

**THE IMPACT OF STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES ON FORM FOUR  
STUDENTS IN PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAKURU MUNICIPALITY,  
KENYA**

**BY**

**JACINTA NJERI KARIUKI**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this project report is my original work and has not been previously published or presented for the award of a degree in any university.

.....

16/10/2003.....

JACINTA NJERI KARIUKI

DATE

## RECOMMENDATION

This project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

.....

12/10/2003.....

Dr. BRISTON OMULEMA, PhD.

DATE

## DEDICATION

*Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes.*

*Faith, hope, and love remain.*

*But the greatest of these is LOVE*

*2 Corinthians 13:7,13*

*To my husband Kim and children Wangeci, Maina, Kamanu and Muthoni.*

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If asked these people gave me the truth, any errors present in the project are all mine

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL, ALWAYS.



## ABSTRACT

Due to current and emerging problems in Kenya, changes have arisen which have exposed students to various problems. These changes include urbanisation, economic hardships, technological impact and freedom due to the collapse of traditional social systems. These problems are too much for the students to handle, especially when academic work is also involved. Due to these situations, stress is a common phenomenon among students. Day school students have more exposure to these problems, because of the many hours they spend out of school. When they get stressed even their academic performance together with their social and psychological well being is affected. It is therefore important for schools to come up with proper ways of aiding these students cope with their stress. This study was aimed at assessing ways in which schools help students cope with stress. It was focused on the various programmes prepared by the schools and administered to the students, to help them cope with stress. The focus on the students was to find out whether they utilised these programmes, and how effective these programmes were, that is, if these programmes had a positive impact on the students. The study aimed at assessing stress management programmes, with a view of strengthening them and making them more effective. The study was a survey in which form four students in public day secondary schools in Nakuru municipality were sampled randomly, and the research design utilised was the ex post facto. Data was collected using a questionnaire, which the students responded to. Data collected was analysed by use of descriptive statistics, using the statistical package for social sciences. The study found that there is stress influence on the students' well being and academic performance. The researcher recommends that schools need effective stress management programmes, to enable students cope effectively with stress.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

Stress is suffered by each person; adults, children, leaders, teachers, students, professionals, in fact all people and even animals experience the effect of it. Stress therefore is defined not by the cause of distress but by the way in which we react to it. However, a certain amount of stress is essential and necessary in order to accomplish set goals. This emotional condition will serve as a stimulus to reach an adequate level of accomplishment and arriving at success. Selye in his article observes that a complete absence of stress means death (Melgosa, 2000).

Although an amount of stress is essential to steer one towards succeeding, excessive stress can cause adverse consequences to human life. More than 50 years ago, Selye suggested that stress was a common factor in causing disease and his theory has been studied and confirmed. Puberty and adolescence (12 – 18 years) is a time full of changes. These changes are physical and include development of the primary and secondary sex characteristic, endocrine changes and changes in physical appearance. However, there are also psychological changes, which include the questioning of family values, self-concept, personality development and emotional experiences. All of these changes are decisive and can generate high levels of stress. Stress is also produced by the multiple functions or duties which the adolescent must carry out (Melgosa, 2000). It is upon this background that this study was carried out to look at the problems that public day scholars have to undergo everyday in their coming and going out of school, and how stress can affect their performance as well as how the school counsellor could help them to manage stress.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Day scholars have to undergo many problems every day in their commuting to and from school. Some walk to school, others travel by public means, while others are delivered to school by their parents. This means that many times, they cannot reach school on time. These delays cause them to be punished by their teachers. Apart from coming late to school, others are punished due to failure to complete their assignments. When out of school, students interact with many people, who have different types of behaviour. At home, they experience problems of lack of food, lack of decent shelter, and lack of money. Lack of money leads some of them to engage in immoral relationships and substance abuse. This may also result in misuse of leisure time.

These problems, together with the load of academic work, results to stress among these students. This produces students who cannot adequately achieve in school and who become social misfits. If this stress is not managed, there is a danger of poor growth and development of these students. This study aimed at assessing what stress management programmes and strategies are affected by the school, to assist the victims of stress in the school population. It was further aimed at assessing how effective these programmes are in helping students manage their stressing issues and circumstances.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The aims of this study were to: -

1. Identify various problems faced by day school students that lead to stress.
2. Identify ways in which students cope with stress in the classroom situation.

3. Determine how teachers assist stressed students cope with their stress.
4. Determine how effective stress management programmes are in the lives of the students.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

Based on the objectives, the study attempted to answer the following research questions: -

1. Do circumstances of public day students in secondary schools expose them to problems that lead to stress?
2. Do day school students in public Secondary Schools have effective ways of coping with stress?
3. Do teachers in public day secondary schools assist students in coping with stress?
4. Do the stress management programmes have effects in the lives of students in public day secondary schools?

#### 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study may be useful to various stakeholders in education system. It has recommendations that may help education planners to include stress management programmes in education system. The study may also help school administrators and guidance counsellors come up with useful programmes that may help students manage their stress. If the recommendations are adapted, school administrators and counsellors may be able to foresee situations that could result to stress and arrest them in advance. The study can create awareness to parents on various ways of helping their children resolve their problems and this may be useful in supplementing the schools activities. Finally, this study could help students to learn ways of coping with stress and reduce



it. It could help them to be better adjusted in the school and this could enhance learning and academic excellence.

### **1.6 Assumptions of the Study**

The study was based on the following assumptions: -

1. The researcher assumed that the stress among day students is a result of the circumstances of day schooling and not from other factors in the school.
2. The researcher assumed that schools had put in place programmes to assist stressed students cope with and resolve their stress.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The study was focused on public day secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality. The students in these schools were the main concern of the researcher. The whole population was not studied, but a representative sample was obtained for the purpose of the study. This was due to lack of time and finances.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms**

*School counselor*: -An appointed teacher who deals with issues affecting the students and assists them to overcome problems as well as guiding them on how to cope with situations.

*Public school*: - Government and municipal council secondary schools

*Pupil*: Persons who are learning in schools either secondary or primary.

*Internal*: - What comes from within us; emotions that affect one from inside i.e. mind or mental ability.

**External:** - What happens to us from outside like tragedies, frustrations, traumatic experiences and others.

**Stress:** - An experience of pressure from positive or negative events in our lives, and the effects this experience has on us.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Conceptualisation of Stress

In the recent times, there has been a growing awareness of the difficulties which many young people experience during their formative years. Difficulties, which may arise in one area of life often, intrude into others and it is perhaps not surprising that the organization in which children spend half of their working day should experience the problem of stress. Stress is a term which, when used in a vague and general context is readily understood by most people. The use of 'stress' in such a way results in individuals getting a wide range of meanings, which can encompass anxiety, fear, inability to cope, unhappiness and frustrations (Reid, 1989). As Pratt, (1979) points out, no research into stress has been available to the stressed person's actual feelings nor can they ever understand exactly what it is like to undergo that person's particular experience. The situation may further be complicated by the fact that stress is sometimes perceived as a negative attribute and students may perceive it as an admission of personal weakness or incompetence.

Research on stress observed by teachers has viewed the nature of stress in different ways. Dunham, (1984) has identified three approaches: the first sees stress as a set of pressures, which are exerted upon students. These pressures are identified as the causes of specific outcomes in the teacher, often of a psychological or physiological nature. In the second, stress is understood in terms of the student's reactions to the prevailing pressure situations or events. A third approach and possibly the most widely advocated for at the present time, considers that stress



results from the interaction of the individuals with the pressures upon them and is dependent upon their resources to cope with the pressures. Where personal resources are exceeded by the demands of the situation, then stress is a balance between demands and personal resources where an emerging stress results (Reid, 1989).

Researchers often encounter problems in defining stress. Although the layperson appears to understand what is meant by the term, scientists often have difficulty in agreeing upon a precise definition. Many experts have focused upon stress as an independent and intervening variable. The first of these views stress as an external stimulus or force which is applied to the individual, the second perceives stress as a response to noxious stimulus and the third views stress as the product of any interaction between an individual and the environment in which the individual experience difficulty in adjusting to the demands imposed by the environment (Reid, 1989). Environment here refers to the individual's internal and external environment and to his or her physical and psychosocial worlds.

Stress therefore is seen as a set of experiences rather than symptoms. The limitations this imposes are obvious in almost any classroom where it is apparent that not all students respond to similar pressures in the same manner. The view of stress is the interactionist model; this is of specific help when it comes to considering what action might be taken to alleviate stress symptoms. In any case, those who learn how to identify the damaging effects of stress may enjoy success and more satisfying lifestyles. However, when it becomes impossible to change one's environment, then personal change becomes necessary. The school may be both a source of stress for its pupils and an arena in which external causes of stress may manifest. It is

Therefore, it is important to recognize the role, which the school may play in helping students under

## 2.2 The Meaning of Stress

Stress means being subjected to external forces or pressures and can be either positive or negative depending upon the effect of the external force (Melgosa, 2000). Stress is the pressure we feel from positive or negative events in our lives called 'stressors' and the effects these stressors have on us. Blackburn et al, (1986) suggest that this normative stress is that which results from normal events in life as opposed to catastrophic ones such as debilitating injury, natural disaster, severe financial loss and such chronic problems of alcoholism and mental illness. Webster's third new International Dictionary defines stress as the state or condition of strain and especially of intense strain. The word stress stems from the middle ages' English word 'stresse' which was short for 'distress' or stress. The verb form of the word stress can be traced back to the combination of the middle ages' English word 'distresse' and the middle French work 'estrecier' to constrain or to force.

Cutman (1997), states that stress is the process by which environmental events threaten or challenge an organization's well being and by which that organization responds to these threats. The term stress has become part of lay vernacular and is widely used as a ready explanation for a number of problems ranging from health complaints to work burnout and job dissatisfaction. So far tying stress to the idea of a constraining force which causes distress or suffering seems much more common. In one's daily usage of the word 'stress' we tend to refer only to the negative aspect. Stress therefore is used to indicate an emotional state of being which is so intense that it

hinders one's ability to function. By observing the changes, which a person undergoes when facing stress, we can conclude that stress is a combination of physiological and psychological reactions of the body when it is subject to heavy demands.

### 2.3 Causes of Stress

Warris (1988), observes that when one feels unable to cope with the demands of his/her environment, when threatened with physical or psychological harm, we begin to feel tense and uncomfortable. In this case, they experience stress. UNESCO (1989), states that stress/anxiety exists when individuals are at odds with themselves. The underlying conflict springs from a clash between incompatible impulses, desires or values. Infact such conflicts prevails when pupils are angry but are afraid of giving offence. Because these pupils are always in conflict with teachers for failure to complete their class work and parents who are affected by their behaviour or their peers who do not agree with them they become anxious and get stressed.

Weligson (2000), observes that when external factors are particularly strong even the best-equipped people suffer stress. Unless stress management strategies are discovered and implemented, the progress of bright pupils will be hindered. Reid (1996), says that stress originates from two sources. Internal – this is what comes within the person. Each time people have to choose between two or more options a certain amount of stress is produced. As for the adolescent pupils, stress may occur when individuals are at odds with themselves. The underlying conflicts spring from clash between incompatible impulses, desire or values. Such conflicts prevail when they are angry but afraid of giving offence. It also exists when a person is eager to be popular but has scruples against what may be necessary to become popular. What



happens to people from outside like tragedies and frustrations contribute to their level of stress. Traumatic experiences like tribal clashes, floods, rape, disease, etc disrupt their daily routines and hence causes stress.

Ginnian (1986), observes that when family's financial situation changes because there is school fees to pay and maintain a child, there is usually a fight over who controls the spending. This situation causes tension where a pupil who has to go home everyday will witness and hence the pupil will be stressed. Living with the nitty-gritty of everyday financial demands can be downright stressful asserts Blackburn et al, (1986). Experts generally agree however that most families suffer more than they need to from continuing financial strife. If a family disagrees over money matters they are exposed to stress, which is the cause of day secondary school pupils for most of them come from very poor families. A 1974 national survey conducted by the General Mills Corporation reported that over half of the families surveyed said they fought about money a lot (Blackburn et al, 1986). Pupils exposed to such fights among their parents are usually traumatized as well as stressed and school performance drops.

Ketnerman (1995), states that the abused pupils suffer from disorderly conducts in class and tend to produce anger, which they may displace on other students. They need heroic efforts to avoid becoming abusive themselves and those who are weak usually project their frustrations on other students: thus both teacher and student get stressed. However, whether abuse is the crude label of cursing, the rudeness of competing with teachers for control or the silent retaliation of groups is irrelevant. The sad fact remains that a massive amount of verbal as well as physical violence by the young people continues to wreck havoc in schools, hence the source of lots of stress on both

teachers and students. He observes that mothers who had suffered abuse when young avoided inflicting the same to their children hence became permissive allowing their own children to get away with terrible mistakes. That verbal abuse dished out at school was only a habit young people had transferred from home. Ketterman (1993), asserts the situation is deserving of some explanation. Students who are always late at school, who cannot complete their homework, who show and are lazy are usually punished and turn out to be rebellious and rude to their teachers and the outcome is stress for both. Craze (1998), uses a general list of some 45 principal life events that are known to cause stress. They range from the death of a parent, divorce of parents, leaving home or changing schools, winning awards, change in living conditions, change in personal habits, minor law breaking to holidays, Christmas and many others. Usually, these callers will face all or most of these problems. In that case, they will be stressed and their performance will be affected.

## 2.4 Stages in the Development of Stress

Stress passes through some stages from the time it appears until it reaches its most acute level.

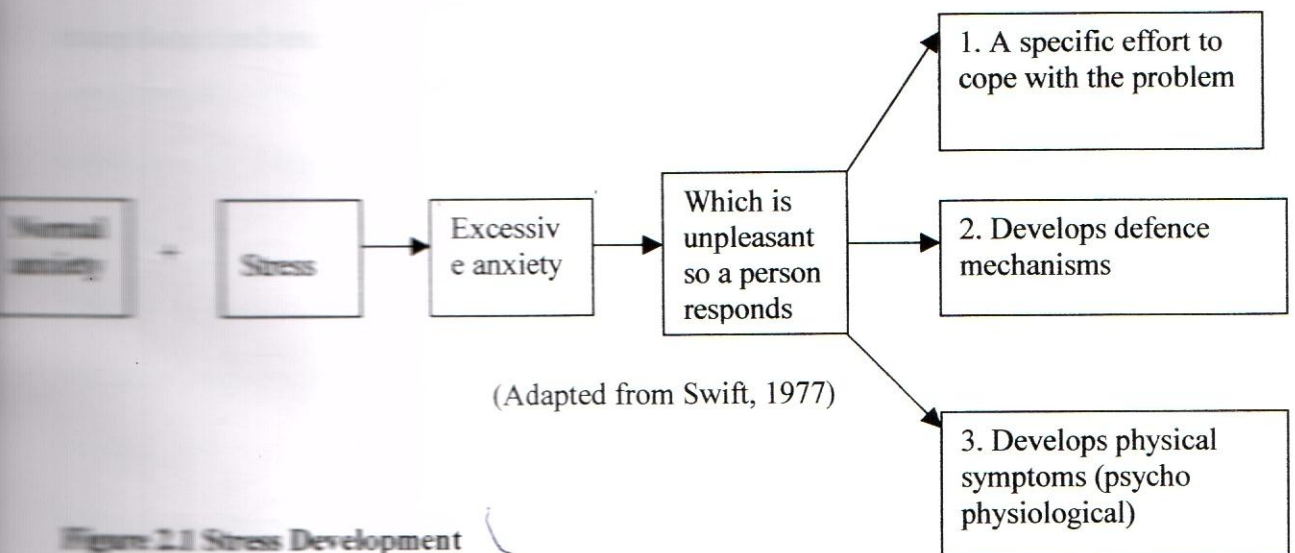


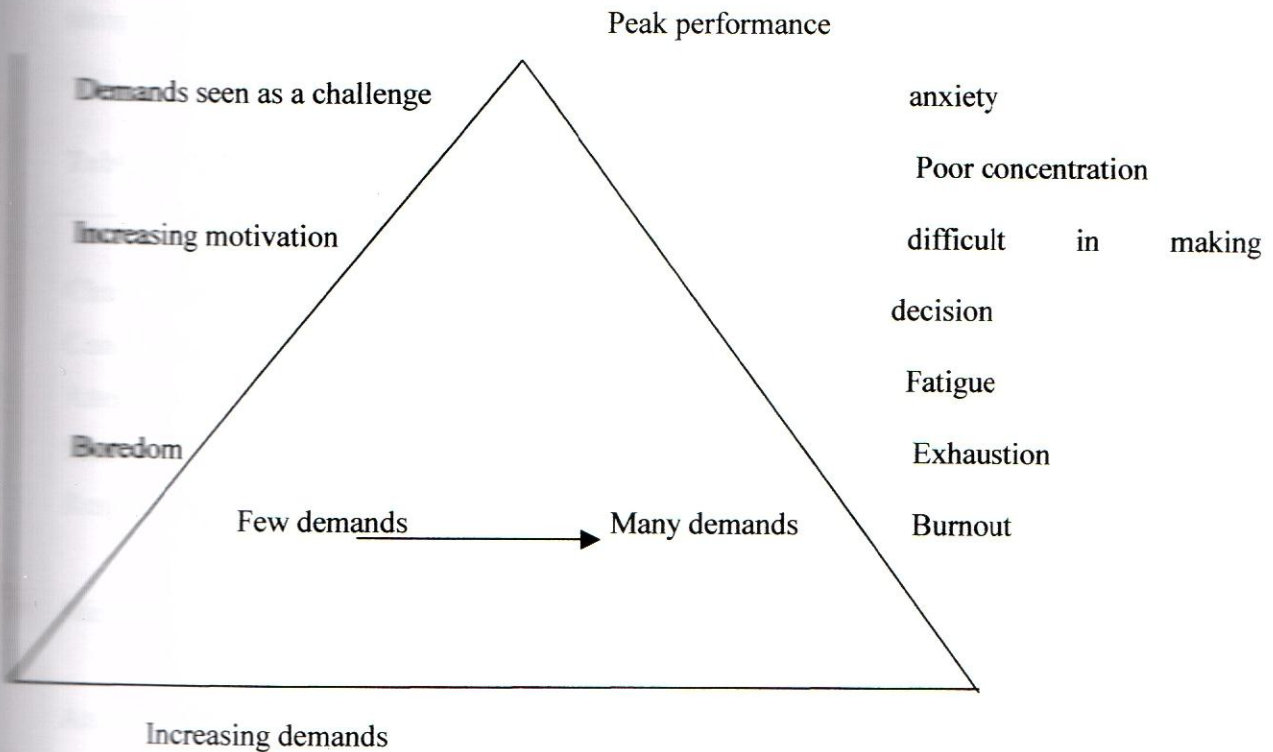
Figure 2.1 Stress Development

Anxiety is a normal and common emotion. When anxiety is intense, it may turn out into fear. If the reason for anxiety is unknown, this very fact can increase its intensity. When anxiety is excessive, it can be very distressing and can interfere with normal thinking and behaviour. Both sleep and the ability to concentrate may suffer. Excessive anxiety sometimes shows itself in physical symptoms like increased pulse rates, elevated blood pressure, rapid or laboured breathing, perspiring, gooseflesh and many others, Swift (1977).

Reid (1989), suggests that a first indicator that all is not well is a build up of frustrations. This can cause in the individual feelings of resentment to authority, anger and irritation. A second stage may well be a build up of anxiety resulting from the student being placed in an increasingly demanding situation where they are uncertain of the appropriate of action, which can give rise to feeling of inadequacy. Thus rapid change can initiate loss of confidence in their own abilities, reduce the ability to concentrate and lead to panic. Prolonged exposure to exhaustion strains and drains the body's resources, which can initiate even greater drawing on resources and results in exceptional tiredness.



## The Relationship Between the Pupils' Performance and Demands Experienced



(Adapted from Reid, 1989)

Figure 2.2 The Relationship Between the Pupils' Performance and Demands Experienced

### 2.5 Impact of Stress on Students

Morris (1988), observes that people who belong to the lower social economic class are both more exposed to stress and more vulnerable to it. That is to say that the less educated and the poorer at the same time, are less likely to have means to ease off the stresses resulting from hardships. Because most pupils who are day-scholars are from poor families or their parents are of low economic status are usually faced with difficult situation that expose them to stress. In the end students can suffer from loss of intellectual capacity, irritability, insomnia, anxiety and depression. Melgosa (2000), states that while it is unlikely that one person will suffer from all of

these manifestations at the same time, it is possible to have one or two dominant symptoms, along with one or more recessive ones.

**Table 2.1 What Happens When There is too Much Stress?**

<b>COGNITIVE AREA (THOUGHTS AND IDEAS)</b>	
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Effects</b>
Concentration and Attention	Difficulty in concentration on a demanding activity and frequent loss of attention
Memory	Short-term and long-term memory decrease
Response Speed	Problems, which need an immediate and spontaneous response, are solved in haphazard and unpredictable ways
Mistakes	Any problem which requires logical thinking tends to be solved with a higher than normal number of errors.
Analysis of Present and Future Situations	The mind is unable to accurately analyse and evaluate present situations or to project them into the future
Logic and Organization of Thought processes	Thinking does not follow logical and coherent thought patterns but is disorganized.

**Table 2.2 Emotional Area (Feelings And Emotions)**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Effects</b>
Nervousness	Difficulty relaxing emotionally and physically
Hypochondriacal Personality Traits	In addition to normal physical illness, new illness are suspected
Ethics	Development of impatience, intolerance, authoritarianism and the lack of consideration for others
Depression and Discouragement	Ethical and moral principles, which govern the life, relax and there is less self-control
Self-esteem	Increased discouragement, decreased desire to live
	Thoughts of worthlessness and inferiority

**Table 2.3 Behavioural Area (Attitudes And Behaviours)**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Effects</b>
Language	Inability to verbally address a group of people satisfactorily. Stuttering. Inability to speak fluently.
Interests	Lack of enthusiasm for preferred activities such as hobbies or favorite pass-time
Absences	Absenteeism from work or school
Stimulants	Increase in consumption of alcohol, tobacco, coffee or drug use
Energy	Energy levels fluctuate from day to day and tend to be on the low side
Sleep	Sleep patterns change. Generally, insomnia increases to levels of extreme deprivation
Relationships	The tendency towards suspicion increases. A tendency to blame others and put the responsibility for mistakes upon others
Change in Behavior.	The appearance of tics and strange reactions, which are not normally a part of the person
Suicide	Thought of suicide increase along with suicide attempts

(Adapted from Melgosa 2000)

Besides producing the physiological responses, stress also produces a series of responses, which have to do with the mental and behavioural processes. These are psychological responses as shown in the charts above.

## **2.6 Stress Management**

Reid (1996), observes that teachers can help pupils to cope with stress effectively by helping these pupils to deal with stressors so that adverse effects experienced can be minimized. The teacher/counsellors should provide pupils with means of coping with potential stressors through preventive programmes, which are lacking at present in most day secondary schools. Instrumental coping in terms of actions which individuals can take to either meet the demands of



environment to alter situations causing stress is recommended. Therefore while teachers may not be able to develop programmes for individual needs, they can help to develop those skills and focus attention upon strategies, which pupils may encounter, hence reduce stress. Once the teacher/counsellor has defined pupil's stress problems, the next step in coping is to determine how much actual control pupils have over the source of the stress, observes Blackburn, (1986).

**Table 2.4 Anti-Stress Exercise Program**

- Plan for a fixed amount of time every day (before or after work)
- Consider this time as 'sacred' and off limits for any sedentary task
- Choose an activity, which you enjoy and which is compatible with your abilities: aerobics, tennis, cycling, swimming, golf or walking.
- Find partners. Exercise in solitude tends to be abandoned
- Be enthusiastic. Think about how much you will enjoy the activity and of the physical and psychological benefits you will receive.
- Begin moderately, then increase quality and intensity progressively
- Keep a record of your achievement so that you can observe your progress without becoming obsessed with it.

### **Benefits of Physical Exercise**

#### **a) Organic Benefits**

- Improves the heart's efficiency
- Dilates the blood vessels and improves blood circulation
- Reduces cholesterol levels
- Facilitates the production of endorphins with the resulting sense of well being

- Relaxes the muscles
- Maintains flexibility
- Burns excess accumulated energy, thus helping to maintain the ideal weight
- Favours the flow of oxygen to all the cells of the body
- Helps to control high blood pressure
- Helps to encourage rest
- Normalizes perspiration and aids in the elimination of toxic substances.

#### **b) Psychological Benefits**

- Improves mental capacity and agility by improving the blood circulation to the brain
- Increases self-esteem
- Improves the sense of well being
- Facilitates a good mood

(Adapted from Melgosa 2000)

Most people who suffer from stress do not exercise and are unable to sleep. They are caught up in a vicious circle, which is difficult to break. Physical exercise is the best way to break loose and the rest will come automatically. The charts above have outlined several reasons why exercises are good for stress.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study used an ex post facto design because there was no treatment used on the respondents. It was descriptive because it described the effectiveness of the school counselor on the stressed students. It was a survey in which the researcher used a questionnaire to determine the opinions, attitude, preferences and perceptions of students towards school counselors and programmes.

#### 3.2 Population

The population was all form four students in public day secondary schools within Nakuru municipality. Public schools include Government and Municipal Council Schools. According to the municipal education office records in July 2002, there were 1088 form four students in all public day secondary schools.

**Table 3.1 Distribution Of Form Four Day students In Nakuru Municipality**

	<b>School</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Streams</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	Menengai High School	Government	5	142	74	216
2	Nakuru Day School	Government	3	70	35	105
3	Langalanga Secondary	Government	3	78	44	122
4	Moi Secondary	Municipal C	3	68	45	113
5	Nakuru West Sec	Municipal C	3	66	35	107
6	Lanet Secondary	Municipal C	3	58	83	141
7	Upper Hill Mixed	Municipal C	2	36	24	60
8	Flamingo Secondary	Municipal C	3	62	58	120
9	Kenyatta Secondary	Municipal C	3	65	45	110
	<b>Total</b>					<b>1088</b>



### 3.3 Sampling

In order to obtain a representative sample of the population, the schools were classified as per the categories.

- Government schools
- Municipal Council schools

The researcher used Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) formula as follows:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where:

- S - required sampling size
- N - the given population
- P - population proportion
- d - the degree of accuracy as reflected by amount of error that can be tolerant in the fluctuation of a sample
- X<sup>2</sup> - table value of cm<sup>2</sup> for one degree of freedom relative to the desire level of confidence

The researcher therefore visited 9-day secondary schools with a population of 1088 in Nakuru municipality. Using the above formula, out of a population of 1088, a sample of 286 was obtained. Therefore, from each school, a total of 30 students were sampled from a school with 3 streams while 1 school with 5 streams a total of 56 students were sampled, and 1 school with 2 streams, 20 students were sampled.

### **3.4 Instrumentation**

The researcher prepared a questionnaire, which was forced response type, and open-ended which allowed individual more freedom of response while forced response type facilitated consistency of responses across respondents. The questionnaire was administered on the sampled students to obtain information on the effects of stress on their lives at schools, home, and other places. Also if the school counsellor helps them to manage stress in their day to day lives.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

The researcher administered a questionnaire to each student, with the help of research assistants and teachers from respective schools. Subjects were briefed about the questions by the researcher. They were given a day to respond to the questionnaire. Teachers collected the questionnaires for the researcher.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data so as to show to what extent programmes of stress management in schools had helped students deal with stress. The computer statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to analyse the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

Everyone suffers from stress; leaders, executives, teachers, manual labourers, teenagers, children and even animals experience stress. In any case everyone deals with the build-up of stress and even seem to thrive on it while others need much more ordered, regulated lines to be able to cope. Those who cope well may need little in the way of extra training or exercises, but those who cope badly will need help. This study aimed at assessing the impact of stress on form four students in public secondary day schools within Nakuru Municipality

#### 4.2 Findings On Sample Distribution

Table 4.1 shows the number of form four students interviewed according to their gender. The study revealed that 52.4% were boys while 43.4% were girls. The studies also revealed that majority of students in these schools are boys. There is high probability that due to insecurity and vulnerability most girls are taken to boarding schools.

**Table 4.1 Distribution of Sample by Gender**

Response	Frequency	Percent
-Gender not indicated	12	4.1
Male	152	52.4
Female	126	43.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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According to the finding Table 4.2 85.9% of the students interviewed have the knowledge of what stress is while 14.1% are ignorant of stress. This shows that most students know what stresses them and if they can be helped they can overcome stressed situations and have a stress free environment. 88.6% of the students interviewed had the knowledge of a counsellor while 11.4% do not know who counsellors are. These finding indicate that most students know that if they have problems they can seek help.

From the study as indicated 71.4% have the knowledge of a school counsellor while 28.6% are not aware. The study shows that most schools have teachers/counsellor appointed to help troubled students. Majority of the students know where these teachers/ counsellors can be found in the schools.

**Table 4.2 Students' knowledge about Stress**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Knowledge of stress	249 (85.9%)	41 (14.1%)
Awareness of counsellors	257 (88.6%)	33 (11.4%)
Knowledge of Counsellor and location	257 (88.6%)	33 (11.4%)

### 4.3 Stressors in Public day Secondary School Students

The research question 1 aimed at identifying various problems faced by day school students that led to stress. According to the findings as indicated in the table 4.3, 74.5% felt comfortable as day scholars while 25.5% were uncomfortable. Puberty and adolescence (12-18 years) is a time full of changes. These changes are physical and include development of the primary and secondary sex characteristics, endocrine changes and changes in physical appearance. However, there are also psychological changes, which include the questioning of family values, self-concept, personality development and emotional experiences. All of these changes are decisive and can generate high levels of stress. Stress is also produced by the multiple functions or duties which the adolescent must carry out Melgosa, (2000).

**Table 4.3 Students' Comfort as Day Scholars**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Positive	216	74.5
Negative	74	25.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.4 indicates that 25.2% get into trouble with teachers while 74.8 do not often get into trouble. This is questionable because if a student has to walk, travel by car or *matatu* not all can be on time to school hence there is a possibility of arriving late and getting into trouble with teachers. Also 30.7% get into trouble with other pupils while 69.3% are free of trouble. There may be less trouble because in day secondary schools time to be together is not much because after school the students leave in a hurry to arrive home before it is dark.

In the same table 12.1% get into trouble with administration while 87.9% do not. This is questionable because most day scholars are poor and do not pay school fees on time hence are often sent home and in most cases they sneak back to school before they are cleared. When discovered usually they are in trouble with administration.

The research also aimed at establishing whether students got into trouble with workers at school, people who surround their school and those on the way to and from home. 23.1% indicates that they do get into trouble while 76.9% don't get into trouble. This may be so because most students live far and have very little time to be in contact with other people around them. Some even leave home as early as 5.30 a.m. and arrive back home as late as 8.00 p.m.

**Table 4.4 Sources of Trouble on Students**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Trouble with Teachers	75 (25.2%)	217 (74.8%)
Trouble with other pupils	89 (30.7%)	201 (69.3%)
Trouble with the Administration	35 (12.1%)	255 (87.9%)
Trouble with other people in the school community	67 (23.1%)	223 (76.9%)

The tables 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 indicate the students' response to the rules at school, home and elsewhere. The highest number of those who responded to the rules at school were 27.2% while



the lowest were 1.0%. This indicates that rules at schools are either tough on students or too many to adhere to.

**Table 4.5 Adherence to Rules at School out of 5**

<b>Positive Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.00	12	4.1
2.00	23	7.9
3.00	57	19.7
4.00	66	22.8
5.00	79	27.2
6.00	3	1.0
Missing scores	50	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.6 shows that the highest number of those who responded to rules at home were 30.7% and the lowest were 0.3%. Most of them gave the reason for not responding to these rules as the rules being boring and unreasonable.

Table 4.8 shows the effects of the rules discussed in the above tables. 50.0% were affected while 49.0% were not affected. That means more than half of the interviewed students were stressed by the rules at home, school and from community around them. This is because the missing systems in these tables are of those who did not care about any rules. It is fair to conclude that those who did not care at all about the rules were stressed, because they were always in contravention of the rules and hence in trouble. Morris (1988), observes that when one feels unable to cope with the demands of his/her environment, or threatened with physical or psychological harm, he/she begins to feel tense and uncomfortable. In this case they experience stress. UNESCO (1989), states that stress/anxiety exists when individuals are at odds with themselves. The underlying conflict springs from a clash between incompatible impulses, desires or values and such conflicts prevail when students are angry but are afraid of giving offense. Because these students are always in conflict with teachers for failing to complete their class work, parents who are affected by their behaviour, and their peers who do not agree with them, they become anxious and get stressed.

**Table 4.8 Effects of rules and regulations**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No response	3	1.0
Positive	145	50.0
Negative	142	49.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Tables 4.9 shows the causes of stress to the students. 39.3% have stress caused by parents while 60.7% claim that parents do not cause them stress. 15.9% of the students were stressed by teachers while 83.8% were not stressed by teachers. 23.8% of stress was caused by peers while 74.9% was not caused by peers. Academics caused 53.8% of students to be stressed, while 45.9% were not stressed by academics. Reid, (1989) observes that stress exists when a person is eager to be popular but has scruples against what may be necessary to become popular. When external factors are particularly strong, even the best-equipped people suffer. Asked how academics stressed them, most of them felt that this happened when they failed tests, and were not able to meet the targets set for them by their teachers and their parents.

The results show that 6.2% of the students were stressed by poor health, while 93.4% did not have stress from health. That means most students felt that they were healthy. 15.5% had stress because of lack of finances while 84.1% did not have any stress from finances. This indicated that many parents are able to provide for the needs of their children. Asked whether relationships affected them 11.0% responded positively, while 88.6% responded negatively. This may be possible because these day-scholars have very little time to think deeply about relationships. This is because most of their time is spent at school and the rest moving to and from home. The research was aimed at establishing whether drugs caused stress to students. 6.6% had stress and the reasons they gave were that they were not able to stop taking them. 93.1% were not involved with drugs. If counselling programmes were well established at the schools then many students could be free from drugs. Asked whether personal problems caused them stress. 42.1% responded positively, while 57.6% responded negatively. The research also aimed at establishing whether parents provided basic needs for their children. 84.8% responded positively while



14.8% of the students did not get their basic needs. This is indicative that most parents are able to provide the basic needs of their children. Blackburn (1986), observes that many parents may be too pre-occupied with other activities that they assume that by providing physical needs to their children, their parenting responsibilities are met. Parents should in any case find time for their children.

**Table 4.9 Causes of Stress**

<b>Causes Of Stress</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Parents	114 (39.3%)	176 (60.7%)
Teachers	46 (15.9%)	243 (83.8%)
Peer	69 (23.8%)	220 (75.9%)
Academics	156 (53.8%)	133 (45.9%)
Health	18 (6.2%)	271 (93.4%)
Finances	45 (15.5%)	244 (84.1%)
Relationships	32 (11.0%)	257 (88.6%)
Drugs	19 (6.6%)	270 (99.1%)
Personal Problems	122 (42.1%)	167 (57.6%)
Provision of Basic needs	246 (84.8%)	43 (14.8%)

#### **4.4. How Students in Public day Secondary Schools Cope with Stress**

The research question 2 aimed at identifying whether students were aware when they were stressed or were able to know when they were stressed and whether they were able to cope. According to the findings as indicated by the table 4.10, 55.5% were stressed when they were in conflict with other students since students from day schools in Nakuru Municipality went to school from Monday to Saturday the findings show that most of the time majority of them lived with stress because it is only Sunday that they did not meet other students. 44.8% were always in conflict with teachers while 54.8% were not. Those who were in conflict with teachers must suffer very much which can reduce their academic performance. 59.3% were in conflict with their parents while 40.3% were not. Agular and Galbes (1999), observe that parents are natural teachers of their children. They argue that the child demands for physical needs as well as emotional ones, which include love, acceptance, security and stability. These needs cannot be effectively met when the parents are not there to give. Parents must play their role in order to help their children cope with academics as well as stresses from other fields of life.

Some students (34.1%), usually have conflict with administration while 65.5% are not. In times of economic strain there may be an increase in financial demands, which may reduce the good relationship between students, and administration hence some of these students are not able to cope with stress caused by failure to pay school fees and meet other requirements. 49.0% are in conflict with other people around them while 50.7% are not. Morris (1988), observes that when one feels unable to cope with the demands of his/her environment, one begins to feel tense and uncomfortable. Students in day secondary schools experience much demand in their school life,

and some of these are environmental such as noises from bars, at bus stops, in crowded estates, factories and even churches especially charismatic ones, which are usually built in estates.

**Table 4.10 Awareness of when stressed**

<b>Indicators Of Stress</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Conflicts with other pupils	161 (55.1%)	128 (44.1%)
Conflict with teachers	130 (44.8%)	159 (54.8%)
Conflict with parents	172 (59.3%)	117 (40.3%)
Conflict with Administration	99 (34.1%)	190 (65.5%)
Conflict with others	142 (49.0%)	147 (50.7%)

#### **4.5. How Teachers in Public day Secondary Schools assist Students in coping with Stress**

The research question 3 was aimed at establishing whether most students were assisted by their teachers/counsellors when stressed. The findings on table 4.11 show that only 36.2% sought counselling when stressed while 63.4% did not. Swift (1977), observes that anxiety is a normal and common emotion but when it is intense, it may turn out into fear. When anxiety is excessive, it can be very distressing and can interfere with normal thinking and behaviour. Reid (1989), observes that frustrations can cause in the individual feelings of resentment to authority,



anger and irritation. That rapid change can initiate loss of confidence in the students abilities, reduce the ability to concentrate and lead to panic. Melgosa (2000), observes that when there is too much stress the mind is unable to accurately analyse and evaluate present situations or to project them into the future. Thinking does not follow logical and coherent thought pattern but is disorganized.

**Table 4.11 Seeking counseling services**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Seeking Counselling when stressed	105 (36.2%)	184 (63.4%)
Seeking Services	94 (23.4%)	196 (67.6%)

#### **4.6 Effects of Stress Management Programmes on Students in Public day Secondary Schools**

This research question 4 aimed at establishing whether counselling programmes in these schools made any change to the stressed students. As indicated on table 4.12 when stressed 3.8% of the interviewed students performance was good, 30.7%, performance was bad, 36.2% performance was fair while 29.0% performance was poor. Melgosa (2000), suggests that a certain amount of stress is essential and necessary in order to accomplish set goals. This emotional condition will serve as a stimulus to reach an adequate level of accomplishment and arriving at success.



**Table 4.12 Performance when stressed**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No response	1	.3
Good	11	3.8
Bad	89	30.7
Fair	105	36.2
Poor	84	29.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.13 indicates that when students got counselled 33.4% were helped very much. 35.9% were helped but little 30.3% were not helped at all. Asked the benefits they got from counselling programmes in school, some said that they improved in their academic performance, in understanding themselves, improved self-esteem, acquired confidence and good personality. Reid (1986), observes that teachers/counsellors can help students to cope with stress effectively by helping them deal with stressors so that adverse effects such as experience can be minimized. Once counsellors/teachers have defined students' needs and stress problems, the next step in coping is to determine how much actual control pupils have over the source of the stress, observes Blackburn (1986).

**Table 4.13 Help from Counseling in Coping**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No response	1	.3
Very	97	33.4
Very Little	104	35.9
Not At All	88	30.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

There is need to help students to be more productive and satisfied in their day to day activities, social life, academics and interpersonal relationships as it is clear that stress influences adaptive outcome such as well being of any person and especially young people. Having recognized the signs of stress and identified the cause the school counsellor should help students change their reactions to stress by rising to challenge meet it all on and forge ahead for excellence in all life.

#### 5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings on the study the following conclusions are made.

- Most students in the day secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality are boys and the difference in the percentage is big. This is probably due to insecurity, which causes the girls to be taken to boarding schools, for girls are more vulnerable than boys.
- Majority of students are aware of teacher / counsellor in school. This indicates that many schools in Nakuru Municipality have offices where school teacher/counsellor can give services to those students who are troubled.
- Majority of students do not seek counselling services and the reason is that they have no confidence in the counsellors since the students' problems are not kept confidential but are usually discussed in the staff rooms.
- Most students are comfortable as day scholars. May be it is because they are able to interact with their friends and eat food cooked by their parents or may be they cannot compare with boarding life for they have no experience.



- Most students are not comfortable with rules either at school or at home not even from the community around them. The reasons they give are that they are too many and they get bored following them and most of the time they are unreasonable. They claim that these rules are very stressful.
- Most students know what stress is and what causes them stress mostly are academics, parents, personal problems, teachers and finances in that order. The reason they give is that they can hardly meet the expectations set for them.
- Most students do not seek counselling even when they are stressed and the reasons they give are that they cannot trust teacher/ counsellor with their problems for they are not confidential or safe.
- Those who benefit from counselling are the majority and they improve on academics, relationships and self-esteem.
- Parents are the highest stressor of their children, followed by the peers, community around the students, teachers and administration at school.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

- There is need for the Ministry of Education to review the Curriculum so as to give counselling in schools a special place in the school timetable.
- There is need to train counsellors so as professionalism can be exercised in this field of education so as to help give trust to the students.
- Until schools get enough professional counsellors there is need to organize guidance and counselling workshops and seminars for the teachers who have been appointed as counsellors in schools.

- There is need for the Parents Teachers Association to organize seminars or talks to provide guidance to parents and teachers on how to provide good or proper guidance to the developing child, parent-child relationship, parental responsibilities and factors affecting personality development of children.
- There is need for teachers to understand the concept of guidance and counselling as a responsibility that offers direction and influences on behaviour modification as opposed to correctional activities, which most teachers and school administrators seem to favour.
- There is need for the society to re-examine its values to avoid stress related lifestyle on its youths.
- Behaviour change, self esteem and satisfaction or enjoyment in learning are more important to the young people than the highest grade one can get. Thus there is need for the education system to minimize competition and mean scores.
- Since stability of the young people, happiness and future depend on the way a generation raises its children, it is important for the government, society, community, teacher and school administration to try and make guidance and counselling a priority for creation of stress free environment in schools, home and other places.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

The researcher recommends further research in the following areas.

- Causes of misunderstanding between children and their parents.
- Causes of misunderstanding between students and teachers,
- The impact of competition on teachers' psychology.
- The impact of continuous assessment test and examinations on students.
- The impact of burnout of teachers on students.

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**APPENDIX**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS**

(Answer the following questions as honestly as you can. Insert a tick in the appropriate box and fill in the spaces provided. You can choose to write your name or not write your name).

Gender Male  Female

1. Have you heard of school counsellor?

Yes  No

2. Have you ever sought the services of a school counsellor?

Yes  No

3. How many school counsellors do you know and do you know where their offices are?

----- Yes  No

4. Do you feel comfortable as a day scholar?

Yes  No

5. Do you get in trouble with teachers? Yes  No

Do you get in trouble with other pupils? Yes  No

Do you get in trouble with administration? Yes  No

Do you get in trouble with others? Yes  No

If yes why? -----

-----

If no why? -----

---

6. How many shoulds and have tos do you respond to at school?

----- out of 5

Home? ----- out of 5

Elsewhere ----- out of 5

7. These shoulds and have tos, do they affect your feelings? How? -----

---

8. Are you aware of what stress is?

Yes

No

9. What causes you stress?

(a) -----

(b) -----

(c) -----

10. Are your basic needs being met? Yes  No

11. How do you know when you are stress? Insert Yes or No

(a) By being in conflict with other pupils?

(b) By being in conflict with teachers

(c) Parents?

(d) Administration?

(e) Others?

12. What are some of the problem that cause you stress that you feel you would require counselling services? (Any four).

(a) -----

(b) -----

(c) -----



(d) -----

13. Do you seek counselling services when faced by the above? Yes  No

If yes, why? -----

If no, why? -----

14. What is your performance when you are stressed or in trouble?

Good  Bad  Fair  Poor

15. What are some of the benefits you have accrued from the school teachers/counsellors and their programmes? (Any four)

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

16. Have the counselling programmes helped you to have a stress free environment?

Very  Very little  Not at all