

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Around the globe, occupational stress is considered a growing phenomenon that has negative financial implications not only to workers but also companies (Hart & Cooper, 2001). Occupational stress has become a great concern and given the value of work and the amount of time spent at work, it is increasingly becoming more inevitable (Kendall, Murphy, O'Neill & Bursnall, 2000). Kendall et al (2000) posit that the increasing demand for speed, efficiency and competition in the work spaces contributes to the development of occupational stress. On an individual level, unpleasant emotional state such as anger, anxiety and frustration have been associated with occupational stress as result of the work done (Hart & Cooper, 2001). Furthermore, stress is associated with events that are traumatic and life threatening. Correctional services is counted amongst other professions that experiences such events in the work setting along with police, medical and paramedical professions (Kendall et al, 2000). Furthermore, on an individual level, occupational stress has extreme consequences such as a range of health, mental health and behavioural problems (Mambi, 2005).

In the quest of resolving it employees personal and labour problems, the Department of correctional service has put in structures such as Employee Wellness/Assistance Programmes to assist it workers to cope with Occupational stress. The Department also has recreation and sporting activities to help it employees to cope with Occupational stress (Bhoodram, 2010).

It is noted that preventative measures should be in place to reduce correctional officers vulnerability to occupational stress (Mambi, 2005) and these measures may include understanding the type of conditions and contexts that trigger their stress and determining the psychological as well as physical strengths and weaknesses of individuals to be in a better position to understand one's own vulnerabilities (Mambi, 2005). In South Africa there has been a growth in the provision of employee wellness services as organisations are becoming more aware of issues related to employee wellness and wellbeing (Sieberhagen, Pienaar & Els, 2011).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Correctional officers' experiences of occupational stress are a huge concern because it poses safety concerns in the officers' ability to discharge their duties effectively (McLaurine, 2008). For a long time prisons have been dismissed as institutions whose practices do not need to be questioned, and what happens within their boundaries should not be brought to the attention of the public (Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006). For correctional officers, working in prisons encompasses being challenged mentally and physically, and one's integrity tested regularly (Micieli, 2008).

The violent nature of prisons, accompanied by confrontation and hostility that many prisoners display towards correctional officers has a negative impact on correctional officers' work and personal lives (Micieli, 2008). Wicks (1980, p.1) as cited in Schaufeli and Peeters (2000, p. 22) describes the correctional officers' career path as follows: "Watching their entrance into the prison can be quite an experience. The hopes on their faces, the positive anxiety of their motivated gait - at first, it's all there. Then slowly and almost methodically, the smiles wane, the expectations atrophy, and the desires to perform in a positive fashion succumb to escapist fantasy and verbally acknowledged scepticism".

Correctional officers face numerous challenges in their work setting. In particular, many tend to feel that they are not appreciated as an occupational group (Penal Reform International, 2013). Management is perceived as lacking an understanding of the nature of work demands experienced by correctional officers and the dangers involved in their work (Penal Reform International, 2013). It is noted that the way in which correctional officers are treated influences their work motivation and this invariably has an impact on the way they treat prisoners (Penal Reform International, 2013). Lack of support from supervisors and peers as well as lack of preparation for the work place and perceived dangers is likely to contribute to correctional officer's occupational stress (McLaurine, 2008).

Within the South African context, the Department of Correctional Services has transformed drastically over the past years and has impacted positively in employee's well-being. These changes were brought about by the South Africa's political transition from the apartheid era to a democratic state when the department had to be demilitarised (Mohoje, 2006). This change

required the department to shift from a militarised structure to a one that is civilian in nature and facilitating the rehabilitation of offenders (Mohoje, 2006). The transformation however brought with it other challenges such as overcrowding, and this escalated just after 1997 when amnesties were granted between 1990 to 1994 (Muntingh, 2012). In South Africa, there is evidence of extreme overcrowding in this prisons and this has been linked to heightened violence levels (Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006). According to Gibbons and Katzenback (2006), overcrowding limits prisoners' productivity a level, resulting in correctional officers feeling hopeless invariably this leads to stress. Therefore, overcrowding in prisons has also been identified as a workplace stressor for correctional officers and this often compels correctional officers to use forceful measures to control the violence (Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006), which can have a negative impact on the emotional and psychological health of correctional officers. The violent prison conditions in the country are believed to be influenced by the political fluctuations that have occurred since 1990.

South African prisons are branded with a system of gangs. Although gangs are found in many prison settings, in South Africa prison gangs are distinctive in nature (Micieli, 2008). Micieli (2008) characterises the prison gangs' subculture as being distrusting in nature, one where prison rules are not followed. According to the Human Rights Watch (1994), there are three identified prison gangs in South Africa, namely, the 26s, 27s and the 28s. . These gangs have a command structure similar to that in the military, due to the different ranks, with each having precise hierarchical duties and a disciplinary code which is strictly maintained (Human Rights Watch, 1994). The correctional officers are expected to guard the violent cultures of these gangs, which tends to pose as a stressor for some correctional officers (Micieli, 2008). Due to such stressors, many correctional officers are faced with serious health challenges, and their life span is considered to be shortened (Lambert, 2001 as cited in Micieli, 2008). Recently nine correctional officers were stabbed by offenders at the Drakenstein Correctional Centre on the 22nd of January 2015; with five of the officers being severely injured (Lobelo, 2015). Due to the nature of the attack, it is suspected that the attack was a gang ritual (Lobelo, 2015). This is a clear demonstration of the hostility present in correctional settings. Furthermore, on the 26th of December 2016 at St Albans Prison in Nelson Mandela Bay, three offenders were killed and 26 were injured in an altercation between inmates and correctional officers, most of the injured were correctional officers who were rushed to hospital (Spies, 2016). Albans Prison is said to have a history of offenders attacking correctional officers. This particular incident started with

a offender allegedly stabbing a correctional officer during their breakfast session, this attack thereafter led to more attacks by offenders and correctional officers retaliated (Spies, 2016).

Another factor identified by Micieli (2008) as contributing to correctional officers' problems in the workplace is that of role confusion. Correctional officers often experience role conflicts relating to their work. This role conflict arises from trying to reconcile conflicting custodial duties. On the one hand, they need to ensure that security is guaranteed in the prison for purposes of limiting escapes and violence. On the other hand, they have treatment functions to execute which involve rehabilitating offenders (Pollock, 2006 as cited in Micieli, 2008). As a result of their occupational stress, many correctional officers present with reduced life satisfaction, inability to deal with traumatic events, heightened substance use, lack of positive social relationships and increased work-family conflict (Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato & Dewa, 2013).

For these foregoing reasons, the study aimed to explore correctional officers' experience of occupational stress, as well as the coping strategies they employ when dealing with occupational stress occurring due to the nature of their work. The study also considered the organisational services offered by the prison in assisting correctional officers to deal with occupational stress. It was hoped that by acquiring adequate understanding of the occupational stressors confronting correctional officers, correctional service management as well as policy developers will be in a better position to formulate strategies aimed at assisting correctional officers. Also, it was hoped that information gathered from this research study, will inform training needs for this occupational group. It is envisaged that such training will contribute positively to their job performance. This viewpoint is supported by Sanne, Mykletun, Dahl, Moen and Tell (2005) who emphasise that identification of the conditions that correctional officers work within, accompanied by appropriate interventions may have essential clinical as well as economic implications.

1.3 PRIMARY AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of the study was;

- To explore coping strategies employed by male correctional officers working at Leeuwkop prison when dealing with occupational stress.

The secondary objectives included

- To elicit information on correctional officers' understanding of occupational stress
- To explore correctional officers' perceptions of how occupational stress impacts on their professional and personal lives
- To discover the coping mechanisms correctional officers employ in dealing with occupational stress
- To understand services offered by the institution to assist correctional officers in dealing with occupational stress

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Job Demand-Control-Support model was used to inform the study. Karasek and Theorell's (1990) Job Demand Control Model is considered by many to be the most dominant occupational stress theory. The theory states that there are two fundamentals involved in the process of occupational stress, namely, employees' level of control over their work duties, and the demands of their job (Rehman, Khan, Jadoon & Khan, 2010). According to Tsutsumi, Kayaba, Theorell and Siegrist (2001) the Job-Demand-Control Model posits that when there are high demands in relation to work done and low control, it is likely that health problems will result. Interestingly, workers employed in 'high strain jobs' characterized by high demands but low control are likely to experience unpleasant psychological strain, including fatigue, uneasiness and depression (Sanne, Mykletun, Dahl, Moen & Tell, 2005).

Another element was subsequently added to the model and was termed the 'social support dimension'. This dimension gave birth to the Job Demand-Control-Support model (Sanne, Mykletun, Dahl, Moen & Tell, 2005). The JDSC model operates on three distinctive components, namely, "(psychological) demands, control (or decision latitude) and (social) support" (Sanne, Mykletun, Dahl, Moen and Tell, 2005, p. 463). Proponents of the model argue that when working, employees are faced with various circumstances and events which are often not given attention, and some of these events are considered to be a threat to a person's

physical or psychological well-being (Rehman, Khan, Jadoon & Khan, 2010). Occupational stressors lead to unpleasant emotional behaviour such as anger, nervousness and dissatisfaction. Individual control and social support are considered to play a mediating role between the employees and occupational stress arising thereafter (Rehman, Khan, Jadoon & Khan, 2010). Many employees use behavioural control tactics in order to cope with job demands, for example, finding ways of dealing with their own deficiencies or lack of work resources (Rehman, Khan, Jadoon & Khan, 2010).

Therefore by using this model, the researcher was able to explore the level of job control that correctional officers have when doing their jobs and assess whether the control they have over their work assists them in coping with their work demands. These factors were explored alongside the level of support they receive from their supervisors, managers or peers when doing their work and how this support impacts on their work productivity and job satisfaction.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

To explore the coping strategies used by male correctional officers from Leeuwkop prison when dealing with occupation, a qualitative approach was utilised. A case study design was used which allowed for greater exploration of the research question. Furthermore, the researcher chose a non-probability/convenience sample procedure to select 25 male correctional officers to participate in her study; participants should have worked as a correctional officer for over one year to be part of the study.

To collect data, in-depth interviews were conducted at Leeuwkop prison at their medium B and maximum facilities. Semi-structured interview schedules were used when interviewing participants which allowed for greater exploration of the research topic as it contained open-ended questions. The research schedule was initially pretested on two correctional officers who didn't form part of the actual study; this helped the researcher to ascertain whether the set questions will answer the research question.

Lastly, data gathered were analysed using thematic analysis, where the researcher used the objectives of the study as themes forming the discussion of the findings, she then transcribed the interviews in verbatim format and analysed the data thereafter.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter one discussed the background and rationale of the study and what it intends to achieve as well as the theoretical framework informing the study.

Chapter two provides the review of literature on the history of the South African correctional system, the correctional system in the Democratic South Africa, correctional officer’s tasks, models of occupational stress and factors contributing to correctional officer’s occupational stress as well as the coping strategies they use.

Chapter three discusses the research design and methodology used to carry out the study.

Chapter four discusses the findings of the study using the objectives of the study and links the findings with literature.

Chapter five provides summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for; Leeuwkop prison, social work practice as well as theory and research.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

KEY TERMS	DEFINITION
Correctional officers	Prison staff tasked with the role of guarding prisoners and changing the behaviour of offenders (Matetoa, 2012).
Correctional system	A system that aims to maintain and protect society through ensuring that offenders are detained, but also maintain their dignity. It thus aims to promote social responsibility and development of all prisoners (Corretional Services Act, 1998).
Occupational stress	Stress that occurs as results of a person job (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013).
Coping strategies	“Coping strategies represent the efforts, both behavioural and cognitive, that people invest in order to deal with stressful

	encounters” (Pienaar, Tothmann Che, 2003, P. 81)
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1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the problem statement and rationale of the study, it further looked at the primary and secondary aims of the study. The theoretical framework informing the study was also discussed and a brief overview of the research design and methodology was provided as well as the overview of the research report.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Correctional Services has been in existence for over 102 years. It aims to reduce crime and ensure that offenders are properly integrated back into society (South African Government, 2014). The Department of Correctional Services functions on three principles; firstly being increasing the numbers of offenders partaking in rehabilitation programmes, secondly to ensure that victims come to parole hearings and lastly to increase the number of parolees who behave lawfully and do not violate their parole obligations (South African Government, 2014). This chapter will look at different legislations relating to the correctional services, it will go on to discussing correctional officers and the work they do. Models to occupational stress will be explained as well as factors contributing to correctional officers' occupational stress and lastly coping strategies used by correctional officers in dealing with occupational stress will be discussed.

2.2 HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

2.2.1 The 1900s

The South African prisons system was established in the 19th century at the time when colonial rule transitioned from the Cape Peninsula to the contemporary boundaries of South Africa (Human Rights Watch, 1994). Thereafter, in 1910 the Union of South Africa was established. The union joined together South Africa's four provinces, namely, the Cape, Transvaal, Orange Free State as well as Natal. Following the state of the Union in 1911, a firm Prisons and Reformatories Act was passed (Human Rights Watch, 1994). The White Paper on Corrections (2004) notes that this period saw the introduction of the remission system where prisoners were allowed remission of their prison sentence subject to good behaviour as well as the system of probation that grants the early release of offenders. The period was also the time when racial segregation in prison was favoured and prescribed by legislation (White Paper on Corrections, 2004).

2.2.2 The 1945 Landsdown Commission on Penal and Prison Reform

This commission maintained the need for rehabilitation and literacy of offenders, in particular black offenders (White Paper on Corrections, 2004). Furthermore, it warned against militarisation as it viewed this process as the Government's attempt to control prison officials and derail rehabilitative prospects they envisioned. Unfortunately, it is noted that not much was achieved from the Landsdown Commission Report which was presented in 1947 (White Paper on Corrections, 2004).

2.2.3 Prisons in the 1960s and 1970s

During this period the Prison Act of 1959 No 8 was established. It further endorsed racial segregation within prisons as well as the military structures (White Paper on Corrections, 2004). Although the Act was cognisant of the international instruments relating to the rights of offenders, especially those relating to rehabilitation, it ignored other important aspects such as corporal punishment (White Paper on Corrections, 2004).

2.2.4 The Prisons Department in the 1980s and 1990s

In 1998, major changes were made to the prison legislation and laws on race were changed, however it took time for these changes to be implemented (White Paper on Corrections, 2004). In the 1990s Mnguni (2011) noted that the Government introduced extensive reforms in the prison system by separating the Department of Justice from the Prison Service and the latter was renamed the Department of Correctional Services. In 1996, the correctional system was demilitarised and this process enabled the department to start implementing rehabilitation services for offenders (Mnguni, 2011).

2.3 CORRECTIONAL SERVICES IN THE DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

2.3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) notes that every individual has the right to fair work practices. The promulgation of the Constitution brought with it many changes to the correctional setting such as: the Department's name changed from the Department of Prisons to the Department of Correctional Services; prison warders are now referred to as correctional officials and prisoners are referred to as offenders (Rozani, 2009). According to the Strategic Plan by the Department of Correctional Services (2012) the Constitution requires the department to comply with various sections of the constitution on how they should treat

prisoners. The following principles are covered: **Equality**; which states that everyone has equal protection before the law and guards against unfair discrimination of people based on their race, gender or ethnic background. **Human dignity**; assures that everyone has the right that their dignity be protected at all times. **Freedom and security of the person** - for prisoners, this value includes assuring that they are not detained without trial, also that they are not physically violated nor tortured or treated in a degrading way. **Right to health care services** - states that everyone has the right to access health services. **Children's rights** - in relation to prison, children have the right to parental care or appropriate alternative care; they also have the right to basic nutrition and shelter. For detained children, they have the right not to be detained with people over the age of 18 years and should be treated in an age appropriate manner. **Right to education** - everyone has the right to an education offered in a language of their choice. **Freedom of religion** - everyone has the right to pursue the religion of their choice. **Rights to humane treatment and to communicate and be visited by family next of kin etc.** - every arrested person has the right to be visited and to communicate with either his or her spouse, close family member, doctor or religious counsellor (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

2.3.2 The Correctional Service Act No 11 of 1998

On the overall, the Correctional Service Act (1998) looks at providing the correctional system with functions and control aimed at efficient functioning of the Department of Correctional Services. The Correctional Service Act (1998) states that correctional officers' work tasks should be targeted at achieving the purpose of the Act. It further states that the relationship between the Department of Correctional Services and correctional officers is regulated by requirements set out in the Labour Relations Act No 66 of 1995 (Correctional Service Act, 1998). The Labour Relations Act No 66 of 1995 aims to ensure the advancement of; "economic development, social justice, labour peace and democratisation of the workplace" (Labour Relations Act, 2002, p.8).

2.3.3 The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa

The White Paper was developed with the aim of refining priorities of the correctional system in the post-apartheid South Africa. It recognised that the Department's correctional legislative framework is supposed to work towards providing a foundation for the correctional system to adhere to the South African Constitution (White Paper on Corrections, 2004). The White Paper on Corrections (2004) notes that the Constitution provides descriptions of the human rights environment within which the department should ideally work.

2.3.4 Constitutional Democracy Demands on the Prison System- Post 1994

In South Africa, there are political processes that have influenced the Country's prison system. The major contributor of this change was the political order during Apartheid that exacerbated the mistreatment of offenders, mostly offenders of colour. It is noted that during the Apartheid Era, political prisoners went through various forms of torture and assault such as "electric shocks; being forced to drink gasoline; being throttled or nearly suffocated with a wet towel; being slapped, kicked, whipped, punched, and beaten about the face, ears, genitals and other parts of the body; having their heads banged against a wall; being jumped on while prone; and being forced to exercise to the point of exhaustion" (Nicholas, 2014 , p.20). However during Apartheid these injustices faced by mostly political prisoners were used as a tool of negotiation for the transformation of the political system that does not discriminates against anyone (Buntman, 2003). Because there was no law stipulating people's rights, politicians found themselves being arrested for the colour of their skin and because they were seen as being against the state (Filippi, 2011).

However when South Africa achieved it democratic state in 1994, the prison system lagged behind. This than led to extensive prison riots as the inmates realised that they were not being adequately included in the new South Africa (Filippi, 2011). This made offenders to turn to violence in order to voice their frustrations against apartheid prisons which were characterised by overcrowding, hostility towards offenders by warders and conflict between warders and gangs as well as political prisoners demanding to be released. These actions than prompted the new president that time, President Nelson Mandela to appoint a *Commission of inquiry into Unrest in Prisons*. "According to this commission, from 28 February to 27 June 1994, 71 riots took place in 53 prisons, which housed 77 per cent of the country's prison population; 750 inmates and 145 warders were injured and 28 prisoners died in the process"(Filippi, 201, p. 641). It was through these efforts of offenders and solutions by the commission that gave birth

to a new system of control and punishment and properly aligning this system with criminal courts in order to uphold the law at all times (Filippi, 2011).

2.4 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

There are various theories that help in the conceptualisation of crime and punishment around the world, these theories are crucial in decreasing crime in societies through attaching punishment to each crime. For the purpose of this paper, three crime and punishment theories will be discussed and one will be linked to South Africa's prison system.

2.4.1 Deterrent Theory

The premise of this theory is to deter the offender from repeating the same crime (Mishra, 2016). Punishment is seen as a way of improving social behaviour of future offenders through inflicting terror by using current offenders as examples (Imran, n.d). In that way they see that the cost of committing a crime outweighs the benefits they might get from doing the crime (Imran, n.d). Some deterrents believe in using pain to deter future behaviour however what they have found over the years is that imprisonment is regarded as being a better deterrent factor, this is because once a person becomes accustomed to the physical pain, the deterrence factor loses its strength in society (Imran, n.d). It is for these reasons that rehabilitation/reformation theories yield better results (Imran, n.d). There are two types of deterrence, General and Specific deterrence. General deterrence refers to punishment of offenders aimed at deterring the general population from committing that crime through the use of the death penalty or corporal punishment (Hobbes, 2010), while Specific deterrence refers to punishment act aimed at deterring the individual offender from committing that crime again (Hobbes, 2010).

Michael Foucault on Discipline and Punishment and links to the Deterrent Theory

In early modern society, power was perceived from a top-down approach whereby punishment was executed by kings through terror as a measure of demonstrating his authority (Shapiro, 2002). Therefore prisoners were publicly tortured, "The point to be made was that the king (as a surrogate for God) had complete and utter power over his subjects" (Shapiro, 2002, p.2).

As time went by, Foucault argued that the middle class criticised terror used by kings to punish prisoners and therefore delegitimised the old social order of punishment (Shapiro, 2002). The middle class then introduced a more gentle way of punishment through prison sentences (Shapiro, 2002), this also assisted in creating opportunities for professions falling within the

legal realm who will be dealing with offenders (Shapiro, 2002). This new form of punishment encompassed the following acts ; “imprisonment, confinement, forced labour, penal servitude, prohibition from entering certain areas, deportation - which have occupied so important a place in modern penal systems - are 'physical' penalties: unlike fines, for example, they directly affect the body. But the punishment-body relation is not the same as it was in the torture during public executions” (Sheridan, 1995, p. 11)

According to Foucault, this new system of punishment ensured the elite in society that they can avoid being punished for their wrongs through the use of lawyers (Shapiro, 2002). Therefore Foucault argued that by abandoning terror on punishment we did not become more enlightened because the codes of justice are still biased towards certain powers in society, which being the middle class/Bourgeoisies (Shapiro, 2002). Therefore Foucault analysed how the “Bourgeoisies” in society have moulded the justice system through the use of power to modify punishment to being more humane within institutions such as prisons through using the judgement of intellectuals for the main purpose of stabilizing the Bourgeoisies society against the non-bourgeoisies (Shapiro, 2002).

The old system of punishment described by Foucault has similarities to the Deterrent theory as it also believed in public punishment as a measure of deterring future offenders’ behaviour. Hobbes (2010) notes that deterrence punishment was traditionally carried out in public, for the purpose of others witnessing the pain therefore preventing them from committing that crime in the future.

2.4.2 Retributive Theory

The philosophy of the retributive theory is based on “rights, desert and justice” (Mishra, 2016, p. 74). It believes that the guilty should be punished for their deeds and that the punishment should outweigh the act for the purpose of restoring societal order that has been disturbed by the offender (Mishra, 2016). However retributive theory condemns private punishment but rather promotes institutionalized punishment in accordance to the law (Mishra, 2016). The basic premise of this theory therefore is that a person gets what they deserve; it notes that “It is the fact that a person has committed a moral offence which, in the first instance, constitutes the justification for him being punished (Materni, n.d, P.278). The downside of this theory is that retributists have not provided adequate guidelines as to how punishment should be proportionate, making it difficult for judges to measure punishment for those crimes committed (Mishra, 2016).

2.4.3 Reformatory Theory

According to the reformatory theory, this form of punishment is aimed at the reformation of the offender, therefore it is more a rehabilitation than punishment (Imran, n.d). It aims to teach the offender to be a responsible citizen by the use of moral and ethical training (Imran, n.d), it sees the offender's crime as a result of the lack of training and opportunities that he has had in life, therefore pushing him to the life of crime (Imran, n.d). This form of punishment therefore gave human touch to criminal law and reduced brutality towards offenders (Mishra, 2016). This shift in punishment was motivated by the increase in understanding of social and psychological causes of crime which has led to the transformation of prisons to being institutions of training rather than pure punishment (Mishra, 2016).

In South Africa, one can argue that the primary theory used for punishment of offenders is the Reformatory theory. This is said because the Department of Correctional Services aims to not only lock offenders away but to also correct their behaviour through following rehabilitative processes of equipping offenders with various skills that will assist them with finding employment when they are released, thereby minimising the possibilities of them reverting to criminal activities (Rozani, 2009). Matetola (2012, p. 39) describes what an ideal correctional officer should be like;

“The ideal correctional officer should embody the values that the Department of Correctional Services hopes to instil in the offender, as it is this official who is to assist and facilitate the rehabilitation process of the offender. An attitude of serving with excellence, a principled way of relating to others and above all a just and caring attitude are essential ingredients of the make-up of the correctional official”.

Matetola (2012) notes that the rehabilitation process of offenders is the most important part of the prisoner's punishment. It draws from the medical model which relates prisoners' criminal behaviours to their personal deficiencies that make them behave in that manner. The rehabilitative aspect of punishment is premised on the belief that people can change with the aim of transforming the person from being a criminal to being a law-abiding citizen (Matetola, 2012).

2.5 CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

Correctional officers play a vital role in the functioning of prisons (Bezerra, de assis & Constantino, 2016). Correctional officers work in unique environment which is considered to have hostile clients (Cheeseman and Downey, 2011). Therefore, they need to work in teams and are expected to be vigilant and exercise self-control when working with offenders. Furthermore, they are expected to be proactive in their duties and also portray the ability to negotiate in adverse situations such as violence (Bezerra, de assis & Constantino, 2016). The Prison environment is considered to have inherent job hazards (Cheeseman and Downey, 2011). Correctional officers work are subjected to the risk of death in their work which may result in heightened anxiety levels for some officers which may in turn lead to psychological distress (Bezerra, de assis & Constantino, 2016). Psychological stress may be defined as;

“An emotional difficulty associated with psychological and physical symptoms, and is considered a common mental disorder characterized by non-psychotic symptoms such as insomnia, fatigue, irritability, forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, and somatic complaints like headaches, stomach pains, coughs, or weakness “ (Bezerra, de assis & Constantino, 2016, p. 2137).

Correctional officers’ work stress is usually caused by their main function of ensuring the safety of prisoners, co-workers and other prison staff (Boudoukha, Hautekeete, Abdelaoui, Abdelaoui, Groux & Garay, 2010).

2.5.1 Male versus Female Correctional Officers

Correctional officers are predominantly male. Men and women correctional officers tend to exhibit different reactions to crime and punishment and how to treat offenders (Rozani, 2009). Men and women are considered to have distinct ideas of what they consider as stressful in life and how to cope with the stress (Carlson, Anson & Thomas, 2003). However Mohoje (2006) found that correctional officers’ gender has not been a strong predictor of burnout as some studies have found higher stress and burnout among female correctional officers and others have found this trend among male correctional officers while other studies found no differences in their experience of stress. Morgan, Van Haveren and Pearson (2002) argue that a possible explanation for the difference in findings is that women have learnt to adapt in correctional settings, noting that studies done in the 1980s that found females as being more stressed compared to those done in the 1990s that found no or marginal differences in the experience of occupational stress between female and male correctional officers. The latter was due to the

fact that, along the years female correctional officers eventually learnt to cope in stressful prison conditions unlike before, hence the changes noted in the 1990s.

In a study conducted by Van Voorhis et al (1991) as cited in Morgan et al (2002), women correctional officers were found to seek more peer and supervisory support unlike their male counterparts, by so doing they coped better with stress. Males did not seek much peer and supervisory support due to their need to appear as '*macho*' to their colleagues. This is supported by Hurst and Hurst (1997) who note that male correctional officers tend to suppress their occupational stress as a way of coping, whereas female correctional officers often seek social support from other people as a coping mechanism. On the other hand, Hurst and Hurst (1997) argue that men experience greater occupational stress compared to their female counterparts because unlike females, males tend to emotionally detach themselves from prisoners or any stressful situation happening within the prison. However, this coping strategy has been found to be ineffective in helping them to deal with occupational stress.

2.5.2 Correctional officers training

Correctional officers are considered frontline employees at prisons (Department of Corrections, n.d). Their tasks include searching cells, monitoring offender's behaviours and ensuring security within the correctional facility (Department of Corrections, n.d). With the introduction of the Constitution in South Africa, correctional officers were expected to execute rehabilitative functions as well. In order to become a correctional officer; there's open access for individuals meeting the following requirements (South African Qualifications Authority, n.d, p.1);

- “Who have successfully completed the National Senior Certificate
- Who have successfully completed the National Certificate: Vocational, NQF Level 4
- Who have successfully completed a Further Education and Training Certificate
- Who meet the psychological and physical requirements of a Corrections Official”

Qualifying candidates go through training at the Department of Correctional Services where basic training is offered. The Department has two training colleges; one is at Kroonstad and the other is at Zonderwater. After completion of the training process, successful candidates are thereafter transferred to varying prisons across the country depending on the needs of the department or the persons' preference (Gostudy, n.d).

2.6 MODELS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress is regarded as the discomfort experienced by a person who has exhausted all his or her capabilities to cope with stressful circumstances experienced in the workplace (Spector as cited in Karimi & Alipour, 2011). Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato and Dewa (2013) describe occupational stress as occurring when stressed workers are affected by stressors present in their personal environment or those occurring in the workplace.

There are different types of occupational stress models designed to inform practice and enhance the understanding of occupational stress. However, for the purpose of this paper, only the person-environment fit and job characteristic model as well as the Michigan model and the job demand control support model will be discussed.

2. 6. 1 Person-Environment Fit and the Job Characteristics Model

The Person-Environment Fit model postulates that the determinant of employee health depends on the fit between people's individual characteristics and their work environments. Therefore, workers' skills, attitudes and resources should be consistent with their job demands. Also the work environment needs to accommodate the employee's needs, skills as well as potential for growth (Mark & Smith, 2008). If there is a misfit between personal and workplace demands, problems arise and workers' health and productivity levels decline (Mark & Smith, 2008). While the person-environment fit model caters for personal attributes in relation to occupational stress, the Job Characteristics model by Hackman and Oldham (1980) pays attention to the characteristics of the job in relation to: "skills variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback" (Mark & Smith, 2008, p. 5). These characteristics, whether negative or positive lead to mental states that influence people's behaviour. For instance, they impact on employees' work motivation, absenteeism levels as well as work satisfaction (Mark & Smith, 2008).

2.6.2 The Michigan Model and the Job Demand Control Support model

Similar to the Person-Environment Fit model, the Michigan model also takes into consideration people's subjective meanings of stressors (Mark & Smith, 2008, p. 5). This model states that stressors in the work environment such as job security, lack of stimulation, role conflict and role overload are subjectively perceived according to individuals' varying personalities, age, gender, race and social support, which subsequently influence health outcomes (Mark & Smith, 2008, p. 5). Lastly, the Job Demand Control Support model will be used as the theoretical

framework informing the current study. This model is still considered to be the most influential occupational stress model as it does not only predict how occupational stress occurs, but goes further by suggesting that social support is needed as a mechanism to buffer stress levels emanating from high job demand, and reduced levels of job control (Mark & Smith, 2008).

Occupational stress is believed to have positive and negative consequences in the workplace. For instance, Boswell, Olson-Buchanan and LePine (2002) differentiate between challenge-related stress and hindrance-related stress. On the one hand they define ‘challenge-related stress’ as occupational stress which is caused by work demands and conditions which positively impact on the individual (Boswell et al, 2002). On the other hand, ‘hindrance-related stress’ is thought of as resulting from work demands and conditions, which negatively impact on individuals’ work duties and their potential to grow (Boswell et al, 2002).

On the negative side, occupational stress may cause medical conditions such as anxiety, headaches and cardiovascular disease (Spector, 2002 as cited in Karimi & Alipour, 2011). Research has found a relationship between occupational stress and reduced work motivation, extended strikes, anxiety, absenteeism, burnout, increased employee turnover and not being productive (McHugh as cited in Chandra & Sharma, 2010; Murphy, 1995; Schabracca & Cooper, 2000;). However, stress is not always negative; stress can lead to positive results in the workplace as some people work well under stress. Also people cannot be put into one box as proposed by the models mentioned above; some people are better able to cope with work demands as compared to others, and individually have their own protective factors they make use of. This viewpoint is supported by McGowan, Gardner and Fletcher (2006) who state that when stress is appropriately negotiated, positive results emerge.

2.7 CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS’ OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress is caused by several work stressors both within and beyond the work environment. On the individual, group and organisational levels, Bruin and Taylor (2005, p.749) identified several workplace stressors contributing to employees’ occupational stress, namely, “difficulty working with, or obtaining, the relevant tools and equipment needed to complete a task properly, role ambiguity, poor relationships at work, physical working conditions, non-work factors interfering with work and the lack of opportunity for career development”. Conflict between colleagues and with superiors is known to affect employees’

interpersonal relationships (Spector, 2002). Other factors such as workplace bullying have also been identified as also contributing to the interpersonal challenges occurring between workers. Workplace bullying has been found to impact negatively on organisational turnover, productivity levels and absenteeism (Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011).

In addition, occupational stress can occur at an organisational level. At this level, employees can experience occupational stress due to the lack of resources to perform their work tasks, or the perception of unfair payment and reward system in relation to their colleagues (Spector, 2002). Career development is also identified as an organisational stressor, in that perceived job insecurity or lower chances of being promoted can hinder employees' motivation to advance themselves in their careers (Bruin & Taylor, 2005). This experience is likely to be more evident in bureaucratic organisations where authority is cherished, and professional growth is limited. Bruin and Taylor (2005) state that bureaucracy may contribute to employees' occupational stress because the organisation adopts the practice of rigidly following procedures and protocol. Correctional institutions may be considered to be bureaucratic in nature, with career development and task autonomy being difficult to attain, which may lead to correctional officers experiencing occupational stress.

Occupational stress of correctional officers however does not only affect the officers himself but also his family. Bezerra, de Assis and Constantino (2016,p. 2136) note that occupational stress may lead to “psychological problems such as Anxiety, tension, anguish, insomnia, alienation, interpersonal difficulties, self-doubt, excessive worrying, inability to concentrate, anger and emotional hypersensitivity”. Due to their nature of work, correctional officers often have to use force as they position requires them to exercise authority, therefore some tend to embed an authoritative behaviour even outside their work environment into their homes (Valentine, Oehme & Martin, 2012). When they use their work forceful behaviour at home, correctional officers tend to control their intimate partners, humiliate them and become abusive and dangerous towards them (Valentine, Oehme & Martin, 2012).

2.8 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS' OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

There are approximately 49 000 people who are employed in prisons, ranging from Governors, Doctors, and Psychologists to Civil Servants (Liebling, Price & Shefer, 2011). The largest group comprises Correctional Officers (Liebling, et al., 2011). Correctional officers are defined

as "...a close-knit group of mainly family men - looking to each other for social life and support, feeling misunderstood, unappreciated and looking at life with a semi-humorous, semi-bitter, cynical pessimism - a group where breaking ranks in any way is very difficult, because the bonds are strong professionally, socially and culturally" (Liebling, et al., 2011, p.15). Over the years, the occupational stress experienced by correctional officers has heightened due to prison overcrowding as offenders are receiving longer sentences. This overcrowding has led to heightened staff assaults (Finn, 1998; Martinez, 1997 as cited in Brough & Williams, 2007).

2.8.1 Crime and prison overcrowding

Since 1997, South Africa's crime rates increased drastically therefore resulting in prison overcrowding. Prison overcrowding is attributed to the number of offenders awaiting trial (Goyer, 2011). According to the Human Rights Report (2012), South Africa's prisons house approximately 158,165 offenders in facilities designed to accommodate approximately 118,000 offenders. It is important to note that overcrowding is not the sole problem causing occupational stress for correctional officers. Other factors are: "the militaristic structure of correctional centres/services, the use of shift-based working hours and the negative public perceptions of correctional officers" (Brough & Williams, 2007, p.3).

The challenges of overcrowding in prisons are not unique to South Africa as other countries such as the United Kingdom and the United State of America face the same predicament (Samuels, 2010). It is noted that in South Africa prison overcrowding has also been linked to increased crime (Goyer, n.d).

Table 2.1 SA crime stats for 2016 (Business Tech, 2016)

Category	2015	2016	Change
Aggravated Robbery	53 639	56 447	+5.23%
Contact Crimes	616 973	623 233	+1.01%
Crime detected as result of police action	356 919	355 926	-0.28%
Contact-related Crimes	125 789	124 804	-0.78%
Property-related Crimes	553 487	543 524	-1.80%
Other Serious Crimes	499 698	479 075	-4.13%

Total	2 206 505	2 126 552	-3.62%
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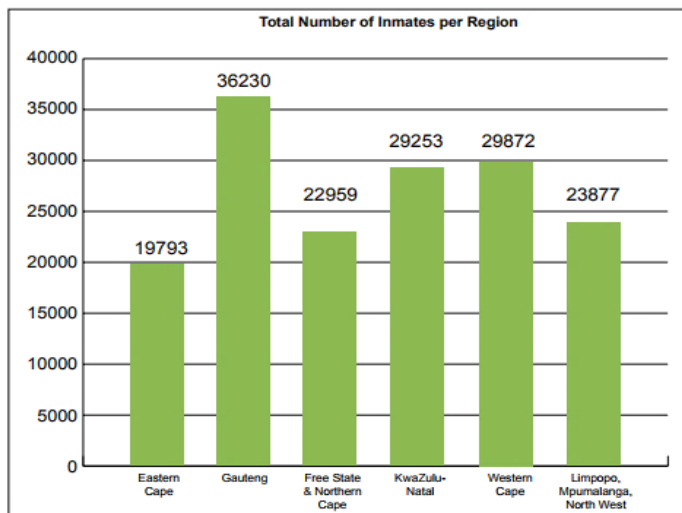
The table above details South African crime statistics that were recorded in 2016; it shows the increase in each of these crimes from 2015-2016. The South African Police Service note that generally crimes reported have generally increased in provinces such as Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, however in some other provinces crime decreased, while provinces such as the Northern Cape reported crime remained stable (Business Tech, 2016). Stats SA along with the South African Police Services recorded robberies and cash-in-transit crimes as the biggest crime categories in South Africa (Business Tech, 2016). Because South Africa is a developing state, crime has been on the rise since the dawn of democracy, this is because “Development generates greater opportunities for crime while also causing inequalities which encourage crime “(Goyer, n.d, p. 7). Furthermore it is noted that over the years with sustained development, the nature of crime in South Africa has changed from violent crimes to property crimes. This is because with economic growth more people can afford for instance luxury cars, and expensive personal belongings which in turn become target for theft (Goyer, n.d). This trend is also visible in the above table which show an increase instead of a decrease of property crimes.

2.8.2 Prison understaffing

Understaffing of correctional officers has been reported as one of the challenges faced within prisons (Tapscott, n.d). This factor further contributes to correctional officer’s stress as they do not have the time to complete all the tasks required of them. They therefore work under immense pressure and at times do not have enough manpower to control inmate violence (Tapscott, n.d). . According to Hargovan (2015), South Africa is regarded as having the highest per capita inmate population as it ranks the ninth in the world and highest amongst African countries. The DCS note that in the period 2015/2016 their inmate population was 161 984, with a 119 134 bed space which confirms that there is a problem of overcrowding in their facilities (Correctional Services, 2016). The same statistical document provides a graph (see below) that shows that Gauteng had more offenders compared to other regions (Correctional Services, 2016). Therefore, the ratio of offenders to correctional officers in South African prisons is a worrying factor. It is noted that it often happens that one officer has to oversee 300 inmates alone, and at times 15 correctional officers may have to guard 4 000 to 5 000 inmates,

therefore sometimes when violence erupts the correctional officers cannot do much to stop it (Gear, 2015).

Figure 2.1 Number of inmates per Region



To cope with this imbalance, correctional officers lock the inmates in their cells without releasing them for their one hour of exercise as this makes it easier for them to monitor them when they are in their cells (Gear, 2015). Therefore although overcrowding and understaffing create distinct challenges however they coexist. This is because when these prison conditions are combined they aggravate the problem of violence in prisons; because overcrowding means there are too many offenders sharing a particular space however few staff to guard and protect them, which than put both the offenders and correctional officers at risk as violence will not be adequately contained (Malgas, 2017).

2.8.3 Work Rewards

Rewards at work have also been identified as one of the workplace stressors facing correctional officers. It is postulated that work rewards can be either intrinsic or extrinsic (Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato & Dewa, 2013). Intrinsic rewards refer to the officer's personal attainment resulting from his/her efforts (Finney et al., 2013). On the other hand extrinsic rewards refer to the recognition by management of work done by the officer, which may come in the form of salary increments or prospects of a promotion (Finney *et al.*, 2013). In a study

conducted by Finney et al. (2013) it was found that lack of intrinsic rewards was associated with correctional officers' stress as well as health challenges. It is postulated that low pay, limited promotion possibilities and insufficient work benefits contribute to occupational stress (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). Prison staff members are generally considered to be paid low salaries (Penal Reform International, 2013). This factor is likely to negatively impact on their work performance (Penal Reform International, 2013). Low salaries have been identified as one of the reasons for corruption to occur in prisons, where corrupt correctional officers accept bribes from offenders in order to supplement their salaries (Muntingh, 2006).

The Penal Reform International (2013) notes that it is unfair labour practice when correctional officers are not encouraged professionally, and when they are not considered for training and promotion. Such practices not only violate employees' human rights, but also affect their self-image and ultimately how they treat offenders (Penal Reform International, 2013).

2.8.4 South African Prison Gangs and Safety Challenges

Like other countries, South African prisons are inhabited by different gangs. Goyer (2011) notes that inmates associate themselves with gangs because being imprisoned is often accompanied by feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and insecurity, and being part of a gang helps to alleviate such emotions. Therefore, because South African prisons are overcrowded and understaffed power shifts take place when prison staff and management are no longer able to guard the increasing number of offenders, which then allows the gangs to take control of some aspects of the prison processes. It is noted that gang violence is not uncommon and the killing of offenders who are non-members by gang members is not frowned upon (Goyer, 2011). This situation therefore presents dangers to correctional officers who are tasked with ensuring safety in prisons of not only their co-workers but also the safety of other offenders.

The interaction between people working in correctional services and offenders is usually negative and risky in nature which can make correctional officers jobs to be very dangerous as some of the gang members are not afraid to use violence against officers. Correctional officers face such dangers because they are tasked with supervising people held against their will; therefore staff members' safety becomes an immediate concern (Castle & Martin, 2006). In 2013 in Mangaung correctional centre an officer was held hostage by offenders for over 13 hours (The Guardian, 2013). Brodsky (1982) as cited in Castle and Martin (2006, p. 66) eloquently captures the inevitable hostile relations between offenders and correctional employees when he states: "Any organisation or social institution which consists of one group

of people kept inside who do not want to be there and the other group who are there to make sure they stay in will be an organisation under stress". Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) posit that structural clashes occurring between correctional officers and offenders may sometimes instigate violence in prisons. The stress experienced by correctional employees has been associated with individuals' internal withdrawal, lowered satisfaction with life as well as their inability to cope with traumatic encounters (Finney et al., 2013).

In a report written in 2015 by Just Detention International- South Africa on the state of South African Prisons, it was found that correctional officers do not know when to use force and how much of it is allowed. The officers said that they were not properly trained on how to manage violence and often have to decide on their own how much force to use to control the offenders (Gear, 2015). This causes officers to be afraid of charges being pressed against them for unlawful use of force and all this is blamed on inadequate training (Gear, 2015).

Because of these stressors, researchers have reported that correctional officers usually acquire stress-related illnesses such as "hypertension, heart disease, depression, and anxiety" (Misis, Kim, Cheeseman, Hogan & Lambert, 2013, p.3). It is further noted that many correctional officers display significant anger towards their family and friends, hostility, increased divorce rates, posttraumatic stress disorders and drug use (Misis et al., 2013). Micieli (2008) supports this viewpoint by stating that occupational stress not only has a negative impact on the correctional officers personally, but also impacts on the correctional officers' social and family life.

2.9 CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS AND THE ABUSE OF INMATES

Offenders are considered a vulnerable group such as children. However, children are often taken care of by their parents who have their best interests at hearts, contrary to this, offenders are looked after by correctional officials which often makes them more vulnerable to being mistreated (Henry, 2014). They rely on correctional officers for everything and if they receive abuse from this occupational group they cannot tell anyone (Henry, 2014). This is considered a bad use of power by the correctional officers. According to sociological theories of power; power is considered to being held by different groups in society who are more powerful than others (Muntingh, 2009). The relationship between correctional officers and offenders is considered to be tense to a point that it has led to the death of three offenders by the correctional officers at Krugersdorp prison in April 2007 and this led to the conviction and sentencing of

three correctional officers (Muntingh, 2009). Furthermore, it is noted that due to the culture within prisons, correctional officers view offenders as dangerous people who need to be controlled and guarded. Such a perception has led to the bad treatment of offenders by correctional officers (Liebling, 2008 as cited in Muntingh, 2009).

2.10 COPING STRATEGIES AND ORGANISATIONAL STRESS INTERVENTIONS

It is argued that prolonged stress can have negative mental and physical consequences for people (Zukri & Hassim, 2010). In the same vein, stress can have a negative impact on employees and manifests itself through; increased absenteeism increased turnover, decreased work performance and motivation (Zukri & Hassim, 2010). Correctional officers are particularly exposed to powerful stressors in their work environment (Regan, 2009).

Research on the coping strategies of correctional officers has lagged behind in comparison to literature on occupational stress (Regan, 2009). However, it is very important in understanding the overall occupational stress process of correctional officers (Regan, 2009). The following section covers correctional officers' coping strategies. Pittaro (2015) note that people deal differently with stress therefore individuals need to experiment with coping techniques and determine strategies that work for them.

There are two types of coping strategies; emotion focused coping and problem focused coping (Mulligan, 2014). Emotion focused coping is described as when a person believes not much can be done to change the situation causing them stress, and therefore resort to either "acceptance, humour and positive reframing" as a way of coping (Mulligan, 2014, p. 12). While problem focused coping encompasses the individual actively planning ways to overcome the problem causing them stress (Mulligan, 2014). The table below explains examples of coping strategies sometimes used by correctional officers and other professions when dealing with occupational stress, Pittaro (2015, p. 2) explanation of these coping strategies fall under the emotion focused coping. Emotion coping strategies by correctional officers were found to be effective in a study conducted by Hassim (2015) with correctional officers from a prison in Kedah, Malaysia, where he found that correctional officers often use positive reframing, acceptance and emotional support as a way of coping.

Table 2.2: Emotion focused coping

Coping Strategy	Definition
Avoid unnecessary stress	This can be achieved by avoiding people and situations causing you stress
Alter the situation	If one fails to avoid a situation, they then can try alter it by becoming open minded to other suggestions but remaining assertive at the same time.
Adapt to the stressor and adjust your attitude	If a stressor cannot be avoided or changed, then the individual can change their expectations and attitude about the problem and rather adapt to the situation. They can change their attitude by being positive and focus on the bigger picture.
Accept the things you cannot change	Instead of looking to change people and situations you cannot control, rather focus on changing yourself and your own reaction to people and situations.
Make time for fun and relaxation	Try doing things that make you happy and help you to relax, by so doing one will be better equipped to handle stressful situations.
Adapt a healthy lifestyle	Individual stress resistance may be enhanced through one's physical and emotional health through exercising regularly.

The following will discuss problem focused coping strategies;

2.10.1 Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is defined as the amount of control employees have over their work duties (Yusoff, 2013). Jobs which are demanding lead to unpleasant employee reactions among those with low control over their work duties (Rehman, Khan, Jadoon & Khan, 2010). However, workers given autonomy tend to regard job demands as hurdles which they can overcome, or see them as motivations to improve their work performance (Rehman et al., 2010). Karimi and Alipour (2011) note that employee work autonomy may be increased through intervention

strategies such as job development and decision-making programmes, allowing discretion as a measure of increasing workers' sense of control over work done. Getahun, Sims and Humme (n.d) identifies job autonomy as being one of the factors contributing to correctional officer's job satisfaction. Lambert (2004) also found a positive association between job autonomy and job satisfaction of correctional officers in a study he conducted with correctional officers.

2.10.2 Supervisory Support

Given the vital role played by correctional officers in ensuring the proper functioning of prisons, any stress correctional officers experience may affect them personally as well as the correctional institution (Lambert, Hogan & Griffin as cited in Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013). Lambert, Jiang and Hogan as cited in Misis, et al. (2013) argue that in order for correctional officers to be successful in their work duties, supervisors need to play a vital role. Supervisory support is believed to decrease occupational stress experienced by correctional officers (Misis et al., 2013). In a study conducted by Brough and Williams (2007), it was found that supervisor support had a positive impact on job satisfaction and employees' psychological health at work.

2.10.3 Employee Assistance Programmes

Micieli (2008, p. 19) postulates that stress and burnout experienced by correctional officers are factors with which officers can cope in their own capacity. Therefore, correctional officers need to be trained in '*biofeedback, meditation and relaxation techniques*'. However, if the workers' stress levels are too high for them to do their work efficiently, they are often provided with the services such as employee assistance programmes to assist them to deal with their emotional difficulties. When dealing with work-family conflict of correctional officers, correctional organisations can assist the officers and their families through the use of employee assistance programmes. Mambi (2005, p. 25) notes that the programmes may take different forms depending on the employee's problem, for instance they may involve the provision of "on-site fitness facilities, dietary control, cardio-vascular fitness programmes and relaxation classes or stress and health education but most often psychological counselling". These programmes are aimed at assisting officers and their families to reduce the impact that work stress might have on the family system (Micieli, 2008).

2.10.4 Religion

Religion has also been mentioned as another way in which correctional officers deal with occupational stress. In a study conducted by Regan (2009), it was found that correctional officers used religion as a coping strategy. Religious coping is explained as occurring when people use their religious beliefs as a measure of dealing with problems in their lives (Safaria, bin Othman & Wahab, 2010). Regan (2009) however, notes that coping strategies used by correctional officers are dependent on situational factors and the officer's individual personality. Therefore they may use any coping strategy depending on the nature of the stressor.

2.11 CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

2.11.1 Substance Abuse

Negative coping strategies of correctional officers have also been documented by previous researchers where they found that many correctional officers abuse substances such as alcohol to cope with their work stress (Vickovic, 2015). McCarthy (2012,p. 40) notes that when correctional officers drink on a regular basis, their physical health may start to take strain as alcoholism has been link to health problems such as “liver disease, cancer and heart disease” . Alcoholism may lead to disciplinary processes being taken against the officer if alcohol consumption is not handled correctly (McCarthy, 2012).

2.12.2 Overeating

It is noted that another negative coping strategies correctional officers can adopt is overeating (McCarthy, 2012). This may have a debilitating effect of officers as obesity may lead to other health problems. Comfort foods that people tend to turn to when stressed are considered to being unhealthy as they contain high carbohydrates or fat (McCarthy, 2012).

2.12 CONCLUSION

The South African Correctional System has evolved since the dawn of democracy where the militaristic structure of prisons was replaced by the need to rehabilitate offenders in order to equip them with knowledge and skills that will help them to reintegrate back to society. This has been endorsed by many legislations such as the; Constitution of South Africa, the

Correctional Service Act and the White Paper on Corrections that were discussed in this chapter. Correctional officers face different stressors in their work environment that contribute to them experiencing occupational stress, to understand the occupational stress experienced by correctional officers, models to occupational stress such as the; the person-environment fit and the job characteristics model, the Michigan model and the job demand control support model were discussed, lastly the chapter discussed coping strategies often used by correctional officers to cope with occupational stress.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will give a presentation to the methodology used in the study. It will discuss the design, population of study and the sampling procedure used to select the participants. The instruments used to collect data will be discussed as well as the method used to collect the data. The chapter will also detail how the data collected was analysed. The trustworthiness of the study will be discussed and how credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the study were achieved. The chapter will look at the ethical consideration that the researcher adhered to when

conducting the study, particularly looking at voluntary participation; informed consent, beneficence as well as anonymity and confidentiality and lastly the limitations of the study will be discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH & DESIGN

The researcher used a qualitative approach to answer the research question. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate as it captures the deeper understanding of how people live and behave (Monette, Sullivan & DeJong, 2011). Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006, p. 287) describe the qualitative approach as “researchers wanting to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world, and therefore want to study them in their natural setting”. By using this approach, the researcher was able to gain a better understanding of the coping strategies used by correctional officers when dealing with occupational stress. This was achieved through the researcher and participant’s ability to interact freely with each other as this approach allowed the researcher to better capture the experiences of the correctional officers. Bailey (2007) argues that qualitative research pays attention to social relationships and the means by which people create their social worlds.

A case study design was used when gathering data from the correctional officers. According to Creswell (2011, p.13), when using case studies the researcher explores a “program, activity or process of a person or a collective”. This design was used for the purpose of exploring the views of the participants within the bounded system or collective of a prison environment regarding the coping strategies employed when dealing with occupational stress. The design allowed the researcher to describe, analyse and contrast the phenomena under study through the use of participants’ responses. It is noted that the case study design allows for the issue under study to be explored through many lenses which therefore allows for the better understanding of the phenomenon under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Through the use of this design, the researcher was able to understand the stressors present in prison settings and how they contribute to correctional officers’ occupational stress. The design further allowed the researcher to get an understanding of how correctional officer’s deal with the stress they experience as result of their work and importantly the researcher was able to discover what services are offered by the correctional system to assist officers to deal with occupational stress. Zainal (2007) states that the case study design allows for deeper exploration as it allows for in-depth investigations. It further “helps explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon

through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation” (Zainal, 2007, p. 1).

3.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND PARTICIPANTS

The population under study were male correctional officers working at Leeuwkop prison where permission to conduct the study was granted (see appendix D). Males were selected as the focus of the study mainly because correctional field is considered to be dominated by males and also the researcher was interested in understanding their ways of coping with occupational stress. This is because female correctional officers perceive their roles differently compared to their male colleagues who see the necessity of physical strength and the use of force when necessary (Regan, 2009). The correctional officers selected were those who have worked for over a year in the prison and this is because after a year they would hopefully have acquired coping strategies to deal with their occupational stress.

The researcher used non-probability sampling when deciding on the research sample. When using non-probability sampling, the researcher does not know the possibility of including all the elements of the study in the sample (Monette, Sullivan & DeJong, 2011). Results gathered from a study using non-probability sampling are usually not generalizable to the total target population (Mesa, Duquia, Bastos, Chica & Bonamigo, 2016). There are different types of non-probability sampling; however for the purpose of this study convenience sampling was used to select 25 correctional officers. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2008) when using convenience sampling the researcher chooses participants based on their availability. Convenience sampling was suitable for the researcher because she did not have any prior knowledge about the targeted group nor was she affiliated with them in any way, and also because correctional officers’ work shifts therefore selecting them based on their availability proved to yield better outcomes. Marshall (1996) regards convenience sampling as the selection of participants that are most accessible. The researcher attended a staff meeting at Medium B facility and Maximum facility through the assistance of the prisons Employee Assistance Programme head who accompanied the researcher to both these facilities and introduced her to the managers of each facility. The Managers both introduced the researcher to the staff members and the researcher thereafter explained the envisioned study and asked those available to participate. Convenience sampling is said to come to an end when the envisioned number of participant is reached or the time limit is reached (Mesa, Duquia, Bastos, Chica & Bonamigo, 2016). However the disadvantage of this sampling procedure is that the researcher has no

guarantee that the responses given are a representation of how correctional officers as a whole generally experience occupational stress as well as the coping techniques used. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) note that the limitation of convenience sampling is that the researcher has no assurance that data gathered represent the population as a whole.

3.3.1 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The researcher utilised a semi-structured interview schedule to collect data from correctional officers (see appendix C). Semi-structured interview schedules are usually organised around the area of interest, while at the same time allowing flexibility with regard to the scope and depth of the interview (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2011). The interview schedule contained mostly open-ended questions for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of correctional officers' occupational stress. This instrument allowed the participants to go deeper with their responses and for the researcher to probe where she was unclear with certain responses.

3.3.2 PRE-TESTING OF THE RESEARCH TOOL

The researcher interviewed two correctional officers at Leeuwkop Prison who were not included in the final study. This was done for the purpose of pre-testing the interview schedule. Pre-testing the research instrument consists of testing it on a small number of people who share similar characteristics to those of the main sample (De Vos et al., 2011). The pretesting results showed the need to take out one question which yielded the same response as a question that was already asked. Therefore pretesting helped the researcher to identify the weakness of the interview schedule and also assess the strength of the schedule in answering the research question. It is noted that pretesting assist in identifying possible flaws of the research questions; it may also provide warning of possible failure of the research project (Hurst, Arulogun, Owolabi, Akinyemi, Warth & Ovbiagele, 2015).

3.3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher conducted individual in-depth, face-to-face interviews in order to explore the issue under study. Interviews are regarded as being the most commonly used method of collecting information in qualitative research (De Vos et al., 2011). Participants were interviewed at two different settings (Medium B and Maximum). The researcher requested to use two separate setting to conduct the interviews so to get a better understanding of the phenomenon under study also she wanted to understand whether there are any differences in

correctional officers working at these separate settings. Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2011) define in-depth interviews as being informal in nature with the purpose of exploring a wide range of topics over a period of time.

The researcher conducted the interviews with individual participants in secure rooms which allowed for confidentiality. Oltmann (2016) notes the importance of selecting an appropriate location to conduct interviews as this is very important to respondents therefore the researcher must make every effort of ensuring that the information shared is kept between the both of them by selecting a secure location for the interview (Oltmann, 2016).

Furthermore, a tape recorder was used to collect data from participants so to ensure that the participant's responses are captured adequately. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) importantly note that interviews should be recorded for the purpose of ensuring that permanent records of the interviews are ensured and to remember what was said and not said during the interview. However prior to recording each interview, informed consent was requested from participants where the researcher asked them to sign the form (see appendix B) if they allow her to record the interview.

3.3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic Content Analysis was used to analyse the data gathered. Data analysis is regarded as unlocking the information from raw data and changing it to something meaningful (Monette et al, 2011). Guest and MacQueen (2008) explain that thematic content analysis refers to the process of identifying those themes which are implicit and those that are explicit. These themes are linked with raw data collected, and then analysed.

To analyse data collected, the researcher took the data she had transcribed and arranged it to themes using the initially objectives set for the study. She wrote down the participant's responses in order to identify differences as well as similarities in their responses through coding their responses this enabled the researcher to identify common responses under each objective. The researcher was therefore able to identify patterns in the participant's responses which helped her to better understand the coping strategies used by correctional officers when dealing with occupational stress. Attride-Sterling (2001) as cited in McLeod (2001, p. 146) explains the steps of thematic analysis used by the researcher as follows; "material is coded, codes are examined to look for common themes, and themes are examined to determine whether they can be organised into superordinate and subordinate themes". After the themes

were identified and participant's responses were filtered into the set themes, the researcher was thereafter able to write out the findings of the research as shown in chapter four.

3.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research studies is challenging, but very important. Creswell (2009) argues that proposal developers should clarify the measures they intend to take in ensuring the accuracy and credibility of the findings of the study. Babbie and Mouton (2011) postulate that a qualitative study cannot be regarded as being transferable unless it is credible, and cannot be called credible unless the dependability of the study has been confirmed. Therefore, the researcher did the following in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

3.4.1 Credibility

Credibility looks to ensure whether the information gathered from participants is a true reflection of the participants' original views (Anney, 2014). To ensure credibility of the study, the researcher thoroughly went through the data gathered and the transcripts in order to ensure that she has interpreted the data gathered correctly. Also peer debriefing was utilised by the researcher through sending her research drafts to her research supervisor for further analysis of data gathered. Checking the credibility of the study is done for the purpose of correcting errors that might have occurred when interpreting data and to get more information from the participants and make necessary adjustments (Babbie & Mouton, 2011).

3.4.2 Transferability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2011), transferability refers to whether the findings of the study may be applied to other environments and with different participants. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher cannot claim that the data gathered at Leeuwkop Prison can necessarily be applied to other contexts, or in the same context of Leeuwkop Prison but in a different period. This is because in qualitative research, findings are deduced from a small number of participants, therefore it is difficult to assure that the findings of a research study may be applicable to other participants in different setting (Shenton, 2004).

3.4.3 Dependability

It is further argued that a study should thus supply its readers with evidence that if it was to be repeated using the same instruments, with similar respondents and in the same (similar) context as the one currently used, the findings gathered would be similar (Babbie & Mouton, 2011).

This refers to dependability of the study. To ensure dependability, the researcher used the Audit Trail technique whereby she reported on the unit of analysis, the criteria used to purposefully select participants, the data collection method, and the data analysis method utilised. Anney (2014) describes audit trials as the examination of the research process in order to validate data gathered, recorded and analysed.

3.4.4 Confirmability

Lastly, confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study are entirely based on the intended focus of the study, and are not subject to the researcher's bias (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). To enhance confirmability of the study, correspondence checking was utilised whereby the researcher sent the supervisor transcripts of her interviews so that the supervisor could check whether her own categorization of themes corresponds with those of the researcher. Also for as a measure of the research to comply with confirmability, the research further depends on the use of the audit trial technique whereby she will make available raw data (participants' voice recordings) as well as the transcripts to be used as audit trials in ensuring the confirmability of the study. Audit trials are said to offer "visible evidence-from process and product- that the researcher did not simply find what he or she set out to find" (Anney, 2014, p. 279).

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Qualitative research studies tend to raise different ethical concerns such as the participants right to privacy and avoiding any misinterpretations of data gathered (Sanjari, Bahram, Fomani, Shoghi & Cheraghi, 2014). Therefore ethical concerns such as anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent should be taken into account when undertaking qualitative research (Sanjari, Bahram, Fomani, Shoghi & Cheraghi, 2014). Halai (2006, p.5) postulate that "Sound research is a moral and ethical endeavour and should be concerned with ensuring that the interests of those participating in a study are not harmed as a result of research being done". Therefore the researcher will discuss ethical issues that she took into account when conducting the study.

3.5.1 Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent

Although one cannot be certain of all ethical issues which may arise from a research project, one can minimize such challenges (Bailey, 2007). Due to the kind of stressors present in correctional institutions and the stress which emanates from them the researcher made sure that

potential participants are adequately informed about the intended research, the researcher distributed participant information sheets (see appendix A). To ensure that they were fully aware of what the research was about. The principle of voluntary participation aims to show respect to the participant so that they don't feel forced to partake in the study by providing them with all the information about the research so they can decide for themselves whether they want to participate or not (Halai, 2006). According to Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2011), informed consent includes informing participants about all aspects of the research process which have the potential of influencing the participant's decision regarding participating in the study. "The standard components of consent are (a) provision of appropriate information, (b) participants' competence and understanding, (c) voluntariness in participating and freedom to decline or withdraw after the study has started, and (d) formalisation of the consent usually in writing" (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006, p.72).

3.5.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2011) note that when collecting data from participants, privacy issues tend to arise. In such situations, assuring anonymity and confidentiality becomes vital (Babbie, 1992). Babbie (1992) emphasizes that although these two terms are often used interchangeably, they are nevertheless, distinguishable. Anonymity refers to the fact that no person can link information gathered to any participants (Monette et al., 2011). Confidentiality on the other hand refers to promising the participants that although the researcher knows the participant and is aware of the person's responses, he or she promises not to make them public (Babbie, 1992). The researcher gave potential participants informed consent forms for signing (see appendix B). Signing the informed consent form meant that confidentiality was assured by the researcher to the participant.

3.5 3 Ethics Committee

The researcher obtained approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand to conduct the research as they saw it as being ethically sound. The ethics committee therefore assesses whether the study will not cause the participants any harm and whether consent is being requested from the participant to participate in the study (Garrard & Dawson, 2004).

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

3.6.1 Structural

The bureaucratic structure of the prison system, participants could have been reluctant to share some occupational factors causing them stress. To minimize this weakness of the study, the researcher informed the participants that confidentiality will be assured and no identifying details will be included anywhere in the final report. Therefore any information shared will only be known by the researcher and her supervisor and their true identities will not be revealed.

3.6.2 Research Instrumentation

Using semi-structured interview schedule presented itself as a limitation as it was time consuming because the participants went deeper with their responses which therefore required the researcher to invest more time with each participant.

Also language presented itself as a problem as the researcher found herself having to alternate different languages to accommodate Black participants who didn't understand some questions asked in English; also because they responded in African languages it took the researcher longer to transcribe the data back to English.

3.6.3 Sampling

A further limitation identified was that the non-probability, convenience sampling procedure used to select the participants of the study will preclude generalization of the findings to the broader population of correctional officers.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology used to conduct the study. The qualitative approach was used to answer the research question being studied. Non-probability sampling and its convenience sampling method were utilised to get the participants of the study. To gather information from the participants, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from participants. Also the trustworthiness and ethical consideration of the study were discussed as well as the study limitations.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter will discuss the findings of the study. The findings will be discussed according to the objectives of the study. Data were gathered for the purpose of determining how male correctional officers from Leeuwkop prison cope with occupational stress. Data were gathered through the use of interviews, the interview schedule contained 14 questions that the 25 correctional officers were asked. Therefore the present chapter will discuss the following;

- The demographic of the participants of the study will be analysed; the motivation for becoming a correctional officer will be explored and lastly their work experience as correctional officers will be discussed;
- The second part of the chapter will look at correctional officers understanding of occupational stress;
- The third part of the chapter will explore correctional officers' perceptions of how occupational stress impacts on their professional and personal lives;
- The researcher will go on to discuss the coping mechanisms correctional officers employ in dealing with occupational stress; and

- Lastly services offered by the institution to assist correctional officers in dealing with occupational stress will be discussed.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Table 4.1 Demographic information of participants

	Participants	Total number of participants
Gender	All males	25
Race	Black	23
	Coloured	1
	White	1
Age	20-30	3
	31-40	12
	41-50	6
	51-60	4
Work experience	1-10	12
	11-20	4
	21-30	8
	31-40	1

The participants of the study were all male. All the participants have worked as correctional officers for over one year which was the benchmark set for partaking in the study, which all the participants met. Their work experience varied from three years' work experience to 32 years, with six participants working at the prisons' Juvenile centre (Medium B) and 19 participants working at the prison Maximum facility.

Maximum Facility- refers to an institution where problematic offenders reside, these offenders are considered to pose a threat to staff and the community, and as a result their movement is restricted. The facility is highly secured to prevent escape, their movement is rigorously supervised (Matshaba, 2007).

Medium facility- medium facilities are moderately restricted. Unlike maximum facilities, offenders residing in medium facilities are allowed to move around more with supervision as they engage in programmes and activities aimed at motivating them to adopt new behaviours (Matshaba, 2007). The researcher did not find any differences with regards to the experience of stressors by correctional officers either at Medium B or Maximum facility.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS MOTIVATION OF BECOMING CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

Table 4.2 Motivation to join DCS

Number of participants	Motivation	Participants responses
1	To secure an income	P20: .. <i>"I was just looking for a secure job and income than I landed here"</i>
10	The love for the job/wanting to make a difference	<p>P2 : <i>"I love working with the youth making a difference in their lives"</i></p> <p>P3: <i>"curiosity mostly but also it was my passion"</i></p> <p>P5: <i>"I wanted to part of the organisation that brings change to Africa, and save people's lives"</i></p> <p>P6" <i>it has always been my passion....."</i></p> <p>P12 <i>"hmm I wanted to help society to be safe"</i></p>

14	Lack of other (preferred) opportunities	<p>P4: <i>“there were no jobs. But I like it now”</i></p> <p>P7: <i>“nothing motivated me; I was just looking for a job”</i></p> <p>P8: <i>“actually I wanted to be a teacher however I ended up here but later found out it was similar working with them”</i></p> <p>P10: <i>“actually to put it straight, by than I was just looking for a job”</i></p> <p>P13: <i>“I could not afford to go to varsity so I applied at correctional services and I was employed “</i></p> <p>P21: <i>“ahh for me it was part of getting a job, I got motivated when I started here”</i></p>
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Table 4.2 details participant’s motivation to become correctional officers. 14 participants joined the department due to lack of opportunities while others loved the job and wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. Davidson (2010) as cited in Zaidi and Iqbal (2012) argue that many factors are at play when a person chooses a career path, such as the family considerations, the salary paid for that occupation, the personality of the individual and available opportunities. Research done by Zaidi and Iqbal (2012) found that there is a strong correlation between job selection and job satisfaction which therefore meant that choosing the right career ultimately impacts on a workers’ job satisfaction. With the sub-theme *“lack of other opportunities”* having more respondents under it in the study may raise some concerns particularly because correctional officer’s jobs require them to ensure the safety of prisons. Therefore if they lack the satisfaction to do their work, they might not do it optimally. It is argued that low levels of job satisfaction among correctional officers has been found to produce undesirable workplace behaviours; such as “ using the organisation’s time to pursue personal tasks, psychological and practical withdrawal from the job, and behavioural changes that alter the work place environment (Getahun, Sims & Hummer, nd. p.1). although lack of career choice may impact on job satisfaction and performance, however it is also noted that Job crafting may assist in this regard. Job crafting is defined as when workers redesign their jobs to make them more pleasurable, by so doing employees are able to engage better with their work and work environment, they are more resilient and thrive in their work (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2008). It may be argued that some participant of the study have engaged in job crafting that has allowed them to eventually fall in love with their work, for instance participant 23 noted; *“In the beginning when I applied I was doing civil engineering but I was struggling*

to get a job so I applied here thinking I will further myself but it did not happen because I fell in love with the work”. Job crafting happens in three different ways, firstly some may modify the boundaries of their jobs by either taking more or less tasks or changing how they perform these tasks, secondly some job crafters change the way in which they interact with other people in their work environment to build healthy working relations and lastly other job crafters change how they cognitively perceive their jobs by attaching value into their work and the positive impact their jobs have on other people (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2008).

4.4 CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS’ UNDERSTANDING OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

The first objective of the study was to find out about the level of understanding correctional officers have of the term ‘occupational stress’. The study revealed that all participants understood what occupational stress is however they differed in how they explained it. A possible reason for this could have been language which possibly prevented some correctional officers from articulating well what occupational stress is. The researcher however was flexible with language use as she explained the term occupational stress in IsiZulu for those participants who didn’t understand it well.

Table 4.3 Participants understanding of occupational stress

THEMES-->	Stress related to work conducted	Stress related to lack of support by superiors	Ambiguous responses
	<i>P2 “I am not sure but I think its related to work stress, the challenges that one can face and how it affected that person”</i>	<i>P13” it’s when you come to work and you do not get assisted, maybe with an offender or your</i>	<i>P4 “how can I put it, eish I don’t know”</i>

PARTICIPANTS UNDERSTANDING OF OCCUPATIONAL STRES		<i>personal life and that stresses you out.”</i>	
	<i>P3 “Its stress related to work. That’s is what I understand about it”</i>	<i>P 18 “I think it’s the kind of work you do, especially if you don’t receive enough support”</i>	<i>P16” hmm everywhere there is stress”</i>
	<i>P7 “I think its stress related to your work”</i>	<i>P19 “Stress relating to the non recognition to people’s qualification and emotions”</i>	
	<i>P8 “challenges people face in the workplace, when you need to do activities and there are no equipment’s and it leads to frustrations.”</i>		
	<i>P9 “my understanding hmmm, it’s the challenges you face, like here”</i>		
	<i>P11 “its stress related to the work you do I think”</i>		
	<i>P15 “its stress that you may experience at work”</i>		

Table 4.3 is a representation of some of the participant’s responses, it highlights participants understanding of what occupational stress is. Some of the participants explained the phenomenon in relation to the grievances they have with the organisation, for instance participant 19 expressed that not enough is being done by their institution to ensure the recognition of their previous qualifications and that causes him not to like his work.

Occupational stress is defined as the inability to balance the pressure that comes with one’s job and their abilities to execute the work requirements (Holmlund-Rytkönen & Strandvik, 2005 as cited in Yaacob & Long, 2015). It is argued that occupational stress is a subjective phenomenon; each person makes their own interpretation of their experiences and circumstances in the workplace (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013). Therefore if a person perceives discrepancy between his workplace demands and his ability to fulfil these demands, stress emerges (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013). On that note Ekundayo (2014) argues that stress is the influence by the interaction between the person and his environment, due to the emotional strain that occurs, the person physical and mental condition is affected.

4.5 OCCUPATIONAL STRESS EXPERIENCED BY LEEUWKOP PRISON MALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

When asked whether their jobs were stressful, 17 of the participants said that they found their jobs to be very stressful whilst the other six participants expressed that they do not experience stress in the workplace due to coping strategies they use to avoid the stress and the remaining

two saying that they sometime experience stress. This section of the study may be understood better through the lens of the theoretical model informing the study; The Job Demand-Control-Support model which fundamentally argues that an individual control over their work environment is crucial in determining employee's health (Jonge, Dollard, Dormann, Le Blanc & Houtman, 2000). It is noted that most people are not aware of occupational stress as it happens in their work space and pay less attention to it, some who are aware think that it will not impact on their productivity at work however it goes on to affect their health as well (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013). Furthermore, it is noted that stress for correctional officers is a silent killer since they are not aware of it, because most of them feel that it can only happen to weaker officers (ToeraBijins, 2012). It is also argued that correctional officers are seen as "first responder" because they experience emotional and mental trauma due to the work that they do and are often oblivious of the impact until it's too late (Toera Bijins, 2012) On this, participant 9 noted:

"Not really, if you are discipline than you will not have a stressful time here. If you do things that are not allowed in this environment and you end up being caught in between the department and inmate that's when it becomes stressful, if you disciplined than you will excel here"

Participant 21 however notes:

"I have never been stressed at work either than lack of opportunity to build you in your career, they don't groom us. I have been here for seven years but never attended any course"

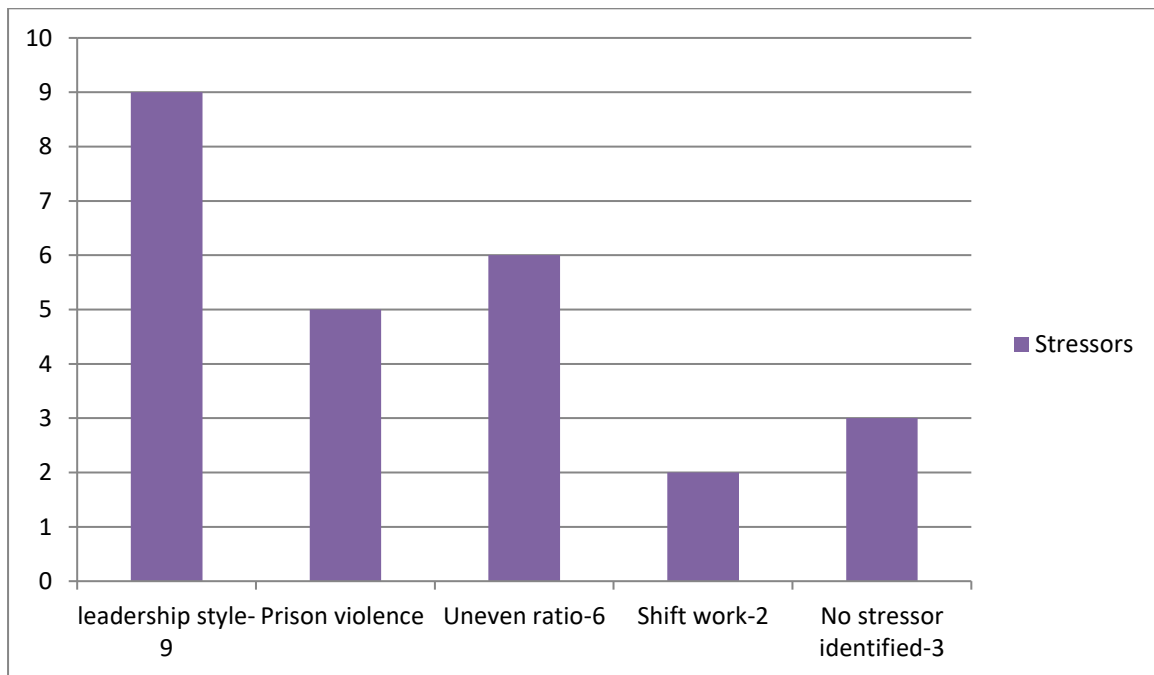
This therefore shows that the participant is dissatisfied with the lack of professional development in his institution. Such dissatisfaction can hinder his performance at work and lack of training will ultimately impact on his professionalism as a correctional officer as he is not equipped with necessary skills to help him adapt to the changing prison environment. This is supported by Hartman (2003) who states that training of correctional staff is crucial due to the evolving methods used with regards to the incarceration of inmates. Furthermore, Hartman (2003) notes that training is not only beneficial for the offenders and the institution, but also it are essential for officers as they learn how to protect themselves too.

Participant 7 also noted

“No I won’t say it’s stressful, it’s just frustrations, every work space now and then there will be stress”

Stressors correctional officers face in their workplace was also looked at. Figure 4.1 identifies the most common stressor identified by the participants. Correctional officers are said to be faced with high levels of workplace stress and due to the nature of their work which can negatively impact on the safety and security of the prison (Brower, 2013). These stressors are elaborated further below.

Figure 4.1 Stressors identified by participants



4.5.1 Leadership Style

With regards to the management of prisons, it is noted that the management of prisons should always reflect ethical values as it deals primarily with human beings, both the staff members

and the offenders, therefore when making decisions about these human beings, special consideration should be in place (Colye, 2009). When asked what situations in their work environment or duties contribute to their work stress participant 7 said: *“I would say management style. While P10 responded to the question by saying: sometimes, the people around that you work with like your supervisor or manager may cause stress, their leadership style and stuff”*. It is noted that those in managerial positions in prisons should enthuse their staff members with a sense of value for the work that they do. They also need to have a vision for the prison and have high standards for the work they do and also constantly reassure employees that the work they doing with inmate are important for rebuilding healthy societies (Colye, 2009). Judging from the response of participants, it can be assumed that most managers at the two prison facilities used for the study portray traits of autocratic leadership, participant 9 pointed to management style as contributing to his stress, he said: *“mostly I would say, sometimes management they use their rank to stress you, if you allow them than you going to be stressed”*. Gonos (2013) describes autocratic leadership style as follows:

- Subordinates are not included in the decision making processes of the organisation
- Managers don't compromise regarding their decisions and do not want to explain their behaviours to subordinates
- Operational tasks are set by management without consulting employees and do not allow them to show initiative

It's noted that management style has an impact on work-related stress (Hsieh, 2015). This is supported by Chovwen (2013, p. 115) who states that bad leadership *“induces tension and mental instability in workers which in turn negatively affect their work performance”*.

When asked whether they are allowed to make their own decisions when doing their work, five participants adamantly said that no job autonomy is granted to them. For instance participant 15 said; *“not always, management usually come to us with their own decisions, they tell us what to do”* , similar sentiment were expressed by participant 6 who said ; *“No, our job is already in the policy so we need to follow the policy”*.Participant 19 also felt that not much job autonomy is allowed when he said; *“ no we not decision makers, decisions come from above”*, Participant 25 also shared that; *“no we are not allowed, we must always take instructions from them. They say complain and comply”*. On the other hand 12 participants felt that management

does give them the opportunity to make their own decision concerning their work however these decisions should always be in line with the departments' Acts and Policies. Some of their responses were; participant 3 *"decisions, hmmm yes we are. But they must be within the policy. For example, you want an offender to work; you can't take an offender outside to work if they have not served a certain portion of their sentence maybe a third of his term, you cannot take a rapist or a murderer outside"* participant 9 also gave a similar response regarding aligning decisions to policies, he said; *"yes you can use your own discretion that will benefit both parties. As long as you aligning to the policy, so here you can make your own decisions but must be according to the department"*. Participant 10 also had a similar response to this question; *"yes I am allowed to use my own discretion but not forgetting the policies"*. Of the 12 participants who said they allowed to make decisions, nine of them stressed that these decisions should at all times be in line with policies, while the other three said that all the decisions made should be reported back to management. The remaining eight participants shared that they 'sometimes' allowed to make their own decisions. Some of these participants shared that;

Participant 1 *"yes sometimes we make our own decisions. Like when inmates are fighting I must resolve it there without involving managers"*

Participant 17 *"at times yes, like with gangsterism we need to take a decision there and there when they fight"* . Nyberg (2009) notes postulates that workers should be given space to navigate their work duties independently without having to be limited by a strict organisation and its rules and processes, therefore the most fundamental role of the leader is to provide support to his/her employees at all times.

The participant's responses may be better understood through the Job Demand-Control-Support model which argues that if the job is demanding and workers have low control over their work tasks, health problems may arise because their frustrations ultimately affects their wellbeing and functioning, contrary to this are jobs that are not too demanding and allow high control by workers; these jobs positively impact on workers as they lead to mastery of tasks and self- efficacy (Jonge, Dollard, Dormann, Le Blanc & Houtman, 2000). Regarding the participants responses in this regard, it's clear that most felt that they had some sense of control over their work however for those who said no job autonomy exists are those who expressed their frustration with their work in most of their responses, this than shows the importance of

a worker sense of autonomy in the work he does as this has positive correlations with their wellbeing.

The experience of job autonomy is vital to determining employee's job satisfaction. Increasing job autonomy in the workplace has proven to have positive linkages with job performance (Walley & Lowe, n.d). Achieving job autonomy in the workplace may essentially require changing how management operate (Walley & Lowe, n.d). Therefore in order to increase autonomy, organisations need to "flatten hierarchies, decentralising authority and upgrading workers skills through training" (Walley & Lowe, n.d, p.1). An interesting trend appears with data on job autonomy whereby the participants interpret job autonomy differently although working in the same environment. This therefore shows people's different ways dealing with potential stress. Giebels, Reuver, Rispins and Ufkes (2016) argue that in an organisation where change is embraced, more employees are take personal responsibility for change and innovation. These organisations therefore stimulate change-oriented behaviour which encourages employees to be autonomous (Giebels, Reuver, Rispins & Ufkes, 2016).

4.5.2 Violence

Correctional officers are faced with many stressors in their working environment, one of which is tied directly to the offenders that they supervise who often pose as threats to the correctional officers, what increases this risk is that they have to deal with inmate violence on a daily basis (Brower, 2013). Five participants identified inmate's violence as a serious stressor in their workplace. Some of their responses were;

Participant 1: *"I can say yes because always we working with different people, some are aggressive and get angry for no reason"*

Participant 3: *"what situations?, hmmm, I would say violence. Sometime you think it not something that will stress you but it does cause they fight for anything here"*

Participant 16: *"yes its stressful sometimes especially when the guys in here fight"*

Participant 24: *"like take if the offenders are stabbing on another and we have to disarm them, so it's very stressful"*

The possibility of inmate violence has been identified as the most frequent source of correctional officer's occupational stress (Finn, 2000). Prison violence ranges from "assaults, hostage taking, riots, inmates killing each other, and inmate suicides" (Finn, 2000). Violence in prisons is inevitable as correctional officers work in environments with people having very limited freedom of movement and to the outside world, this in turn becomes a problem for correctional officers who have to work with them on a daily basis (Brower, 2013). In the same vein, Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato and Dewa (2013) also note that correctional officers are exposed to risk factors in the work environment as they house people against their will for the purpose of rehabilitating them so they can be law-abiding citizens. This therefore means that correctional officers and offenders exist uncomfortably with each other, these groups individually use coping strategies to survive in the prison environment and most times these coping strategies utilised are negative. Coping mechanisms utilised may include elements of violence, which often lead to heightened stress levels for either the correctional officers or the offenders (McCarthy, 2012). Perceived dangerousness of correctional officer's role has been found by previous studies to increase their stress levels (McCarthy, 2012). Finn (2001) as cited in McCarthy (2012, p.11) interestingly notes that "officers who are not mentally prepared to deal with these stressors could be rendered ineffective to the job, and might even jeopardize the safety and security of others within the prison".

Although literature points out the impact inmate violence has on correctional officers stress levels, however in relation to the participants of the study, inmate violence was not identified as a major contributor of stress as only five participants mentioned violence as a contributor of stress, while the others pointed out that they have found other ways of dealing with inmate violence in a way that doesn't cause them stress. This may be because people have different coping strategies therefore are not affected by inmate violence the same way, or they might be in denial of the impact inmates violence might have on them.

4.5.3 Uneven ratio

When collecting data, six Correctional Officers pointed out that the other reason that cause them stress is that of prison overcrowding and the prison ratio. The following participants expressed their feelings regarding the matter of prisoners being more than them;

Participant 8: *"job is stressful particularly because we working with inmates. Like here in maximum the ratio between stuff and inmates does not balance, there are posts not filled because it's supposed to be 2 officers to 1 offender here in maximum but it's not like that"*

Participant 16: *“hmmm I would say the environment itself and the ratio of the prisoners and us because they are many and we are less”*

Participant 20: *“for now I can say yes because of overcrowding and the shortage of manpower that can cause a lot of stress”*

It is noted that the delays in filling the posts causes strain on the remaining staff members as they have to do extra tasks (Tapscott, 2005). This strain is said to have health implications on the staff members as this situation causes stress and burnout on correctional officers (Tapscott, 2005). Overcrowding causes many problems in prisons, firstly it dehumanises offenders and makes them vulnerable to man communicable diseases. Also it makes supervision of prisoners difficult as it burdens the prison staff (Dankwa, n.d). The unbalanced ratio between correctional officers and offenders is perceived to be endangering the lives of correctional officers, when asked as to whether the institution adequately addresses their personal safety within the facility; 17 participants said they feel safe within the prison, while the other eight participants said they don't feel safe. The participants had the following to say;

Participant 7: *“no zero, you have to sort yourself out”*

Participant 10: *“no it does not, in a way that the ratio of number of offenders we work with is more than us. We are not safe”*

Participant 11: *“I won't lie to you; I work in a section where all the trouble makers have to come to our unit, so it becomes extremely dangerous. We are expected to work with them, sometimes you isolated in a hall alone with this group of inmate because of the shortage of staff and you can't sit and say you don't have anybody to go with you. At the end of the day management needs their statistics”*

This therefore is a clear indication of how the ratio of offenders to correctional officers compromises the lives of correctional officers on a daily basis. Vickovic (2015, p. 20) notes “Correctional officers experience higher number of workplace non-fatal violent incidents per 1,000 employees than any other profession except for police officers”. As result of this, many studies in the past have found that perceived danger from correctional officers is the most potent predictor of stress amongst this occupational group (Vickovic, 2015). Understaffing is said to lead to different kinds of stress and more duties as follows;

- Insufficient time to finish tasks, eg. Head counts, administrative work, attending to inmates requests and needs

- Lack of backup shall inmate violence occur
- Due to the workload, taking leave for family events or emergencies is impossible (Finn, 2000).

4.5.4 Shift work

Two participants did point out shift work as being one of their stressors. For instance participant 6, when asked about what situations in his work environment or duties contribute to his work stress he said;

“Night shift work can be problematic. And sometimes we disagree with my supervisor”

Micieli (2008) notes that stressed officers often lack motivation in their work and become passive. Also its noted that correctional officers stress is not solely rooted on offenders, there are also other by-products that impact on correctional officers such as shift lag which is defined as when a worker experiences physiological fatigue as result of shift work that often leads to impaired performance and demotivation not only on the job but also their personal lives (Pollock, 2005 as cited in Micieli, 2008).

4.6 TO EXPLORE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF HOW OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IMPACTS ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIVES

The workplace has transformed over the past years due to many changes occurring such as; technological advancements, mass retrenchments happening in most organisations, demand for more productivity and increased competition, as result many people spend most of their time at work striving to meet their work obligations ignoring the “stressors that impact negatively on their social and personal lives which can in turn impact negatively on their mental and physical health (Jahanzeb, 2010 as cited in Yaacob & Long, 2015).

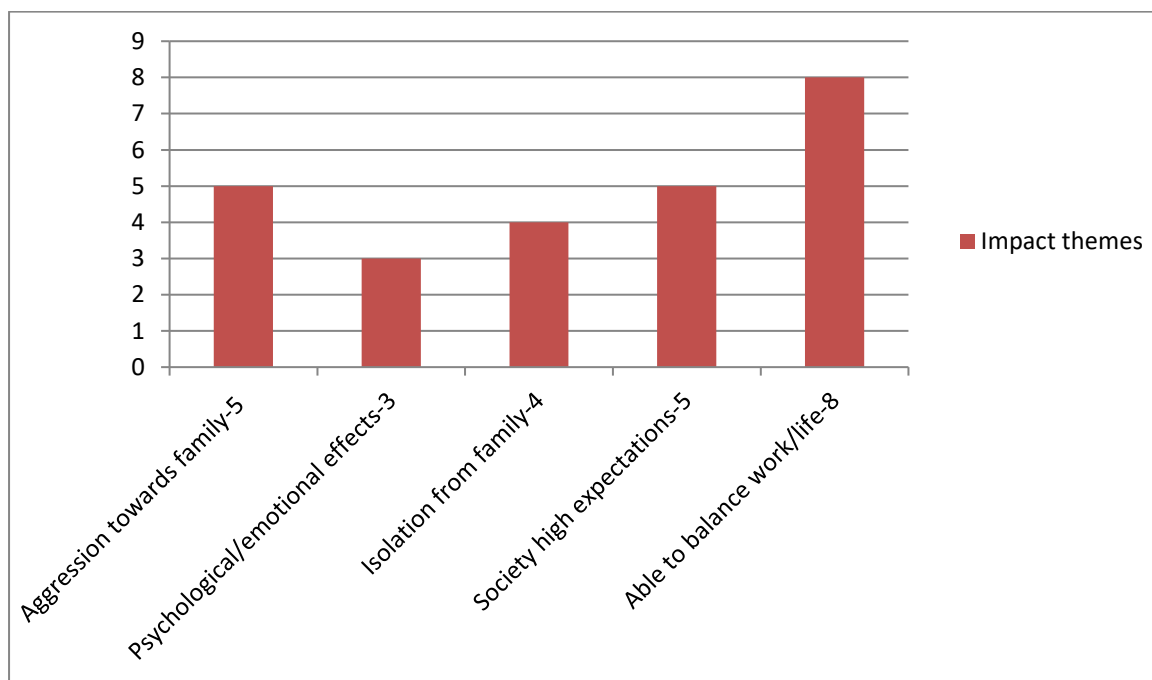
Occupational Stress has been associated with decreased organisational commitment and satisfaction (Vickovic, 2015). Behaviourally occupational stress among correctional officers has been linked to increased organisational turnover and absenteeism (Vickovic, 2015). According to McCarthy (2012) absenteeism is regarded as employee withdrawal, for correctional officers, in most cases absenteeism was due to work stress. Sheridan (1985) as

cited in McCarthy (2012, p. 50) defines withdrawal as “a reduction in the employee’s socio-psychological attraction to or interest in the work organisation”. One participant admitted that due to his work stress and work overload he often takes leave in order to avoid coming to work and dealing with work challenges, Participant 13 said that;

“As an individual currently I’m working at the single cells where problematic prisoners are housed, my superiors who are supposed to come see these prisoners everyday don’t come, and that frustrates me and is one of the reasons that I also report sick and don’t come to work”

With regards to their personal lives, 17 correctional officers revealed that their work does indeed impact on the kind of person they are outside their work environment. Figure 4.2 represents participant’s responses on the personal challenges they face which emanate from the work they do. The challenges said by the participants were grouped according to the commonality of their responses and arranged to themes.

Figure 4.2 impact of occupational stress on correctional officer’s personal lives



4.6.1 Aggression towards family/isolation from family

It is noted that correctional officers often show a great deal of anger towards their families and friends (Misis, kim, Cheeseman, Hogan & Lambert, 2013). Due to their prison work of having to deal with offenders mind games, attending to managers requests, the administration that comes with the job and shift work, some correctional officers eventually change as their work

duties impacts on their day to day lives, their parenting skills are impaired, their decision making capacity both at home and at work is negatively impaired and ultimately some fall into the trap of alcohol, drugs and violence (ToerBjins, 2013). This was confirmed by participant 1 – *“yes, since I got here I have anger; my behaviour has changed towards my family”*. Also participant expressed how his work has affected how he is with his family, he said; participant 13- *“yes a lot because we spend half our time here at work with offenders, sometime you find yourself getting irritated by minor things your children do”*. This therefore shows the impact prison maladaptive culture may have on correctional officers personal life as the conditioning of the prison environment ultimately impact on how they interact with their families. A possible reason for this is that they constantly have to use force to discipline offenders, therefore the aggressive and disciplinarian traits eventually become embedded in their personalities and behaviours that it start spilling over to their relationships with their loved ones. ToersBjins (2013) further postulates that correctional officers are often very disconnected from the world especially when they are within the high walls of prisons; they are sadly isolated from their families most of the time due to shift work.

4.6.2 Psychological/Emotional effects

Correctional officers are considered to play a vital role in the functioning of prisons as they are responsible for the custody of offenders. In their duties to ensure safety in prisons, they are in the process exposed to hard situations that produce tension which eventually leads to psychological distress (Bezerra, De Assis & Consantinio, 2016). This is confirmed by participant 2 who shared that; *“you know sometimes you come here and work and you here things like sodomy and get psychologically affected”*. With regard to the work they do, participant 18 shared how he feels his work affects him; *“Going to mortuary seeing dead new born babies gets difficult when you have children of your own”*. It is therefore clear how such experiences can eventually affect correctional officers psychological functioning as these occurrences happen regularly within their work environment. Psychological effects are not helpful to either the correctional officer nor the institution as the correctional officers will no longer be able to execute their work duties optimally. In a research study done by Lipp on correctional officers occupational stress, she found that with regards to psychological manifestation of stress, most correctional officers expressed symptoms such as “anxiety, tension, anguish, insomnia, alienation, interpersonal difficulties, self-doubt, excessive worrying, inability to concentrate, difficulty relaxing, anger and emotional hypersensitivity” (Bezerra, De Assis & Consantinio, 2016, p.2).

4.6.3 Society high expectations

The work of correctional officers is considered by communities as a measure of ensuring public safety and for this reason correctional officers understand that unethical behaviour in or outside the work environment may lead to the public having less confidence in them (Hall,nd). Five participants felt that due to the work they do, society tends to expect them to behave in a certain way that reflect good behaviours, some of their responses were as follows; participant 3 –“*look, whether we like it or not the work we do will affect us. We wear uniform and certain things are expected from us*”. Participant 7 also shared that –“*in a negative way I would say when you wearing a uniform you no longer yourself*”. Due to many dysfunctional families present in societies, the Department of Correctional Services in South Africa is considered to being a crucial role player in creating and maintaining a functional correcting environment for children and the youth (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). Such high expectation have a potential of adding to correctional officers stress levels as they might neglect their true selves in efforts of conforming to societal expectations, by so doing maintaining a positive image for the Department. It is therefore for this reason that the Department of Correctional Services is held in high regard in communities as they are expected to work with other institutions to ensuring the betterment of families and communities (Department of Correctional Services, 2005).

4.6.4 Work-life Balance

In a study done by Micieli (2008) it was found that most correctional officers often take out their tensions onto their families, they believe to be tightening discipline at home. Work-family conflict arises when the person’s work and social or familial life are incompatible and causes conflicts that lead to spill over’s between the individuals work-and family/social life (Micieli, 2008). Stressful situations at work leads employees to suffer from fatigue, depression as well as tension which then affects the family system, also work-family conflict can also cause behavioural changes in a person where they use their work roles, positions and behaviours onto their families which than leads to conflict at home (Lambert, Hogan & Barton, 2002). Contrary to the effects of work stress as mentioned above, eight participants of the study felt that they are able to balance their work life and their personal lives. For instance, Participant 6 said: *my personal life is not really affected. I spend 50 % with my family and the other time I am here, so it’s balanced*. Participant 9 said that he is able to not allow work to affect his personal life by -; *when I come to work I leave my personal issues outside and focus on my duties and vice versa*. This therefore shows that although they work in the same environment, correctional

officer's reaction to stressors in their workplace is hugely different and this may be influenced by their varying coping strategies that are explained below.

4.7 TO DISCOVER THE COPING MECHANISMS CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS EMPLOY IN DEALING WITH OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

When asked how they deal with work stress, its only one participant who said he does not experience stress, with four stating that they accept certain situations as they can't change them and don't take everything personal.

Participant 7 *"my option is one, if I can't change anything I just let it go. Some things you can't change"*

Participant 24 *"you don't have to take everything happening here personal, that helps me"*

The rest of the 20 participants admitted to being stressed at work however they had varying techniques to dealing with stress.

Most participants said that they engage in activities at work that helps them to relieve stress. it is argued that spending sometime on a hobby a worker enjoys doing may help him in restoring some energy because when a person engages in something they enjoy doing is a functional way of relieving stress (Bickford, 2005).

Participant 1: *"hmmmm exercising and playing soccer sometimes if it's too much I take sleeping pills to sleep"*

Participant 8: *"we have activities here at work where one can participate, like soccer. When your mind is not right one can go and relieve stress"*

While the above participants engaged in safer and healthier ways of dealing with stress, some however said they usually resort to less conventional ways of dealing with stress, the participants noted;

Participant 19: *“mostly after work I exercise or have a drink”*

Participant 25: *“after work I just go to the bar and drink to relieve the stress”*

It is argued that compared to other professions, correctional officers are said to consume more alcohol and also use tobacco to relieve stress especially those officers who perceived their work environment as being too harsh (Vickovic, 2015). This is further supported by participant 13 who said; *“you know most that people who work in stressful environment usually drink, the fact of the matter is people in higher authority do not advise us to go for counselling. We are affected differently so some may see people stabbed and become traumatised and some do not”*. Many studies have found significant association between occupational stress and the heightened levels of alcohol consumption by employee (Anderson, n.d). Alcoholism in the workplace has been linked to arriving late at work as well as leaving early, and for some disciplinary suspension as result of lack of productivity (Anderson, n.d).

The Institute of Alcohol Studies (2014) similarly notes that heavy drinking may also have daunting impact on employees work performance due to possible employee absenteeism, poor decision making capability or damaged relations with customers or clients of that organisation.

4.8 TO UNDERSTAND SERVICES OFFERED BY THE INSTITUTION TO ASSIST CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS IN DEALING WITH OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

This section will analyse services offered by Leeuwkop prison to assist correctional officers to deal with occupational stress. Also the support from colleagues and superiors will be looked at to gather whether or not they receive the necessary support.

4.8.1 Co-worker support

When asked about co-workers support, 22 participants said that they help each other whenever someone requires assistance, particularly when prisoners are fighting.

Participant 9: *“I would say that my colleagues are supportive, when I need them they there, when they need me too I am always there”*

Participant 12: *“yes we support each other; you can’t work alone with such work”*

Participant 17: *“yes they are, each day we sit down and talk and plan so that helps”*

Participant 22: *yes we help each other; we work together in the sections. No member works alone we always have to peer up*

The other two participants felt they don’t get enough support from their co-workers while the remaining one said they help them sometimes.

Participant 7: *“ahhh I would say no, you need to see for yourself here”*

Participant 19: *“No no, everyone is for himself here”*

Participant 21: *“I don’t have too much problems that I share with colleagues, maybe my supervisor only I can share my personal or work related problems”*

Department of Justice and Attorney-General (n.d) importantly notes that’s the way in which employees are supported plays a vital role in reducing work stress. Amongst workers, support is said to vary from helping in tasks or through the provision of information (Department of Justice and Attorney-General, n.d).

It is argued that in an environment where co-worker support exists, workers are freer to engage with one another and be honest which has a positive input on job satisfaction (Ibrahim, 2014). In a study conducted by Ibrahim (2014, p.74), it was found that “individuals who experience higher levels of emotional support, such as caring and empathy and instrumental support, such as assistance in problem solving or information exchange; perceived themselves to a valued members of the organization”.

4.8.2 Superiors Support

With regards to superiors support, 16 participants responded by saying that they do receive sufficient support from their managers however this was not for every participants.

Participant 1 : *“yes they are always on our side. When there is something I don’t know, they help as well as if there is something I cannot solve regarding a inmates”*

Participant 3: *“Yes, here at medium B they are very supportive. Actually leeuwkoop in general is very supportive, it’s a homely environment. You can call your supervisors anytime, anywhere”*

Participant 17: *“yes because whenever we have a problem we go to them and they find a solution”*

Participant 18: *“yes definitely, they are always there to assist us”*

Four participants said they felt that their superiors do not support them while the other five participants said they support them sometimes.

Participant 10: *No, because sometimes they tend not to recognise the work you do. They do not communicate with, instead my supervisor divides us*

Participant 19: *no, they are not supportive; they will wait for you to come to them*

Supervisor’s support is regarded as the reassurance to the worker that he/she has access to the help of the supervisor, whether it is in a form of communicating information, providing empathy or other tasks related assistance (Ismail, Suhaimi, Bakar & Alam, 2013). The support from supervisors is said to positively impact on the employee’s sense of purpose in the workplace well as provide hope when confronted with challenging situations in the workplace (Mansor, Fontaine & Chong, 2003& Simpson, 2000 as cited in Ismail, Suhaimi, Bakar & Alam, 2013) support from supervisor’s and co-workers is regarded as a cushion to the stress workers may be experiencing due to the demands of their work that makes them feel as though they are not in control and without this cushion of support, workers struggle to cope (Department of Justice and Attorney-General ,n.d).

This aspect of coping may be further understood according to the Job Demand-Control-Support model, looking specifically at its support element. It argues that if workers have low control over their work tasks, plus high task demands but with little social support, their wellbeing may be affected. However if they are given support, this may act as a buffer to the strain that they might be experiencing due to their work (Hausser, Mojzisch & Schulz-Hardt, 2010). It further notes that “increased control buffers high demands most effectively under conditions of high social support” (Hausser, Mojzisch & Schulz-Hardt, 2010, p. 3).

When asked about the services available at the institutions to help them to deal with occupational stress, 22 of the participants were aware of these services provided by the EAP

unit while the remaining three said that they do not know of any services offered by the organisation. Table 4.6 demonstrates the responses of some participants who said they are aware of the services and those who said they weren't aware of the services offered by the prison to help with occupational stress or any personal problems they might have.

Table 4.6 Examples of participant's awareness of services offered by the organisation

Participants aware of services	Participants not aware of services
P4: <i>"yes, what is it called? Hmmm EAP "</i>	P17: <i>"no I don't know of any services, all we do to ease our minds is to play games like soccer"</i>
P5: <i>"yes, yes we have. Most of the times we attend courses, Also we have khuluma ndoda forum and we meet and talk about our problems"</i>	P 21: <i>"for me there are none"</i>
P10: <i>"yes I have heard of EAP, they refer people with problems"</i>	P 25: <i>"No no no there is nothing here"</i>
P15: <i>"yes we have the EAP where the social worker helps when you have a problem"</i>	

However eight participants felt that the people providing these services do not adhere to confidentiality. Their responses were as follow;

Participant 7: *"yes there are, there are relevant offices but the problem is EAP doesn't respect privacy that why we prefer to go outside than to use her so to protect yourself"*

Participant 11: *"yes we have an EAP who is working here at leeuwkop, two weeks ago she was here, she sometimes comes with doctors to come and talk to us"*

Participant 19: *"yes we have the EAP, but no training facilities"*

Although majority participants were indeed aware of these services offered as shown above, however 19 of the participant admitted to have never used these services for different reasons, with only five who have used them whether through wellness workshops or trainings with only participant 19 who said he has used their counselling services; *"yes there is the employee*

assistance worker; I used them three years ago when my wife passed away, since she was diagnosed I was alone and had to deal with all alone. But the EAP was able to assist me because my children were still young at that time so it was stressful”.

Those who never used the services said the following;

Participant 4: *“no I haven’t. I haven’t had any problems maybe when the time comes I will go. They do come here to check if everything is still well”*

Participant 10: *“no I have never used them, I believe counselling does not only come from a professional I believe, a friend of family can do it”*

Participant 20: *on my side no cause so far I’m coping*

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) are defined as programs that aim to address workers concerns and workplace problems that could possibly lead to various workplace challenges such as violence, decreasing morale among workers or also impact negatively on the physical and mental health of employees. With the growing need for these services over the years, many companies offer EAPs that target a range of health and productivity services for workers and companies for the purpose of not only improving organisational performance but also assist workers and their families (National Business Group on Health, 2008). Within the Department of Correctional Services, one of the reasons for developing EAP units in their facilities was due to stress management as they felt that they work with individuals that are perceived to be dangerous as well as the structural problems present in prisons, there was a need for these services because the recreation and sporting facilities were not adequate to assist staff members to deal with stress (Bhoodram, 2010).

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter reported on the findings of the study. 25 male correctional officers were interviewed where the researchers gathered the participant’s demographics as well as their motivation to join correctional services. Participants understanding of occupational stress was explored, the researcher gathered that most of them understood this phenomenon however language presented itself as a limitation with regards to the participant’s responses. Many stressors were identified as leading to correctional officers occupational stress, these were; leadership style, prison violence, uneven ratio of offenders-to-correctional officers as well as

shift work. These stressors were discussed in detail in this chapter. Occupational stress tends to impact on employees productivity and personal lives, this correlation was discovered with correctional officer where the researcher gathered that as result to the stressors identified, correctional officers present; aggression towards their families, psychological effects, and their work sometimes isolates them from their families, and society has high expectations from them. This chapter lastly looked at correctional officers coping strategies as well as their utilisation of services offered by the Department of Correctional Services aimed at helping them to deal with occupational stress. The findings were substantiated with literature; the theoretical framework informing the study was also referred to when presenting the findings

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters have discussed literature relating to correctional officers, occupational stress and the coping strategies they use. The research design and methodology used when gathering participants and data were discussed as well as the findings of the study. The present chapter will therefore provide a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The study aimed to investigate how male correctional officers from Leeuwkop prison deal with occupational stress. The summary will be presented in relation to the four objectives of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS STUDY

5.2.1 Correctional officers understanding of occupational stress

The study revealed that most participants understood what occupational stress is and most of them explained it in relation to the dissatisfaction they have with their work or the organisation as a whole. Most of their dissatisfaction came with the risks involved in their work and how management was not adequately addressing their safety concerns, particularly regarding the ratio of offenders to officers which poses as a potent threat to the correctional officers as they sometimes feel overpowered by the offenders due to staff shortages. This may be better understood according to the theoretical framework informing the study; the Job Demand-Control-Support Model, as the participants felt that most of the time they have no control over their work and the demands of looking after so many offenders can be stressful for them.

5.2.2 Explore correctional officers' perceptions of how occupational stress impacts on their professional and personal lives

Under this objective, the findings revealed that professionally occupational stress has impacted negatively on correctional officers as it has led to decreased organisational commitment and satisfaction, most participants shared that they are not satisfied with their jobs however this was not for every participants as some expressed satisfaction with their work. Occupational stress has also contributed to increased levels of absenteeism by correctional officers; the participants mentioned that at times they stay away from work in order to cope with the stress. Alcohol intake was also identified as another impact occupational stress has on the lives of correctional officers as there were participants who said they drink in order to cope. The theoretical model informing the study, Job- Demand-Control-Support Model notes that if a person has no control over the work they do, and there is high task demand, workers tend to have mental health problems, burnout and low job satisfaction (Ibrahim & Zirwatul, 2013).

Regarding their personal lives, most participants shared that indeed their lives have been affected by the work they do with a few saying that they have not allowed their work to change the kind of people they are. Those that said they have been affected shared that since their joined the correctional services they have become: Firstly; aggressive towards their families, saying that due to the frustration they experience at work and the fact they often have to discipline offenders make them to exert the same behaviour with their families, particularly their children; Secondly some participants also shared that because of the nature of their work, they are isolated from their families as some work far from home and they are not allowed to bring cell phones to work that therefore causes them to disconnect with their loved ones; Thirdly society high expectations of them also came off as one of the personal effects correctional officers face as they are expected to behave a certain way within their communities because of their jobs and any deviation from this expectations paints them badly in society.

5.2.3 To discover the coping mechanisms correctional officers employ in dealing with occupational stress

The third objective was to discover the coping mechanisms correctional officers employ when dealing with occupational stress. Regarding the coping strategies, some participants said that they are not stressed as they understand that work is work and therefore they don't allow it to affect them however most of the participants said that in order to cope, they participates in sports offered by the institution such as soccer which has helps them to relieve stress. However other participants said that they drink after work as a measure of coping as the work stress can get too much for them.

5.2.4 Services offered by the institution to assist correctional officers in dealing with occupational stress

Under this objective, most participants told the researcher the institution has got an Employee Assistance Practitioner that attends to workers needs if they are stressed and also looks at improving their work environment, however most of these participants said they have never used the services offered by the Employee Assistance Practitioner because they do not trust her as they have had many problems of confidentiality with her, they therefore have resorted to not using the service. Some however said that they have attended wellness workshops organised by the unit and have found them to be helpful, with one participant who has used their counselling services. Participants shared that the EAP services are the only services they are aware of that are offered by the institution to help them deal with occupational stress.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Previous studies and literature reviewed revealed that correctional officer's work is very stressful. However with regards to the study conducted, inconsistent findings were gathered whereby some participants were able to relate their work duties to their stress, whereas other did identify the stressors in their work environment however shared that they are not stressed by them as they regard these stressors as normal in their line of work. This may be because they have normalised their work stress or they have developed strong coping strategies.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Leeuwkop Prison

The prison is on the right path in ensuring that their workers emotional and psychological needs are catered for as they not only have a unit designated for this, they also have sport programmes that the encourage their staff to participate in. However going forward, the prison management must advise the EAP unit to advertise their services more in a way that they will be attractive to correctional officers.

Also management need to attend to the uneven ratio occurring between offenders and correctional officers. Crime is a big problem in the country and until crime stats go down, prison overcrowding will remain a problem. Therefore correctional services superiors needs to

hire more correctional officers in order to balance out the ratio and in turn decrease some correctional officer's occupational stress.

5.4.2 Occupational social work practice

From what the participant said regarding EAP services, it's clear that the prison needs to hire more occupational social workers to provide counselling services and other wellness services to the prison staff. Also by hiring more people, more meso and macro intervention programmes can be established to help correctional officers to deal with occupational stress. Also the EAP unit must encourage correctional officers to use EAP external service providers if they are not comfortable using the in-house services, this may be a solution for those participants who feel they cannot trust the in-house EAP services.

5.4.3 Theory and Research

In South Africa, there is a need for more theory on correctional officer's occupational stress and coping as most of the literature found was from abroad. Also more research still needs to be done on correctional officers occupational stress and coping in South Africa where correctional officers from different prisons across the country are studied. This will be done for the purpose of understanding their different coping strategies and what influences them. Also future research needs to look at South African female correctional officers and how they cope with occupational stress present in prison settings and contrast those findings with those of male's correctional officers and thereafter come to a conclusion of the differences or similarities in their coping.

5.5 CONCLUDING COMMENT

The findings of the study therefore suggest that most male correctional officers working at Leeuwkop Prison do experience occupational stress. The finding show that the stress is not caused by a particular stressor, rather different stressors affect different officers depending of the work they do and where they are stationed within the prison. These range from stressors such as violence, the uneven ratio and leadership style that affect the officers. Some challenges feed onto others such as the uneven ratio influencing prison violence, so if management could hire more officers to balance the ratio of offenders-to-officers, than the officers will be better able to attend to prison violence without endangering their lives.

With regards to coping and services offered, currently not much is being done to attend to the needs of correctional officers as many don't feel comfortable with consulting with the in-house

employee assistance practitioner and therefore some resort to dysfunctional ways of coping such as drinking and staying away from work. However participants showed more interest in attending wellness workshops arranged by the EAP. Nelson Mandela once said “It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones” (Amnesty International, 2015, p.1). Although this may be true; however more measures need to be in place to ensure that the wellbeing of those who look after offenders is also catered for.

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Coping strategies used by Leeuwkop prison Correctional Officers when dealing with occupational stress

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APPENDIX A

Participant information sheet

Dear participant,

My name is Thulisile Raphadi, I am a post graduate student registered for a degree in Masters in occupational social work student at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research on the coping strategies employed by male correctional officers at Leeuwkop prison in Johannesburg in dealing with occupational stress. It is hoped that the information gathered from the study will assist in enhancing occupational social workers understanding about the occupational stress experienced by correctional officers and coping strategies employed.

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. If you are interested in taking part I will arrange for an interview with you at a time and place that suits you best. The interviews will take approximately one hour, thirty minutes. If you feel at any time within the process of the study that you wish to withdraw, you may do so and you can refuse to answer any question you feel uncomfortable with answering.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. Information gathered will be shared with my supervisor. The tapes used and the interview schedule will be stored in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for six years if no publication emanates from the study. Please be alert that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to ask any questions. I will answer them to the best of my ability. I may be contacted on 082 9583898 or my supervisor, Ms Francine Masson on 0117174480. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study; an abstract will be made available on request.

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

Yours sincerely

Supervisor's name: Mrs Masson

Supervisor's office number: 011 717 4480

Thulisile Raphadi

Supervisor's email: Francine.masson@wits.ac.za

Coping strategies used by Leeuwkop prison Correctional Officers when dealing with occupational stress

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APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

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

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

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 utilised will be destroyed after two years if any publication arise from the study or six years after completion of the study if no publications emanates from the study.

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Coping strategies used by Leeuwkop prison Correctional Officers when dealing with occupational stress

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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH QUESTIONS

Biographical information

Age	
Race	
Marital Status	
Number of dependents	

Research questions

Work experience

- 1) How long have you been working as a correctional officer?
- 2) What motivated you to becoming a correctional officer?

Occupational stress

- 3) What is your understanding of occupational stress?
- 4) Would you say your job is stressful? If yes, in what way?
- 5) What situations in your work environment or duties contribute to your work stress?
- 6) On the whole, do you find your colleagues to be supportive? If yes/no, please explain
- 7) On the whole, do you find your superiors to be supportive? If yes/no, please explain
- 8) When performing your work duties, are you allowed to make your own decisions?
Please give examples
- 9) Do you feel that your own personal safety is adequately addressed? If yes/no, please explain
- 10) Do you think your personal life is affected by the work you do? If yes, please explain how it is affected

Coping mechanisms

- 11) How do you deal with the stress that you experience at work?
- 12) Are there services within your institution to help employees to deal with occupational stress? If so, please describe these services

13) Have you used these services? If yes/no, please give reasons for using or not using these services

14) What recommendations would you suggest to address occupational stress experienced by correctional officers?

Coping strategies used by Leeuwkop prison Correctional Officers when dealing with occupational stress

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APPENDIX D- DCS APPROVAL OF STUDY LETTER



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/O WF Nkomo and Sophie De Bruyn Street, PRETORIA
Tel (012) 307 2770, Fax 086 539 2693

Mrs. TF Raphadi
Annapuran Street
Lenasia South
1829

Dear Mrs. TF Raphadi

RE: FEEDBACK ON THE APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON: "COPING STRATEGIES USED BY MALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS FROM LEEUWKOP PRISON WHEN DEALING WITH OCCUPATIONAL STRESS"


It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved.

Your attention is drawn to the following:

- The relevant Regional and Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- Your internal guide will be **Dr. PA Bhodram: Director Employee Wellness, Head Office.**
- You are requested to contact him at the telephone number: **(012) 305 8784** before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document and this approval letter should be in your possession when making visits.
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) e.g. "Offenders" not "Prisoners" and "Correctional Centres" not "Prisons".
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits. However, the audio recorder is allowed.
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc) of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the Directorate Research for assistance at telephone number (012) 307 2770 / (012) 305 8554.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully


ND SIHLEZANA
DC: POLICY CO-ORDINATION & RESEARCH
DATE: 10/09/2015

Coping strategies used by Leeuwkop prison Correctional Officers when dealing with occupational stress

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APPENDIX E- ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/04/09

PROJECT TITLE

Coping strategies used by male correctional officers from Leeuwkop prison when dealing with occupational stress

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Ms T Raphadi

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Human and Community Development/

DATE CONSIDERED

17 April 2015

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

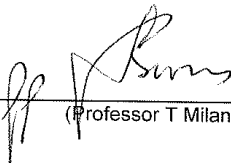
Approved unconditionally

EXPIRY DATE

20 April 2017

DATE 21 April 2015

CHAIRPERSON



(Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor : Ms F Masson

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

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

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

Signature

Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES