



Occupational stressors among women bus drivers in the public transport sector

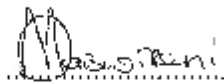
**A research report presented to
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School of Human and Community Development
Faculty of Humanities
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**In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in
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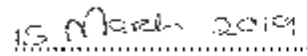
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Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unbiased work, and that I have given full acknowledgements to the sources utilised.



Anangisa Maswikeni



Date

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of stress has become a worldwide issue affecting almost all nations and occupations across the globe. Similarly, occupational stress is considered a widespread occurrence with far-reaching emotional, practical and economic consequences. Leong (2008, p. 313) states that “occupational stress is the term used to describe the harmful physical and psychological consequences to individuals that results when an imbalance exists between demands of the work environment and individual needs, abilities and resources”. In addition, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Health Series asserts that work-related stress is an issue of concern in developing countries due to changes in the modern world (Houtman & Jettinghoff, 2007) Against this backdrop, this study sought to explore occupational stressors that have an impact on women bus drivers in South Africa. This chapter introduces the study, describes the background to the study, statement of problem, aim and objectives, the research question and provides an overview of the methodology that the study employed.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Prior to 1994, apartheid laws placed limitations on issues of gender equality in South Africa, especially in relation to the involvement of women in the labour market. However, with the advent of democracy in 1994, new labour laws came into being which allowed women to actively contribute in the labour market. Section Nine of the new Constitution of South Africa (1996) guarantees equality before the law and states that “no one may discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” (Ackerman, 2012, p. 181.) Hence, it paved the way for anti-discriminatory laws which seek to redress past unfair discrimination. The Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 promotes equal opportunities in a workplace through the eradication of unfair discrimination and also implements affirmative action in order to ensure reasonable representation of all occupational categories (Jansen & Roodt, 2015, p. 164.) Hence, post-apartheid progression has also allowed women to take part in non-traditional female jobs such as bus driving. It is therefore important to explore how women bus drivers cope with every day

stressors and what intervention mechanisms are available to them in the work environment to ensure their well-being and to help them to manage the negative impact of stress on work performance and individual health.

Offermann and Armitage (as cited in Horrocks & Johnson , 2012) maintain that most of the published literature on occupational stress and health is based on the experiences of men. In addition, the WHO Health Series report (2007) testified that work-related stress in developing countries is often made worse by a wide spectrum of factors outside the work environment. For example, women are typically faced with simultaneous role demands that require them to attend to household tasks apart from their paid employment. The combination of work and family demands is likely to exacerbate the experience of stress. Similarly, Tse, Flin and Mearns (2006) argue that since buses are one of the most popular means of public transport worldwide, there is a need to actively address the psychosocial work milieu of bus drivers.

In a patriarchal society like South Africa, women were previously regarded as inferior to men, a perception that is still prevalent in contemporary South Africa. According to Whitzman, Legacy, Andrew, Klodawsky and Viswanath (2013), apartheid laws placed women at the bottom of the hierarchical order and they were discriminated against and oppressed in a manner that was different from the way in which men were oppressed. Similarly, Coetzee (2001) noted that despite current legislation in South Africa that prohibits discrimination on grounds of gender, it appears little has been done in a society to address ideologies that promote patriarchal beliefs and attitudes. These assumptions make it important to study women bus drivers as the issue of patriarchy may still be a matter of concern even in the public transport sector and women drivers may continue to face stereotypes in their workplace which may cause occupational stress, thus having a negative impact on their work. Coetzee (2001) argues that in a society where social values are determined by patriarchy, women are regarded as powerless objects. Humphrey (2005) agrees with the assertion and argues that certain gender differences also exert various degrees of influence on how individuals confront their environment. Burke and Davidson (2000) concur with this viewpoint and postulate that the most important reason to continue to study work stress among women is to be able to develop interventions tailored to the needs of women. Messing (as cited in Burke, 2002) agrees with this view and postulates that with the increasing numbers of women in the labour force, it is critical that more attention be given to

understanding the effects of occupational stress since women may experience different stressors than men.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

While research has been carried out in South Africa on women bus drivers, the research conducted thus far has not sufficiently focused on occupational stressors from an occupational social work perspective. Research conducted in South Africa has explored the experiences of women bus drivers. For example, Komane (2013) explored the experiences of women bus drivers in Tshwane. Another study by Chuchu (2012) focused on the experiences of women who entered into traditional male- dominated occupations, paying particular attention to female long-distance bus drivers.

Therefore, there is a need to broaden knowledge of the factors that may cause occupational stressors among women bus drivers. The research has both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical point of view, in South Africa this particular occupation remains inadequately explored. To this end the study is likely to contribute to the knowledge base on occupational stressors among women bus drivers within the South African context. The World Health Organisation Health Series publication on stress prevention and control (2007) asserts that organisations and workplaces are constantly changing to keep up with the developments of globalisation. Therefore, there is a need to monitor the workplaces for causes of occupational stress. Practically, the study has the potential to raise awareness of occupational stressors among women bus drivers which in turn may influence policy at an organizational level that may guide managers and other stakeholders to attempt to minimise the effects of occupational stressors.

This topic is both relevant and timely since women bus drivers is a recent phenomenon in the country. Considerable research on the well-being of public bus drivers has been undertaken in Europe and as a result there is ample evidence that the occupation has some physical and physiological impacts (Long & Perry, 1984). This study therefore has the potential to bridge the gap that exists in the contemporary South African research literature.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The Person In Environment (PIE) perspective provides the theoretical lens for the study. According to Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2015) the PIE is seen as a guiding principle that highlights the importance of understanding individuals and their individual behaviour in light of

the environmental contexts in which persons live. In addition, Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2015) argue that the Person In Environment approach perceives people as continuously interacting with various systems around them such as family, friends, work, social services and educational systems in which persons are portrayed as being dynamically involved with each other. Germain and Gitterman (as cited by Du Plessis, 1990) argues that problems cannot be seen as reflecting some maladaptation within the individual, but are viewed in the context of an interaction between people and the environment.

Similarly, Pollock (2013) states that individuals must be understood in light of their environmental influences. Therefore, the Person In Environment perspective is applied in an effort to understand the effect of such an environment on female bus drivers. For instance, stress in the workplace may emerge from personality issues that may need modification of the individual or it could emerge from the interaction with significant others or stress could emerge from relations between the bus driver and the institution. Therefore, individuals cannot be isolated from the environment in which they operate. To this end the PIE approach is suitable to afford a basis for describing aspects relevant to occupational stressors.

1.5 Primary Aim

To explore the occupational stressors among women bus drivers in the public transport sector in Mpumalanga's Mbombela district.

1.6 Secondary Objectives

- To explore women bus drivers' understandings of occupational stress.
- To investigate the type of occupational stressors experienced by female bus drivers.
- To explore how occupational stressors are impacting on women bus drivers' psychosocial well-being.
- To obtain information on how women bus drivers cope with occupational stressors.
- To explore the organisation's support mechanism that is available to minimise the impact of occupational stress among women bus drivers.

1.7 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

- What are the occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers in the public transport sector in Mpumalanga's Mbombela district?
- What is the perceived impact of occupational stress upon women bus drivers' psychosocial well-being?

1.8 Overview of the Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) maintain that the qualitative approach is used to answer complex questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon with the aim of describing and understanding the phenomenon from the participant's point of view. In addition, De Vos et al. (2011) argue that the qualitative research paradigm elicits participants' accounts of meaning and experience, and also produces descriptive data in the participants' own written or spoken words. Similarly, Rubin and Babbie (2005) assert that qualitative research is a powerful technique for gaining insights into the nature of human affairs and such, the chief strength of this approach lies in the depth of understanding of the social phenomenon which makes it a suitable approach to this study which seeks to explore the occupational stressors among women bus drivers in the public transport sector in South Africa.

A case study research design was adopted for this study. De Vos et al. (2011) describe the research design as the full plan on how the study will be carried out. Padgett (2008) argues that case studies draw on the ability of the researcher to extract depth and meaning in context. In addition, Padgett (2008) further argues that case studies draw on multiple perceptions and data sources to produce contextually rich and significant interpretation. The study's unit of analysis was women bus drivers drawn from a bus company which is the largest commuter service operator in the Lowveld of Mpumalanga with a fleet of approximately 450 buses. The company is organised into three integrated business units divided along geographical lines. However, from their three depots, two were selected due to their proximity to the researcher. According to De Vos et al. (2011) qualitative researchers are mainly concerned in the meaning that

participants give to their life experiences; therefore, they should use some form of case study to immerse themselves in the actions of a single person or a small number of people. A total of 15 women bus drivers were interviewed from the two depots. From depot A a total of five participants consented to be interviewed while 10 participants consented from Depot B. For the purpose of data analysis, the researcher utilised Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide to thematic analysis. The research methodology is provided in detail in Chapter three of this research report.

1.9 Definition of Key Concepts

Occupational stress: The interaction of work conditions with characteristics of the worker such that the demands of the work surpass the capability of the worker to cope with them (Ross & Altmaier, 2000).

Transport industry: In its broadest sense public transport includes any type of transportation that is available to the public for safe and efficient movement for trip purpose satisfaction (Teodorovic, 2016). In this study, the term public transport is used to mean buses.

Bus drivers: This is a profession which focuses on operating the bus according to a set daily schedule and ensuring the safety of passengers (Rohani, Wijeyesekera & Karim, 2013).

Coping strategies: Positive skills to cope with stress (Seaward, 2018)

Intervention: This is a professional process which requires those involved to facilitate change in a desired direction to occur (Bruhn & Rebach, 2007).

1.10 Overview of the Research Report

This research report is structured in five chapters. The introductory chapter outlined the rationale for the present study. An overview of the research methodology is also given and concludes with the aims and objectives which are stipulated and key terms defined.

Chapter two focuses on the presentation of the literature review. This chapter begins by engaging with key contextual information that is relevant to the study of occupational stressors among women bus drivers in the public transport sector. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on bus driving

as an occupation and the integration of women in the South African labour market, with particular reference to the public transport sector. The study also discusses the theoretical framework that informed the study. In addition, this section discusses legislation and policies that are more relevant to the study. The literature review also focuses on the major sources of stress experienced by women bus drivers, the stress outcomes as well as their coping abilities. Finally, the literature review section concludes with an examination of the existing methods of intervention used to reduce occupational stress in the public transport industry.

Chapter three explicates the research design and methodology used in the study. It then outlines the qualitative case study approach adopted by this research and describes the procedures used to analyse the data.

Chapter four presents the findings and discusses the data collected.

Chapter five is the final chapter of this research report and consists of the conclusion built on the research findings as well as the recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter engages with key contextual information that is relevant to the study of occupational stressors among women bus drivers in the public transport sector. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on bus driving as an occupation and the assimilation of women into the South African labour market and particularly the public transport sector. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework that informed the study. In addition, the review focuses on the major sources of stress experienced by women bus drivers, the stress outcomes as well as their coping abilities. Finally, this section concludes with an examination of the existing methods of intervention used to reduce occupational stress in the public transport industry.

2.2 Occupational stress defined

There are several definitions of occupational stress that have emerged globally. According to Stamatiou, Antoniou and Cooper (2005), a construct like occupational stress has been shaped by the social, political, and economic forces in which work occurs and in which people respond to their work experiences. Similarly, some researchers such as Cooper (2013) believe that occupational stress is conceptualised largely through transactional processes that focus on environmental demands and personal reactions to them. Therefore, the definitions of occupational stress widely focus on the mismatch between the demands placed on employees and their capabilities. Ross and Altmaier (2000, p.11) define occupational stress as “the interaction of work conditions with characteristics of the worker such that the demands of the work exceed the ability of the worker to cope with them”. Similarly, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health define occupational stress as “the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker” (Mohajan, 2012, p.3).

Although occupational stress definitions seem to refer to cases where work related issues are the sole causes of the experience of stress and associated symptoms of ill-health, there seem to be new developments in theoretical and conceptual approaches to occupational stress which acknowledge that non-work domains such as family can also contribute to occupational stress. Makanjee (2004) argues that family and work depend on each other to the extent that experiences in one area affect the quality of life of the other. Thus, bus drivers also have to cope

with stress in their family situation that may affect their capability to work from time to time, taking into consideration that their occupation requires them to concentrate on the road to ensure the safety of passengers.

2.3 Occupational stress as a global phenomenon

Occupational stress seems to be a worldwide problem. The United Nation's International Labour Organisation (ILO) has defined occupational stress as a global epidemic. According to Scott (2010), in the year 1992, the United Nations referred to job stress as the 20th century epidemic. In the United States, it is reported that occupational stress has cost employers quite a significant proportion of their budget. According to Bradley (2013), in the United States, it is projected that occupational stress cost companies around \$200 billion per annum in terms of absenteeism, low production, compensation payments, health insurances and high staff turnover. Similarly, in the United Kingdom work related stress is said to account for approximately 14 million lost working days which cost the British economy some 4 billion pounds annually (Bradley, 2013). This means that there is certainly a considerable economic cost correlated to occupational stress which may result from outcomes such as absenteeism as well as costs associated with health care provisions.

Kortum, Leka and Cox (2010) argue that occupational stress in developing countries is one area that have not yet been quantified due to lack of information. However, it is reported that within the South African context occupational stress may carry with it an economic burden of 3 billion Rands per year (Volmink, 2014). Furthermore, Kortum et al. (2010) emphasize that the scarcity of quantified information in the field of occupational stress may present a major barrier that may prevent developing countries from adequately addressing emerging health concerns associated with work-related stress and its consequences.

2.4 Sources of occupational stress among bus drivers

According to Gregory (2016), bus driving is considered to be amongst the most stressful of occupations in public transport. Kompier (as cited in Gregory, 2016) revealed that a study of Dutch drivers found that most of them commonly retire due to inability to work caused by physiological or psychological issues. This finding is supported by international researchers who found that bus drivers as compared to workers of other jobs are more likely to be exposed to stress due to conflicting demands like ensuring safety of passengers and dealing with erratic

passengers (Durgamani, Suresh & Sethuraman, 2018, p. 289) Clarke and Cooper (2004) categorised sources of occupational stress as inherent to the job, role in the organisation, relationships at work, career advancement, organisational structure and home-work interface.

These categories have been supported by research. According to Tse et al. (2006) the main sources of stress among bus drivers are shift work, dealing with passenger expectations, working conditions, fear of accidents and communication problems. Similarly, Taklikar (2016) argues that hypertension was the most common cardiovascular morbidity seen among bus drivers and lower back pain was the most common musculoskeletal morbidity.

Reflecting on the above, it can be argued that the most stressful events among bus drivers are related to a variety of psychological and physical complaints. However, driver health is viewed as critical to public transport drivers as public transport drivers with health concerns could have repercussions for the drivers' own safety and that of their passengers. According to Tse et al. (2006) public transport drivers who are not healthy similarly pose a threat to the health of companies through increased absenteeism or turnover caused by continued stress which is linked to various health complications such as heart disease, stroke and gastrointestinal diseases. Furthermore, stress intrinsic to the bus environment was categorised under three main categories namely, physical environment, job design and organisational issues (Tse et al, 2006, p. 90) (see Table 1).

Regarding female health, Chuchu (2012) asserts that females have a different biological make-up from men. In her study on women bus drivers in South Africa, some women bus drivers experienced problems such as cramps during menstruation which had a negative impact on their driving. In addition, women bus drivers would constantly need to use the bathroom. Complications during pregnancy are some of the problems reported to have been experienced by women bus drivers. According to Nelson (2013), reproduction can have profound effects on the lives of men and women alike but was more profound and had greater negative consequences in women. Similarly, Richardson and Wearing (2014) assert that what makes a person male or female is grounded in biology.

Table 2.1: Stress, mediators and outcomes for bus drivers (adapted from Tse et al, 2006, p. 90)

Stressors	Mediators/ Moderators	Outcomes
Physical Stressors - Poor carbon ergonomics - Violence and aggression from passengers - Traffic congestion fumes - Vehicle vibration Job design - Inflexible running times - Limited rest breaks and facilities - Social isolation - Rotating shift patterns - Prolonged seating - Posture Organisational Issues - Limited decision-making capacity regarding runs, routes and timetabling - Simultaneously manage competing demands of customer service and passenger safety.	Demographics - Gender - Age Personality - Type A/B - Locus of control - Negative affectivity Other - Social support - Control	Physical - Cardiovascular disease - Gastrointestinal disorders - Musculoskeletal problems - Fatigue Psychological - Anxiety - Depression - PTSD Behavioural - Substance abuse - Sleepiness Organisational - Absenteeism - Labour turnover - Accident

One can therefore argue that the categories outlined by Tse et al. (2006) can be linked to other occupational stress models such as the Institute for Social Research (ISR) model which proposes that an individual's response to stress could be physiological, psychological or behavioural (Jex and Britt, 2014, p. 14). Therefore, one can conclude that bus driving includes an elevated risk of stressors that can impact negatively on the bus drivers and the organisation. One can therefore argue that an important factor in offering quality service is to ensure that the emotional well-being of bus drivers is prioritised.

2.5 Influence of gender on Occupational stress

According to The World Health Organisation (WHO), gender refers to characteristics of women and men which are socially constructed such as norms, roles and relationships between groups of women and men and varies from society to society and can also be changed (Dawson, 2017, p. 10). In addition, Oksuzyan (as cited by Mayor, 2015) argues that differentiated social roles are significant factors in the higher morbidity observed in women primarily because of the differentiated stressors and stress reaction they induce. The changing roles of women in society and in the workforce at large have led to greater consideration of the influence of gender on occupational stress. According to Mankjee (2004), family and work are so much interdependent to the extent that experiences in one area affect the quality of life of the other. This means for example that women bus drivers may have to cope with stress in their family situation which may affect their capability to work. Linked to the above, it can be argued that despite their changing role in the labour market women have not abandoned their traditional roles such as wife, mother or caregiver which may increase their risk of experiencing occupational stress.

A study carried out by Gentry et al. (2007) to determine gender differences in experiencing stress among adults revealed that although the degree of gender differences was small, the results of the study suggest the existence of substantial gender differences in experiencing of stress. Similarly, Nelson and Quick as (cited by Crandall & Perrewe, 1995) reviewed research on gender differences in workplace stress and conclusions were made that women experience greater occupational stress than men because of the unique source of job stress which they typically face as women, for example, discrimination, stereotyping and the interface of marriage and work. South Africa through legislation such as the Employment Equity Act of 2008, Affirmative Action and the National Gender Policy Framework of 2003 has committed itself to

address gender imbalances in the workplace and would serve to ensure equal rights and opportunities in both the public and the private sector. However, despite legislation women continue to endure stressors that are the result of unequal treatment. According to Eva, Maria and Fulvia (2015), the treatment of both men and women in the workplace continues to be unequal despite legislation that promotes the involvement of women in the labour market. Eva et al. (2015) give examples of gender stereotyping whereby it is accepted that women are viewed as a weak sex, gender neutral and work-family conflict balance as some of the stressors women experience. Glass ceiling, tokenism and sexual harassment are described as stressors that are more associated with women than men in a workplace (Eva, et al. 2015, p. 178).

Hartman (as cited in Chuchu, 2014) asserts that women who enter traditional male occupations like the army, mining, or the transport sector are at greater risk of harassment compared to women who occupy the traditional female jobs. Similarly, Bielby as (cited by Komane, 2013) argues that women who are relatively new to traditionally male-dominated work settings often draw more attention, are harshly evaluated and are more likely to be seen as a disruptive force in the workplace compared to male co-workers. According to Mushtaq, Sultana and Mtiaz (2015), when working women face difficulties such as unwanted attention, this condition creates stress, fear and tensions. For example, an incident of sexual harassment may threaten a woman's job security and violate her physical privacy, which may cause mental and physical stress symptoms. PrakashBabu and Vembu (2014) argue that sexual harassment has been a major source of worry for women through the ages. The International Finance Corporation (2015) reported that at least 77% of women in South Africa experienced sexual harassment sometime during their working life.

According to conflict theory, women experience discrimination because of their biological make-up. Tishler (2014) explains that conflict theory proposes that each individual or group struggles to attain the maximum benefit. According to Brinkerhoff, Weitz and Ortega (2014), two important concepts employed by conflict theorists are sexism and discrimination. Sexism is described as a form of prejudice and refers to the belief that women are biologically inferior to men and therefore it is justifiable to treat them unequally, whilst discrimination is the natural result of sexism. This perspective on the inferiority of women can even prejudice them in a home whereby household labour is unpaid for and associated with a lack of power which sees women assuming virtually all the domestic chores.

The situation may be exacerbated in a society whereby social factors appear to support the culture of silence and suppression. This means that victims live with the fear of loss of their reputation or job as a result of complaining and as a result stress may arise with the fear that they might be attacked again.

Despite experiencing occupational stressors that are associated with gender, women continue to penetrate blue collar jobs that have been dominated by men. One can argue that the effect of the feminist movement on the shift in gender composition within male-dominated occupations such as bus driving should not be underestimated as feminist movements continue to advocate for women's rights which have seen the advent of women in male-dominated workforces.

2.6 Gender Roles

According to Nynas and Yip (2016), gender roles not only affect one's personal life, but also affect one's professional life because gender and gender roles can carry over from one aspect of life into another aspect and activate the gender belief system. Cooper and Quick (2017) assert that the shift in roles has made women to be inclined to the same occupational stressors as men yet in addition they are exposed to a number of workplace stressors that are unique to them. For example, women bus drivers may have to cope with stress in their family situations such as other traditional roles of wife and mother that may affect their capability to work from time to time.

Recent studies have found that mothers with children aged 18 and below were three times as compared to fathers to report that being a working parent made it more difficult for them to progress on the job (Cooper & Quick, 2017, p.328). Furthermore, Benya (2009) argues that some men find it hard to work with women because of the traditional belief that perceive a woman's place to be in the kitchen. Therefore, this means that due to these beliefs women in male-dominated occupations such as driving still face discrimination because of their gender.

In a similar vein, Komane (2013) argues that bus driving involves the allocation of shifts which may be difficult for some women as mothers and wives. Thus, stereotyping by employers cannot be ruled out since they may have to take time off at short notice due to family problems as compared to their male colleagues. Discrimination has been linked to a range of outcomes that may be destructive in many ways. According to Cooper and Quick (2017), when women recognise that they are objects of discrimination, it is common that they tend to have more

negative views of themselves as individuals and as members of the group, which in turn can lead to increased stress and feelings of worthlessness and again lead to reduced performance.

2.7 Workplace bullying

Fines Brodsky (as cited by Tehrani, 2012) defines bullying “as being the repeated, persistent attempts of an individual to torment, frustrate others”. The treatment provokes and puts pressure on another individual. According to Quigg (2015), people who bully others often have different reasons for targeting someone. For example, the bully may want to eliminate someone by making life so unbearable that they will leave the organisation.

Although bullying in a workplace appears to be directed to all kinds of employees, some demographic risk factors seem to exist. According to the Nordic Bullying Network Group (2012), belonging to a gender minority in a workplace has been shown to be a risk factor for exposure to bullying at work. A study of workplace bullying in 2014 carried out by the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) in the United States of America suggests that 69% of workplace bullies are male (Namie, 2014, p. 7). According to Paludi (2015), the attitude of male aggression towards women at work is often motivated by a desire to disempower and control them.

In a similar vein Hartman (as cited in Chuchu, 2012) maintains that women who enter into male occupations like the mining or transport sector are at greater risks of harassment compared to women who occupy traditional female jobs. However, bullying seems to produce destructive effects which may end up psychologically breaking the victim. Tehrani (2012) describes the consequences of bullying as catastrophic as career possibilities are broken while the mental health of a victim is affected by psychological stress, depression, post-traumatic stress and even suicide.

2.8 Dealing with passengers

As pointed out earlier in the discussion, dealing with passengers’ expectations is mentioned as one of the major stressors among bus drivers. By the nature of their job, bus drivers interact with passengers with different personalities; therefore, they may have to deal with passengers’ behaviour during the course of their duties. The Lowvelder (2016) reported an incident in South Africa’s Nelspruit town in which a female passenger grabbed the steering wheel, causing the woman bus driver to lose control of the vehicle, eventually crashing into a tree and causing an

accident. This could be an indication of violence against women drivers in the public transport sector. According to Cauto, Lowoto and Svanstroom (2009), employees in the road transport sector are at a possible risk of being exposed to workplace violence as they meet diverse clients on a daily basis. Therefore, one can argue that how society perceives women in male-dominated professions can have an impact on how they are treated.

According to available literature on women bus drivers, Chuchu (2013) confirms that the patriarchal influence in the South African society continues to hinder active participation of women in the transport industry as women bus drivers have to fight sexism and prejudice in their daily interaction with passengers. Chuchu's (2013) study also revealed that passengers still have some reservations about women bus drivers since there were reported incidents of passengers who expressed their dissatisfaction at being driven by woman drivers. This is a clear indication that the age-old belief of male superiority over women continues to haunt the new generation of women who have taken strides to transform the patriarchal social structures that further the superiority of men. This could be attributed to how society is being socialised. The process of socialisation is believed to start in the family. Socialisation theory argues that the family is the important agent of socialisation because it gives individuals their earliest experiences with relationships and their first exposure to the rules of life (Ferrante, 2008). Similarly, Bryam and Hu (2013) argue that stereotypes can be learned from the immediate families during primary socialisation as well as through peer groups, education and the media during secondary socialisation. According to Jandt (2010), stereotypes refer to judgements which are negative or positive that are made about individuals based on any noticeable or believed group membership.

The school as a secondary agent of socialisation is viewed as reinforcing gender stereotypes. According to Marinova (2003), most images in school books depict women as carers who are responsible for childcare and other household chores whilst men are portrayed as responsible for masculine jobs and being leaders. Marinova (2003) points out that the principal lessons that children take from their mothers are usually contaminated with the same stereotypical thinking they also adopted from their parents which generates a vicious cycle. In order to deal with the issue of patriarchy, Marinova (2003) further suggests that it is necessary to rethink the process of socialisation and teach equal values to boys and girls.

To this end, it can be argued that the continuing engagement of men in achieving gender equality requires greater consideration since beliefs that have been adopted during the process of socialisation may be transferred by individuals into their place of work.

2.9 Shift work

Bus drivers may have to follow shift schedules because of the requirements of their job in the community. According to Iskra-Golec, Barnes-Farell and Bohle (2016), shift work is any form of work that is different from the normal work in which the operating time of a company is extended beyond the usual work day in which different groups of workers alternate. This definition resonates with the International Labour organisation (ILO) which defines shift work as “any method of organising work whereby workers succeed each other at the same time according to certain patterns, including a rotating pattern, and which may be continuous or discontinuous requiring the need for workers to work at different times over a given period. (Kidner, 2015, p. 443).

According to Grosswald (2002), most transit schedules are designed with efficiency and convenience for the workplace as priorities rather than the health and welfare of the employee, the employee's family or the public. Newman-Giger (2017) postulates that shift work is inevitable in contemporary society given that some facilities require round the clock operation. However, women doing shift work could experience a great deal of additional stress as compared to their male counterparts due to family and social obligations. Leka and Houdmont (2010) assert that work-family conflict can obviously be experienced by both male and female workers but the caring for dependents and management of household demands is still conducted more often by women; thus, family problems may also contribute to occupational stress. According to a study carried out by Grosswald (2002), to investigate coping strategies for parenting of transit bus drivers, it emerged that some women bus drivers in the United States of America, resorted to taking their children to work although it was against the company's policy due to limited child care facilities available during early the morning shifts. The above discussion clearly shows how women bus drivers struggle with the practicalities of child care because of shift work. PrakashBabu and Vembu (2014) postulate that employees experiencing family problems would usually carry their anxieties to work and their mood could affect their ability to carry out job

responsibilities. Germain and Gitterman (as cited in Du Plessis, 1990) mentions that three primary sources of stress that have relevance to the workplace include life transitions, issues associated with harsh social and physical environments and maladaptive patterns of relationships that inhibit growth. To this end Kruger and Van Breda's Occupational Social Work model (2001) highlights the employee's personal problems and emphasises that interventions should take cognizance of employees' non-work roles.

2.10 Bus driving as an occupation for women in South Africa

As was the case in most male-dominated occupations, women bus drivers responded to the post-apartheid labour laws that opened prospects for women to go in the labour market such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998, The Black Economic Empowerment Act and the Skills Development Act. According to Turnball (2013), by the year 2008, at least 19,6% of women were employed in the transport sector in South Africa. Research findings carried out by Komane (2013) suggests that the incorporation of women in the bus industry has been without its challenges as they face a lot of prejudice and are assumed to be incompetent to operate buses. This assumption has not only affected women in the public transport sector but in other occupations that are male-dominated. The South African Board for People Practices (2011) reported that barriers faced by women in male-dominated occupations related to stereotyping, cultural beliefs and religious orders which expected women to be submissive. Marinova (2003) maintains that thoughts of the superiority or inferiority of either sexes and the beliefs about stereotyped roles for men and women not only reduce progress in achieving gender equality but also perpetuate discrimination, thereby creating obstacles to men's abilities for redressing gender inequalities. In addition, Marinova (2003) argues that the socialisation process and belief systems that individuals hold about others influence adherence to gender specific stereotypes.

According to the International Labour Organisation (2008), the transport industry is one of the sectors that have traditionally been regarded as no place for women in many countries. However, in South Africa, women have managed to cross the gender barriers. Statistics published by the International Labour Organisation suggest that South Africa is considered one of the leading countries globally that is integrating women into the public sector (Azad foundation, 2014).

However, there has been very little academic literature written about women's employment in the public transport sector from the South African context. Most of the literature available on the topic is based on the American perspective. Berger (as cited in Komane, 2013) argues that a perspective about women being bad drivers was developed in the United States of America over the last hundred years. In addition, Berger (as cited in Komane, 2013) further argues that the ideology about women being bad drivers was an attempt made to make sure that women are confined in the private space of the home. In applying the argument about the stereotyping of women to the South African context, it can be argued that it is applicable. This is due to the fact that women in the transport industry continue to experience discrimination. According to Chuchu (2014), women who become bus drivers may be treated as a danger and a joke to male masculinity; hence they are disparaged by use of inappropriate language or sexually harassed in order to make their working lives uncomfortable. Similarly, Benya (2009) argues that some men find it hard to work with women because of the traditional belief that a woman's place is in the kitchen. Therefore, due to these beliefs women in South Africa are still faced with stereotypes that society internalises during socialisation.

Reflecting on a study that was conducted by Meshack Khosa (1997) in a journal article titled "Sisters on Slippery Wheels" most women taxi drivers reported that their male colleagues undermined them. The case study exposes unequal power relations between women and men working in the taxi industry, discrimination and sexual harassment of women taxi drivers. The study conducted by Khosa provides insight into the experiences of women in the taxi industry and as outlined earlier in this review, there is little documented information on women bus drivers in South Africa. One can therefore use this scenario to apply to women bus drivers. It can further be argued that women drivers in the public sector face different forms of discrimination. According to Cooper and Quick (2017,) discrimination has also been linked to outcomes that include psychological stress and the negative perception which women experience in the workplace can be harmful to them in many ways.

2.11 Effects of occupational stress in the bus driving profession

According to the study carried out by Tse et al. (2006), the outcomes of stressors were found to be physical, psychological, behavioural and organizational. Van Zyl (2012) noted that the levels of stress experienced by South Africans in the workplace were abnormally high compared to the

rest of the world. Consequently, Net Bridge (2012, February 29) reported that research findings by The People Element, a human resource group, indicated that in South Africa as much as three billion Rands a year is lost due to stress in the workplace in the form of absenteeism, low productivity and staff turnover. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the consequences of occupational stress from an individual and organisational perspective. PrakashBabu and Vembu (2007) argue that occupational stressors do not only affect the employee's health, but also the organisation's wealth. In addition, Tse et al. (2006) concur and maintain that the physical and psychological health of the bus driver is a very important factor in driving performance since the effects of stress can also be felt by passengers and the bus operating company. As a result, PrakashBabu and Vembu (2007) noted that stressed employees lose focus on their work which may lead to employees being ineffective and missing out on vital information. Therefore, in the case of drivers, safety of passengers could be compromised due to poor concentration and pre-occupation with other matters which is caused by stress. Research conducted by Workers Occupational Health Services concluded that workers under stress are 30 percent more likely to be involved in accidents than those experiencing low levels of stress (PrakashBabu & Vembu, 2007)

Tse et al. (2006) report that cardiovascular disease, gastro-intestinal disorders, musculo-skeletal problems and fatigue were found to be common among bus drivers. Although limited data were available on pregnant female bus drivers, a study carried out on the behavioural effects of occupational stress on female employees working in commercial banks revealed that occupational stress could be a contributing factor to a woman having a miscarriage (Stephen 2014, p.96).

Tse et al's (2006) stressor strain model further indicates that occupational stressors may lead to behavioural and organizational outcomes. Cole (as cited by Stephen, 2014) states that if stress is not properly handled by management or effectively controlled by victims, the results were often physical, psychological or behavioural responses. Occupational stress has also been identified as resulting in motor behavioural symptoms that manifest in behaviours such as increased cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, sleeplessness, aggression, making of excessive errors, intolerance and feelings of despair which can also impact on the organisation in different ways (Stephen, 2014).

Absenteeism is considered to be one of the grave results of occupational stress. PrakashBabu and Vembu (2007) maintain that employees under stress do not feel motivated to work and therefore take leave citing different reasons which may have an adverse effect on productivity. In addition to all the above mentioned problems, Prakash and Vembu (2007) further argue that organisations would also face high turnover rate of employees, high replacement costs and increased grievances. PoloskiVokic and Bogdanic (2007) noted that the consequences of occupational stress experienced both on the individual and at organisational level are a real cost to the organisation and because of its significant economic effect can be a huge burden to the organisation.

In addition, Kavitha (2009) argues that the current turbulent business environment has caused professionals to face constant problems and stress in their jobs. Irving, Weiner, Schmitt, Neal and High-House (2012) maintain that stress has far-reaching practical and economic consequences. Irving et al. (2012) further emphasize that stress in organisations affects both the individual and the organisation. According to the stressor strain model developed by Tse et al. (2006), the most often cited psychological manifestations of stress in bus drivers are anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. According to Roberts (2003), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) refers to the difficulties experienced in coping with everyday life after undergoing or witnessing a significant life-threatening event. Men and women have been found to report the same symptoms of PTSD. However, Norris (2012) states that studies carried out by the University of California, San Francisco revealed that women exposed to trauma may be at greater risk of developing PTSD because of a heightened fear response. Bus drivers spend most of their time on the road and can be directly or indirectly involved in accidents. Carll (2007) maintains that any person exposed to a disaster, directly or indirectly will feel its impact. Many of these people develop posttraumatic stress symptoms that may become chronic.

Therefore, it can be deduced that the psychological health of the bus drivers should not be underestimated as is a critical factor in their performance. With increasing numbers of women entering the labour force it is imperative that more attention be given to understanding the effects of work stress among women bus drivers since they may experience different work stressors from their male counterparts. Ross and Altmaier (2000) argue that the changing role of women in society in general and in the workplace has led to greater consideration of the influence of gender on occupation.

2.12 Dealing with Occupational Stress

Comish and Swindle (as cited in PoloskiVokic and Bogdanic, 2007) suggest that the damaging and costly consequences of stress demonstrate the need for strategies to reduce stressors within the workplace. In a similar vein, the International Labour Organisation (2013) maintains that employers have a duty to prevent occupational stress by taking preventive and protective measures. Studies carried out on occupational stress suggest that organisational commitment through practical interventions can moderate job stressors thereby enhancing the efficiency of the transport industry. According to Tse et al. (2006), employee assistance programmes (EAPs) can be used as a strategy to help employees to deal with their personal problems.

Similarly, occupational social workers are employed in organisations and use different types of interventions that deal with primary sources of stress and help individuals to cope in their workplace environment. Stephen (2014) postulates that companies need to implement more effective work designs and stable job policies if they are to reduce occupational stress. Hicks and Mcsherry (2006) noted that stress in a workplace has been viewed from the perspective of the individual rather than the stressors themselves being identified in the workplace. Consequently, PoloskiVokic and Bogdanic (2007) maintain that organisations and their employees should become more aware of the degree to which stress is a cost that is unnecessary and can be effectively be dealt with by both management and its employees.

2.13 Policy and Legislative framework

Prior to 1994, apartheid laws placed limitations on issues of gender equality in South Africa, especially in relation to the participation of women in the labour market. However, with the advent of democracy in 1994, new labour laws came into being that enabled women to actively participate in the labour market. This section discusses legislation and policies that are more relevant to the study and that promoted the rise of women in the labour market. Furthermore, the legislation that gives direction for operational policies to enhance employee health and wellness, is also discussed.

2.13.1 The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination

United Nations (UN) Handbook for Parliamentarians (2003) reports that the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1979. The convention set out measures for the achievement of equality between men and women irrespective of their marital status in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life. South Africa signed the CEDAW convention in 1993 and ratified it in 1995. It is within this context that women's chances of employment have been reinforced by employment equity legislation and other employment and labour laws available. The CEDAW recognises the importance of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in employment. Article 11 clearly points out that the state is obliged to encourage the provision of support to enable parents to combine work and family responsibilities and provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work which may prove to be harmful to them. The convention has influenced the transformation measures that are aimed at equalising access to employment opportunities in South Africa. According to the South African CEDAW report (2008), the principal instruments that have been implemented include the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act, 75 of 1997), the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998) and the White paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service, 1995.

Despite enabling legislation and policies to empower women in South Africa, structural oppression still exists. The South African CEDAW Report (2008) acknowledges that discrimination in terms of gender, age and race still persists in the South African labour market.

2.13.2 The Beijing Platform for Action (1995)

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. About 189 countries including South Africa unanimously adopted the Beijing platform for Action (BPFA) which is a global policy document that seeks to advance gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality. The Commission for Gender Equality (2010) reported that since the ratification of the BPFA and other international instruments, South Africa has passed progressive legislation to empower women which is in line with the Constitution and international commitments. For example, sexual harassment is

prohibited and punishable in South Africa. Sexual harassment in the workplace is prohibited under the Employment Equity Act (1995) and the Labour Relations, 66 of 1995. In this regard, the Code of Good Practice on Handling of Sexual Harassment has been issued in terms of the Labour Relations Act. To this end, evidence has been documented regarding misconduct related to sexual harassment. According to the South Africa's Beijing +20 Report (2015), statistics on misconduct related to sexual harassment in the public service as at 30 August 2014 highlights the fact that 426 cases were reported from 1996 to 2014.

2.13.3 The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development

The South African government has committed itself to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) declaration on gender and development. Article 19 of the SADC protocol on gender and development stipulates that member states shall by 2015, review, amend and enact laws and policies that ensure women and men have equal access to wage employment in all sectors of the economy and also eradicate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.

2.13.4 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 is the supreme law of the land. According to Morna, Dube and Makamure (2015), South Africa has one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. Section Nine of the new Constitution of South Africa (1996) guarantees equality before the law and states that “no one may discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth”. According to Parashar (as cited in Chuchu, 2014), institutionalised apartheid exacerbated inequalities in labour outcomes, not only between various races but also between the sexes. The promulgation of the Constitution has seen a notable increase of women participating in the labour market. According to Statistics South Africa Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2016), the proportion of African women within the labour force stands at 45 percent (Levendale, 2017, p. 11). This figure could be attributed to anti-discriminatory laws that seeks to redress past unfair discrimination.

2.13.5 The Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998

The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 promotes equal opportunities in the workplace through the eradication of unfair discrimination and also implements affirmative action in order to ensure equitable representation of all occupational categories. The purpose of the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 is to achieve equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment through elimination of unfair discrimination and implementation of affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experiences by designated groups in order to ensure equitable representation in all occupational categories and all levels in the workplace.

In a patriarchal society like South Africa, women were previously regarded as inferior to men and it seems that the system still exists in contemporary South Africa. According to Whitzman, Legacy, Andrew, Klodawsky and Viswanath (2013), apartheid laws placed women at the bottom of the hierarchical order and they were discriminated against and oppressed in a way that was different from the way in which men were oppressed. Similarly, Coetze (2001) noted that despite current legislation in South Africa that prohibits discrimination on grounds of gender, it appears little has been done in a society to address ideologies that promote patriarchal beliefs and attitudes. These assumptions make it important to study women bus drivers as the issue of patriarchy may still be a matter of concern even in the public transport sector and women drivers may continue to face stereotypes in their workplace which may cause occupational stress thus having a negative impact on their work. Coetze (2001) argues that in a society where social values are determined by patriarchy, women are regarded as powerless objects. Humphrey (2005) agrees with the assertion and argues that certain gender differences also exert various degrees of influence on how individuals confront their environment. Burke and Davidson (2000) concur with this viewpoint and postulate that the most important reason to carry on studying work stress among women is to be able to develop tailor made interventions which are sensitive to the needs of women. Messing (as cited in Burke, 2002) agrees with this viewpoint and postulates that with the increasing numbers of women in the labour force, it is critical that more attention be given to understanding the effects of occupational stress since women may experience different stressors than men.

To this end, it is therefore important to explore how women bus drivers cope with every day stressors and what intervention mechanisms are available to them in the work environment to ensure their well-being and to help them to manage the negative impact of stress on work performance and individual health.

2.13.6 The National Policy Framework for women's empowerment and gender equality (2008)

The political will to build a society that is free from racial and gender discrimination informed the formulation of the National Policy Framework for women's empowerment and gender equality which outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality and how it intends to realise this ideal. According to Shehu (2010), the National Policy Framework for women's empowerment and gender equality adopts a developmental approach that prioritises the meeting of basic needs because of the high levels of inequalities of women in South Africa especially black women. This development enabled women to have access to a broader scope of positions in the labour market. However, despite the enabling legislation which allowed women to participate in the labour market, women continue to experience problems. According to Chuchu (2014), women in male-dominated professions such as the transport industry still experience structural disadvantages as workers. In addition, Chuchu (2014) argues that women in the labour market are not only faced with income differences as a form of discrimination but also face sexual harassment, bullying, humiliation, patronising behaviour, superiority attitudes and physical threats.

2.13.7 The Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service (EH&WSF)

The Government of South Africa recognises the importance of employee wellness and its link to organisational wellness and productivity in the workplace. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) developed the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service (EH&WSF) in 2008. According to the DPSA (2008) the framework seeks to represent an integrated and holistic approach to employee health and wellness. The Framework embodies four pillars of strategic functioning which are HIV and AIDS and TB Management,

Health and Productivity Management, Safety, Health, Environment, Risk, Quality (SHERQ) and Wellness Management DPSA (2008). The Framework is also responsive to various South African legislative and international instruments that are relevant to occupational health. These include among others the CEDAW, The Beijing Declaration and its platform for Action, 1995, the Constitution of South Africa, Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995, Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998, 97 of 1998 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993.

In conclusion, it can be argued that South Africa has made great strides to increase women participation in the labour market and also eliminate some forms of discrimination as well as promoting employee wellness in the workplace through legislation. However, literature has indicated that no significant changes have been noted with regard to society's perceptions regarding gender relations.

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the literature review relating to occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers. It is clear from the review of the literature above that occupational stress has significant mental and physical consequences for individuals as well as serious outcomes for an organisation. Although studies that has been carried out in other occupations that are male-dominated assert that male and female drivers may experience the same stressors in a workplace, it has been found that women continue to face additional problems in the workplace due to gender stereotypes within a patriarchal environment. Furthermore, women have family-work conflicts that may be stressful to them and can also leave them at a disadvantage. Since it has been established that occupational stress has adverse outcomes for the individual and the organisation, employers have been challenged to prevent occupational stress by taking preventive and protective measures. Studies carried out on occupational stress suggest that organisational commitment through practical interventions can moderate job stressors thereby enhancing the efficiency of the transport industry.

As highlighted earlier in the previous discussions, the number of women entering the male-dominated occupations such as bus driving has significantly increased over the years due to enabling legislation that seeks to empower women. However, a review of the literature indicated that there is a dearth of information regarding occupational stressors among women bus drivers

in South Africa. It is therefore important for future research to be conducted in order to allow a more accurate understanding of the current situation. It is the duty of occupational social workers to ensure that the issue of occupational stressors in the current working environment is appropriately addressed and given priority given that there have been extensive transformation in workplaces since the dawn of democracy in South Africa. This then draws attention to the need to explore the occupational stressors among women bus drivers in the transport industry. The next chapter of the report outlines the research methods that were applied in undertaking the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the research design and methodology adopted in this study. The chapter also outlines the rationale for selecting qualitative research methods. In addition, this section discusses the research approach adopted, the research population and sampling techniques employed, the research instrument used, method of data collection as well as data analysis. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the limitations and ethical considerations that guided the study.

3.2 Research strategy

The study adopted a qualitative approach. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) maintain that the qualitative approach is used to answer complex questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon with the aim of describing and understanding the phenomenon from the participant's point of view. In addition, De Vos et al. (2011) argue that the qualitative research paradigm elicits participants' accounts of meaning, experience and also produces descriptive data in the participants' own written or spoken words. Similarly, Rubin and Babbie (2005) assert that qualitative research is a powerful method for gaining insights into the nature of human affairs and as such, the chief strength of this approach lies in the depth of understanding of the social phenomenon that makes it a suitable approach to exploring occupational stressors among female bus drivers in the public transport sector in South Africa.

3.3 Research design

Flick (2009) describes a research design as a strategy for conducting and analysing evidence that will make it likely for the researcher to answer whatever questions posed. A case study research design was adopted for this study. Padgett (2008) argues that case studies draw on the ability of the researcher to extract depth and meaning in context. In addition, Padgett (2008) further argues that case studies draw on multiple perspectives and data sources to produce contextually rich and meaningful interpretations. In this research study the case study was primarily exploratory in nature as it sought to explore the occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers in the public transport sector. Yin (as cited in Kumar, 2000) distinguishes between three types of case

study research, namely, exploratory, descriptive and explanatory in which exploratory cases seek to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the researcher.

The study's unit of analysis was women bus drivers drawn from one of the largest commuter service operators in the Lowveld of Mpumalanga with a fleet of approximately 450 buses. The company is structured into three integrated business units divided along geographical lines. However, from their three depots, two were selected due to their proximity to the researcher. According to De Vos et al. (2011), qualitative researchers are primarily interested in the meaning subjects give to their life experiences; therefore they should use some form of case study to immerse themselves in the activities of a single person or a small number of people.

3.4 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures

The population of this study included 74 women bus drivers who worked for the company and the sample was 15 women bus drivers who had worked for the bus company for at least one year. In this research, purposive sampling was employed in selecting the sample for the study. The rationale for choosing the population was that those women bus drivers involved in the profession for a year or more could provide information that might help in addressing the research question. According to Given (2015), purposive sampling refers to a process whereby participants are selected because they meet criteria that have been predetermined by the researcher as relevant to address the research question. Thus, the researcher had a sample of 15 participants drawn from two depots in Mbombela whose experience ranged from 1 to 13 years in the field of bus driving with the same company.

Purposive sampling was also used to select two participants from the managerial level. It was anticipated that the inclusion of the two managers in the study would enrich the context of the study by providing data on what the organization was doing to ensure the well-being of women bus drivers since they are responsible for staff development and daily operations of staff including women bus drivers.

3.5 Research Instrumentation

Coltorn and Covert (2007) describe social science instruments as tools for the collection and measurement of data. For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted personal interviews

with women bus drivers using a semi-structured interview schedule as set out in Appendix A. The interview schedule was the data collection instrument for the conduct of interviews (Hall, 2000, p. 156).

According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), qualitative research uses structured, unstructured or semi-structured interviews. However, the researcher used a semi-structured interview which relies on interview schedules. The interview schedule consisted of a set of questions that allow the researcher to be more flexible and to probe questions based on the interactions during the interview. The researcher used two interview schedules, one for women bus drivers and one for managers. (See Appendix A and C).

3.6 Pre-Testing of the Research Instrument

The researcher conducted a pre-test of the research instrument before the actual data collection was carried out. This was done in order to reduce the possibility of errors. Babbie and Mouton (2011) argue that no matter how carefully data collection instruments are designed, a possibility of error cannot be ruled out and pre-testing becomes very important in order to address vague questions that participants may not understand. Three participants were selected. Therefore, the researcher pre-tested the interview schedule with two women bus driver and one interview with the operations manager from one of the depots. None of these participants were included in the final study. Minor amendments were made to the questions for women drivers which needed clarification. The interview schedule for managers appeared to be clear and therefore, no changes were made to the schedule.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher obtained data by conducting individual face-to-face interviews. The data were collected in English. However, the researcher had to rephrase some questions in the local IsiSwati language for some participants who showed little understanding of some English phrases. Seventeen participants were interviewed, including 15 women bus drivers and two managers. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to guide the interviews which lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013) maintain that

semi-structured interviews allow for the discovery of new aspects of the problem by exploring in detail the explanations supplied by the respondents. Similarly, De Vos et al. (2005) argue that using semi-structured interviews gives the researcher and the participant more flexibility thereby allowing the researcher to follow up interesting possibilities that emerge in the interview while allowing the participant to give a wider picture.

All the interviews were audio tape-recorded after obtaining consent from the participants. This procedure was followed in order to enhance the collection and management of the data and to ensure that the researcher captured the complete account of all the data collected during the interviews. Rubin and Babbie (2011) note that because of the in-depth, open-ended nature of qualitative interviews, a tape recorder becomes a powerful tool to capture the responses from participants as it ensures verbatim recording and allows researchers to focus their full attention on the participants. The researcher was given an opportunity to address the employees during a staff meeting about the study. Participants were then contacted to arrange appointments and to agree on suitable times and venues for the interview. All the participants preferred the interviews to be conducted at their place of work during the time when they were on breaks waiting for their next shift.

On the day of the interview the researcher went through the information sheet which highlighted the purpose of the study, voluntary participation and issues of confidentiality. The two consent forms were explained; for voluntary participation and audio recording. The participants understood and consented without any difficulties. According to Given (2008), ethical issues should be considered at all stages of the interview. Therefore, the researcher went through the information sheet to ensure that the participants had an in-depth understanding of what participation in the study entailed. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour and all of them were tape recorded.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The study used the thematic analysis approach to analyse data. Braun and Clarke (2013) describe thematic analysis as a method of identifying themes and patterns across a dataset in relation to a research question. The researcher was more interested in interpreting data in a way that would highlight the real experiences, feelings and perceptions of the participants. Thus a non-numerical approach to analysing data was adopted. According to Babbie (2011), qualitative

data analysis is a non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) maintain that qualitative data analysis is a science and art. Hennick et al., (2011, p. 205) further argue that the science aspect is found in the rigour and structure that come from following established procedures and using well accepted techniques for analyzing textual data. Thus, the researcher used the six-step thematic analysis approach as indicated by Braun and Clarke (2006). The steps are as follows:

Phase 1: Familiarization with the data

The researcher familiarised herself with the data collected by repeated reading of the interview responses. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2014) noted that during this phase, researchers immerse themselves with data collected from the participants by reading through the text many times over, making notes and brainstorming. Furthermore, the researcher familiarised herself with data during transcriptions of the interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), listening to audio recordings and making notes helps the researcher to move the analysis beyond a focus on the most obvious meanings. It is at this stage that the researcher noted some exciting views from the interviews.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

After familiarization with the data, the researcher produced initial codes from the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) define coding as a means of deriving and developing concepts from data. During this stage, the codes were used to identify features of the data that were important to the researcher. The ideas were then assessed in relation to occupational stressors among women bus drivers. This stage therefore influenced the development of themes in the next step.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

When all the data had been coded, the researcher searched for meanings which were implicit and identified potential themes. The aim of the researcher was to see how the codes could be grouped together and also to see how these themes related to each other. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the search for themes should not simply be one of discovery but should be one in which the researcher clusters ideas together to create a plausible mapping of key patterns in the data. Identifying relationships between themes helped the researcher to proceed and form main themes and sub-themes from the data.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

This stage involved the reviewing and refining of themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended reviewing and refining themes to see if some may be eliminated or combined. They further recommended considering whether there is coherence within themes and sufficient distinction amongst them. During this phase, the researcher carefully considered sustainable themes by carefully going back and forth between through the data. Furthermore, the researcher looked for quotes in the data that supported or negated each of the themes. During this stage, the researcher made a few changes while some themes were discarded.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

During this phase, the researcher further refined the labels that will be given to the themes for the final analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) writing theme definitions and selecting a theme name ensures the conceptual clarity of each theme and provides a road map for the final write up. A detailed analysis for each individual theme was written and sub-themes were identified. In addition, the researcher clarified the main points of each theme and sub-themes. Finally, the researcher gave each theme a name.

Phase 6: Producing the report

This was the last phase of the data analysis, and involved the final analysis and write up of the report. The task of the write up of the thematic analysis is to tell the complex story of the researcher's data in a way that convince the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23). The analysis serves to provide a concise, coherent and logical account of the story the data tells across themes.

3.9 Limitations of the study

According to Given (2015), all research projects have limitations that need to be acknowledged. Language barrier was a limitation since some participants only partly understood some of the research questions which were phrased in English. In order to overcome this limitation, the researcher had to rephrase the questions into a local language they were better able to understand. Patten (2014) suggests that while working with the participants, qualitative researchers should be open to the possibility of making adjustments to the measures, such as

rewording questions, which is what the researcher did. She made sure that she used the same explanations or rewording with all the participants.

Challenges related to postponement of appointments were experienced during the course of data collection. The process of data collection then became time consuming as participant would at times not honour their appointments. Participants, except those in management, used their break-time; therefore, it was not always easy to get hold of them despite scheduling appointments. However, to overcome this challenge the researcher approached some women bus drivers who were on break time and available at the depot. The researcher asked them for interviews and some of them agreed. According to Hahn (2008), gathering qualitative data can be the most time-consuming part of a research project.

Another limitation is that since the study was conducted with one bus company, the findings of this study could not be generalised to other bus companies elsewhere employing women bus drivers. Furthermore, the researcher did not interview the person who was implementing some of the stress management programmes as it would have added additional insight to the study. However, the study can help future researchers with information about the topic.

3.10 Trustworthiness

Shenton (2004) argues that the trustworthiness of qualitative research is often questioned by positivists, probably because their concept of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way as naturalistic work. Marshall and Rossman (2011) maintain that trustworthiness is concerned with the quality of qualitative research and the concept was drawn from quantitative approaches. Thus, Lincoln and Guba (1986) proposed that constructivist inquiry demanded different criteria from those inherited from traditional social science. Lincoln and Guba (1986) further suggested that trustworthiness was a parallel process to rigour with credibility as an analogue to internal validity. Transferability is seen as an analogue to external validity, with dependability as an analogue to reliability and conformability as an analogue to objectivity.

In order to enhance *credibility*, the researcher used triangulation by collecting data from different participants as well as including different perspectives from the participants. The objectives and purpose of the study were explained to the participants. In addition, multiple theories were used

to interpret the data. Triangulation is the idea of using different sources of data to get at the same thing (Litchman, 2014, p. 195).

Litchman (2014) argues that *transferability* is the extent to which findings can be applied to other settings. According to Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Shenton 2004), it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork site is provided in order to allow the reader to determine how far they can be confident in transferring findings to other situations. In the case of this study, the researcher made efforts to provide sufficient information to ensure that the findings could to some extent be transferable to other organisational contexts with similar conditions.

Dependability emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs (Litchman, 2014, p. 387). *Dependability* was enhanced by using the same researcher and the same interview schedule for all interviews in order to ensure consistency. In addition, the researcher gave an account of all the steps of how data were organised and analysed.

Confirmability refers to the degree to which results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Litchman, 2014, p. 387). In addition, Shenton (2004) explains that the concept of *confirmability* is the qualitative equivalent of the quantitative researcher's comparable concern with objectivity. To enhance *confirmability*, the researcher made sure that the recorded data was kept and accurately transcribed verbatim before analysing the data. In addition, the researcher made sure that findings recorded were based on the participants' experiences and not the researcher's preferences.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The research involved human participants; therefore it is important to account for ethical issues. Ethical behaviour in research demands that researchers engage with moral issues of right and wrong (Wiles, 2013, p. 12). Similarly, Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2014) note that research ethics should be a central concern of all social science researchers in planning, designing, implementing and reporting research with human participants. According to Berg (2011), the reason for social scientists to uphold ethical obligations is that they delve into the social lives of other human beings. The researcher encouraged the participants to provide data

freely and they were informed that it was their right to withdraw at any point from the study if they so wished. The researcher also emphasized her independent status to the participants so that they could contribute their ideas without fear of jeopardising their jobs with the company.

Informed consent:

Babbie (2011) defines informed consent as a norm in which participants base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of what is involved. The Participant Information Sheets set out in Appendix B and Appendix D were used for this purpose. Berg (2011) maintains that signed informed consent systematically ensures that potential participants are knowingly participating in a study and are doing so of their own choice. Permission to interview the participants was sought by the researcher from the company authorities before approaching the individual participants. The consent form used in the study is displayed in Appendix C.

The researcher tried to ensure that the participants had a clear understanding of what the study entailed. Therefore, in light of this requirement, the participants signed a statement indicating that they were aware of the purpose and procedures of the study and were willing to participate voluntarily. Informed consent means the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice (Berg, 2011, p. 87). Participants have the right to know what the research is about and how it will affect them (Bless et al., 2013, p. 32). The researcher highlighted, both verbally and in writing to the participants that non-participation would not cause any harm to their person and those who decided to participate could withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality

Bless *et al.* (2013, p. 32) maintain that information that is provided by participants should be protected and not made available to anyone other than the researchers. In this regard, keeping of records and audio-tapes in a safe place was explained to the participants. The organisation and participants were assured that all collected data from participants would at all times be kept under secure conditions and would only be accessible to the researcher and supervisor. In order to protect the identity of the participants no identifying details were used in the report.

Non-Maleficence

Given (2008) maintains that the principle of non-maleficence includes the avoidance, prevention or limiting of harm to others. Given (2008) further argues that in qualitative research the principle also includes harm or injury to feelings, privacy, confidentiality or reputation of participants. Counselling was arranged with practitioners at a non-profit making organisation. However, in this study no physical or psychological harm was experienced. Therefore, no participants requested counselling. The researcher tried to minimize harm, by adhering to the following:

- Trust building allowed the participants to share their experiences without fear.
- The researcher clearly defined her role to the participants.
- During gathering of data, the researcher explained to the participants that should the research cause any distress to the participants, counselling would be made available free-of-charge. However, during the process of data collection no participant was identified as in need of counselling.
- Interviews were carried out in a private place where the participants felt comfortable.

Ethics Clearance

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), universities and professional associations have created codes of ethics and research review boards in order to protect participants from unnecessary harm. In the case of this study, ethics clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Witwatersrand before the research proceeded.

3.12 Summary of the chapter

This chapter outlined the methodology adopted for conducting the research. This included the research approach used, the research population and sampling techniques. The research instrumentation and the data collection methods and analysis were highlighted. Limitations of the study were also identified. The chapter also discussed the ethical considerations that guided the study. The following chapter provides an analysis and discussions of the study's findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4. Introduction

This chapter details the main findings of the study. Themes drawn from the research findings are presented and discussed in terms of the four objectives of the study. The first part of the chapter presents demographic information and women bus drivers 'understandings of occupational stress. The second part describes the occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers. The next section discusses strategies used by women bus drivers to cope with occupational stress and the last section presents the organisational support mechanisms that are available to minimise the impact of occupational stress among women bus drivers. The last section of this chapter concludes with an overview and summary of the results.

4.2 Demographic Information

All the 15 participants were black female bus drivers. The researcher also interviewed two key informants, namely, the operations manager and the general manager. The figures below represent the participants' age group, years of experience and marital status.

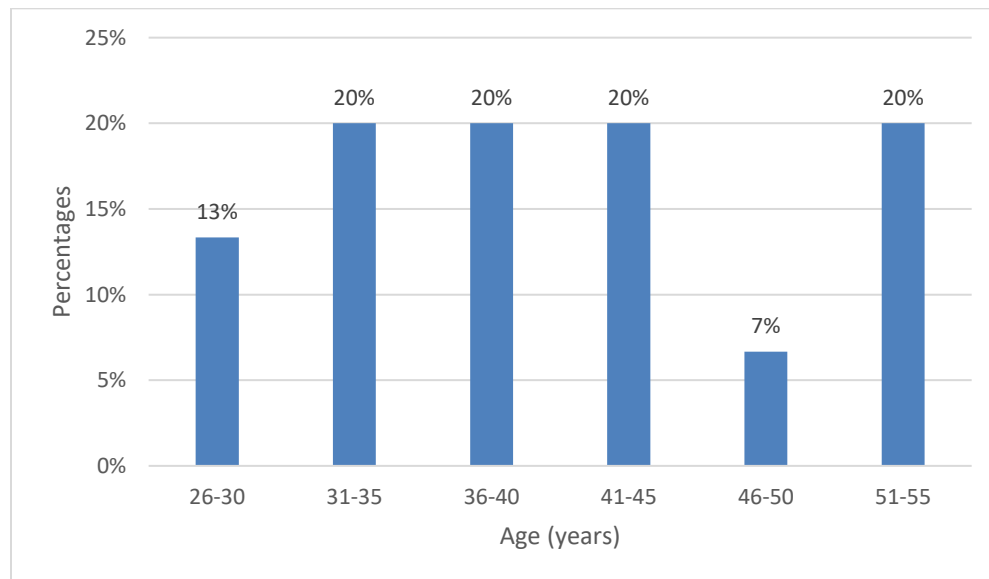


Figure 4.1 Age of participants (N=15)

Figure 4.1 indicates that the majority of participants were mature women bus drivers whose age group constituted an economically active cluster who were at the peak of their careers.

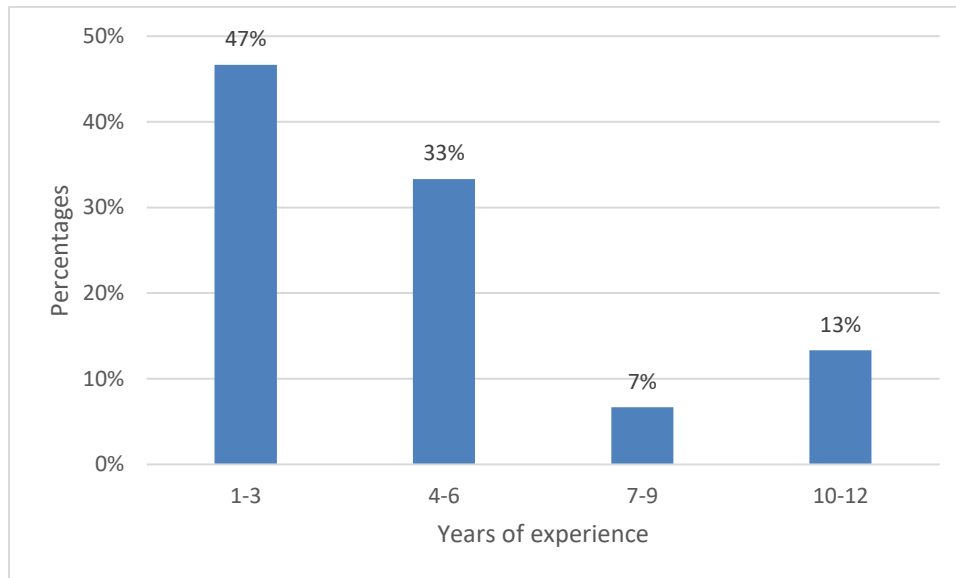


Figure 4.2 Years of work experience of participants (N=15)

Figure 4.2 shows the years of work experience of the participants. The length of service of participants ranges from 1 – 12 years hence because of the varying years of experience, participants were in a position to provide relevant information about the occupational stressors they experience as women bus drivers.

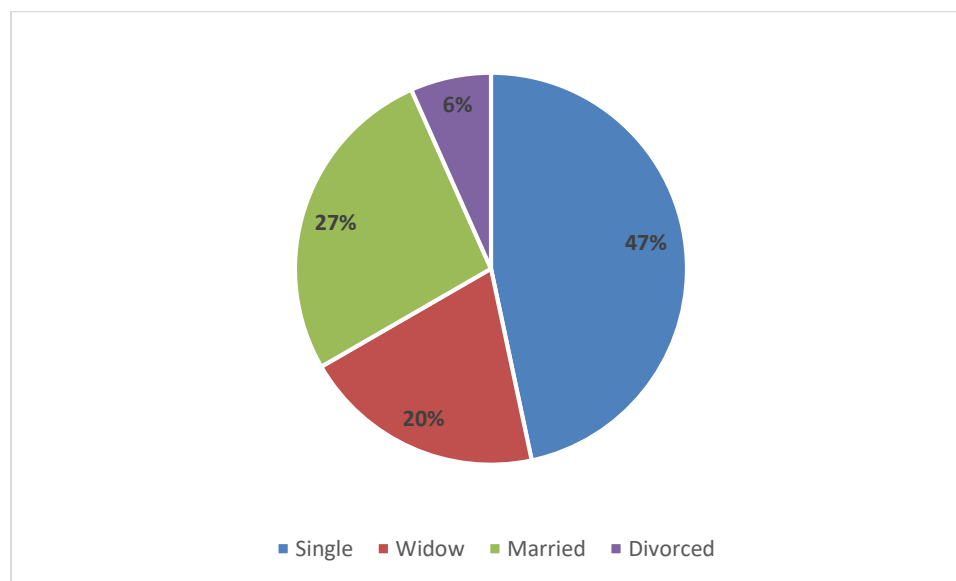


Figure.4.3 Marital status of participants (N=15)

Figure 4.3 indicates that single women bus drivers made up the largest cluster (46%) which implies that results were from participants who may have had other roles and responsibilities if they were single parents.

Table 4.1 Key informants who were interviewed (N=2)

Key Informant	Reasons for interviews
Operations Manager	The operation manager responsible for daily operations of the company provided information on the complaints raised by the bus drivers. She shared her thoughts about occupational stressors presented by women bus drivers and the current methods that are being used by the organisation to deal with occupational stress. The operations manager also provided information on the future strategies that company hoped to adopt in order to address occupational stress in the company.
General Manager (Training and development)	The general manager responsible for training and development provided information on development programmes aimed at enhancing the operation of bus drivers in the company. The manager also provided information on the current mechanisms used by the organisation to address drivers' psychological and physical health issues. In addition, he shared his perceptions of the major contributions to occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers.

4.3 Women bus drivers' understandings of occupational stress

The first objective was to explore women bus drivers' understandings of occupational stress. According to the literature, there are numerous definitions of occupational social work. However, Britt and Jex (2014) noted that occupational stress researchers have adopted a stimulus-response definition in which stress is some type of force acting upon an individual and a response definition implies that stress is synonymous with the way in which employees react to stressful job conditions. Hence the participants were asked at the commencement of the research interview what they understood about occupational stress. The researcher simplified the term occupational stress and all the 15 participants exhibited an understanding of the concept of occupational stress. What was of interest to the researcher was that the participants did not know that their company provided some programmes that reduce stress among employees. Griffin (2000) argues that a wellness stress management programme is a special part of the organisation specifically created to help with stress. However, only two participants seemed to have knowledge of stress management programs from their previous employer.

One participant remarked:

"Yes I do understand what work-stress means because at my previous workplace we used to do team building activities and hold workshops on how to manage stress". (Participant 14)

One participant commented:

"Yes I do understand what work stress is. These are challenges and difficulties that you face in the workplace which make you to feel stressed." (Participant 1)

Another participant remarked:

"Work-stress is when you experience stressful situations at work. When I am stressed I talk to my colleagues if the problem is work related but if it is something from home I talk to my relatives. I did not know that a company can have someone whom you can discuss your problems with." (Participant 4)

From the above statements, it was clear that participants were aware of what constituted occupational stress. According to Annmalai and Nandagobal (2014), occupational stress can be

caused by too much pressure, having to make too many decisions and fatigue from the physical strain of the work and environment. Similarly, according to the Person-Environment fit model, the employee perceives the work environment as stressful when there is a lack of fit between the employee and work environment (Jex & Britt, 2014). In this study, participants identified sexual harassment, aggressive passengers, some cultural practices, balancing work and family life, health problems, working hours, interaction with road users and road accidents as causes of their occupational stress. These findings are consistent with a study by Komane (2013) who found that women bus drivers experienced both health and psychological problems due to their work environment. This was similar to the findings by Martin and Barnad (2013) who concluded that women have unique physical, work identity and work-life balance needs that challenge their capability to function without difficulties in an environment which is male dominated. Therefore, it clear that the information provided by the participants conforms with research findings which perceive occupational stress as the process whereby some aspects of the working environment produce reactions that can result in psychological distress or physical illness.

4.4 Occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers

There are two objectives incorporated under this heading because there are intertwined. One of the objectives sought to explore the occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers. The other objective sought to establish how occupational stressors are impacting on women bus drivers' psychosocial well-being.

There are numerous occupational stressors that emerged from the findings in as far as women bus driving is concerned and how they are impacting on their well-being. Literature has shown that male and female drivers may experience the same stressors in a workplace. However, it has been found that the changing role of women in society and in the workforce has led to women facing additional problems in the workplace due to gender stereotypes within a patriarchal environment. The participants pointed out a number of stressors they experience in the workplace as well as the psychological, behavioural and physical outcomes as a result of stress. Participants in management further pointed out the organisational outcomes caused by occupational stress due to lack of practical interventions aimed at improving employee well-being. All the women bus drivers agreed that although they enjoyed doing the job, there were a

number of stressors associated with the profession. The themes of the study are discussed in detail below.

4.4.1 Sexual harassment

One participant who was brave enough to share about her experiences of sexual harassment gave an account of how she endured sexual harassment in the workplace and the impact it had on her emotional health. She further highlighted how her working relationship with supervisors was strained as she was viewed as a bad influence.

The participant explained:

“When I had worked for at least one year in this company, I was harassed by my depot supervisor. This man I am told has a tendency to harass women who are new and wants sexual favours from them. I reported him for the first time and it did not help. Working with became very difficult as he ended up charging me on very petty issues. My duties then changed and I would knock off at 9 p m. When I park the bus, I had to wait for the staff bus to take me home but I would find him waiting for me and he would insist to accompany me home. I reported him again to the shop steward and I was eventually transferred to another depot. He continued to harass me because he hired people to attack me on my way home and at one point I was stabbed and had to fight for my life. This issue stressed me a lot as I feared for my safety and I ended up being involved in an accident. The same person who is harassing, charged me and I was suspended from work. After my suspension, a lot of cases against me were created. I nearly lost my job. This problem triggered other health problems and I became hypertensive. I was off sick most of the time and I had to submit a lot of sick notes which made my supervisor to suspect that my notes were fake. I became a victim and I was accused of being a bad influence to other women bus drivers. As I talk to you right now it can be a case because drivers are losing their jobs over small issues, so we have a lot of fear”
(Participant 6).

From the interviews conducted with women bus drivers, only one participant mentioned her experiences of sexual harassment and she mentioned that the harasser tended to target new employees. This can be regarded as a very small representation of participants but her views

cannot be dismissed as insufficient because no other participant confirmed or refuted these findings. Although it cannot be concluded that sexual harassment is prevalent in the company, it also cannot be denied that it is happening. The management is aware of the situation because incidents have been reported. According to Mokomane (2014), victims may not report the harassment for fear of humiliation and labelling that may occur as well as more long-term effects such as less chances of promotion opportunities or even dismissal. In addition, some prefer to request a transfer or leave the job rather than confront the harassment.

Literature has shown that it is difficult to find a generally acceptable definition of sexual harassment because people's views on what constitute sexual harassment differ widely. However, one code of good practice defines sexual harassment as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The unwanted nature of sexual harassment distinguishes it from behaviour that is welcome and mutual (Bendix, 2010).

The study highlighted the fact that sexual harassment exists in the transport industry. It seems that employees that are victims of sexual harassment are often too scared to reveal such acts for fear of victimisation or loss of opportunities. According to Clinton and Langberg (2011), victims will often be nervous or afraid to report sexual harassment as they may be concerned about losing their jobs especially when the harasser is their supervisor or someone in a position of higher authority. From the above statement it can be noted that the participant's story could reflect the suffering of other women in the workplace who continue to experience gender-based violence. Conte (2017) noted that sexual harassment can be subtle through the creation of a hostile atmosphere that systematically erodes women's spirit. Despite legislation, sexual harassment in the workplace remains a problem. South African law prohibits sexual and other forms of harassment. Sexual harassment is included in the rights relating to non-discrimination under the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998). Laws passed to protect women against violence in the workplace include the Employment Equity Act, 1998 which recognises the harassment of an employee as a form of unfair discrimination. This is accompanied by the code of good practice on the handling of sexual harassment issued in terms of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995).

Despite reporting the case of sexual harassment to her superiors, the participant indicated that nothing much was done to help her; instead the harassment continued. The participant's

experience is similar to the case of Ntsabo vs Real Security in which Ntsabo's, supervisor would sexually harassing her and threaten her with a poor performance review if she refused to engage in a sexual relationship with him. In its landmark judgement, the Labour Court in Cape Town held that since the employer was aware and had been notified of sexual harassment but did not take any steps to protect the employee, the company would be accountable for the employee's damages (Grogan, 2009). It can be argued that the decision by the court in Cape Town would serve to encourage employers to take more pro-active measures in relation to sexual harassment.

The participant also indicated that, the harasser tended to target new women bus drivers who joined the company. According to Mokomane (2014), in a country like South Africa with a history of discriminatory practices such as unequal power relations based upon race and gender, patriarchal cultures and belief systems, the potential for sexual harassment is rife. In addition, Mokomane (2014) argues that women working in traditionally male settings are believed to be at greater risk as they are targeted because of their high visibility and perceived threat to male identity.

Due to high levels of stress the participant developed hypertension and was often absent from work. She was subsequently involved in an accident and was suspended from work. According to Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2006), subtle costs are associated with psychological and physical harm to victims and often victims may experience depression, frustration, nervousness, fatigue and hypertension which in turn leads to decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. In a similar vein, Mokomane (2014) argues that victims of sexual harassment sometimes resort to abusing alcohol or drugs in order to cope.

Therefore, employers are encouraged to take more pro-active measures in relation to sexual harassment. Grobler et al (2006) suggest that providing effective sexual harassment training for all employees is vital as this strategy can potentially enable employees to have a better understanding of the issues and help change inappropriate behaviours in a workplace.

4.4.2 Dealing with aggressive passengers

All the 15 women bus drivers interviewed indicated that passengers were a major contributor to their stress at work. Drivers are placed in an awkward position as they have to exercise customer care and adhere to the work policies that advocate that the customer is always right. However, according to the participants' experiences some women drivers end up losing their temper and engage in verbal altercations with passengers which may lead to them facing disciplinary action.

One participant mentioned that passengers can be very disrespectful to women bus drivers.

"Sometimes passengers say words that hurts and can make you angry but because we were trained that passengers are always right. The company provides us with training on customer service. I sometimes keep quiet but one day I failed to control myself after a passenger said demeaning words to me. I reported the case to my supervisor but apparently the passenger had already called my supervisor and reported first because passengers have our supervisors' numbers. I went for a hearing and I was found guilty. I was told that the company policy says the customer is always right. I did not welcome the outcome because the passenger passed some bad remarks about me in the bus yet his side of the story carried more weight" (Participant 1).

Another participant added:

"I am very disappointed by the behaviour of passengers. Sometimes passengers get into the bus with a wrong or expired ticket. If you tell them that they cannot proceed they will start harassing you. One day the passenger used vulgar words and called me a prostitute after I had told him that his ticket had expired and could not board the bus. That day I cried all the way (Participant 2).

The same participant expressed the view that men passengers were better than women passengers.

"Some women comments are driven by jealousy. As women we look down upon each other. One day my neighbour was a passenger in the bus that I was driving and I could hear her say are we going to get where we are going in time. I was hurt" (Participant 12).

Similarly, another participant commented:

“One women passenger told me that she did not want me to drive them the following day and she did not want to see me but she did not say why...Passengers can mistreat you and would expect the driver to stop for them anywhere. If you do not stop for them the following day they would make sure that they shout at you. A passenger told me that I get paid because of his money. I was hurt and had a verbal altercation with him because I was not wrong not to stop for him because I have to stop only at a bus stop” (Participant 5).

From the above discussion, it can be noted the participants experienced different forms of aggression from passengers. It appears some women passengers do not support their fellow women who are in the driving industry as it appeared that some women passengers could be heard saying derogatory words to women bus drivers. However, it should be noted that it is not only women passengers who are aggressive towards women bus drivers but men as well. As such the study highlights the impulsive and volatile nature of some aggressive encounters drivers experience. According to Levy, Wegman, Baron and Sokas (2018), workplace violence can include physical assault and non-physical events such threats and verbal abuse. Bus drivers are amongst the occupational groups considered to be at high risk of workplace violence. Similarly, Linos and Kirch (2008) noted that no one is immune to workplace violence; however, some workers are at increased risk due to contact with customers. In 2016, approximately 25 bus passengers were injured when a passenger allegedly grabbed the steering wheel from the driver thereby, causing the woman bus driver to veer off the road before crashing into a tree. It is alleged that a squabble erupted between a woman bus driver and the passenger when the passenger wanted to alight from the bus before a bus stop. When the driver refused to stop, the passenger pulled the steering wheel causing the driver to lose control in which one passenger suffered a broken leg (The citizen, 19 January, 2016). Recently the Sunday world (2018) reported a similar incident that happened in the same province of Mpumalanga in which a bus driver transporting school children was physically attacked by a school child while the bus was in motion.

Participants indicated that some passengers can say demeaning words that can deeply affect them emotionally. According to Pillinger (2017), women drivers are subject to derogatory remarks

from passengers who see them as breaking out of their traditional roles since bus driving is seen as a male job. Therefore, one can say that women who join occupations which are male-dominated are likely to face stressors associated with sexism in their daily interaction with passengers. Pillinger (2017) noted that violence at work in the transport sector is a biggest form of workplace stress which has undesirable effects on women workers' physical and mental health and well-being, their capacity to work and their relationships with family and work colleagues.

The economic burden of violence against women is also evident in the workplace. According to the operations manager, when drivers were stressed by passengers they would apply for sick leave in order to deal with their emotions. According to Grown, Gupta and Kes (2005), the broader economic effects of violence against women include increased absenteeism and lower productivity.

Although participants indicated that they reported their challenges with passengers to their supervisors, they felt that very little emotional support was provided to them. The situation was exacerbated when the bus driver was required to attend a disciplinary hearing. As employees, they are bound by the workplace policy which stipulates that a passenger is always right whilst at the same time such violence can threaten their emotional health. One participant indicated that she became a victim and was found guilty after a passenger verbally attacked her and she also got upset and unintentionally retaliated. In order to avoid disciplinary actions, participants indicated that they end up developing their coping strategies such as remaining silent when they are being abused verbally by passengers or trying to forget about the verbally aggressive behaviour. These findings conform to a study by Komane (2013) who found that silence worked as the best medicine in heated situations. However, this strategy contradicts findings by Smallwood and Wade (2013) who state that individuals who have attempted to use silence as a coping strategy found themselves in unbearably stressful situations and opted to resign. According to Kavitha (2009), organisations have three categories of dealing with stress such as primary, secondary and tertiary interventions. In addition, Kavitha (2009) explains that primary interventions focus on taking action to reduce stressors or sources of stress; secondary interventions are concerned with detection and management of stress; while tertiary interventions are concerned with the recovery process of individuals suffering from stress through counselling. The traumatic experience of these drivers clearly indicates that much needs to be done in order to

support them emotionally. Therefore, it can be argued that in order to develop an effective organisational programme for stress management, employers need to integrate primary, secondary and tertiary levels of intervention.

4.4.3 Cultural practices as a stressor for women bus drivers

One participant indicated that her husband passed away and she had to adhere to cultural practices of the Swazi culture in which she was required to wear a black dress during the period she was in mourning.

“I did not want to drive in a black dress when I came back to work after my husband’s funeral but my manager told me that there was no other duty I could take. Besides, I was told that passengers travelling my route requested that they would want me back. The reason I did not want to drive with black clothes is that a lot of conditions are attached to this mourning dress” (Participant 10).

A lot of sanctions placed on widows make it difficult for women who have to work in occupations such as bus driving. For example, the widow is traditionally bound to be at her home before sunset. This was impossible for the participant as her shift ends at 19h00 hours daily. In addition, she has to wash the only dress that she had and wait for it to dry. The participant indicated that this period of mourning was stressful for her as she had to preserve her cultural rituals while at the same time making sure that she continues to work her normal duties.

“I need to wash my clothes because I only have one dress and with my duties it so difficult. The other thing is that when I am in a period of mourning I am not supposed be in conflict with people and there is group of passengers who board the bus at z bust stop. This group of ladies are a problem. They have no respect at all and can pass any comments as they board the bus but I have to keep quiet. Sometimes other passengers in the bus are the one who control them on my behalf as they know that I cannot say anything in my black clothes (Participant 10).

The participant’s experience highlights the fact that women bus drivers are not immune to some cultural practices that may be in conflict with their work values. According to the operations manager, the company does not have policies that encompass cultural practices but did not have

problems when grieving bus drivers have to wear their mourning attire as required by their culture. Such practices can become a source of stress as women are caught between cultural duties and occupational demands in which failure to adhere to cultural practices may lead to them being isolated by their families and the community at large.

An in-depth look at the mourning period of the participant reveals that the mourning period for working women can be a very stressful time as she has to deal with the loss of her husband at the same time that she has to adhere to certain cultural practices which can be in conflict with the working environment. Dlamini (2016) explains that upon death of the husband, the Swazi widow is expected to wear mourning attire for a specified period. In addition, there are prescribed behaviours such as how the bereaved should be addressed and times when they need to be at home. Matsaneng as (cited in Dlamini, 2016) observed that wearing of mourning gowns had a negative effect on people's mentality and traumatised the women. Similarly, Dlamini (2016) noted that cultural practices of mourning the dead were more oppressive to women especially when they are expected to be home before sunset or practices such as not making extensive contact with people.

Although, Eyetsemitan (2017) argues that many organisations lack a coherent bereavement policy. The company seemed to be flexible and willing to accommodate women who are bereaved by allowing them to observe their culture and wear black clothes during the mourning period. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act No, 75 of 1997 allows full time workers to take 3 days of paid family responsibility leave during each annual leave cycle. Eyetsemitan (2017) observed that the standard bereavement leave only allows employees time to express their immediate grief and attend to funeral arrangements but it may not give employees enough time to deal with their grief in their long term.

4.4.4 *Balancing work with family*

One of the stressors that emerged from the study was maintaining a healthy balance between work and family responsibilities. Of the 15 participants who were interviewed only one of them indicated that she was single and had no children. Fourteen participants indicated that their children were still young and needed their attention. Participants shared their different

experiences and survival strategies on how to deal with their conflicting roles as women bus drivers.

One participant narrated how she got divorced as a result of her duties as a woman bus driver.

“I was married and divorced. The reason my husband left me is because I did not have enough time to please him. I leave home as early as 03.30 and arrive home around 20:00pm. Although I break during the day my children will be at work and he would be at work” (Participant 7).

Another participant remarked:

“My parents are late and I am a bread winner at home with five siblings to look after at home and my husband could not give me money to look after them so I have no choice. My former husband failed to be patient with me so it means he was not meant for me” (Participant 6).

Other participants explained:

“My husband cooks for the children because when I get home I will be very tired” (Participant 11).

“I do not have time to help my children with their homework so I ask my younger sisters to assist. I have a six-year old and she need to be assisted with almost everything and I am usually not there for her (Participant 15).

“I leave home at 0420 am when my children are still asleep. I break at 08:00am until 15:00pm. My break time is too long and during that time my children are at school. This means that I do not have to discuss important things with my children. There is no time to bond with my children” (Participant 9).

“If I have family issues to solve, I usually apply for leave” (Participant 4).

“Sunday morning is the only day that I get time to do my laundry since I have to go to work at 13:00pm this means that I do not even have time to go to church. Although I

am grateful for this job my problem is that I no longer have time to attend church with others” (Participant 3).

The above verbatim quotes highlight the stressors women bus drivers face in maintaining a healthy balance between their work and family life. As outlined earlier in the literature review, major changes have taken place since the dawn of democracy in South Africa which saw women entering the job market. Although these changes have been celebrated, it is evident from the interviews that women bus drivers are faced with a dilemma whereby they have to work and these employment commitments prevent them from giving the required attention to their families. Lamanna, Riedman and Stewart, (2016) noted that even though women’s employment has become an equally important component in the family income, the burden of household duties continues to be borne by working women, leading to marital conflict and increasing the chances of divorce.

Two participants indicated that they get enough rest during their break-times. However, one common factor amongst all women bus drivers interviewed indicated that they come home exhausted and have to rest in preparation for the following day, leaving them with no time to bond with their children let alone quality time to spend with their husbands. Although, one participant mentioned that her husband would cook for the family, most of the women reported having to make use of relatives to help with child care. Giddens and Griffiths (2006) argue that the family is the main agent of socialisation and the mother is normally the most important individual in the child’s early life. It is further argued that the nature of the relationships established between the mothers and their children are influenced by the form and regularity of their contact.

This study highlighted the fact that some women who enter into the job market may face marital conflict if their husbands do not assist with domestic tasks which may lead to role conflict. According to Stangor (2004), role conflict occurs when the individual is expected to fulfil more than one role. This is likely to be applicable to many women bus drivers in contemporary society who have to suffer from role conflict when they are required to play the role of wife, mother and working woman. Furthermore, Stangor (2004) observed that role conflict creates a great source of stress for the individual thereby reducing productivity.

4.4.5 Health problems

At least four participants complained of back pains and two participants complained of chest problems as a result of dust. However, the problem of swollen feet emerged as a major work-related health problem amongst women bus drivers in this study with a total of nine drivers indicating that they experienced the problem of swollen feet after driving. Driving involves the use of legs and most participants indicated that their feet are always swollen as a result of hot air which is produced from the bus. Although, they have received treatment from the clinic, the problem seems to persist and they worry that this could have a long-term effect on their health. The following verbatim responses encapsulate this theme:

“I have developed problems with my legs. My feet are always swollen because of the hot air that comes out of the bus. I usually go to the company clinic for treatment but nothing much has changed” (Participant 5).

“I have problems with my legs. The bus produce heat and we complained about this problem and they tried to open somewhere for air to come in but still the air is not enough. When I get home my legs would be swollen and I have to treat my legs with cold water in order for me to sleep well” (Participant 6).

“I sit for a long time on the steering wheel so I have developed problems with my back. My job also involves being on the road most of the time and the dust affects me sometimes I experience chest problems” (Participant 7).

“My left leg is giving me problems because when I am seated on the steering wheel, the hot air which is being produced from the bus is affecting mostly my left leg. My worry is that I do not know whether this hot air is affecting other parts of my body (Participant 11)

“Maybe they should have our buses air conditioned because the hot air that is produced by these buses affect my feet. I am not the only one some of my colleagues have also complained about swollen feet. We have been complaining about this problem to our superiors but nothing much was done to alleviate this problem” (Participant 5).

Another participant complained about chest problems:

“When I joined this company, I was alright but I later on developed chest problems when I started driving, I would like to believe that this is caused by dust as my route involves travelling in dusty areas” (Participant 12).

From the above statements it can be noted that apart from chest pains and back pains, another stressful factor that achieved consensus amongst the women bus drivers was health problems linked to cabin ergonomics. King (2013) argues that ergonomics is concerned with the problems and processes involved in designing systems for effective human use and in creating environments that are suitable for working. Participants mentioned that their job restricted freedom of movement hence they were exposed to heat as a result of the design of the bus.

The participants also identified the inadequacy of thermostat control in the driver’s cabin. As a consequence of the above-mentioned shortcomings their legs had become swollen and this has become a source of stress as they worry about other possible threats to their health that can be caused by their continuous exposure to heat. King (2013) noted that work methods, equipment, facilities and tool designs all influence the workers’ motivation, fatigue, likelihood of sustaining an occupational injury or illness and productivity. However, when looking at issues relating to occupational health it cannot be concluded that bus driving is the sole cause of swollen feet and other health issues mentioned during the interview such as chest pains and back aches. In her study on the experiences of black female bus drivers in South Africa Komane (2013) argues that when looking at work-related health issues, it is also important to consider the time before they entered the bus driving industry or any other form of domestic work they do since any form of work comes with its own health-related issues.

Harbison, Bourgeois and Johnson (2015) noted that there are reports of females driving heavy duty vehicles who have experienced spontaneous abortions and other gynaecological disorders due to vibrations. Therefore, future studies in this regard could focus on whether prolonged exposure to heat has an impact on the health of bus drivers. However, on an encouraging note, internationally it is reported that bus companies are making strides to address some problems associated with bus designs in order to lower the health risks. According to Martinod, Guieu, Korning and Mehaut (2016), there have been some improvements in the technical equipment in France whereby the drivers’ cab is better designed to allow for air conditioning systems.

4.4.6 Working hours

Bus drivers who reported problems working split shifts (where shifts are split into different parts) reported working hours interfering with mainly social life. However, not everyone who was interviewed was dissatisfied with the working hours as one participant indicated that she utilised the break-time for making extra income. This is what some women bus drivers said about their working time.

“I start work at 04:20 hours until 07:45 hours when I go for break. My duty commences at 15:00 hours and my duty ends at 18:00 hours from Monday to Friday. Saturday, I am on standby then my off day is Sunday. I feel the break is too long because there is nothing much that I can do during that time except to go home and sleep. I do not even see my children because they will be at school. The little time that I see them is after work but I will be tired and I do not have much time with them. My husband is the one who does the cooking for the family” (Participant 11).

Other participants described their day as follows:

“I start work at 05:25 hours and break at 10:00 hours. My duty commences at 14:45 hours then I knock off at 19:30 hours. I feel the duties are not good for women because the break period is just too long. I had the powers I would make sure that women knock off at 14:00 hours so that they go and do other duties at home. I am a single parent and I tell you I have never helped my child with homework. I rely on my siblings for help which is not good because as a mother I also need to supervise their homework but I will be tired” (Participant 10).

“I start work at 05:00 hours and break at 08:00 hours. My duty commences at 14:00 hours. I go home to sleep during my break time and when I go back to work I will be feeling better but as you know sleeping during the day is different with sleeping at night because of some disturbances. My only problem is that I do not have time with my child. I feel guilty because when I come back home at night I only have little time with her because the only thing that I want to do is to eat and sleep. Sometimes I do not have time to sleep as I have to relief a driver who has asked time off unexpectedly.” (Participant 12)

Another participant reflected somewhat different sentiments:

“I start work at 05:00 hours and break at 08:00 hours. My duty commences at 16:00 hours and I knock off at 19:00 hours. During my break I go back home and rest a bit then I start to sew comforters for sale. I have been doing this for 11 years and I have no problem. I can even cook for my children during my break” (Participant 6).

The above statements suggest that the women bus drivers who were interviewed were mainly worried about the length of their break-time. They felt that instead of having long breaks, it would be better to have the time reduced so that they break earlier in order to enable them to fulfil family and other social obligations. Thus, the most prominent stressor under this theme was that their working hours interfered with their family responsibilities. According to Grosswald (1999), most transit schedules are designed with efficiency and convenience for the workplace as priorities rather than the health and welfare of the employee, the employee’s family or the public.

Although bus driving is considered to be physically and mentally demanding, fatigue-related problems during working hours did not appear to be a major concern among the women bus drivers. This could be attributed to lengthy breaks that they have which give them time to rest. It seems women bus drivers have developed strategies to better cope with fatigue. What continued to be of concern to them was the length of breaks. The company operates a split shift system where shifts are split into different parts in order to best cover busy periods. According to Alt, Fu and Golden (2006), a daily work schedule is called a split shift if there is at least two hours of idle time between any two consecutive tasks on the daily work schedule. Men and women bus drivers do the same duties but according to the operations manager the company has a policy that women break earlier than men with the latest being 18:00 hours. Therefore, this is one of the advantages of being a women bus driver in this particular company. It also shows that the company has tried to address some of the gender concerns. However, not all the participants were dissatisfied with the length of breaks. One participant mentioned that she was taking advantage of the break time interval to make extra money by sewing comforters. This clearly shows that individuals have different coping strategies and thus it cannot be generalised that split shifts are stressful. Kushida (2004) postulates that shift work is inevitable in contemporary society given that some facilities require round the clock operation.

4.4.7 Interaction with other road users

Interaction with other road users emerged as another stressor which women in the study were facing in their daily job as bus drivers. Participants reported that disorder and lack of consideration from other road users were responsible for the stress they experienced. Such stress was reported to emanate from ensuring that the passengers were safe in the face of the often unpredictable behaviour of other motorists, specifically truck drivers and taxi drivers. One participant expressed her concerns as follows:

“Taxi drivers give me a hard time. When I am following a taxi driver, I have to be extra careful and increase my concentration because a slight mistake can make me to be involved in an accident so if I think of over hundred passengers that I will carrying I make sure I concentrate in order to avoid accidents” (Participant 4).

Other participants made the following comments:

“My route have a lot of venture taxis which ply mostly local routes. These drivers just stop anywhere and I am forced to apply emergency breaks. When I apply emergency breaks the passengers start to complain yet they do not know what I am going through on the steering wheel. My only worry at that particular time is to ensure the safety of the passengers” (Participant 13).

Some road users undermine women drivers, especially truck drivers. My route has a lot of trucks and some of them want to overtake when it is not necessary, for example, when they can see clearly that the road has one lane and there is a sign showing that it narrows ahead. They do this just because the driver of the bus is a woman. I become under a lot of pressure because I have to make sure that I avoid an accident to happen” (Participant 8).

From the above statements, it can be argued that the practice of dealing with unpredictable motorists poses a great deal stress and frustration to women bus drivers who have to maintain intense concentration on the road. According to Beilby (as cited by Komane 2013), women in the traditionally male dominated work settings often attract more attention, are evaluated unfairly

and receive less support as they are viewed as a disruptive force in the workplace as compared to male co-workers. Women have been considered to be careful drivers as compared to male drivers. Lumsden (2013) noted that insurance companies routinely offered advantageous deals for women drivers as they are deemed more careful as compared to male drivers. They were deemed to be more risky until the European Court Justice prohibited the use of gender in insurance underwriting. One of the managers indicated that not many accidents have been recorded from women bus drivers. However, according to the participant's experiences it appears that society seems to be holding on to the patriarchal values which have seen male road users undermining women bus drivers instead of giving them the necessary support that they deserve on the road.

4.4.8 Accidents

Participants indicated how they became involved in accidents and the effect this had on their emotional health. Some also reported how their emotional state was adversely affected by merely witnessing an accident. One participant said;

“Accidents affects us in a big way. I was involved in an accident once ever since I started driving. Although it was not fatal, I was shocked and after that I was referred to a doctor who assisted me. It was discovered that I was not hurt but the shock affected me so much that I did not even want to go back to work. I felt like I should stop driving” (Participant 2).

Another participant shared the following experience:

“I was once involved in an accident. Although I was not at fault but I feel that I could have avoided the accident. During that time a lot was going through my mind and I could not notice that someone was overtaking me on the wrong side. The accident happened after my divorce and I was having problems with my supervisor at work. It was traumatic and after that I had to face another stress of attending a hearing because that's the procedure” (Participant 11).

Other participants commented on the experience of witnessing accidents while en route:

“Sometimes you come across an accident on your route and it hurts to witness loss of life. It is painful but I have to continue with my journey because I will be on duty. Sometimes when I feel that it is too much for me I talk to my colleagues in order to for me to feel better” (Participant 3).

“We come across accidents which are fatal and some are not fatal but an accident is an accident and when I come across an accident in the road I get shocked and after that I will be under a lot of pressure to try and be more careful so that I try to avoid accidents at all costs” (Participant 4).

Bus drivers spend the greater part of their working life on the road, and according to the participants, at any one point they may be involved in an accident or witness an accident. Although the management of the company indicated that women bus drivers were considered to be careful drivers due to the very few incidents of accidents in which they have been involved, one can argue that this does not mean that they are not vulnerable.

From the above statements it seems reasonable to assume that bus drivers are among the professionals that are at high risk of experiencing traumatic events. According to the participants in the study, it seems that not much attention is paid to the effects of accidents on their emotional and mental health. However, one participant indicated that medical attention was provided for her when she was directly involved in accidents. One would then argue that the inability to proactively provide psychological support when one witnesses or is involved in an accident leaves a gap in addressing the effects of stress on women bus drivers who are involved in accidents. Rosenbloom and Williams (2010) noted that trauma can affect the whole person including changes in body, mind, emotions and behaviour. The study highlighted the fact that women bus drivers who experience or witness traumatic incidents may be psychologically affected and they seem to have developed coping strategies such talking to someone in order to reduce the effects of stress. However, one can argue that it is not only important but appropriate for employers to be involved and have a broad understanding of traumatic stress reactions and common responses to trauma. This is due to the fact that traumatic reactions vary significantly and there may be a need to develop ways of managing the most difficult emotions that arise after trauma. Rosenbloom and Williams (2010) noted that for trauma survivors, the hardships can extend beyond the event to the troubling reactions that follow.

4.4.9 Working relations with male counterparts

Despite being a male-dominated field, 14 of the women who were interviewed mentioned that their relationships with their male counterparts were good. Only one participant indicated that some male drivers see her differently and she attributed this perception to some previous experiences in which she reported her male supervisor for sexually harassing her. According to her, some male bus drivers now view her with suspicion. The participant stated:

“I have a good relationship with my male colleagues but some are not good especially because I had some issues with one of the supervisors they see me differently. But I am not worried because I do my job as I am required to do. I applied the job like any other driver and got the job so I am not worried” (Participant 6).

The following verbatim responses captured the positive relationships that participants enjoyed with their male colleagues:

I relate well with my male colleagues because I am an open person and I see them as my brothers and they are also good to me” (Participant 1).

“My relationship with my male colleagues is just as good as my women colleagues. I think it is because we get the same training. I also think it depends with one’s attitude”. (Participant 3)

“I feel women are better drivers than men but that does not affect our relationship. I have a good relationship with both my male and female colleagues” (Participant 4).

The training department is of the view that the relationship between male and female drivers is very cordial largely due to the fact that they receive the same training. Therefore, there is a lot of respect for each other.

“Both our male and female bus drivers are considered professional drivers and they do the same duties so they respect each other. The only difference is that women drivers do not do late shifts. They also receive same training. So, like now on instead of just training them on driving we also train them on life skills so that they can help them with personal

development so that they cope with challenges that they are likely to come across in the workplace unlike in the past we just train them on driving”.

Although the above statements show that participants’ experiences are different. Some had good experiences while others had bad experiences with their male colleagues. Fourteen out of 15 participants reported to have good relations with their male colleagues. This could be attributed to the nature of training offered by the company which does not discriminate according to gender. This could help in addressing stereotypes associated with women working in the male-dominated fields. In addition, a good working relationship between male and female bus drivers may have been attributed to women’s competency in the profession as witnessed by one participant who indicated that she had won an award for being the best driver of the year.

The company’s commitment to upgrading their training curriculum which currently offers soft skills in addition to driving lessons, could be seen as another contributing factor in healthy working relationships between male and female bus drivers. According to Woolfe, Strawbridge, Douglas and Dryden (2010), personal development training has a lot of benefits and can improve self-esteem and work functioning of an individual. Similarly, Aswathappa (2007) argues that training in personal development helps to remove performance deficiencies in employees and improves relationships with colleagues.

4.5 Strategies used by women bus drivers to cope with occupational stress

One of the objectives of this study was to gather information on how women bus drivers cope with occupational stress. It emerged that the participants used different coping mechanisms to cope with occupational stress. The strategies that were mostly adopted by the participants included using the silence technique, use of professional help, use of shop stewards and sharing their stress with colleagues.

4.5.1 Cognitive strategies

According to the participants, the company policy is that the passengers is always right and once the passengers lodges a complaint they (the bus driver) would be found guilty during the hearing.

Therefore, remaining silent and not responding worked for them as they would avoid more problems. One participant said:

“Participants know their rights but they do not know their responsibilities. Some passengers look down upon women bus drivers as if we are not professionals. I heard them say vulgar words but I keep quiet because I don’t want to cause more problems because I also have to consider the safety of the passengers although I was emotionally hurt” (Participant 2).

Another participant commented:

“There are times when we have to use another driver’s bus if it is not in use and some bus drivers, especially women do not want other bus drivers to use their drivers. They use a lot of excuse and end up saying things that hurt. But my medicine is to keep quiet because some people come with their anger and end up saying words that hurts. At that time I have to get to work whilst I am emotionally hurt. I have to pretend to passengers that I am alright but passengers notice that something is not well because some passengers know us very well because I travel with them on a daily basis” (Participant 10).

Some participants indicated that they prefer to keep quiet and let the stress subside on its own, especially in cases where the stress is being caused by passengers. They indicated that sometimes some passengers were not rational and when you try to explain something it ends up in an argument. One participant indicated that arguing with passengers was not a good approach as in some cases the latter end up lodging a complaint about them to their supervisors.

From the above statements, it can be argued that the women bus drivers in the study preferred to keep quiet as a way of avoiding further problems such as attending hearings, arguing with passengers or experiencing a breakdown of relationships with their colleagues. In this way their emotions are suppressed and they have to pretend to be fine which may later cause physical or psychological stress. According to McEvoy (2004), suppressing stress symptoms is extremely unhealthy and can lead to a myriad of problem behaviours as well as resignation. Similarly, Ugur, (2013) suggests that inhibiting negative emotions does not provide relief. To this end, it can be argued that suppressing of emotions though used by some women bus drivers as a coping

strategy, is not necessarily a good long-term coping mechanism to deal with stressful situations as it may have negative effects on one's physical and emotional health.

4.5.2 Professional help

Women bus drivers indicated that the company has a pastor who usually provides counselling to the employees. Two participants who have used the services of the pastors were bereaved. All the participants indicated that they had heard that the company offers counselling services but were not very clear on how it operates. As a result, one participant indicated that she preferred to source help from outside agencies at her own cost. The company has a clinic which is operated by an occupational nurse and doctor. According to the operations manager, when stress-related issues are identified employees are sent to outside agencies. However, from the interviews conducted, it appeared that participants were not aware of the process. One participant said;

“Ms P is the first woman to want to listen to women issues. She joined the company last year and has good listening skills. She has suggested that a woman forum should be formed so that women bus drivers share their experiences. Otherwise I have only heard that there is a pastor who offer counselling for the employees but I have never used the services. When I was experiencing my problems after I divorced with my husband I had to find a counsellor elsewhere because the problem was also affecting me at work. I kept on applying off sick days and it ended up giving me problems with my superiors who thought that I was submitting fake sick notes. Actually, I had a lot issues happening at the same time because I also had to deal with the harassment from my supervisor and it became too much for me (Participant 6).

Similarly, another participant noted:

“I am not aware of any programs in place. I wish they could recruit a trained person like a social worker who can help with counselling. That is why I depend on colleagues to reduce stress by talking to them. During induction I was never told about an office which deals with counselling. I know of a clinic” (Participant 5).

Another participant echoed the following sentiments:

“I was involved in an accident, I was shocked and referred to the clinic but I did not receive counselling. I felt like I should not drive again. Usually we are not open with our issues which are personal because of fear of confidentiality. So, I think a trained person will help” (Participant 2).

One participant noted:

“When my husband passed away I received a lot of support from the company. The pastor helped me with counselling” (Participant 10).

The above discussion shows that participants made use of the pastor and the clinic whenever they faced problems associated with stress and other emotional issues. Bereaved employees seemed to be the ones who made most use of the pastor’s services. On the other hand, participants who visited the clinic were those who had other health issues or were involved in an accident. The company made some effort to provide counselling and other assistance to its employees through the use of a pastor as well as medical personnel at the clinic. It should be noted however, that when dealing with occupational stress and related issues, an appropriate knowledge base and skills are paramount. For example, Du Plessis (1990) noted that the occupational social worker in the workplace can bring to mental health services knowledge of the worker-environment interface as well as deal directly with workplace stressors.

In a similar vein, Frank and Streeter (as cited in Du Plessis, 1990) observed that a problem may be defined in more than one way which also means that interventions may occur at more than one level. The above argument explains why a number of participants interviewed expressed their lack of knowledge of the counselling unit within the organisation with some of them indicating that they had heard about it which gives the impression that it was not visible.

Another aspect which came to the fore during interviews was a concern for confidentiality from the participants. One participant indicated that she did not usually speak about her problems because she feared that such issues will not be kept confidential. One can then argue that the concern for confidentiality highlights employees’ sensitivity when it comes to confidentiality issues and therefore should not be underestimated. Without downplaying the methods of interventions which are currently in place, it should be noted what makes social work unique as a discipline within a workplace context is how the profession views clients and their problems and

its commitment to confidentiality. According to Maiden (2001), a social worker's commitment to confidentiality is equal to that of a medical professional. In South Africa all practising social workers are required to be registered with the South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP). The Code of Conduct of the SACSSP (2005) stipulates that social workers should conduct themselves ethically and that confidentiality has to be maintained at all times. This shows that there are ethical standards which are relevant to all the activities carried out by social workers irrespective of their practice setting.

4.5.3 Use of shop stewards

Participants also indicated that they depend on shop stewards to assist with resolving their problems. Problems that are reported to the shop stewards include those related to strained relationships with supervisors or colleagues, as well as problems with passengers. One participant stated:

"I get stressed with the relationships with my supervisors. I talk to shop stewards. We depend on them with our problems. My main source of stress are passengers and allocation of duties such as private tours which involve extra allowances. Women have not had same opportunities as men. We have raised our concern but nothing has been done yet. Shop stewards say they are looking into the matter. Maybe the company do not trust us with long distances" (Participant 1).

Another participant echoed the following sentiments:

"Sometimes other drivers do not want us to use their buses suppose mine have a problem. At times we end up quarrelling which can end up straining our working relationship. I usually talk to the dispatcher or shop steward so that the issue do not end up going further" (Participant 10).

Other participants remarked:

"I am a shop steward and solve people's problems but we are not trained to deal with employee stress. At one point I represented a driver who went through a red robot. That driver had a lot going through her mind but was found guilty" (Participant 6).

“Some passengers say vulgar words but I keep quiet because I was taught not to be in conflict with passengers. So, if I have a problem with passengers I talk to the shop steward who will put the issue forward” (Participant 2).

From the above sentiments, it is evident that the women bus drivers who were interviewed reported their problems to shop stewards. According to the Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995, shop stewards are trade union representatives who play an important role advocating for the enhancement of employee rights. While the role of shop stewards seems to be widely acknowledged by the participants in the study, this does not necessarily mean that shop stewards are able to deal comprehensively with all issues including occupational stress. According to the responses by the participants, it seems that their intervention was mainly related to employee grievances. Therefore, due to the lack of a section within the company that exclusively focuses on employee well-being the employees were left with no choice but to use any available means to express their problems in an effort to reduce occupational stress. According to the Work and Wellbeing Trade Union Resource (2015), health and well-being is also an issue that should involve all union workplace representatives in which stewards may play an important role such as advocating for a health and well-being committee.

4.5.4 Colleague support

Participants indicated that the stressful situations that they find themselves in on a daily basis could leave them vulnerable. As a result, the stress they experience could harm their emotional or physical health. Therefore, in order to cope in such situations, women bus drivers indicated that sharing of their experiences and thoughts with colleagues was another coping mechanism that they employed to make them feel better.

One participant stated:

“I talk to my colleagues if my stress is work related. If it is something personal that happened at home I talk to my relatives because I cannot discuss my personal problems at work.” (Participant 14).

Another participant mentioned:

“I once heard an argument with a passenger who later reported me to my supervisor because passengers do have our supervisor’s numbers. I went for a hearing and I was found guilty. I struggled to accept the outcome but when I shared my feelings with my colleagues at work I felt much better” (Participant 1).

Similarly, another participant reported:

“Our company policy is that the passenger is always right. Therefore, the fact that I cannot answer back when passengers harass me cause a lot of stress. I once had an incident when a passenger wanted to drop off where there was no bus stop. I refused and he wanted to pick a fight. I shared the experience with my colleagues during break-time and they supported me. If the case is serious I report to the office and the fact that I reported the case to my superiors reduces stress” (Participant 8).

From the above statements, peer sharing seemed to be a popular method used by women bus drivers in the study to cope with their daily stress. According to Cohen, Underwood and Gottlieb (2000), sharing experiences with other people facing a similar stressor is expected to lead to validation and normalisation of the experience. In a similar vein, Agunede (2014) noted that talking over a problem with someone who is both supportive and empathetic in a workplace can be a great way to relieve stress. Although sharing of feelings with colleagues is considered one way of releasing tension, employees are warned of depending on co-workers for therapy. Masters and Wallace (2011) suggested that employees experiencing stress should desist from using other co-workers as therapists. This is a clear indication that peer sharing of occupational stress is only one way of coping that cannot work in isolation but needs to be complemented by other interventions. From the above statements it can be speculated that the use of this method is just one way of coping with occupational stress which does not apply to everyone experiencing stress since some individuals do not feel safe sharing their experiences with co-workers.

4.6 The organisation’s strategies to minimise the impact of occupational stress among women bus drivers

One of the objectives of the study was to explore the organisation’s support mechanisms in place to minimise the impact of occupational stress among women bus drivers. This objective was critical to the study as it would highlight methods implemented by management in order

minimise occupational stress in their organisation. Participants in management were interviewed and their responses indicated that the organisation offered training and counselling and held weekly meetings in which employees could share experiences that could threaten their well-being.

4.6.1 Counselling

The participants indicated that the organisation has a full-time chaplain who provides counselling to the employees. The chaplain according to one of the participants has training in basic counselling skills. They also mentioned that the clinic employs occupational nurses and an occupational doctor who are able to assess stress and if it is extreme employees are referred to outside agents such as psychologists. However, one of the participants indicated that at times she ended up intervening in her capacity as a manager because there are times when stressed workers resorted to applying for sick leave in order to deal with stress and she had to deal with a relatively large number of applications at one time leaving her in a difficult situation to replace workers.

“When I joined this company it used to happen at one of the depots that a total of ten drivers would go on sick leave at once and they gave the reason that they had problems and no one was listening to them. So, they would go to the clinic and explain their problems and get sick leave” (Participant 2).

Another participant noted:

“I am not happy with the programs to deal with stress. I want the general manager to come up with something. Otherwise talking to the doctor is not enough. My duties are purely operational but I end up dealing with employee problems. Although I have a qualification in psychology I feel it is easier to refer a stressed employee to the relevant person where intervention should be done properly” (Participant 12).

According to Aldridge (2014), counselling is a general term for exploring emotional problems by talking them through with a trained counsellor or therapist using a considerable range of approaches. However, the company’s use of a chaplain to provide counselling to employees could be problematic. Lynch (2000) clearly indicates that pastoral counsellors working in different settings are explicitly shaped by a particular religious tradition or are explicitly associated with a particular religious institution or organisation. From the above statement it

cannot be disputed that due to their affiliation to certain religions, pastoral counsellors could be subjective in their duties as counsellors in a workplace setting. Moreover, counselling should not be an end in itself; it is also critical to look at environmental factors that could be contributing to stress. Kruger and Van Breda (2001) introduced a metaphor of binocular vision as the ability to have a telescopic and microscopic view of the situation at the same time. To this end, it is important to note that there is a need for the organisation to not only focus on individuals but also expand its practice and include the work environment. In order to achieve this goal, there is need for the company to employ specialised personnel to deal with human and social needs of the work community. Earlier in the discussion, one of the participants in management acknowledged the gap in this regard and indicated that in some instances she has to deal with employee problems. A closer scrutiny of this method of intervention shows that there is a possibility of a lack of statistics indicate groups of workers that are at risk, which may be difficult to plan other interventions beyond counselling.

4.6.2 Training

The participants indicated that training was one of the strategies used by the company as a support mechanism for its employees in order to reduce stress. There is a full department responsible for training and development of employees and is headed by the general manager. The department is responsible for both technical skills and soft skills which they deem necessary for their employees. The department is also responsible for bringing in persons from external agencies to present on topics that may be of interest to employees. So far presentations on stress management, financial life skills and issues on substances abuse are part of the soft skills that are imparted to their employees.

“We do train our drivers on stress management which help them to deal with difficult situations .We also have programs in place whereby we work with outside partners who come to do presentations for example on drug and substance abuse financial life skills and stress management... There is need also to empower employees so that we don’t have to wait until they have a problem. Peer education can help whereby bus drivers can discuss various topics during their break time. (Participant 15).

Another participant noted:

“The general manager is trying to come up with programs to deal with occupational stress. I must admit that what we have is not enough. We are not there yet.”
(Participant 2).

From the above statements it is clear that participants who were interviewed acknowledged the gap that exists as far as addressing occupational stress in their organisation. Although certain programmes are in place in their training curriculum, it can be argued that the general manager decides which topics are appropriate for the company’s employees. The most significant limitation of such a model of intervention is the profit-making aspect. During the interviews one participant mentioned that while it was a good idea to have someone specifically dealing with occupational stress, hiring a full-time person was not an option.

“It is a good thing to have services of an occupational social worker. Contracting from outside will be a better option because the utilisation of services might not be cost effective”. (Participant 13)

Du Plessis (1990) also noted that social workers working within the management model have to dwell on the cost effectiveness of services because of the profit motive of companies. However, it is debatable that the company could not be aware of the losses it is making through occupational stress since there are no statistics to this effect let alone someone within the hierarchy who is responsible for assessing the impact of occupational stress within the company. Du Plessis (1990) suggested that educative and training functions are important to supervisors who are regarded as key people in identifying troubled employees. In addition, Du Plessis (1990) argued that deteriorating job performance is an indicator used to identify personal problems. This means that an analysis of cases of employees who were assisted to deal with occupational stress in a certain period may help to develop relevant training interventions which may even save the company from unnecessary absenteeism or turnover.

4.6.3 Meetings

Weekly staff meetings are another strategy which was used by the organisation to allow employees to vent their problems. One participant indicated that meetings allowed management the opportunity to have first-hand information from the drivers. All female and male drivers attend the meeting. Management discovered women bus drivers could have different needs from

their male counterparts. Therefore, a forum for women was suggested and it was going to be facilitated by one of the senior woman drivers.

One participant noted reported:

“Our operations manager is the one who assist us with our problems because we hold meetings with her and she listens to us. She allows us to say out our minds. There have been some significant changes regarding work issues ever since she joined the organisation. I talk my mind, that’s why I am a target, some supervisors say I am a bad influence to other women bus drivers” (Participant 7).

Another participant said:

“Usually women bus drivers complain about being given tough duties by their supervisors and unequal treatment and refusal by their dispatchers to approve leave days among other things. In this regard I hold meetings with my assistants and call them to order ...There is need for a proper wellness program, although I did psychology in my studies I feel that it is not enough. The other issue is that operations managers at other depots may not have the same background. I have a case of a woman bus driver who is grieving and her culture requires that she wear black clothes to work. If for example we had a social worker they would provide the necessary support. Not that I am shifting a responsibility but someone more qualified would deal with the issue in a more appropriate way” (Participant 2).

From the above statements, management seem to use meetings as a way of encouraging open communication. According to Masters and Wallace (2011), meetings encourage discussions and yield feedback that helps in decision-making. A closer look at this statement indicates that meetings are mainly used for operational purposes. Although they are an important part of the communication network in the workplace, it can be a threatening environment for some individuals to express very private issues which are stressing them. One participant acknowledged the gap and indicated that a more qualified person might deal with employee problems in a more appropriate way. For example, occupational social workers are registered with the Council and are guided by the ethical principles of social work. Hugman and Smith (2001) noted that ethics in social work concern the way in which the occupation is practised, organised, managed and planned. To this end, it can be speculated that social workers would

evaluate the limitations of using meetings as another strategy to deal with occupational stress. One participant indicated that she has become a victim because of her ability to express herself. Her well-being could be threatened because of the lack of confidentiality in dealing with employee problems. Hugman and Smith (2001) argue that confidentiality is the system of rules and norms applied to information given by clients to social workers and it is expected that social workers will not divulge this information to others except in certain specified circumstances.

4.7 Summary

From the presentation and discussion of findings one can argue that for the participants in the study, bus driving was a strenuous occupation and women bus drivers are faced with numerous occupational stressors. One can also argue that women bus driver's reactions to stress cannot be detached from the environment in which they operate. Therefore, the findings of this study clearly highlight how the Person In Environment PIE theory which is the theoretical framework guiding this study, the emphasises the importance of understanding individuals and their individual behaviour in light of the environmental contexts in which they exist. Greene (2017) asserts that the PIE perspective is based on the belief that the profession's basic mission requires a dual focus on the person and the environment.

The occupational stressors faced by the women bus drivers who were interviewed, include sexual harassment, dealing with aggressive passengers, some cultural practices which do not favour working women, balancing work with family life, health problems, working hours, interaction with other road users and accidents. These stressors can be grouped into physical and psychological stressors. The findings also revealed that apart from the limited services offered by the organisation to reduce occupational stress, these women bus drivers had developed their own coping mechanisms in order to survive stressful situations.

The findings also provided insight into the interventions that are used by the organisation and their limitations in dealing with occupational stress. It emerged that the programmes that are in place are not sufficient to deal with occupational stress and its effects in the workplace. In exploring the different methods used by the organisation to deal with occupational stress, the study revealed that some employees were not even aware that the organisation could help them to deal with stress. The occupational stressors faced by women bus drivers seem not to be documented thereby making it difficult for the organisation to establish which employees are at

risk and the number of employees using the available services, thereby, making it difficult for the company to measure the negative impact of occupational stress on the organisation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the research report draws conclusions based on the research findings. The purpose of this study was to explore the occupational stressors among women bus drivers. The findings of this study demonstrated that the women bus drivers who were interviewed, experienced unique occupational stressors that need to be addressed as they may hinder their ability to function optimally in a male- dominated environment. Therefore, in light of the evidence presented in this study key recommendations are made. It is hoped that these recommendations will contribute to the body of knowledge as well as future research in the field of occupational stress.

5.2 Summary of main findings

5.2.1 Women bus drivers' understandings of occupational stress

The first objective was to explore women bus drivers' understandings of occupational stress. Consequently, the participants were asked at the beginning of the research interview what they understood about work stress. The researcher simplified the term occupational stress and all the participants demonstrated an understanding of the concept of occupational stress. They were able to mention different stressors that they come across in the workplace and different coping strategies they use when stressed. According to Jackson (2013), literature has not come up with a single and precise definition of stress. Beehr (2014) argues that most definitions used by researchers depend upon the interpretation of each individual. However, despite the different perspectives on the definition of occupational stress it is believed that occupational stress focuses on three elements, namely, "the sources of stress, the consequences for the individual and the organisation and the individual's difference in personality and behaviour" (MacLachlan, 2017, p.106).

5.2.2 Occupational stressors experienced by women bus drivers

There were numerous occupational stressors that emerged from the findings in so far as women bus driving is concerned. The literature review presented some of the occupational stressors contributing to occupational stress for bus drivers. However, it was discovered during this research that participants experienced different occupational stressors although some of the sources of occupational stress were common to all of them, such as dealing with aggressive passengers, interaction with road users and balancing work with family life. Sexual harassment did not feature to a great extent among the participants. This could be attributed to some stereotypes associated with reporting sexual harassment in the workplace. According to Anderson and Taylor (2008) although women in male dominated workplaces are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment, the true extent of sexual harassment is difficult to measure as it remains underreported. Other stressors that emerged during the study include health problems and stressors that involve cultural practices. Very few participants reported that they had been involved in road accidents. According to Elvik, Høy, Vaa and Sørensen (2009), women are usually considered to be more careful drivers as compared to men and are charged for traffic offences less often than men.

5.2.3 Sexual harassment

One participant was brave enough to share her experiences of sexual harassment. She provided an account of how she endured sexual harassment in the workplace and the impact it had on her emotional health. She highlighted how her working relationship with supervisors was strained as she was viewed as a bad influence by other senior personnel in the workplace. The participant explained that despite reporting the case of sexual harassment nothing much was done to help her. Instead the harassment continued. This study revealed that the participant who reported the sexual harassment by her supervisor became a target of secondary victimisation and was seen as a bad influence to other women which became a source of further distress for her. According to Boland (2005), sexual harassment may exert emotional effects such as loss of self-esteem or self-confidence, economic and physical effects on the victim.

5.2.4 *Dealing with aggressive passengers*

Another notable stressor that all the participants experienced was dealing with aggressive passengers. In light of the evidence presented by participants, it emerged that the majority of perpetrators of verbal abuse were women passengers. Participants highlighted how they are caught in an awkward situation as they have to exercise customer care and adhere to work policies which advocate that the customer is always right. However, the study revealed that some women drivers ended up losing their tempers and engaged into verbal altercations with passengers which might lead to them facing disciplinary action. It is clear from the findings that women bus drivers who were interviewed were victims of verbal abuse inflicted by clients and despite being victims the women drivers preferred to keep quiet instead of exchanging verbal altercations with the passengers. As employees, they are bound by the workplace policy which stipulates that a passenger is always right while at the same time such verbal violence can threaten their emotional health. Some of the damaging psychological impacts reported by participants who were victims of verbal aggression included anger, stress, being upset and feeling demeaned.

5.2.5 *Cultural practices as a stressor for women bus drivers*

The findings of this research established that women bus drivers in the study were not immune to some cultural practices that may be in conflict with their work values. Such practices become a source of stress as women are expected to uphold certain cultural practices in which failure to adhere may lead to being isolated by their families and community at large. Manala (2015) noted that the pain caused to African widows through traditional widowhood rites outweighed the benefits. A participant indicated that her husband passed away and she had to adhere to cultural practices of the Swazi culture in which she was required to wear a black dress during the period the mourning. It is important to note that a number of sanctions placed on widows may make it difficult for women who have to work in occupations such as bus driving. For example, the widow is traditionally bound to be at her home before sunset. This was impossible for the participant as her shift ended at 19:00 hours daily. In addition, she has to wash the only dress that she had and wait for it to dry. This shows how the mourning period for working women can be a very stressful time as she has to deal with the loss of her husband while at the same time having to adhere to certain cultural practices which can be in conflict with the working environment.

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 allows full time workers to take three days of paid family responsibility leave during each annual leave cycle. Eyetsemitan (2017) observed that the standard bereavement leave only allows employees time to express their immediate grief and attend to funeral arrangements but it may not give employees enough time to deal with their grief in the long term. However, the company seemed to be flexible and willing to accommodate women who are bereaved by allowing them to observe their culture and wear black clothes during the mourning period.

5.2.6 *Balancing work with family life*

One of the stressors that emerged from the study was maintaining a healthy balance between work and family responsibilities. The majority of the participants had children who were still young and needed their attention. One participant narrated how her husband failed to tolerate her work schedule and ended up divorcing her as a result of her duties as a woman bus driver. Women bus drivers were left in a dilemma as they had to abide by the terms and conditions of their employment. In some cases relationships had broken down as a result of failing to balance work and family time. However, it emerged during the study that not all partners were uncomfortable with their wives' working hours. These participants indicated that their partners were supportive and were prepared to carry some duties such as cooking for the family, which lessened the burden of women bus drivers who in most instances had to arrive home in the evening.

5.2.7 *Health problems*

The study indicated that women bus drivers who were interviewed experienced health problems due to their occupation. Participants complained of back pains as well as chest problems as a result of dust inhalation. However, from the findings, the main stress factor that achieved consensus amongst the women bus drivers were health problems linked to cabin ergonomics. According to Carayon (2016), ergonomics is the science that matches the capabilities of people with the work they perform. The primary interest is an understanding of how the design of work affects people's safety, health, performance and productivity. Furthermore, of specific interest is the prevention of muscular-skeletal injuries produced by working. This study revealed that women bus drivers experienced the problem of swollen feet as a result of hot air coming from

the bus. This emerged as a major work-related health problem for women bus drivers. Although, they have received treatment from the clinic, the problem seems to persist and they worry that this could have a long-term effects on their health.

5.2.8 *Working hours*

Another stressor which emerged during this study was caused by the shift work system which is not friendly to the needs of women bus drivers who are also carers in their families. Although men and women bus drivers perform the same duties, women bus driver do not work night shifts which can be an advantage to women bus drivers as women are considered to be vulnerable. In this context of security, Rogers (as cited in Letherby & Reynolds, 2016) suggested that women drivers should not do night shifts because of the antisocial behaviour that does happen during this time. However, the study revealed that not all participants were dissatisfied with their working hours as some participants indicated that they used their break-time to engage in other activities.

5.2.9 *Interaction with other road users*

Interaction with other road users emerged as another stressor that women face in their daily work as bus drivers. Participants reported that lack of consideration from other road users was responsible for the stress they experienced. Such stress was reported to emanate from ensuring that the passengers were safe in the face of the unpredictable behaviour of other motorists, specifically male truck drivers and taxi drivers who usually confused them on the road. Therefore, women bus driver experienced the stress of dealing with societal patriarchal values which reflected in male road users undermining women bus drivers instead of giving them the necessary support that they deserve on the roads. This practice of dealing with unpredictable motorists seemed to present a great deal of stress and frustration to women bus drivers who needed to maintain intense concentration on the road. These results is aligned with previous research which argues that drivers' obligation to provide safety to the passengers may put them under undue pressure to perform as they may feel that their performance is constantly monitored by passengers (Biggs, Dingsdag & Stenson, 2009, p. 9).

5.2.10 Road Accidents

It is worth noting that another stressor that emerged during this study was caused by exposure to road accidents. Women bus drivers who were interviewed indicated that they often witness accidents on the road. Only one participant mentioned that she was directly involved in a road accident which left her traumatised. Enhrlich et al. (as cited in Hutchison, 2011) define trauma as an emotional shock producing a lasting effect on an individual. From the findings it is clear that bus drivers were at high risk of experiencing trauma. According to Vermetten, Germain and Neylans (2018), men and women appear to perceive, respond and cope with trauma differently. Therefore, a study of differences between genders would provide valuable information in how to better tailor treatment for men and women bus drivers who have been exposed to traumatic incidents. However, literature concurs that victims exposed to a traumatic incidents, need professional attention in order to ease the trauma inflicted by the incident. Hutchison (2011) argues that Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) is used to help individuals exposed to traumatic incidents to address stress within 72 hours. Similarly, Leonhardt and Vogt (2016) indicated that CISD is an acute crisis intervention to help overcome stress reactions. However, this study found that women bus drivers at some point experienced or witnessed traumatic incidents and whatever the case may be they were psychologically affected and not much attention was paid to reducing the impact of trauma.

5.3 Strategies used by women bus drivers to cope with occupational stress

One of the objectives of this study was to gather information on how women bus drivers cope with occupational stress. It emerged that the participants used different mechanisms to cope with occupational stress. The strategies that were mostly adopted by the women bus drivers who were interviewed included using the silence technique, seeking professional help, consulting shop stewards, and sharing their stress with colleagues.

5.3.1 Cognitive strategies

The findings revealed that some participants preferred to employ a cognitive approach in dealing with their stress. Participants mentioned that they endeavoured to keep quiet and let the stress subside on its own, especially in cases where the stress was being caused by passengers. They indicated that sometimes some passengers were not rational and when one tried to explain

something to them; it would end up in an argument. However, involving themselves in arguments with passengers did not seem to be a good approach as in some cases passengers would end up lodging a complaint about them to their supervisors. Therefore, being silent worked for them as they would avoid further problems such as attending a disciplinary hearing. In this way their emotions were suppressed and they had to pretend to be fine which may later cause physical or psychological stress. Vasudevan, Subasree, Ravindranath and Joseph (2015) suggested that it is helpful for the organisations and individuals to look at the approach they are using to cope with stress as lack of a coping strategy may lead to lack of productivity.

5.3.2 Professional help

Counselling is another support mechanism that is used by women bus drivers. However, counselling is provided by the chaplain who is employed by the company to provide such services. From the findings, participants who lost their loved ones indicated that they had used the services of the chaplain. The role of the chaplain seemed to be unclear as some participants knew about his presence but were not very clear about his duties and whether he was responsible for assisting them with stress-related problems. According to Karimi and Alipour (2011), job stress can be prevented or controlled effectively by integrating primary, secondary and tertiary interventions.

5.3.3 Use of shop stewards

The findings also revealed that those participants who were members of trade unions depended on shop stewards to assist with resolving their problems. Problems that were reported to the shop stewards included those related to strained relationships with supervisors or colleagues, as well as problems with passengers. While the role of shop stewards seemed to be widely acknowledged by the participants who were interviewed, it was evident that shop stewards were not able to deal comprehensively with occupational stress. Their intervention was mainly related to employee grievances or issues that warranted disciplinary hearings. Therefore, due to the lack of a section within the company that exclusively focused on employee well-being the employees were left with no other choice but to use any available means to express their problems in an effort to reduce occupational stress. Internationally, trade unions have started working out innovative approaches in order to engage their members with stress-related issues. According to

the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Labour education report, in the United Kingdom the trade unions are pushing for legislation to address issues of work related stress. Similarly, in the Netherlands the Dutch Trade Union Confederation has developed an instrument called the stress quick scan which enables unions to identify the causes of stress and put the issue on the company agenda. In Japan, the Japanese Electrical Electronic and Information Union consults with union members and their families over the toll-free dial on matters of mental health. In Sweden, the Swedish Union of Clerical and Technical Employees Industry has produced a CD Rom which describes the balance that must be struck between work, leisure and rest including the repercussions if the proper balance is absent (Mureau, 2002, pp. 80-81).

5.3.4 *Colleague Support*

It was apparent from the research findings that peer sharing seemed to be a popular method used by women bus drivers in the study to cope with their daily stress. Participants indicated that the stressful situations that they found themselves in on a daily basis could leave them vulnerable if they kept such stressors to themselves. Therefore, in order to cope in such situations, women bus drivers indicated that sharing of their experiences and thoughts with colleagues was another coping mechanism that they use to make them feel better. Viedebeck (2006) noted that persons who are supported emotionally and functionally have been found to be healthier than those who are not supported. However, the use of this method is just one way of coping with occupational stress which does not apply to everyone experiencing stress since one individual indicated that she did not feel safe sharing her experiences with co-workers, especially if the issues were personal and had trust concerns. According to Fiske, Gilbert and Lindzey (2010), sometimes support providers did not give adequate advice, or fail to provide concrete assistance, sometimes provide inappropriate or too little emotional support thereby reducing the effectiveness of the effort.

5.4 The organisation's strategies to minimise the impact of occupational stress among women bus drivers

One of the objectives of the study was to explore the organisation's support mechanisms in place to minimise the impact of occupational stress among women bus drivers. This objective was critical to the study as it would highlight methods implemented by management in order

minimise occupational stress in the workplace. Participants in management were interviewed and their responses indicated that the organisation offered training and counselling, and held weekly meetings in which employees could share experiences that could threaten their well-being.

5.4.1 Counselling

Counselling is another support mechanism that is available to employees who are experiencing occupational stress. According to Navare (2008), counselling is very specialised and a profession that can be an effective and preventative management strategy for organisations to help employees better manage stress, personal issues or work-related problems. In a similar vein, Roberts and Moore (2010) noted that providing counselling for employees can also be an expression of the employer's concern for the welfare of the workplace and working in this setting would require skills and accreditation. However, the company has a full-time chaplain who provides counselling to its employees. According to one of the participants, the chaplain has training in basic counselling skills. They also mentioned that the clinic employs occupational nurses and an occupational doctor who are able to assess stress and if it is extreme, employees are referred to outside agents such as psychologists. Coles (2003) argues that in the context of workplace counselling, the service is publicised widely through the various worksites. The findings revealed that the company acknowledges the limitation of using a chaplain in dealing with issues of occupational stress. To this end the organisation also admitted that they need to expand their programmes beyond counselling and also emphasised the use of a more qualified person who will deal with occupational stress in the organisation.

5.4.2 Training

Training is another strategy that is used by the company as a support mechanism for its employees in order to reduce stress. According to Burke (2017), priority should be given to training programmes geared towards identifying and reducing sources of stress that directly increase emotional exhaustion. There is a full department responsible for training and development of employees and is headed by the general manager. This department is responsible for both technical skills and soft skills which they deem necessary for their employees. Huppert and Cooper (2014) argue that skills training includes imparting the knowledge about stress through lectures, discussions and reading courses. However, it was not clear how the general manager assessed the needs of the women bus drivers in order to come up with interventions that

are tailor-made for this specific vulnerable group. Furthermore, the unavailability of a person in the company who deals exclusively with issues of occupational stress in the company also meant that there are no statistics available on employees who were assisted in dealing with occupational stress. Therefore, the training interventions that are being used by the company thus far may not adequately reduce occupational stress of those employees who are at risk.

5.4.3 Meetings

The weekly staff meeting was another strategy that was used by the organisation to allow employees to vent their problems. Women and male drivers attend the meeting. However, the current management discovered that women bus drivers could have different needs from their male counterparts. Therefore, a forum for women was suggested and it was going to be facilitated by one of the senior woman drivers. Although management preferred meetings as a way of encouraging open communication, a closer look at the research findings indicated that meetings were mainly used for operational purposes. In addition, in so far as they are an important part of the communication network in the workplace, it can be a threatening environment for some individuals to express very private issues that are causing them to feel stressed. Scott (2010) mentioned that one of the most vital things that can be achieved during a meeting is to create a safe and open environment of trust so that employees can feel safe to engage in conversations.

5.4. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the occupational stressors experienced by women bus driver, their coping mechanisms to manage stress and the mechanisms that are provided by the company to mitigate occupational stress in the workplace. The research findings revealed that women bus drivers were faced with numerous occupational stressors and these included sexual harassment, dealing with aggressive passengers, some cultural practices which do not favour working women, balancing work with family responsibilities, health problems, working hours, interaction with other road users, and accidents. These stressors can be grouped into physical and psychological stressors. The findings also revealed that apart from minimal services offered by the organisation to reduce occupational stress, women bus drivers who were interviewed had developed their own coping mechanisms in order to survive stressful situations.

The outcomes of this study also provided insight into the interventions that are used by the organisation and their limitations in dealing with occupational stress. It emerged that the organisation has programmes in place. However, it appears that the interventions by the organisation were not sufficient to deal with occupational stress and its effects in the workplace, thereby leaving a gap in what is offered by the organisation and what is subjectively needed in order to deal with occupational stress. It was also interesting to note that the study was a wake-up call to the managers of the company who acknowledged the gap that existed in dealing with occupational stress in the company.

5.5 Recommendations

The study highlighted some of the stressors experienced in the transport industry with specific reference to women bus drivers. The findings revealed that bus driving is a stressful occupation and although participants mentioned different types of stress experienced in this occupation, the study revealed that stress was not experienced uniformly by women bus drivers but varied from one individual to the next. The study also revealed that minimal support was being offered to the women bus drivers by the company to mitigate their occupational stress. During the study, management acknowledged that there was more they could do as a company to support employees to deal with occupational stress. Therefore, the company has a potential to contribute towards change efforts in addressing transformation in an industry that is male-dominated and address issues of occupational stress in the workplace. Below are key recommendations that can be taken into consideration by the company in dealing with occupational stress in the workplace.

5.5.1 Recommendations to the company

- Since positive coping mechanism are critical to managing occupational stress, it would be beneficial for the company to establish a professional support system which is informed by occupational stress models and managed by a qualified person with relevant clinical skills in order to deal with employee stress and facilitate change in this regard.

- A working committee comprise relevant stakeholders within the company should be established as this strategy is likely to provide a platform for a participatory approach to occupational stress management.
- The company needs to commit itself to providing stress management skills to bus drivers which are relevant and informed by the needs of its employees.
- Colleagues were cited as the most effective source of support for women bus drivers in their efforts to deal with occupational stress. The company can therefore expand their strategies to include the provision of team building events.
- Although the company has counselling as a curative mechanism, the findings revealed that the interventions were not being executed by people who are experts in dealing with occupational stress. Furthermore, the mechanisms did not seem to be adequate to mitigate occupational stress in the workplace. Therefore, the company could move beyond this method of intervention and integrate occupational stress interventions in an effort to reduce occupational stress within the company as suggested by occupational work models that emphasise interventions at the micro, meso and macro levels.
- The company management needs to develop an understanding and appreciation of how gender may influence occupational stress of women bus drivers and develop new ideas on dealing with it. The use of surveys may help the company to make important decisions in dealing with impact of occupational stress among female bus drivers.
- Furthermore, it is recommended that the company develop a tool to monitor and evaluate the methods used to mitigate occupational stress. The proper evaluation of programmes is likely to provide valued insights into the success of the overall initiatives and generate ideas for future activities.
- Educative and training of supervisors should be central as they are regarded as being key people in identifying and referring troubled employees for professional help.

5.5.2 *Suggestions for future research*

In order to enable the company to improve performance by reducing occupational stress, the following recommendations are made:

- Further studies can be conducted to evaluate the actual impact of occupational stress on the transport industry given the substantial economic cost of occupational stress. This can help companies to develop policies that will help to bring about transformation in the transport industry since this is a relatively new profession for women.

- The study revealed the stressors experienced by women bus drivers and the support mechanisms provided by the company. Exploring the management's understanding of occupational stress and its impact on the workforce can be useful to the study of occupational stress in the transport industry especially in the African context.

5.6 Concluding comments

In conclusion, the different methods used by the organisation to deal with occupational stress were explored. This study revealed that some employees were unaware of the existing interventions used by the organisation to help them deal with stress. The occupational stressors faced by women bus drivers seem not to be documented thereby making it difficult for the organisation to establish which employees are at risk and the number of employees using the available services. The unavailability of statistics and a professional person to deal exclusively with stress in the workplace makes it difficult for the company to measure how much the company could be losing through occupational stress. Therefore, the findings of this study illustrate a need for the development of internal policy reforms towards supporting employees in dealing with occupational stress.

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OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AMONG WOMEN BUS DRIVERS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WOMEN BUS DRIVERS

Background Information on Choice of Bus Driving as an Occupation

- *Tell me about your duties and responsibilities?*
- *What made you choose to become a bus driver?*
- *What do you like most about your job?*
- *What do you like least about your job?*
- *What is your impression of a good driver?*
- *Do you think women drivers are good drivers as compared to men?*

Bus driving and Occupational Stress

- *What do you understand about the term 'occupational stress'?*
- *What aspects of your work do you find most stressful?*
- *Do you sometimes carry your work-related problems home? If so, please describe.*
- *Do you sometimes carry your problems from home to work? If so, give an example.*
- *Do you sometimes get upset to an extent that you can't work?*
- *Give me an example of a time when you were overwhelmed by emotions?*
- *What are some of the things that you find difficult to do?*
- *Does your work interfere with your personal life? If yes, please give examples.*
- *Does your work affect your health? If so, in what way?*
- *How do you handle pressure such as pressure to keep to arrival and departure times?*

Challenges Faced by women bus drivers in their everyday work

- *What sort of challenges do you experience in working in the transport industry?*
- *Are there any challenges related to your working hours?*

- *Are there any challenges related to the distances you travel?*
- *Generally speaking, how would you describe your relationship with supervisors?*
- *What sort of challenges do you experience in relation to supervisors?*
- *How is your relationship with management?*
- *What sort of challenges do you experience in relation to management?*
- *Tell me about any stressors you experience while driving passengers?*
- *How do passengers generally react to having a woman bus driver?*
- *Generally speaking, how is your working relationship with you colleagues?*
- *As a woman bus driver, how are you generally treated by male colleagues?*
- *What sort of challenges do you experience in working in the transport industry?*

The Organisation's Support for Employees psychosocial Well-Being

- *What kind of response does management show when dealing with employee concerns?*
- *Does the organisation have any programmes in place to help employees to deal with stress in the workplace? If so, please describe.*
- *Is there anything else you think the organisation should do in order to help employees exposed to stress?*

Coping Strategies of Women Bus Drivers in Dealing with Occupational Stress

- *How do you cope with occupational stressors?*
- *How do you cope with stressors that happen outside work?*
- *Is there anything you would like to share to help us understand the stressors experienced by women bus drivers?*

Thank you for your participation!!

OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AMONG WOMEN BUS DRIVERS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR WOMEN BUS DRIVERS

Good day,

My name is AnanciataMaswikeni and I am a postgraduate student registered for the degree MA in Occupational Social work at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research on the occupational stressors among bus drivers in the public transport sector in Mpumalanga's Mbombela District. It is hoped that this information may help Occupational Social Workers to understand the occupational stressors of female bus drivers as well as help management to come up with policies that may enhance the well-being of their employees in the public transport sector.

I therefore 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, I shall arrange an interview with you at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you may feel uncomfortable with answering. All collected data and your identity will be kept confidential.

With your permission, the interview will be tape recorded. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for five years if no publications 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. Should you feel distressed as a result of any of the questions asked, telephone or face-to-face counselling will be made available to you by Lifeline Nelspruit at no cost. Lifeline Nelspruit contact details are as follows; 8 Hope street, Nelpruit. Telephone 013 755 3606.

Please contact me on 073 093 8853 / amasvikeni@yahoo.com or my supervisor, Dr. Francine Masson on Office Number 011 717 4480/ francine.masson@wits.ac.za if you have any questions regarding the study. Should you wish to receive a feedback on the results of the study; a summary of the results will be made available on request.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study.

Yours sincerely

AnanciataMaswikeni

OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AMONG WOMEN BUS DRIVERS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MANAGERS

Background information on managers' role

- *Tell me about your duties and responsibilities?*

Management's understanding of occupational stress

- *What do you understand about the term 'work stress'?*
- *What are your views regarding stress amongst women bus drivers in your organisation?*
- *How do you assess stress in your workplace?*
- *What do you think are the main contributors of stress amongst your employees?*
- *What are the effects of stress on performance of women bus drivers?*
- *Do you think the work environment can create stress for women bus drivers?*

Challenges faced by management in dealing with stress

- *What kind of problems do you deal with on a daily basis?*
- *What sort of challenges do you experience in dealing with stress in your organisation?*
- *Generally speaking, how would you describe your relationship with your subordinates?*
- *What sort of challenges do you experience in relation to your subordinates?*
- *Is there participation of employees in the decision-making process of the company?*

The organisation's support for employees' psychosocial well-being

- *How do you deal with employee concerns?*
- *Do women bus drivers perform the same duties as their male counterparts?*
- *What duties do you think cause stress among women bus driver?*
- *Does the organisation have any programmes in place to help employees to deal with stress in the workplace? If so, please describe.*
- *Do you have an organisational culture and policies in place to promote these actions?*

- *Is there an in-house or external agency that helps employees to manage their stress?*
- *What is your opinion regarding occupational social work in your organisation?*
- *Is there anything else you think the organisation should do in order to help employees exposed to stress?*
- *Is there anything you would like to add to help us understand the support that you give to stressed women bus drivers?*

Thank you for your participation!!

OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS OF WOMEN BUS DRIVERS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR MANAGERS

Good day,

My name is Ananciata Maswikeni and I am a postgraduate student registered for the degree MA in Occupational Social work at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research on the occupational stressors among women bus drivers in the public transport sector in Mpumalanga's Mbombela District. It is hoped that this information may help Occupational Social Workers to understand the occupational stressors of female bus drivers as well as help management to come up with policies that may enhance the well-being of their employees in the public transport sector. As part of this study, management's opinion is also important.

I therefore 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, I shall arrange an interview with you at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you are uncomfortable in answering. All collected data and your identity will be kept confidential.

With your permission, the interview will be tape recorded. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for five years if no publications 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. Should you feel distressed as a result of any of the questions asked, telephone or face-to-face counselling will be made available to you by Lifeline Nelspruit at no cost. Lifeline Nelspruit contact details are as follows; 8 Hope street, Nelpruit. Telephone 013 755 3606.

Please contact me on 073 093 8853 / amasvikeni@yahoo.com or my supervisor, Dr Francine Masson on Office Number 011 717 4480/ francine.masson@wits.ac.za if you have any questions regarding the study. Should you wish to receive a feedback on the results of the study, summary of the results will be made available on request.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study

Yours sincerely

Ananciata Maswikeni

OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AMONG WOMEN BUS DRIVERS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

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 confidential.

Name of Participant.....

Date.....

Signature.....

**OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AMONG WOMEN BUS DRIVERS IN THE PUBLIC
TRANSPORT SECTOR**

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-TAPING OF THE INTERVIEW

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 five years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Name :.....

Date:.....

Signature:.....



Development

Reg. No. 2000/18878/07

2 Petroleum Street PO Box 2527 NELSPRUIT 1200
Tel (013) 752-4893 / -4762 / -4841
Fax (013) 752-4871

26 April 2016

Ananciata Maswikeni

University of the Witwatersrand

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT BUSCOR
(PTY) LTD**

Your request dated 22 March 2016 has been approved. This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. You are expected to uphold academic research ethics;
2. The rights of the people to be involved in the study must be respected;
3. Company confidentiality must not be compromised;
4. Prior arrangements must be made before visiting the company for the study;
5. Buscor should be afforded the privilege of the study report.

We wish you well in your studies.

Regards.

Skhumbuzo Nkuna

General Manager



SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)



DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SOCIAL WORK) CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: SW1/16/03/01

PROJECT TITLE: Occupational stressors among female bus drivers in the public transport sector

RESEARCHER/S: Maswikeni Ananaciata (1076594)

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT: Social Work

DATE CONSIDERED: 30/03/2016

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE: APPROVED

EXPIRY DATE: 30/03/2018

DATE: 22 July 2016

CHAIRPERSON: Francine Masson

Cc: Supervisor: Mrs Francine Masson

DECLARATION OF RESEARCHER(S)

To be completed in **DUPLICATE** and **ONE COPY** returned to the Administrative Assistant, Room 8, Department of Social Work, Umthombo Building Basement.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorised 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. **For Masters and PhD an annual progress report is required.**



SIGNATURE



DATE

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

