individuals resort to utilising religion for psychosocial support. Religion has been defined in numerous ways based on the beliefs of individuals. According to Toynbee as cited by Crawford (2002) religion "is the presence in the world of something spiritually greater than man himself… man`s goal is to seek communion with the presence behind the phenomena" (p. 2). Thus, most individuals use religion as a support structure whenever they are faced with challenges. In addition, religion can be determined by what people are experiencing at the particular moment or based on existential security. It is further noted that existential security refers to the absence of challenges such as war, abuse, poverty, natural disasters and many other challenges (Pollack, 2008). When people`s existential security is threatened, most people feel the need to rely on religion as a support structure. Hence, many individuals such as teachers and other members of society resort to religion during the need. This is followed by discussion of the chapter`s summary.

2.9 Summary

The literature chapter has outlined occupational challenges and defined concepts such as occupational health services, policies on employee wellness, conceptual framework for South Africa occupational services, occupational stressors, occupational social work and theoretical framework which will guide the research. The following chapter will discuss the research methods used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology applied during the research study is described in this chapter. The chapter outlines the research questions and both the primary and secondary aims. In addition, the research strategy, inclusive of the approach and design are explained. The population and sample are defined and the sampling procedure is described. The method of data collection is discussed and the research instrument utilised in the process of data collection is referred to. How that data was analysed is explained and the trustworthiness of the study is highlighted. In addition, the ethical principles considered during the research study are described.

3.2 Research questions

1. What are the perceptions of teachers in Vhembe District Limpopo regarding occupational services offered by the Department of Education?
2. How do teachers in Vhembe District Limpopo describe the occupational services offered by the Department of Education?
3. How do the occupational services rendered contribute to the wellbeing of teachers in Vhembe District Limpopo?

3.3 Primary aims and secondary objectives of the research

The primary aims of the research are:

1. To explore whether and what type of occupational services are rendered to teachers at public schools in Vhembe District Limpopo.
2. To establish the perceptions of teachers about the occupational services available to them in Vhembe District Limpopo.

Secondary objectives are:

1. To establish teacher`s awareness about the availability of occupational services rendered to teachers in the Vhembe District Limpopo.

2. To explore teachers experiences when utilising the available occupational services in the Vhembe District Limpopo.

3.4 Research strategy

3.4.1 Research approach and design

The research approach utilised during this study was qualitative and exploratory in nature. The qualitative approach is rooted in an interpretivist paradigm and has been chosen since it "is concerned with understanding (*verstehen*) rather than explanation with naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement with the subjective exploration of reality" (Strydom & Fouche, 2011, p. 308). Sarantakos`s definition alludes to some elements mentioned by Fouche and Schurink, and defines the qualitative approach research as a "procedure that operates within a naturalistic, interpretive domain guided by the standards and principles of a relativist orientation, a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology" (2013, p. 36). The reason the approach was chosen is because of its informative and detailed characteristics; which allow the interpreting and reflecting of reconstructed impressions by the society (Sarantakos, 2013).

Since the research aims to explore and analyse a particular phenomenon, the research design which was used is a case study. This design is concerned with the nature and complexity of a particular case and an exploration and in-depth analysis of the case or bounded system (Fouche & Schurink, 2011; Bryman 2012). It is argued by Bryman (2012) that case studies are used to "elucidate the unique features of the case" (p. 69) and furthermore allow the researchers to examine key social processes through the use of research questions. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to "develop in-depth analysis of a particular case and researcher [may] collect data using a variety of data collecting procedures" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14).

Although the qualitative research paradigm allows the researcher to be flexible, this particular design also has its limitations which may affect the entire process. The limitation of qualitative research and methodological implications relate to producing quality research by following logic and qualitative principles. The limitations include the challenges to accessibility related to the research settings usually hindered by gatekeepers (Fouche & Schurink, 2011). If the researcher struggles to get access to the research field, no data will be collected, further affecting the outcomes of the research. Before the researcher can conduct the study, there is a need to consider

practicalities which also include ethical considerations. Mason as cited in Fouche and Schurink (2011, p. 326), postulates that "it is advisable for researchers to adopt the rule of dealing with practical concerns in ways that are intellectually sound, even if practicalities mean that researchers cannot conduct their studies as they would like to do intellectually". Therefore, researchers need to consider such limitations when using the qualitative approach. Although this might be an anticipated challenge, the researcher did not struggle to access the research field.

3.5 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures

In association with exploring occupational services rendered in public schools, the population of the study consisted of teachers from two secondary schools, situated in the Vhembe district, Limpopo. The schools were randomly chosen because of their location and being situated in the Vhembe district. David and Sutton (2004) define a "population as simply every possible case that could be included in [one`s] study" (p. 149). A sample of 19 teachers was drawn from the population, 9 teachers were recruited from the one and 10 teachers from the other Secondary School. The criteria for selection of the sample included that participants had to represent both males and females and had to have had a minimum of two years teaching experience in Vhembe district. An email requesting permission to conduct research at the schools was sent and granted (refer to appendix B). Both contact people had communicated with the staff regarding the request to conduct research at school. As part of the recruiting process, the researcher had to briefly explain what the focus of the study was, which allowed for teachers to decide whether they wanted to voluntarily participate in the study.

In this regard, Sarantakos as cited in Strydom and Delport (2011, p. 391), postulates that "sampling in qualitative research is based on saturation, not representative" thus 10 participants might be sufficient if the data is saturated. The method is significant because it helps the researcher collect the richest data possible, and is commonly used in exploratory and qualitative research studies (Sanantakos, 2013). Furthermore, Patton as cited in Strydom and Delport (2011) mentions that qualitative research does not limit the researcher regarding the sample size but is dependent on the purpose of inquiry including adhering to credibility.

Purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, was used as the sampling procedure. In the case of non-probability sampling, researchers usually have limitations regarding particular or

specific participants who will participate in their study since the population might not be known (Strydom and Delport, 2011). However the purposive sampling indicated who must be in the sample group. Purposive sampling requires the "researcher to use [personal] judgment about which respondents to choose and picks only those who best meet the purposes of the study" (Bailey, 1987, p. 61). It is argued by Sarantakos (2013) that the researcher "choose subjects who, in their opinion, are relevant to the project" (p. 177). Participants were recruited on the day of the data collection through a brief presentation which invited teachers to be part of the study. Thus, part of the brief research presentation, requirements were stipulated which included a minimum of two years teaching experience within the district and gender representation with both male and female.

3.6 Research instrument

A semi-structured focus group interview schedule was used as a research instrument. According to Sarantakos (2013) it has "a given structure but with relative freedom to formulate the questions and to determine their order and presentation" (p. 472). The focus group guideline was developed by the researcher, with the aim to explore the experiences and to find answers to the research questions. This particular method allows for diverse responses and provides research with valuable information regarding the process and attitude change, which includes a construction of meanings where group members agree and negotiate what is stated by individuals (Sarantakos, 2013). This was an appropriate instrument for collecting data for this particular research. The disadvantages of using focus group interviews include participants hiding real opinions if this is seen as a threat to their life or career, the difficulty of keeping track of topic of discussion, and some members possibly not wanting to participate at all (Sarantakos, 2013). It is of importance to conduct a pre-testing for the particular chosen method which was the case with this particular research.

3.7 Pre-testing of the research tool

Before data was collected with selected participants, the research instrument was pre-tested. According to Sarantakos (2013, p. 266) "pre-tests are small tests of single elements of a research instrument that are predominantly used to check its mechanical structure". One pre-testing was conducted with two teachers based in the rural areas of Vhembe District. The teachers, who participated in the pre-test, were select by means of referrals from people who reside in Vhembe district. Furthermore, their participation was based on their experience and profession as teachers

in the district. It is important to further note that the data collected in pre-testing was not used as part of the actual data analysing. The reason for conducting a pre-test was to provide guidance towards adjusting the research questions. This particular process yielded positive results, allowing the researcher to change questions which were not clear and questions which did not address the research objectives/aims. This correlates with what Royse (1995) and Denzin & Lincoln (1994) identified with regards to the role and benefits of pre-testing a study, which included evaluating the study`s feasibility before one could embark in the actual process of collecting data (Strydom and Delport, 2011).

3.8 Method of data collection

The method which was utilised to collect data was a focus group discussion which allowed the researcher to collect data through constructed discussions in group settings. According to Sarantakos, (2013, p. 279) focus group interviews "are employed to interview a group of [participants] at one time". According to Babbie (2013. p 313) focus groups may consist of "structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews, [this] allows the researcher/interviewer to question several individuals systemically and simultaneously". As explained by Kingry et al. as cited in Greeff (2011), focus groups are planned discussions which are anticipated to obtain various perspectives in a defined area of interest and provide a platform where members can share their diverse views.

The focus group discussions were conducted and each one lasted between 60-90 minutes. With reference to Sarantakos (2013), focus group discussions firstly allows for reflexivity upon the knowledge produced; secondly, the group interview is directed towards studying life and it`s reality; and thirdly, interviews are flexible since they follow what emerges during the interviews. Focus groups have advantages and disadvantages. Krueger (1988) argues that some advantages of using focus groups include its flexibility when collecting data, speedy results and saturation of data, face validity which is accompanied by real life data capturing. In addition, the focus groups interview allows the researcher to probe issues and also group members to probe each other`s responses which additionally provides in-depth data for the research (Bryman, 2012; Sarantakos, 2013). This was evident during the focus group interviews in the particular research study.

The disadvantages of using a focus group included difficulties regarding recording data since there are a number of individuals in a session and at times not every participant has the opportunity to share real or in depth opinions since they are part of a group setting (Sarantakos, 2013). Another disadvantage of using this particular approach might be the group dynamics and how that can influence responses within the group (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). In relation to this Sarantakos (2013) refers to individuals who might dominate the discussion, or deviation from discussion points which might directly affect the outcomes of the focus group. In addition, one of the disadvantages of using focus groups includes difficulty regarding analysing data as collected since there are a range of points raised by participants (Krueger, 1988). The focus group discussions were tape recorded and data collected was stored in a coded security computer system which is accessible by the researcher only.

3.9 Method of data analysis

Thematic content analysis was utilised to analyse the collected data. Bryman (2012, p. 717) refers to this method of data analysis as an "extraction of key themes in one's data". Popping and Boyatzis as cited in Sarantakos (2013) claim that thematic analysis is a method which seeks to analyse data based on themes which are further identified by coding. As stated by Creswell (2009, p. 175), this method allowed the researcher to "build patterns and categorise themes from the bottom up, by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information". It is important to note that focus groups need to be carefully analysed since they are usually problematic due to the intensity of the data. Greeff (2011) suggest that the research should seek to look for trends and patterns which might appear throughout the conversation in one meeting or through comparing themes emerging with other focus groups discussions. Morgan and Krueger as cited in Greeff (2011) note that the researcher has to pay attention to various matters when analysing data collected through focus discussions, namely the frequency of comments, words and internal consistency and the group dynamics and how these interplayed during the discussions.

The process according to Marshall and Rossman (2011, p. 209) includes "organising the data, immersion of the data, generating categories and themes, coding the data, offering interpretations". The analysing process followed the steps as outlined below in Figure 1.

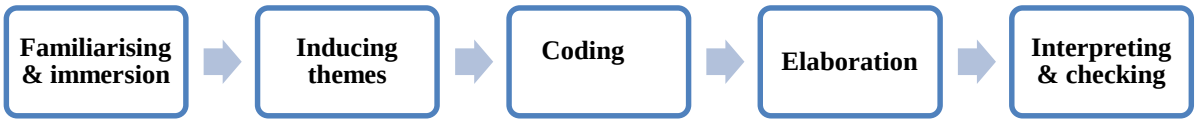

Figure 3: Analysing steps **(**Terre Blanche, Durheim, & Painter, 2008)

The first step is characterised by arranging of data into various files and converting files into appropriate text which include familiarising. As the researcher arranged the data such as field notes and transcripts, this in itself provided an opportunity for the researcher to want to immerse in the data (Schurink et al., 2011). In addition, the first step required the researcher to develop ideas and familiarise himself with the relevant literature including transcribed data.

The second step is characterised by inducing themes from the data collected. In this particular stage, there "are no hard-and-fast rules about what sort of theme or category are best, nor is there one best way of organising any given collection of raw data" (Terre Blanche et al., 2008, p. 323). Schurink et al. (2011) outline this step as one where the researcher writes memos, leading to inducing of themes into coding.

The next step involved coding, the stage that "entails marking different sections of the data as being instances of or relevant to one or more of your themes" (Terre Blanche et al., 2008, p. 324). This involves reducing and categorising data, including coding data into themes. In this case "codes [took] several forms: abbreviations of key words, coloured dots, numbers - the choice is up to the researcher" (Schurink et al. 2011, p. 411). Once the data was coded, the researcher had to connect different lines and paragraphs so that the information coded would make sense.

Once the data was coded, the researcher focused on the elaboration. Schurink et al. (2011, p. 415) termed this step a stage of "testing emergent understandings and searching for alternative explanations". This stage included evaluating the data and its usefulness towards understanding the social phenomena which is being researched. Flick as cited in Schurink et al. (2011, p. 417) says that the researcher should compare "between the extremes of a dimension or with the phenomena from completely different contexts ways to challenge the contents of a category and explore alternative explanations". Lastly, the researcher interpreted the data that was collected. The interpretation of data according to Schurink et al. (2011, p. 416) involves "sense making of

the data, the lesson learned". This is a written account of the subject being studied which is the final stage of writing a research report.

3.10 Trustworthiness of the study

It is important for researchers to take note of the trustworthiness of their study, which means that if the same study is to be conducted, it would be expected to yield similar results. Lincoln and Guba as cited in Schurink et al. (2011) proposed four aspects which could be used to validate qualitative research, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The table below provides a summary of the four elements and how these have been achieved within this particular research study.

Table 1: Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness

Areas of trustworthiness	**Proof of**
Credibility	• Availability of audio recording • Peer debriefing through supervisor marking drafts
Transferability	• Thick description of data findings and reviewed literature • Use of purposive sampling • Verbatim transcriptions
Dependability	• Availability of audio recording • Verbatim transcriptions and analysis of product
Confirmability	• Thick description of the methodology • Submission of audit trails in final report • Limitations identified during the pre-testing exercise

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility focuses on the compatibility between constructed realities and responses from participants (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2001). According to Schurink, Fouche and de Vos, credibility's "goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject has been accurately identified and described" (2011, p. 420). To achieve

credibility, the researcher used referential adequacy which relies on the available documents to support the research findings, such as audio recording; secondly peer debriefing was used as a method of assuring credibility, through the assistance of the research supervisor as research drafts were marked (Schurink et al. 2011).

3.10.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the "extent to which the findings can be applied in another context" (Babbie et al., 2001, p. 277) or "whether the findings of the research can be transferred from a specific situation or case to another" (Schurink et al., 2011, p. 420). Transferability has been achieved through thick descriptions of the research findings, where data collected was recorded sufficiently and precisely. Furthermore, as a way to adhere to transferability, the research used the purposive sampling method to sample the participants, which allows the study to be applied in another context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Although transferability is challenging, researchers are advised to use original theoretical frameworks and theoretical parameters as a guide to transferability (Schurink et al., 2011).

3.10.3 Dependability

As a means of inquiry the research would be expected to yield similar results if it is to be repeated (Babbie et al., 2001). Schurink et al. states that dependability seeks to "ask whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited" (2011, p. 420). To further achieve dependability, an inquiry audit is to be used, which requires written field notes, analysis of product and researcher`s journal.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba as cited in Schurink et al., "stress the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another" (2011, p. 421). Therefore, in order for the research to comply on the issues of confirmability, the researcher is dependent on the use of various audit trails as stated by Lincoln and Guba. Through the raw data and process notes, these mechanisms are to be used as audit trails to assure conformability (Babbie et al., 2001).

3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles play a critical role in the research process since they support and protect participants and their environment. Consideration of ethics restricts researcher from causing harm to their participants. Marshall and Rossman (2011), state the importance of the moral principles which should be discussed in the consent form such as the respect for human dignity and beneficence. Denscombe (2010) talks about how confidentiality and privacy should be assured to the participants so that they can express themselves freely. Babbie (2013) postulates that the researcher should not cause any harm to the participants, which is guided by respect for person, benefits should be shared with participants and research report should be published through the consideration of justice, which is fairly shared within the communities and society. The following ethical principles were taken into consideration during the research study.

3.11.1 Ethical Clearance and permission to do the study

Ethical clearance and gaining permission to conduct a study means that the researcher must ask for permission from various structures such as the ethics committee and the various research sites (Cresswell, 2014). This was done through applying for ethical clearance at Wits University, and writing formal letters to the Department of Education Limpopo, and the two schools in Vhembe district to request permission to conduct research. Formal approval was granted from all structured stipulated (see appendix A)

3.11.2 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation is based on the participants agreeing to participate in a research study without being forced to participate once informed about the study (Babbie, 2014). Before the participants participated in the study, they were notified of the process and their participation was based on their willingness which was voluntary participation. “No one should be forced to participate” (Babbie, et al., 2001, p.521). All participants were provided with a participation information sheet (see appendix B) and were required to complete a consent form (see appendix C), as a form of agreeing to voluntarily participating within the study.

3.11.3 Informed consent

Informed consent is when the researcher provides participants with clear and adequate information about the research study (Sarantakos, 2013). “The principle means that prospective research participants should be given as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision to participate in the study” (Bryman, 2012, p. 183) (see appendix B). During the recruitment stage, all participants were given information about the research. Therefore, once participants were informed, they made voluntary decisions to participate in the study. All participants signed consent towards participating in the research by completing and validating through a consent form (see appendix C).

3.11.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality means that the “researcher keep names linked to data, but information made public will neither include the name of the [participants]” (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 20). With regards to confidentiality, participants were informed about confidentiality issues even though it was not guaranteed since data collection was conducted in a group setting (see appendix B). However, participants were encouraged to keep confidentiality. In relation to the audio recordings, all the recordings are kept in a coded security computer system which cannot be accessed by anyone but the researcher. Confidentiality has been kept as the research findings are being reported and published without the participants really names.

3.11.5 Anonymity

Anonymity is when “the name of the [participant] does not appear on the research instrument or data” (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 20). In this case, anonymity was not guaranteed since the researcher was collecting data on the base of a focus group, participants could also see each other (Babbie et al., 2001). Even though the data method is not favourable for anonymity, participants were requested to keep anonymity. Thus, to address issues of anonymity, pseudonyms were used to identify research participants to avoid reviling participant’s identities and the link to their responses (Babbie, 2013).

3.11.6 Participants deception

Sarantakos (2013) stipulates that deception is when the researcher deceives participants by falsely presenting study. From the beginning of arranging and approaching participants, no individuals were promised any participation rewards after they have participated in the study. To avoid deceiving participants the researcher briefed participants about the research study from the topic, through to the rationale until the objectives of the study so that they do not consent to something that they do not understand (see appendix B) (Babbie et al., 2001).

3.11.7 Doing no harm

It is every researcher`s obligation to protect participants and not do harm. Sarantakos (2013) stipulates that harm towards participants should be avoided, whether it's physical, mental or legal harm. Therefore, the study did not cause any harm to participates, since there was no deception and forceful participation. All participants were informed about the study before they could agree to participate (see appendix B). As a form of agreeing to participation, participants signed consent forms (see appendix C). This includes addressing issues of confidentiality and anonymity where participant`s names are not stipulated in the research report.

3.11.8 Availability of research findings

The research report was submitted to the Department of Social Work and is made available at the Wits University library for the public to access. The research report was sent to the Department of Education, Limpopo and the two schools, allowing participants to read the report within their schools. Furthermore, the researcher had an obligation to report honestly, thus a declaration was signed, and this includes outlining the limitations of the research (Babbie, 2013).

3.12 Summary

The research methodology chapter outlined the process of identifying participants, collecting data and analysing the data as collected. Chapter Four will present that research findings of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF ANALYSED DATA AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four seeks to present data collected and findings of the analysed data. The analysed data will be presented according to themes and sub-themes and in relation to the research question, aims and objectives of the study.

4.2 Demographic profiles of participants

Table 2 below, presents the demographics of participants based on gender, age of participants and years of experience. It is important to note that the demographics are from three focus groups which consisted of 19 participants.

Table 2: Demographic profile of participants (N=19)

Demographic Factor	**Sub-Category**	**No.**
School A		
Gender	Male	6
	Female	**3**
Age of teachers	**25yrs - 35yrs**	**1**
	36yrs + more	**8**
Years of experience	**2yrs – 5yrs**	**1**
	6yrs + more	**8**
School B		
Gender	**Male**	**5**
	Female	**5**
Age of teachers	**25yrs - 35yrs**	**1**
	36yrs + more	**9**
Years of experience	**2yrs – 5yrs**	**0**
	6yrs + more	**10**

*All participants have more than two years working experiences

*All participants gave consent to being tape recorded

As stipulated in Table 2, 19 participants were interviewed; all participants consented to tape recording. Three focus groups were conducted, one from School A with nine participants; and the two focus groups were conduct at School B consisting of five participants each. Participants' demographics included both males and females.

All participants interviewed operated from two high schools within the District of Vhembe. Participants were responsible for teaching various learning areas, which thus presents teachers with numerous challenges regarding curriculum implementation and personal challenges. Emerging themes and sub-themes will be discussed in the following section of the research report.

4.3 Key themes emerging from collected and interpretative approach to data

This section seeks to discuss the themes which emerged namely: occupational services provided to teachers by the Department of Education, Limpopo, other occupational services support as experienced by teachers and needs of teacher in rural areas with regard to occupational services. Below are the themes and sub-themes as identified from the data collected.

Table 3: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Occupational services provided to teachers by the Department of Education, Limpopo	• Access to occupational services provided to teachers in Vhembe district by the Department of Education, Limpopo • Support based on curriculum change
Other occupational services support as experienced by teachers	• Support from trade unions • Consulting external service providers • Support provided by other government departments
Needs of teachers in rural areas with regards to occupational services	• Need for: -Professional services -SAPS -Parent support -Spiritual support

4.4 Discussion of findings

As part of the data collection process, data has gone through the familiarizing and immersion process. The themes were based on the findings on participants' perceptions regarding occupational services in Vhembe District.

4.4.1 Occupational services provided by the Department of Education, Limpopo

This theme seek to discuss the various occupational services, or lack thereof, that participants have accessed within Limpopo as provided by the Department of Education.

- Access to occupational services provided to teachers in Vhembe district by the Department of Education, Limpopo

When participants were asked about the different occupational services that they accessed when they were faced with challenges; the majority of teachers responded by saying that they were not aware of services which they knew of that were provided by the Department of Education, Limpopo. The responses from the teachers' experiences show no knowledge of what the Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA) has in place for its employees such as wellness services presented through various documents and websites. Teachers themselves have to take initiative to seek for private occupational services if they are facing personal and organizational challenges. By seeking private occupational services, this further poses a challenge for teachers since most of them mentioned that their remuneration is not enough to sustain their needs as individuals. Thus, most employees would opt not to access any occupational services. As a result, the majority of participants felt that they couldn't access private occupational services due to financial constraints.

> According to Mphephu *"teachers do not have occupational services to support them from the department; actually we don't have occupational services given maybe by the department. But personally it means I can arrange the occupational therapy maybe using my medical aid card which means is my responsibility to pay those things"*.
>
> Raymond said that *"from the department side, we don't have people to come and assist us when we are stressed or depressed eh that's the part that is lacking from the department"*.
>
> Jake states that the *"problem [is that] they don't just come without having being informed that they must come so the other one social workers and all there like we don't have even their contact numbers we don't even know where to access them"*.

There are various policies and legislation such as the Decent Work Agenda in Africa (2007), Basic Conditions Employment Act 1997, Occupational health and Safety Act 1993 which are put in place to hold various departments accountable with regards to providing occupational services or health and wellness services to employees within South Africa. The National Department of Public

Services and Administration (DPSA) has an employee health and wellness programme. The aim of the programme is to respond and maintain healthy productive employees as public servants who would further render valuable services (DPSA, 2008). Although such services have been made available, this is not the case for teachers located at the rural areas within Vhembe District, Limpopo. Even though the services might be available, all participants were not knowledgeable about any services provided when faced with occupational and personal challenges in their rural context. The findings suggest that there are no occupational services accessible to teachers by the Department of Education Limpopo. Due to the lack of services, participants did not have any perceptions regarding the occupational services as provided by the Department of Education, Limpopo. It is through the interview that such an objective brought some awareness regarding occupation services, thus some participants mentioned that they utilised private services based on the need.

- Support based on curriculum change

What the Department of Education, Limpopo has done is to provide teachers with curriculum support through the different curriculum developments. The curriculum support as provided by the department is said to be helpful to some extent although it has been regarded as insufficient. Thus, this process is seen to further pose as a challenge for teachers since they feel that they are not well equipped to implement the curriculum. Participants mentioned that such challenges impact negatively on teacher`s performance and wellness, further exposing teachers to stress, depression and demotivation. The curriculum support has proven to create confusion to some of the teachers since there has been curriculum change in a short period of time. This is further seen to impact negatively on teacher's productivity and their deliverables. Thus the Department of Education still expects teachers to deliver even though they are faced with challenges. Failure to implement the curriculum as expected may result in disciplinary action, being labelled as lazy or other demotivating names. This is seen to have an impact on teacher`s motivation to do their work, which includes stress and depression.

> Rhandzu states that *"when it comes to the issue of the curriculum, we as educators we are not getting enough support from the curriculum advisors because even if they invite us to the, now we are in the new curriculum, we are using the new curriculum which is CAPS eh so we are not sure of what we should do to that curriculum"*.

Jake noted *"there is the setback, sometimes curriculum advisors who we believe that they are coming here to support us they come unnoticed and demand most of the things which you don't have in disposal so it, it stresses me as an educator"*

Vasiso said that curriculum advisors *"write bad reports about you and then this pulverizes your mind to such an extent that you think you are useless and you not fit to be in a teaching field"*

In the past twenty years, South Africa has experienced numerous changes with regards to basic education curriculum. This has left teachers confused and over burdened by the changes that might be influenced by global bodies such as the United Nations (UN) with the aim for sustainable development regarding issues of education. This includes changes which are proposed by the Department of Education (DoE) such as the shift from Outcomes Based Education (OBE), to National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and currently the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (Department of Education, 2015). Corney (2006) takes note of how it is challenging for underprivileged schools to align its curriculum to the global standards, thus it becomes a problem for advisors and teachers to implement the proposed programme. Therefore, teachers become overloaded with work which they might fail to deliver as expected by the various bodies such as the curriculum advisors and head of schools; further causing stress, depression and demotivation (Stanley et al., 2010). Curriculum support should not be seen as a negative process by teachers since it is aimed at capacitating them. In this case, curriculum support can be seen as one occupational service which seeks to capacitate teachers towards implementing curriculum. However, it is of importance to note that curriculum support should be done in a way which doesn't impact negatively on the teacher`s effectiveness towards the implementation process.

4.4.2 Other occupational services support experienced by teachers

It was identified that there were teachers who received support from other structures as per theme, thus the other structures will be discussed as additional sub-themes.

- Support from Trade Unions

The findings suggest that teachers' trade unions play a rather important role with regards to supporting it members. If teachers present their challenges to their respective unions, trade unions

will try to address the challenge. The unions act as mediators between the departments, head of schools and teachers. Apart from being mediators, unions also provide support during the passing away of a colleague by conducting a memorial service. In general, trade unions are seen to play a supportive role in numerous ways which is aimed at improving the employee`s working conditions.

> Mphephu said, *"unless maybe [she] can go to the union yah of which even though they use to take time to help them"*.
>
> Khazamula stated that he *"concur with the previous speaker, the support which you get mostly is from the trade unions they are the ones whenever we experience problems, we refer our problems to them"*.

Due to the lack of occupational services provided to teachers by Department of Education, Limpopo within Vhembe District, trade unions have been seen as support structures in various ways which include mediating (Abramowitz, 2010) and supporting teachers during the passing on of their colleagues. According to Mwilima (2008) trade union`s role includes improving standards of living for its members; such a role goes beyond the workplace since they are also involved in liberation. The findings of the study concur with what Mwilima (2008) study says with regards to the roles played by trade unions which are to support members when there is a need. Although the DPSA has measures in place to support all civil servants, this is not the case for teachers in the rural areas, thus trade unions play a vital role in supporting teachers when there is a need. It is evident that trade unions are instrumental in providing occupational support which was intended to also be provided by the Department of Education.

- Consulting external service providers

Apart from the support they have received from the trade unions, teachers have used other means to get support from external structures within the community. With this regard, religion has been used by some teachers as a way to seek healing in various aspects of life. In this case, such services are free except for prophets, who require an upfront payment. It is important to note that, such services are not provided by DoE, but are provided by structures found in the community which include the church and traditional consultations. Such consultations may include private medical doctors who charge per consultation.

Joyce *said that people would "Seek healing anywhere and find that there is no solution. In our days we used to go to the prophets and something of that nature to help us heal our sicknesses"*.

Raymond stated that *"a mere counselling from the pastors, if it come from let's say it come from the programme from the government it means it can assist a lot of people"*.

As participants are faced with various challenges, some teachers consult with external services such as the trade unions which seek to improve member`s working conditions (Mwilima, 2008). Additional external services include the use of religion which seeks to enhance spiritual wellness which is assumed will have a positive effect on other aspects of life. Chen et al. (2009) identify such support as informal social support, which might not require individuals to pay unless an upfront payment is required. It is further stipulated that if informal social support is utilised in an appropriate manner, this might yield positive results towards job satisfaction and commitment (Chen et al., 2009). Although DPSA (2008) has availed such a service under the wellness management pillar in connection to psycho-social wellness, this has not been provided to teachers in need, thus they choose to consult external services within their community. A positive response was provided by teachers after they accessed external services, thus they would like the department to avail such services for easy access within Vhembe District.

- Support provided by other government departments

Participants from various schools mentioned that they receive support from other departments such as the Department of Health, Department of Social Development and South African Police Services (SAPS) which is mainly directed to the learners. Although the departments provide services to all citizens, when they visit the schools, their services are directed to the learners. This however has an indirect positive impact on teachers as well. When participants were asked whether it would be beneficial for them to receive similar services from the departments, some teachers mentioned that it would be beneficial however some mentioned that teachers had a sense of pride which is linked to not wanting to be associated with public services. Therefore, the participants suggest that it would be beneficial if the Department of Education would employ social workers and health workers to specifically provide services to teachers when needed without having to access external departments for such services.

Khazamula explained that *"when [teachers] experience problems which learners are doing at school, for example smoking drugs, the department which normally helps us is the department of SAPS"*.

Dritori stated that *"It's high time now that they should provide services such as health support system, such as social workers as well as psychologists as well as protection to the teachers even counselling so as to enhance the performance of the teacher when his here at work"*.

According to the Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa (2010) report, various challenges have been identified such as "HIV, stress related illness and inadequate remuneration" (p. 18); although it pays more attention to learners than to teachers. Therefore the findings are in line with the report since the Department of Educations is supported by various other departments such as the Department of Social Development (DSD), Department of Health, Department of Community and Safety, in addressing the challenges as identified in the report. Since the departments are working together to support the learners, such services could also be rendered to teachers as well. As per the Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa (2010) report, the aspect of utilising other departments as support structures has been well implemented, thus this might require the same departments to render similar services to teachers as well since teachers do not have access to occupational services as rendered by the Department of Education, Limpopo.

4.4.3 Needs of teachers in rural areas with regard to occupational services

Through the analysis of the data, a theme that emerged was that teachers require a range of occupational services, which are outlined in this section.

- Professional services

With all the challenges that teachers face, participants felt that there was a need to have professional occupational services provided to by the Department of Education. Teachers require individuals who are knowledgeable with regards to providing occupational services such as social workers, psychologists, nurses and pastors, as they can play various roles and contribute to employee wellness programme. In this regard, professional services providers will be able to deal with specialised case work, such as substance abuse and other health challenges. Teachers anticipate that if the department can employ professionals on their behalf it would be easy for them

to access free occupational service since teachers will consult without spending any extra money which they don't have in this case.

> Dritori stated that *"there is a need for the support for those people who are addicted to certain substances"*.

> Jake stipulates that *"obviously it, it will be based on the health services that would need social workers; I should think they are the ones who are entitled to ease our frustrations"*

- SAPS

In addition to the various occupational services that teachers require from the department, external services need to be provided by SAPS since teachers don't feel safe within the school setting. This is due to the high substance (alcohol, dagga) consumption by learners resulting to them misbehaving. By initiating security measure this would further reduce teachers stress.

> Jake stipulated that it *"all depends on the type of eh a problem, first one was that we will need support staff from health, then the SAPS then financial and the other one we also"*.

- Parent support

In addition, teachers require support from parents, which require parents to be part of their children`s education which creates a conducive environment for teachers to educate supported and disciplined learners. The lack of support from parents creates various challenges since learners misbehave which is influenced by the use of substances as well.

> Jake stated that teachers *"also need the help from the parents because if a child misbehaves we need the parents"* they will have to speak to that particular learner.

> Vasiso added that he thought that the *"support actually from parents is the one which is lacking"*.

- Spiritual support

Apart from the need for parents' support, some participants mentioned that the department would have to employ pastors and traditional healers who would focus on teacher`s spiritual wellness. This comes as a realization that some teachers cannot afford to consult private professionals with

regards to occupational services, therefore if the department provides such services teachers would not be disadvantaged by their financial constraints.

> Mphepu stated that *"If maybe the government employs pastors that are going to assist us in the school field and maybe the department can employ some traditional healers that may come and assist"***.**

> Dritori postulated that occupational support **"***needs to cover the religious aspect because when we talk about a human being we talk of a variety of aspects such as eh body that is the physique, the mind, as well as the soul"*.

It is evident that there are various services that teachers require, which are beyond the scope of the occupational social worker. Therefore the practitioner would use different professionals and departments to refer based on the need. Services required include a specific focus on safety and security as provided by the SAPS which is anticipated to contribute positively on the physical or the mental wellbeing since teachers will feel safe (Department of Health, 2003; International labour office, 2007). In addition, teachers need to have access to pastors and traditional healers who would focus on spiritual wellness. Pollack (2008) stipulates that individual's existential security, which is a way of feeling comforted and support. Such services are categorised and identified as occupational services although they might not be rendered by occupational social workers. The DPSA (2008) wellness framework consist of four pillars, which two of them focus on safety health environment, risk quality management issues and the second pillar include wellness management which teachers would further like to access even though it is not precisely provided by the occupational social worker. Although the services have been made available by DPSA, teachers in Vhembe district do not have access to it, thus they recommend having such services in the workplace.

Occupational social workers would play an important role in designing and implementing relevant occupational services. As a specialised field, occupational social work will render occupational services aimed at the micro, meso, and macro, which goes beyond the workplace into the employee`s communities (Du Plessis, 1990; Straussner, 1990). What was stipulated in the Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa (2010) report concurs with findings regarding teacher's challenges which result to psychological, physical distress and teachers resigning.

Occupational services will be of benefit in the rural schools and other areas where teachers cannot access occupational services.

4.5 Summary

As teachers are faced with various challenges related to their occupation, including personal finances, health issues and organisational issues they feel that the support from the Department of Education as their employer is not sufficient. Therefore, with the existence of the wellness programme as outlined by DPSA this requires the Department of Education to extend such services to the various rural school as a way to support teachers.

Chapter Four presented the data collected and the findings of the analysed data. The chapter was discussed by outlining themes and sub-theme that emerged in the analysis process. The main findings, recommendations and conclusion will be discussed in Chapter 5

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the summary of the findings which focused on exploring occupational services at public schools within the rural areas of Vhembe District will be presented and linked to the aims of the study. Final conclusions about the study will be offered and recommendations for the various structures such as the Department of Education Limpopo, schools, teachers and trade unions will be provided. The contribution of the study with reference to the knowledge base in this area, practice and policymaking will be highlighted. Lastly ideas about future research in this field will be shared.

5.2 Summary of the main findings

Based on the analysis of the data as presented in Chapter Four, a summary of the main findings of the study will be presented in relation to the aims of the research study.

5.2.1 Perceptions of teachers about occupational services in Limpopo

It was evident from the data analysis that teachers in Vhembe District are not aware or knowledgeable regarding any occupational services provided by the Department of Education in Limpopo. It is clear that the teachers are not informed about the available services within the wellness programme and that the lack of support has been very frustrating for teachers. Therefore, teachers have taken other measures to deal with their various challenges. They consult with and rely strongly on the trade unions and resort to religious institutions/structures, traditional customs and beliefs and occasionally consult with a professional person in their private capacity such as doctors to deal with various occupational and personal challenges. The utilisation of religious institutions as support structures is directly related to affordability since it is free, rather than consulting other professionals, traditional healers and some prophets who are costly. Although some teachers consult professionals in their private capacity, the findings suggest that due to a lot of financial constraints this is not a common practice.

Because teachers are not provided with occupational services by the Department of Education they feel neglected and not valued by their employer. Despite the fact that there are different departments such as Social Development, Health (DOH) and the South African Police Services (SAPS) which provide services to learners (Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa, 2010), they are not contracted to and involved in rendering services to teachers. As a result, lack of financial literacy, inability to manage substance use and access to rehabilitation services are some of the things that affect teachers` productivity and achieving deliverables as expected by the Department of Education.

Apart from having formal support from professionals, teachers felt that there was a need for parents to be involved in the learner's education as a support structure. The core focus of teachers is to facilitate an environment in which learners can progress and develop, however teachers are overwhelmed by the many demands and responsibilities they have to take that are out of their scope of work. Therefore, they expressed a strong need for engagement and collaboration with parents or caregivers of learners to cooperate and participate in facilitating the growth and development of learners.

Given the stressful context in which teachers have to work, they expressed the need that the Department of Education (DoE) commits to add and take serious measure to provide occupational services to teachers in the rural areas, since services are supposed to be available for all civil servants as stated by the Department of Public Services and Administration.

5.2.2 Teachers` awareness regarding occupational services support

The findings of the research revealed that although occupational services of Employee Health Wellness Programmes (EHWP) are supposed to be available for all public servants as prescribed/expected by Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA, 2008), this is not the case for teachers at the two schools in the rural areas of Vhembe District, Limpopo because they are not informed and knowledgeable about or have access to occupational services provided to them by the Department of Education (DoE).

It is evident that the DoE in Vhembe District Limpopo is mainly concerned with the well-being of learners and not really with the well-being of teachers. Documents such as the Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa (2010) report stipulates processes and goals aimed at addressing the

learner`s needs. Less attention is given to the needs of teachers. This creates a challenge because if teachers are facing many occupational challenges and their well-being is not attended to, they won't be able to create a healthy learning environment and adequately support learners with their challenges. Although, teacher's occupational challenges have been noted and documented, interventions to address the challenges have not been adequately implemented as yet.

Curriculum based workshops to support teachers in the implementation of the curriculum is one of the useful resources that is available to teachers. Unfortunately there is a lack of resources to fully implement the programme and this causes confusion and frustration with teachers. The influence of global bodies such as the UN aiming at sustainable development regarding issues of education (Corey, 2006) contributes to the complexity and challenges in the South African context. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that the curriculum workshops are challenging if not well facilitated and implemented, and this causes additional stress and demotivates teachers. Teachers further showed frustration, since they are expected to deliver without the necessary resources and support in the occupational environment.

From the research study, it is clear that teachers consult with trade unions in respect of some of their occupational challenges and perceived them to be supportive in this respect. Although the teachers use trade unions as support structures, unions do not provide all occupational services, thus there is a need for support or collaborate with professionals to provide the required services which is supposed to be provided by the DoE. Mwilima (2008) stipulates that the trade union`s roles are to improve the living standards and provide support to its members as employees. Therefore, once trade unions are informed about challenges they act as mediators in various situations such as disputes between teachers and head of school , and conducting memorial services for employees who passed in support of the deceased`s family and colleagues. However, this is not providing enough support, given the numerous occupational challenges which range from work challenges to personal and community challenges faced by teachers. Therefore, trade unions cannot solely be seen as support structure unless if they work closely with occupational social workers and other professionals.

5.3 Conclusion

In summary, it is evident that teachers from both high schools in the rural areas of Vhembe District, who participated in the research study, do not have access to occupational services despite them having to face various work and personal challenges. It was clear that none of the participants had any knowledge regarding occupational and wellness services which were supposed to be provided to all civil servants as expected by DPSA. Very few of the teachers consult privately when faced with health and wellness challenges due to financial constraints. Thus, there is a need for teachers to collaborate with their trade unions in mobilising and advocating for occupational services to be rendered by the DoE, Limpopo. Most of the participants use trade unions and existing religious and/or traditional structures; however this does not always address the challenges experienced. Therefore, if an effort is made to coordinate occupational service programmes, most teachers will have access to wellness programmes which will address most of their challenges. It is likely that if teachers are supported effectively, their productivity might improve and with that the quality of their teaching which in turn is likely to affect or impact the results of the learners.

5.4 Recommendations

As the research study attempted to explore if and what type of occupational services are rendered to teachers at public schools in Vhembe District, it also sought to gather information with regards to teachers` experiences of available occupational services. Therefore, recommendations are provided to a variety of role players and suggestions are made with reference to possible future research.

Recommendations for the Department of Education in Limpopo:

DoE Limpopo should strive to:

- Establish and provide appropriate occupational services to teachers in the rural areas.
- Inform the teachers about occupational services and wellness programmes available and facilitated access to the services and programmes for all teachers.
- Employ occupational social workers and other professionals provincially to plan, design and implement occupational and wellness services within the various schools, especially those in the rural areas in Limpopo.

Recommendations for Teacher`s Trade Unions:

- Advocate for teachers to have access to occupational and wellness services as expected by DPSA.

Recommendations for Principals and teachers:

- Mobilise and advocate with trade unions for the adequate provision of occupational services for teachers as expected per the DPSA guidelines.
- Request for school social workers to be employed to attend to the psychosocial challenges experienced by learners to free teachers up to do their core work which is teaching.

Recommendations in terms of future research:

- Explore which will be the most effective occupational services model to implement within the rural schools and districts given the South African context.
- Investigate how the lack of occupational services to teachers is affecting the performance of grade 12 learners and their final results in the rural schools in Limpopo province.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL LETTERS

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Ligege

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/07/29**
PROJECT TITLE	Exploring occupational services rendered at public high schools for teachers in Vhembe District, Limpopo
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr F Ligege
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human and Community Development/
DATE CONSIDERED	24 July 2015
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	24 August 2018

DATE 25 August 2015 **CHAIRPERSON** _____ (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr E Pretorious

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ **Signature**

_____/_____/_____ **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Enquiries: MC Makola PhD, *Tel No: 015 290 9448 .E-mail:* MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

PRIVATE BAG 3,
WITS,
2050

FHATUWANI JOSEPH LIGEGE

RE: Request for permission to Conduct Research

1. The above bears reference.

2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"EXPLORING OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES RENDERED AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO".**

3 The following conditions should be considered:

3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.

3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.

3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.

3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.

09/07/2018

Mashaba KM

Date

Acting Head of Department.

Marholeni High School
Office of the Principal

+ P. O. ✉ 1020
ELIM HOSPITAL
0960

EMIS NO: 0912520184
ENQ: Mr. Mashaba, T.L.
☎ : (015) 873 2480
Fax : (015) 873 2480
Cell NO: (083) 400 2489

Ref.: 0912520184

21 August 2015

Mr Ligege, F.J
WITS UNIVERSITY

Sir

Re: **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT OUR SCHOOL:** YOURSELF

01 The matter alluded to above bears reference.

02 It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research at our school has been approved by our school community.

03 We wish you a pleasant experience as you conduct your research at our institution.

Yours faithfully

MASHABA, T.L
PRINCIPAL

TLM/tlm

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MARHOLENI HIGH SCHOOL
Box 1020
Elim Hospital 0960
2015 -08- 21
Principal
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

KHOMANANI HIGH SCHOOL

TEL/FAX: 015 873 1967

CELL: 082 348 4116

ENQ: SHIRILELE K. J.

KHOMANANIHS@TELKOMSA.NET

UNITED WE STAND

KHOMANANIHIGH SCHOOL

PRIATE BAG X 6622

KHOMANANI

0933

SIR

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT OUR SCHOOL

This letter serves to confirm that Ligege Fhatuwani Joseph has been granted permission to conduct research at Khomanani High School as per the mandate by WITS Ethics committee. The school is located in the Limpopo Province in the Vhembe District.

Thanking you in anticipation

The principal : Shirilele K J (Mr)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KHOMANANI HIGH SCHOOL
2015 -08- 17
P/BAG 6622 KHOMANANI 0933
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Good day,

My name is Fhatuwani Joseph Ligege, and I am currently registered for a Master's degree in Occupational Social Work at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research into occupational services rendered at public high schools found in Limpopo, Vhembe district. It is hoped that this information will enhance the occupational social worker`s understanding and the Department of Education towards the importance of implementing occupational services in rural public schools.

Therefore, I wish to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. If you agree to take part, you will be invited to attend a focus group which will be held at your particular place of work. Venue and time will be provided closer to the meeting. The focus group interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. You may withdraw from the study at any time and that information will not be used for the study. In addition, you may also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with answering. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. No other person than my supervisor and research assistance will have access to the tapes, which will be kept in a secure locked cupboard. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept for two years following any publications for six years if no publication emanate from the study. Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report. The report will be submitted to the Social Work Department and the university's library, and any library user will have access to it.

Generally, there is the possibility that you may experience some feelings of emotional distress during the interview. Should you therefore feel the need for supportive counselling following the interview, I have arranged for this service to be provided free of charge by Ms Rezana Hoosain and can be contacted at 011 717 9140, this include Life Line services which can be contacted at 0861 322 322.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study. I shall answer them to the best of my ability. I may be contacted on cell no: 079 601 0884/ email: 475107@students.wits.ac.za or my supervisor: Dr. Edmarie Pretorius on 011 717 4476/ email: edmarie.pretorius@wits.ac.za. A summary of the study will be made available to you upon request. Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study.

Yours Sincerely,

Fhatuwani Joseph Ligege

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY AND AUDIO TAPING

I hereby consent to participate in the research project. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular items or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that my responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Participate in study: Yes ☐ No ☐

I hereby consent to tape-recording of the interview. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Consent to tape recording: Yes ☐ No ☐

Name of participant…….

Date…….

Signature…….

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

1. What kind of occupational services (e.g. health and wellness) do you as a teacher have access to?
2. Would you mind sharing your perception about the available occupational services?
3. In which way do you think occupational services contribute to the well-being of teachers?
4. How do teachers accessing the available occupational services experience the occupational services?
5. What are your suggestions about how occupational services should be rendered differently?

Thank you for participating in the study!