TITLE: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree Masters in Psychology has not previously been submitted for a degree at this, or any other university. I also declare that it is my work alone and that all material contained has been duly acknowledged.

Signature_____at_____Date_____

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends, particularly my husband. Thank you for your support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study endeavours to identify and describe the stress experiences of South African Police Personnel (SAPS) in a specific municipal area. The components of stress and related coping mechanisms are of particular interest in policing as much research indicates that officers suffer from stress related illnesses. The research was thus undertaken to determine what type of stressors affect police officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area, Limpopo Province, and what type of coping strategies they use. A quantitative approach utilising a cross sectional survey design was used for the investigation. Stratified random sampling was used to draw the sample of SAPS officers from the different police stations in Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area. Data was collected by means of questionnaires namely the Police Stress Inventory (PSI) and the Coping Inventory (COPE). Ethical considerations, as required by the University of Limpopo, were followed. Results included the fact that of the top ten stressors five were organisational stressors. This finding suggests that the South African Police Services in this area must provide interventions that reduce the effects of work related stressors. They should also recruit more female officers as the gender disparity is a notable one. Results suggest that no matter what age, religion, language, gender, marital status and rank, all respondents are alike in terms of the use of Avoidant Coping strategies. These are used to some degree however; the majority of respondents use Problem Focused Coping strategies together with Emotionally Focused Coping strategies. This suggests that the sample was able to handle negative stressors in a positive manner. It was concluded that a police force that reflects the general demographic of the area is more likely to provide a community driven workforce

> **Key words**: Anxiety; Avoidant Coping; Emotionally Focused Coping; Problem Focused Coping; Stress; South African Police Personnel (SAPS).

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List of abbreviations and acronyms used in the study

AA	Affirmative Action
CMDs	Common Mental Disorders
COPE	The Coping Inventory
COR	Conservation of Recourses Theory
CVA	Cerebrovascular Accident (stroke)
Diff	Differential (Difference)
EE	Employment Equity
EI	Emotional Intelligence
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GRR	General Resistance Resources
JD – C	Job Demand Control Model
M	Mean
MVA	Motor Vehicle Accident
nd	No date
PSI	Police Stress Inventory
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
JD – C	Job Demand-Control Model
POLMED	South African Police Services Medical Scheme
SAPA	South African Press Association
SAPS	South African Police Services
SD	Standard Deviation
SEM	Social Environmental Model
Sig	Significance
SOC	Strong Sense Of Coherence
Std. Err.	Standard Error
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study introduction

Stress in this study is conceptualised as a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors in the workplace. The two most important dimensions of this syndrome are feelings of overwhelming exhaustion and strain. Literature indicates that stress and inappropriate coping mechanisms constitute a serious problem in the police profession. This study endeavours to identify and describe the stress experiences of South African police personnel in a specific municipal area. According to researchers the components of stress and related coping mechanisms are presently changing in South Africa (Preadhashni, 2012). According to Conradie (2002) the policing situation in South Africa is considered to be more dangerous and stressful than in any European or North American country. The working environment for South Africa police officers is marked by increasing violence, very high crime rates and an increasing number of murders of police officers both on and off duty (Bazana & Dodd, 2012). This is underpinned by research, amongst as asmple of workforce employees in Gauteng Province, South Africa, which found that exposure to violence and accumulative difficulties are a predicitor of mental health problems (Mabunda & Idemudia, 2012). The killing of police officers in South Africa has become endemic since the early the nineties (Bazana & Dodd, 2012) which can be ascertained by visiting memorial page for SAPS officers (South African Police Officers Memorial, 2016). This is in sharp contrast to the average of 67 murders of police officers in the United States of America over a period of 50 years from 1945 to 1994 (Dempsey & Forst, 2009). It is further reported that suicide in the SAPS was reported at around one hundred officers per year (Hitchens, 2012).

Most people face stressful situations in their professional or personal life, but certain occupations, such as police work, are characterised by high levels of strain and stress. This happens, not only because of the nature of police work, but also because of the many environmental influences associated with that working environment. The police profession has been placed in the top ten most stressful jobs in the United States of America (Dempsey & Forst, 2009).

In terms of the aforementioned literature it was considered appropriate to conduct research into stressors and coping mechanisms affecting police officers in Limpopo Province, South Africa specifically in the Greater Tzaneen Muncipial Area

1.2 Research problem

There is much literature that reports high numbers of suicide in the South African Police Service (SAPS) because of stress related problems. Depression and suicidal behaviour are often found in police officers, particularly those who have spent many years in the force. Many police officers become traumatised during working hours as they witness community violence, motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) and shootings, some of which take the life of their peers (Bazana & Dodd, 2012; Rothmann & van Rensburg, 2002; South African Press Association, 2013).

According to the South African Press Association (2013), there was a reduction in police suicides, but an increase in police brutality in 2012 which was attributed to, amongst other things, an increase in police stress. It was further reported that 10,636 police officers were believed to be suffering from depression with 2,763 suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Steyn, Vawda, Wyatt, Williams and Madu (2013) looked at PTSD diagnoses in SAPS officers and how symptoms correlated with suicidal ideation. It was found that hyper-arousal was a significant correlation with suicidal ideation in the sample.

The police minister, in 2013, indicated that policing remains a difficult and challenging duty and requires a committed and selfless personality (South African Press Association, 2013). The stressful nature of the work, perceived unfair promotion opportunities, poor working conditions, alleged unfair disciplinary processes, poor interpersonal relationships with colleagues and low salaries are amongst the many causes of stress in the SAPS which is reflected in officers in the Tzaneen area (Personal communication 6.9.2015 from Desk Sergeant, Tzaneen, Limpopo Province).

Although much general research has been carried out on stressors and related strain in police officers in large cities, little has been conducted in small towns (Bazana & Dodd, 2012; Meyer, Rothman & Pienaar, 2003; Preadhashni, 2012). Stress levels in the SAPS are known to be an issue in South Africa in large metropolitan areas but very little research has been carried out in small towns although there has been one recent study undertaken in Alice in the Eastern Cape (Bazana & Dodd, 2012). An earlier investigation into stress symptoms and

substance abuse was undertaken in the central areas of Limpopo Province (Madu & Poodhun, 2006). This research found that the most stress was linked to workplace stressors. It was also reported that depression, substance abuse and other health issues were found in the sample.

The present study endeavours to understand stress and coping mechanisms in SAPS officers based in one area in Limpopo Province, namely Tzaneen. The research takes into account the SAPS officers unique needs and how the frequency and intensity of stressors they experience affected their well-being. The study also investigated the coping mechanisms used by SAPS members stationed at Tzaneen and gives an indication of how effective these mechanisms are.

This study is important because it adds fresh insight into the stress and coping mechanisms experienced by officers in the police services generally, with specific reference to SAPS officers serving in Tzaneen.

1.3 Background of the study

Different types of stress have been identified as some of the top ten health problems in the SAPS (Preadhashni, 2012). Police officers levels of stress depend not only on stressful events at work but also family pressures and lack of support at home. Inadequate counselling services and insufficient emotional support are other key factors in increasing levels of stress and strain in the SAPS (Bazana & Dodd, 2012; Dhaliwal, 2003). As the nature of police officers work is highly stressful it is important that they develop appropriate coping mechanisms, otherwise they will succumb to illness either psychological or physical, and sometimes (Preadhashni, 2012).

1.4 Aim of the study

- To determine what type of stressors affect police officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area and what type of coping strategies they use.

1.5 Objectives of the study

- To explore job stress amongst police officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area;

- To find out the what coping strategies relating to job stress are used by police officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area;

- To find out if there are gender differences in terms of job stress and coping strategies amongst male and female police officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area..

1.6 Need for the study

Stress and coping is seen as a critical problem in the SAPS in the workplace, where research has indicated that there are high levels of stress (Rothman & Pienaar, 2003; Preadhashni, 2012). This study is relevant to the boader society in South Africa as, without police officers who are both physically and psychologically healthy, it is likely that the investigation of criminality will not be optimal. Consequently it was considered appropriate to investigate stress and coping mechanisms in SAPS officers at Tzaneen.

1.7 Significance of the study

Many studies have been conducted amongst police officers relating to emotional burnout and stress, the majority of them in the United States of America (USA) and Europe but their results are possibly not applicable to different cultures (Preadhashni, 2012). There have been some recent studies conducted in South African (Bazana & Dodd, 2012; Madu & Poodhun, 2006). Ongoing research into stress in the SAPS is necessary in order to assess its impact on the health and wellbeing of officers over-time. This research focuses on the SAPS in Tzaneen, Limpopo Province. This research is seen as a significant as it focuses on SAPS officers in specific town at a particular place in time.

1.8 Conceptual definition of terms

The following theoretical and operational definitions are used to describe the concepts used in the study.

1.8.1 Stress - Stress is operationalised as an expression of the way in which individuals cope with their environmental demands both external and internal. Stress should therefore bestricted to conditions where the environmental demand exceeds the natural regulatory capacity of the organism (Lundberg & Cooper, 2011).

1.8.2 Police Officer - Police Officer refers to any individual who is appointed as a police officer under the inter-provincial policing act (South African Police Service Act - No: 68, 1995). The aforementioned definition will be used to describe all respondents in the study.

1.8.3   Coping – According to Smith, Segal, Robinson & Segal (2015) and Cackinberk (2011) coping is defined as a form of adaptation that implies a struggle to overcome problems. Although adaptation may involve responses to new conditions that are either positive or negative, coping is operationalised as the way people deal with the negative experiences they encounter. For example, a person might have to cope with sudden death of a parent, a primary family wage earner losing a job and/or gangs that are vandalising community halls or parks.

Coping is also defined as the behavioural and cognitive efforts used to manage, tolerate, master and reduce internal and external demands that are appraised as exceeding a persons resource (Lundberg & Cooper, 2011)

1.9 Summary

Stress within police work can have negative physical and psychological effects. Of all the occupations police work can be considered the most stressful as officers are in work which can often lead to violent and/or fatal situations. Establishing the levels of stress amongst police officers in different areas in South Africa and if officers use positive or negative coping mechanisms is important in terms of providing effective and efficient interventions.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The chapter introduces the reader to the theoretical framework underpinning the present study which was used as a guide to interpret the study results. Antonovsky's (1987) model of coping, upon which many questionnaires (or parts of questionnaires) relating to coping and stress, are based was considered appropriate for this study. For the purposes of this study, two models of coping, namely those of Antonovsky's stress and coping model (1987) and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) interactional model of stress will be used. These two models have been chosen because they models highlight the importance of the appraisal processes which are considered central to successful coping (Antonovsky, 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). resources and those that jeopardise wellbeing. Furthermore, it was decided to use the original models postulated by Antonovsky (1979) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984), as more updated versions and other models, do not, in the estimation of the researcher, define and explain stress and coping in as much detail, particularly relating to the relationship between the person and the environment that is assessed by the individual as exceeding his or her coping mechanisms.

2.2 Coping and models of coping

For the purposes of this study, the following models of coping were used, namely those of Antonovsky (1987) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

2.2.1 Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Interactional Model of Stress

Stress is conceptualised, in the above model, in terms of its interaction with the individual and his or her environment. Further, the model proposes coping as an integral part of the interaction between the psychological, environmental and biological factors that influence health and well-being. Stress is experienced when the demands of the stressor exceeds the individual's availability of personal resources. An individual appraises stressors as negative or positive, and depending on his or her individual factors, applies a particular strategy to deal with it. It also defines the way the individual appraises a challenge or a stressor involves either positive or negative emotional responses. Appraising something as threatening gives

rise to feelings of anger, fear, or disapproval, while an appraisal of something as challenging paves the way for "feelings of psychological excitement, hope or eagerness" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.84).

According to their Interactional Model of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), coping involves an evaluation of what can be done to eliminate, or balance, the demanding factors or source of stress which is secondary appraisal and, secondly, attempting to alter the distressed individuals environment relationship (that is, problem-focused coping) and/or to regulate emotional distress (that is, emotion-focused coping). As this is a continuing process, the situation is then re-appraised and the process continues. If the source of stress is successfully resolved positive effects are gained. If this is an on-going process, the situation is then re-appraised and the process continues. If this is not the case, negative effects and physiological disturbances persist, ultimately damaging adaptational outcomes (for instance, psychological well-being, somatic health and/or social functioning).

Coping, in terms of this model according to Bowling, Eschleman and Wang (2010), is generally regarded as a stabilising adaptive mechanism during stressful periods. They define coping as continually changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to achieve specific external and/or internal demands which may be appraised as being beyond the resources of an individual. These cognitive and behavioural efforts change all the time because for each situation a different type of behaviour and way of thinking about the problem so that it can be resolved, is required. Coping is contextual and when an individual is removed from his or her comfort zone coping resources are challenged. Coping is a therefore an individual's unique efforts to manage stressors in his or her life. It must be noted that this does not assure that the process of the coping response will always find a positive outcome .

Lazarus and Cohen-Charash (2001) suggest that if appraisals are the conceptual key to human emotions, they shape the way individuals cope with emotions the every-day life conditions that bring emotions to the fore. An application of the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) model was carried out by Gardner, Rose, Mason, Tyler and Cushway (2005) in a study on cognitive therapy and behavioural coping in the management of work-related stress. This investigation found the model emphasised the role of the cognitive appraisal of potential stressors in determining a suitable stress response. The authors proposed that primary and secondary appraisals of stress could be modified by use of techniques generally associated with cognitive therapy. This was supported by later research by Bowling et al. (2010).

There are two phases of the coping process that are used when an individuals is confronted with a stressor. The first phase of this procedure is appraisal which refers to the evaluation of the initial threat, if it is non-threatening, stressful or very threatening. If the event is regarded as stressful or very threatening then secondary appraisal is used. This phase is described as coping appraisal, in this phase the individual uses coping mechanisms or behaviours. Coping appraisal is therefore theorised not as what the person should, would or could do, but rather what the person in fact does when he reacts to a specific stressful situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Secondary appraisal refers to the evaluation of coping resources and what options are available for dealing with stressful situations (Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001).

Healthy appraisal and coping skills, which are based in reality and are flexible in nature lead to positive adaptational effects. Conversely, irrational appraisal and coping skills, which are compulsive, distorted, and rigid, lead to negative adaptational effects, such as exhaustion and emotional breakdown which is commonly termed burnout (Bowling et al. 2010).

2.4 Precursors of stress appraisal

Stress is conceptualised in the Lazarus (1991) model in terms of its interaction with the individual and his or her environment. The model suggests coping as an integral part of the interaction between psychological, environmental and biological factors that influence health and well-being. Stress is experienced when the demand of the stressor exceeds the individual's availability of personal resources. An individual appraises stressors as negative or positive, and depending on his or her individual factors, applies a particular strategy to deal with it. Additionally, the way an individual appraises a challenge or a stressor involves either positive or negative emotional responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Appraising something as threatening gives rise feelings of anger, fear, or disapproval, while an appraisal of something as challenging pave the way for feelings of psychological excitement, hope or eagerness (Bowling et al., 2010; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

According to Lazarus (1990) stress appraisals result from perceived situational demands in relation to personal coping resources in environmental contexts that are more likely to induce stress (Chou, Chu, Yeh & Chen, 2014). It is individual personal resources, such as resilience, that make people more or less vulnerable to environmental stressors. Furthermore, situational stressors have formal properties, event uncertainty, ambiguity plus historical aspects in relation to the stressing conditions. For example, demands that are difficult, vague and

unexpected induce threat perceptions as opposed to easy tasks that can be prepared for thoroughly, and can be solved at the individuals convenience. Regarding content, environmental aspects can be distinguished with respect to the threat involved in a given situation. For example, threatening social situations imply interpersonal threat for instance, the danger of physical injury is perceived as a physical threat while an individual who anticipates failure receives a threat to self-worth, essentially an ego-threat. The author also distinguishes between task-specific stress, including cognitive demands and other formal task properties, from failure-induced stress, including evaluation aspects such as social feedback, possibility or not of reaching a given goal, possibilities of failure, and/or actual failures. Unfavourable task conditions combined with failure-inducing situational cues are much more likely to provoke feelings of distress.

Lazarus (1991) states that personal coping resources include commitments and beliefs. He notes that commitments represent motivational structures such as personal goals and intentions that determine perceptions of situational stress relevance to the task at hand. Beliefs, on the other hand, are convictions and expectations of being able to meet situational requirements. The stressful situation with low dispositional control expectancies makes individuals vulnerable to distress, whereas perceptions of high dispositional competence represent a positive resource factor (Bandura, 1992; Bowling et al., 2010).

Lazarus (1991) defines coping as problem focused or emotionally focused. Problem – focused coping looks at changing or modifying the actual cuse of the stress in other words to remove or reduce the stressor. The individual has to take control of the situation by looking for help, looking for information about the stressor and developing strategies to either cope with or avoid the stressor. These strategies can be effective or in-effective (for instance, trying to avoid a stressor which is experienced frequently in a workplace). Effective problem-focused coping (for instance, getting psychological counselling to deal with intrusive memories). This type of coping has been found to lower the cortisol levels in the body which helps the individual recover from the stress (Carver, 2011).

According to Carver (2011), when a stressor is unchangeable emotion based coping strategies are more effective. Emotion focused coping strategies involve a cognitive reappraisal of a situation in which an individual self-reflects and endeavours to control his or her emotions. As the problem cannot be changed the individual has to reflect on their emotional reaction to

a stressor (situation that is stressful). Emotion focused coping has been found to relieve depression and help individuals cope with anger (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

Dewe O'Driscoll and Cooper (2013) considered work stress and coping in terms of the transactional model of Lazarus (1991) and argue that the transactional way of thinking is necessary when trying to understand the nature of the stress and individual coping responses. The authors stated that one of the most important frameworks for understanding coping is through appraisal and appraising. Moreover, by employing such focus, it is possible to understand causal relationships that have been difficult to describe in stress research. It is contended that other methods or approaches to stress are not essentially wrong, but that the focus falls primarily on the components of stress in artificial isolation (stimulus, response and interaction between the two) and very little attention is given to the relational aspect between the environment and the person and the constant interaction between the two.

According to Dewe, O'Driscoll and Cooper (2010; 2013), transactional approaches towards stress and coping cannot be conducted without considering the role emotions play in the development of stress. The authors note that lack of attention has been given to the role that emotions play in the experience of stress other than being under stress when in reality stress generates emotions (Dewe et al., 2013; Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001). This is observed when humans adapted to levels of stress in their immediate environment.This is recognised by some authors as underpinning the need to emphasise the study of both positive and negative emotions (Dewe et al., 2013). The interactive model considers other aspects related to personal resources (for instance, educational level, economic resources, social skills, life experiences, social support, health status, physical abilities) that can influence what an individual will be able or unable to do (Lundberg & Cooper, 2011).

2.5 Antonovsky's (1987) model of coping

Antonovsky (1987) based his model on what he termed salutogenesis. The word comes from the Latin workd *salus* or health (well-being). He expanded upon Lazarus and Folkmans model (1984) by distinguishing between primary appraisal, secondary appraisal and tertiary appraisal. He argued that an individual with a strong sense of coherence (SOC) will be more likely to define stimuli as non-stressful, than one with a weak SOC. Secondary appraisals pertain to the selection of the most appropriate strategy used in dealing with the stressor being confronted. This means that the strong SOC individual chooses from a range of

generalised and specific resistance resources at his or her disposal. Tertiary appraisal refers to a further assessment of the availability of an individual's resources if the first option is unavailable or fails. It may involve role modification and the mobilisation of previously unknown resources for instance, the ability to shift and/or moderate perceptions.

The importance of SOC in optimising individual's health and well being has been used in recent research for instance, Rivera, Garcia-Moya, Morena and Ramos (2013) looked at the life events and resources considered as the building blocks of an individual's SOC. Their study concluded that the role in life events and resources, especially in the family context, is the most influential factor in terms of SOC development. It also determined that individuals who experience negative life events have lower SOC. In other research Apers et al. (2015) found that individuals with low SOC were more likely to suffer from depressive symptoms, loneliness, a lower quality of life, and lower of perceived heatlh than those with higher SOC.

Secondary appraisals pertains to the selection of the most appropriate strategies in dealing with the confrontation of stressors. This means that an individual with a strong SOC chooses from a range of general and specific resistance coping resources at his or her disposal. Tertiary appraisal refers to the further assessment of the accessibility of the resources, if the first option is unavailable or fails. It is likely to involve role adjustment and utilisation of unfamiliar resources (Antonovsky, 1987). He regarded General Resistance Resources (GRR) as factors that were important in coping. These are listed below and adapted from Antonovsky, 1979).

- As a possible physical and biochemical link which mediates how indviduals cope with stress;

- The individuals ability to attain food, clothing and accommodation;

- The individuals cognitive and emotional ability in terms of their intelligence and self – knowledge. The author emphasises self-knowledge as crucial as a coping resource.

- Flexibility including active management of personal emotions and the ability to forsee and thus prepare for possible challenges;

- Good interpersonal relationships and social support are seen as key to individuals ability to cope in difficult situatios;

- The individuals socio-cultual environment and macro environment where an individual is able to access other GRRs.

Rivera et al. (2013) emphasise that appraisal and coping occur across many dimensions and that positively resolving an encounter on one dimension depends on the degree of conflict created in other dimensions. Generalised Resistance Resources (GRRs) are an important concept within Antonovsky's (1987) model of coping which was is underpinned by researched by Eriksson (2007) and Strumpher (1990). According to Eriksson (2007), GRRs provide life experiences that promote the development and maintenance of a strong sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1979; 1987; Eriksson, 2007).

2.6 Summary

The chapter dealt with the theoretical model underpinning the research namely Antonovskys (1987) model of coping which expanded on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Interactional model of Stress, older and morerecent research using the models was presented which underpins their continued relevance The following chapter reviews relevant literature relating to the topic under investigation.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The nature of police work is acknowledged as highly stressfully and particularly hazardous. According to Rani and Kumar (2012), the negative effects of job stress on police employees and their work are such that it is necessary to explore the processes involved when job stress is studied.

Rani and Kumar (2012) found that organisational factors are the most significant stressors in police organisations. Stromnes (2009) reports that police stressors are divided into two groups: a) job demands and lack of resources. Job demands refer to the required sustained physical or mental effort aspects of the job and can therefore be associated with certain physiological and psychological costs, for example, shift work, meeting deadlines, working overtime, excessive paper work and handling crisis situations and b) job resources, these are aspects of the job that may be functional in achieving work goals, reducing job demands and the anticipated physiological and psychological costs as well as motivating personal development.

South Africa has a long history of political turmoil and historically police roles have been associated with the oppression of the majority of the population. The SAPS experienced changes within itself as an organisation, after the end of apartheid, where roles had to be redefined and certain structures rearranged. The transition from a police force to a police service and a community policing took place, the rank structure changed from a military structure to a service related structure. Affirmative action policies were also implemented within the organisation (Rauch, 2001; South Africa Press Association, 2013).

According to Bruce (2002), the SAPS is no longer a cohesive body and has ceased to be an organisation that protects, supports and helps the public and its own workforce. Individual officials feel abandoned by the new structures and find their present circumstances anxiety provoking. The new community policing policies require that the SAPS are accountable to the community. Mokotedi (2010) postulats that police officers perceive that thet SAPS is no longer an organisation characterised by cohesiveness and consistency, but rather by its inability to support and protect its members. Nonetheless, in terms of personnel, the recruitment and promotion of black police members increased dramatically. Unfortunatley,

all ethnic groups within the SAPS often regard this promotion process as lacking in intergrity and saturated with external influences from politicians.

3.2 Descriptions of stress and related literature

Stress is described as any cirumstances (stressor) that leads to specific physical and psychological and behavioural outcomes. If these demands persist over time chronic undersiderable outcomes or strains may results (Devi, 2011). Rani and Kumar (2012) also define stress as a pereceived disproportion between social demands and reaction ability, where to address demands results in significant consequences.

Rothmann et al. (2011) report that the body reacts to all stressors in the same way, irrespective of the source of stress. The authors state that the body has three-stages of reaction to stress. The first is the alarm phase, the second is the resistance phase and thirdly there is the exhaustion phase. In the alarm phase the body recognises the stressor and responds by preparing to fight or flee. During the resistance phase bodily processes seek to return to homeostasis. The exhaustion phase occurs only when the body remains unable to return to homeostasis.

Mortillaro and Scherer (2014) report that stress refers to many different experiences caused by different situations and experiences. They also described it as a psychological phenomenon, and sometimes as a physiological state. Stress, they state, is not an unusual condition but the result of an intense emotional state that continues for an extended period of time.

Every individual experiences stress in different ways and some police officers find driving to crime scenes stressful whereas others enjoy it (Campbell, 2008). As reported by Etzion (2003) stressful situations include conflict of any kind, particularly when peers in the police service, are convicted of criminal offences. These reactions are usually expressed as memory disturbances, detachment from peers and surroundings, de-personalisation, and a constant recall of the perception of events (Permall, 2011).

Hitchens (2012) reports that one hundred to one hundred and thirty police officers commit suicide every year in South Africa due to stress caused by the nature of their work. These organisational stressors include for instance, lack of support from management and corruption amongst their leaders. The article further notes that women police officers are

more affected by stress and reports the story of a female constable who commiteed suicide as she could not cope with the high levels of stress her job entailed.

3.3 Causes of stress and related literature

In a study of stress amongst a sample 2632 police officers, it was noted that gender, culture and race had a significant impact on the experience of occupational stress in the SAPS. Exposure to stress over a long period and poor coping mechanisms are the main cause of stress which can lead to burnout. It was noted that stress related conditions and burnout are made worse by environmental and psychological factors such as job conditions where people feel that their contributions in the workplace are useless, ineffective or not appreciated. Dempsey and Forst (2009) also state that poor opportunities for promotion and strict workplace rules and procedures make people feel trapped in organisations resulting in them having a negative view of their jobs. Supportive family members help to protect individuals against stress and related burnout, but if left untreated, stress and burnout can result in injury, illness and even death (Kemeny, 2003; Rothmann et al., 2011).

According to Myendeki (2008), stress and poor coping mechanisms cause a multitude of problems for SAPS members. Some sources of stress are internal and others are external, such as internal pressure to succeed, conflict amongst family and friends, lack of self-confidence and not getting enough sleep. The research indicates that many officers report sick regularly with illnesses such as headaches and influenza. Bakker and Daniels (2012) report that positive mood, work-related flow, work engagement and job satisfaction are rarely looked at in terms of relieving intetnal stressors. They conclude that commitment to work is dependant on taking into account both internal and external stressors, especially when considering the operational effects of stressful work.

3.3.1 Suicide and family killing

In the last several decades news reports have indicated that the SAPS are under severe stress caused not only by the nature of their work but because of poor pay, uncertainty about their future and officers failure to manage family demands. The article noted that some family killings were perpetuated by police officers who, after murdering their families, commited suicide. It was noted that they were not properly trained in terms of dealing with stress and that they did not have enough psychological support (The Sunday Tribune, 2006). It was also reported that a former South African Minister of Police was reported as stating that during his

tenure in 2012, five hundred and eight police officers committed suicide because of their inability to manage stress (South Africa Press Association, 2013).

Piennar and Rothmann (2005) researched suicidal ideation, in relation to occupational stress, coping strategies, and personality traits, amongsgt SAPS officers. The researchers noted that South Africa is a unique for several reasons namely, the rate of suicide is the highest in the world and also that South Africa has one of the highest crime rates in the world. They concluded that personality and indivudal coping strategies had an impact on suicidal ideation in relation to workplace stressors. This underpinned by Violanti (2008) who found that police suicide rates are higher than the the national average of the country. Furthermore, Pienaar Rothmann, and Van de Vijver (2007) found that SAPS suicide rates were eleven times higher than the national average. This is underpinned by Perkins (2016) who reported that suicidal intention and completion was far higher amongst the SAPS than the general population. Furthemore, hyperarousal was found as the key suicidal ideation predictor in males while it was intrusive memories in female SAPS officers (Steyn, 2012).

According to Perkins (2016), the history of homicide-suicide in the SAPS is underpinned by individuals who have a high number of aggressive tendencies which, in turn, causes them to fail at maintaining intimate relatiponships. The source of homicide-suicide is the result of spousal or partner problems relating to high aggression within these individuals who have demanding and stressful jobs. A study conducted in America found that the majority of police officers who commited spousal or intimate partner violence (IPV) and then committed suicide were married white men, with a high school education, who had a history of marital difficulties (Violanti, 2007). Alcohol abuse was a related factor in around forty (40%) of these cases and a third of police officers who committed suicide in this context had been previously diagnosed with some form of psychosis (Asay, Defrain, Metzger & Moyer, 2014).

The Sunday Independent Newspaper in South Africa (2013) reported rates of suicide in the SAPS as 74.5% per 100 000 for the period 01 January 1994 to 31 December 2012. This is far higher than the suicide figures of the general provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2009) and Statistic South African (2011) for the general population in the country. Figures for suicide in the general population are reported as 43.3% Black, 38.4%. White, 15.9%, Coloured and Indian 2% per 100 000. The risk for attempted suicide is highest in the age group 18–34 years and police officers have the highest lifetime prevalence for suicide attempts. The Crime Hub (2010) also reports that SAPS rates are also higher than those

reported by other international law enforcement agencies such as those reported in America for instance, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). In this regard the FBI provides regular resources for its officers so that they are aware of suicide risks (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 2010).

According to Miller (2014), police officers play an important role in holding society together and face traumatic and stressful situations that lead todepression. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and anxiety related disorders often result in them taking their own lives. In Kuilsriver (Western Cape) constable, aged 27, shot his 2 year old son with his service firearm and then killed himself. In the same year an SAPS detective from Claremont in Western Province, killed his wife and then turned the gun on himself (Nicholson, 2008).

In reviewing the statistics of Mopani District, Tzaneen, given verbally to the researcher from a report that was not released to her about police suicide, seventeen police officers committed suicide from 1999 up to 2010. The police officers killed themselves by shooting themselves and/or hanging themselves or by jumping from high buildings. Furthermore, in 2009, 73 police officers committed suicide. The number rose to 97 in 2010, dropped to 85 in 2011, but again rose to 98 in 2012. In 2013, the figure dropped to 34. The researcher was told that in 2015 five police officers had committed suicide in the Tzaneen area. (Personal communication 6.1.2016 from Desk Sergeant Tzaneen).

3.3.2 Inconsistent application of rules in organisations

Inconsistent interaction between management and subordinates is a source of stress (Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato & Dewa, 2013; Permall, 2011). VanWyk (2005) points out that not all police officers are treated unequally by their superiors, which may be caused by racism or favouritism and/or corruption. For instance, those members of the police who are not engaged in corrupt activities are not equally treated by their superiors as they are not receiving *kickbacks* (money or goods from corrupt activities). This is underpinned by Schultz and Schultz (2010) who state that unfair evaluations and unfair promotions have an impact on individual contributions towards any organisation.

Performance appraisal interviews are another source of unpredictability as an individual may be reprimanded for bad or poor performance, while another (who has also done something wrong) is overlooked. This occurs for example, when one police officer commits a minor

disciplinary offence and is severely dealt with, while another gets away with a verbal warning (Permall, 2011).

3.3.3 Proving individual worth in an organisation

According to Permall (2011), an individual experiences stress when he or she continuously tries to prove him or herself in an organisation which can be extremely challenging psychologically. Dodge & D'Analeze (2012) found that police officers in the United Kingdom (UK) feel that they cannot do enough to prove their value when their supervisors are of different ethnic origins which leads to them trying harder and becoming more and more stressed.

Since 1994, South African organisations, including the SAPS have gone through many changes (Rauch, 2001; Schultz & Schultz, 2010). An early review by Rauch (2001) suggested that individual police officers in South Africa may feel that their contributions to the organisation are valueless and feel that they cannot discuss this with their supervisors because they are of different genders or ethnic groups. This is underpinned by the fact that the South African career environment has many adverse factors such as the legacy of apartheid, skill shortages, and the pressure of employment equity (Department of Labour, 2009). According to Rasool and Botha (2011), there is a severe skill shortage which affects socio-economic growth and development in South Africa negatively.

Rosen, Chang, Djurdjevic and Eatough (2010) state that research into occupational stressors suggests that behavioural responses to stressors may include actions that are harmful to individual employees and the organisation. Absenteeism, accidents, and high turnover have been noted as some of the behaviours associated with encountering severe to moderate stressors in the workplace (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

3.4 Models of occupational stress

The following models of occupational stress are explained briefly to provide a background to the phenomena of occupational stress.

3.4.1 Social Environment Model

According to Weinberg and Cooper (2007), whose research focused on employees perceptions of their work environment, the way in which workers interpret the workplace means that they view certain aspects of their work as sources of pressure, which leads to stress. Furnham (2005) states that this model was created in an attempt to categorise and describe the main groups of variables that interact to produce stress based on a number ofintangible categories. The objective environment which are defined as organisational characteristics such as company size, hierarchical structure and job description and environment are noted as being independent of the worker's perception of their work environment as a whole (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). The researchers also reported that a workers subjective environment contains stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, lack of participation and role overload. Weinberg and Cooper (2007) suggest that the Social Environmental Model suggests that stressors lead to strains which manifest themselves as behavioural, emotional and physical reactions to their subjectively experienced workplace environment (Furnham, 2005; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

3.4.2 Person Environment Fit Model

The model is based on the view that behaviour is a function of both the person and the environment and that occupational stress is the result of a divergence between what the individual desires and what the job supplies. (Sekiguchi, 2004). According to Landy and Conte (2007) the amount of stress an individual feels at work is influenced by perceptions of the demands made by the specific work environment, and by the individuals capacity in terms of dealing with it (objective versus subjective misfit). Subjective misfit is defined as an inconsistency between an individuals submective views of themselves and their environment and objective misfit is referred to as the difference between how the individual functions and the objective characteristics of the work environment (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011; Landy & Conte, 2007). According to Kristof-Brown & Guay (2011), the Person–Environment Fit Model thus states that affective outcomes, includes job satisfaction, organisational commitment and intent to leave the workplace are the attitudes most strongly predicted by person–job-fit. Additionally, stress is demonstrated as a consequence of poor person–environment fit.

3.4.3 Job Demand-Control Model

The Job Demand-Control (JD-C) Model moderates the impact of job demands on strain and stressors (Karasek, 1979). This model emphasises the necessity of reducing work-related strains and the importance of promoting work motivation, learning and growth. According to the JD-C model the strongest aversive job-related strain reactions such as exhaustion and anxiety occur when job demands are high and worker control is low (Dewe et al., 2013; Karasek, 1979). According to Dewe et al. (2013) high demands at work are not considered problematic unless accompanied by lack of control by the worker. Karasek (1979) states that model focuses on work overload, role conflict and time pressure as indicators of job demands related to skill preference and decision autonomy. Its basic principle is that stressful jobs are those in which employees are subjected to high level demands but have little to no control over their work (Dewe et al., 2013; Karasek, 1979).

The Job Demands-Control Model is relevant to police officers, because the nature of the job is very demanding and officers encounter situations where they have no control over the complexity of job demands. Police officers are expected to encounter any situation with a supposedly high level of control which, in practice, is not the case. Sulsky and Smith (2005) suggest that perceived lack of control is the most difficult stressor for police officers as they often have little control over a potential crisis thus find it difficult to deal with the situation. This is referred to as an interactive effect between the demands of the job and control of stress levels. If an individual is able to control stress levels that control will form act as a defence and moderate the experience of stressors and strains (Dewe et al., 2013).

Maslach, Leiter and Bakker (2014) advocate that empirical studies have established that much stress overtime, referred to as burnout, is related to health problems and turnover intentions. It facilitates the relationship between job demands and possible health problems. Bakker, Demerouti, Sonnentag and Mojza (2012) suggest that workers with more optimistic personality charactersitics were most likely to take control of their jobs and increase their individual resources by asking for feedback and support. This increased their opportunities for workplace development which, in turn, protected them against stressors and associated burnout and workplace health problems.

3.4.4 The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory

This theory proposed by Hobfoll (1989) and refined by Hobfoll, Dunahoo and Monnier (1995) suggests that indivudals, in order to cope in life, gather the resources that are required in order to cope with situations that are stressful. It does not look at personal development specifically but looks at contexts in which an individual finds him or herself, such as work life or homelife. The focus of the theory is that individuals strive to retain or protect their resources in different contexts. If resources are lost then stress occurs which, in the workplace for instance, is observed as anxiety and general workplace dissatisfaction. According to Bekwa and de Beer (2009), this theory highlights an individual's locus of control, self-efficacy, resilience and learned resourcefulness. These are all important in managing distressing events in the workplace or any social context.

3.5 The effects of, and mediating factors for stress

Stress is a contributing factor in a wide variety of emotional and behavioural difficulties, including anxiety, child abuse (Kalebic & Ajdukovic, 2011), spousal abuse, temper tantrums, physical assaults and explosive expressions of anger (Mabunda & Idemudia, 2011), feelings of hostility, feelings of inadequacy, impatience, suicide attempts and depression (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). If the stressor is perceived as threatening then the individual may react with anger and anxiety. This leads to the activation of the autonomic nervous system and, if the reaction continues to be severe, it results in physical and psychological strain which may cause adverse behavioural consequences (Schneiderman, Ironson & Siegel, 2005). According to Schultz and Schultz (2010), chronic stress has several potential serious effects including pervasive negative effects on the immune system that causes increased susceptibility to viral infections. It also causes increased risk of atherosclerosis and hypertension plus impaired memory and cognition..There are two important age related differences related to stress and coping, younger adults experience more stress in the areas of finance, work and personal life while older adults experience stress related to ageing and sickness or the death of a partner (Schneiderman et al., 2005; Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

Stress has detrimental effects on the performance of employees and is associated with resignations, poor employee workplace motivation, poor job performance and poor learning and development plus absenteeism (Dodge & D'Analeze, 2012; Maslach et al., 2014). According to Rosen et al. (2010) behavioural responses to stressors may include actions that

are damaging not only to the individual employees, but also for the organisation. Absenteeism, accidents, and high turnover have been named as some of the behaviours associated with a work environment with high work stress (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

Marks (1995) reports that police officers in townships such as Soweto, near Johannesburg, South Africa often cannot share their work issues (because of confidentiality) with peers and are also placed under far more stress than those in the suburbs. The townships are where most violent crimes are carried out. Furthermore, police officers in townships are exposed poverty and misery on a daily basis (Bazana & Dodd, 2013; Wood, 2012). This is noted as very depressing since they live with the knowledge that individual's lives are difficult and they realise that change is unlikely in the near future. Police in the townships are confronted with high levels of crime which are unlikely to end for many years, if ever. Those police officers who live in the areas, in which they work, may know both the victims and the perpetrators of crime. It is also likely that they have experienced crime themselves. This in itself is likely to lead to heightened stress levels (Spielberger, Vagg & Wasala, 2003; Wood, 2012). According to Steyn (2012) this leads to PTSD and an associated risk of suicidal ideation.

Wood (2012) reports that the daily psychological stressors that police officers experience puts them at significantly higher risks for a number of long-term physical and mental health effects, including obesity, cancer, sleeplessness and suicide. The study was among the first using police populations to study the link between the stress of policing and psychological and health and wellness outcomes. The research was conducted over five years in a police department in America. The study was driven by the assumption that danger, high work demands and dealing with human misery on a daily basis made police officers more prone cardiovascular disease and other chronic health problems. It was noted that officers cannot speak to their families and friends about many of their experiences while on duty. This can result in feelings of isolation. Within their home lives, police officers may feel misunderstood and be placed under further stress as a result of domestic issues and/or marital discord. The consequence of this is a high rate of divorce amongst police workers especially when their spouses are not members of the police service. In more extreme cases, these feelings of isolation and despair can lead to suicide.

Coetzee and Ganz (2012) report that high levels of stress lead to serious symptoms for instance, physiological (headaches, stomach-aches, ulcers, heart attacks) and psychological (anxiety, depression, flashbacks, and panic attacks). The physical signs and symptoms of stress include, lowered immunity, frequent headaches, back pain, muscle aches, change in appetite and sleeping habits. Emotional signs and symptoms include a sense of failure and self-doubt, feelings of helplessness and/or being trapped or defeated. Stress and its symptomlogy further includes a loss of motivation, an increasing pessimism and negative outlook on life and disinterest in activities that were once found interesting and stimulating (Rasool & Botha, 2011). To shield against stressors research by Ventura, Salanova and Llorens (2014) suggests that professional self-efficacy (self-confidence) is predictor of professional competence which ensures that personal resources are more likely to be concentrated on tasks at hand, thus workers are more likely to be resilient. Hoffman, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer and Fang (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of and found a moderate positive effect for cognitive-behavioural and multi-faceted interventions for stress (different types of interventions for different scenarious). This is supported by Bakker and Maslach (2014) who state that stress management interventions are effective if conducted professionally and if the correct intervention is used.

According to Myendeki (2008), emotional dissonance occurs in face-to-face contacts with the public in which expressions are regulated as part of the job. This means police officers do not show shock, horror or sadness at crime scenes however, they may experience these feelings internally. Emotional dissonance is noted as a structural discrepancy between felt emotions and the emotional display that is deemed as appropriate in the working context. This is important in police work as an inappropriate display of emotion can cause an officer to become alienated from his work colleagues. As noted by Wood (2012) emotional work refers to the psychological efforts necessary to express organisationally desirable emotions during interactions with the public and in the workplace. Police officers are expected to manage their emotions to obtain a facial and physical expression that is neutral, solid and controlled. According to Bazana and Dodd (2012) police officers have a work environment that requires them to suppress their emotions in order to properly deal with conflict and crime scenes. This is noted as diffiuclt as they work long hours and are frequently under-resourced.

Research by Christian, Garza and Slaughter (2011) suggests that job resources are the most important predictors of employee work engagement. The job resources found to predict work engagement were task variety, task significance, autonomy, feedback, social support from colleagues, a high-quality relationship with the supervisor and transformational leadership. Job resources correlate more strongly with engagement than job demands such as physical demands, work conditions (health hazards, temperature and noise) and job complexity. Autonomy and social support are also indicators of job success. These findings are supported by those of Halbesleben (2010) who found that job resources were positively related to positive work engagement. Wood (2012) reports that police officers are also asked to show compassion and understanding towards victims of crime which means they constantly have to switch between being empathic, showing no emotion and, in some cases being overly assertive, which can lead to cognitive confusion. Police work involves exposure to numerous critical incident stressors which includes the risk of being seriously injured or killed. The most common non-fatal injuries amongst police officers are physical assaults, motor vehicle accidents (MVAs), and accidents when training (Maloney, 2014).

Louw and Viviers (2010) looked at the psychosocial stress and coping model in the police work context. They found that the model did not work in the policing context and concluded that some SAPS officers experience stress and burnout and others are not affected because they have the support of their family and have inherent persoanilty characteristics that underpin resilience.

3.6 Gender and other factors related to stress

According to Taylor et al. (2000) there are differences in physiological responses to stress between genders. Men usually choose to wait alone before a stressful process, whereas women want to be with other people, usually close friends or family. Research indicates that this difference is due to the role of the hormone oxytocin which plays an important role in the female body, not males (Campbell, 2008). Studies assessing differences in the levels of stress experienced by male and female police officers indicates some differences between the genders which may add to stress for instance, female police officers are not treated with the same respect as male police officers by members of many communities (McCarthy, Zhoa & Garland, 2007). It must be noted that reactions to gender differences in the workplace are constantly altering as legislation, norms and attitudes change over time (Bennie & Huang, 2010). Women are usually in the minority in police forces generally. For instance, in America

it is noted that although numbers have increased there is still more representation required in police forces in terms of women and minorities that reflect community demographics (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2016).

Both female and minority police officers experience unique stress. Females must deal with the sexual harassment, public stereotypes and need to gain acceptance from male officers (Marshall, 2013). According to Campbell (2008). the effects of work environment, work-family conflict and coping mechanisms on physical and psychological stresses of police officers. The research indicated that female officers generally use more constructive coping mechanisms than male officers. Female officers are much more likely to rely on their faith and talking to their spouse (about non confidential matters) than male officers. According to Naghavi and Redzuan (2011), in many cultures globally females are expected to be more expressive of feelings, while males abstain from expressively showingfeelings, it is more widely believed that females tend to have a higher emotional intelligent level than men.

In the police context, some evidence has been found to explain stress in gender differences. Female officers face stressors that are unique to their gender (Marshall, 2013). Attempting to enter a profession that is traditionally male orientated places them in a difficult position, particularly in a society like South Africa which is patriarchal in nature. According to Van Wyk (2005), negative attitudes towards female officers are stressors that translate into strain for both female and male officers. For instance, female officers are often the target of sexual harassment by males or, when in the field, male officers may want to protect female officers placing themselves at risk.

Van Wyk (2005) found that when domestic disputes are attended by both male and female officers at the same time, may be a source of stress. Male officers are not as likely to take the matter seriously which stresses female police officers. The consequence of this is that a high level of stress is experienced by both male and female police officers due to gender role attitudes, which are compounded by patterns of domestic abuse. Schultz and Schultz (2010) reported that women are no more likely than men to experience high levels of stress and related burnout, but marital status is related to the condition. Single and divorced persons have been found to be more likely than married persons to experience emotional exhaustion. Moreover, Steyn (2013) found that PTSD symptomology related to suicidal ideation were general problems (such as familial and/or work related problems) and intrusive or re-current memories while in male police officers it was hyperarousal.

Pienaar and Rothmann (2006) emphasise the role of ethnicity in levels of distress within police officers in South Africa. According to research on exploring the role of race in the experience of occupational stress it was found that white police officers report higher levels of stress compared to their black counterparts. Furthermore, black and coloured police officers generally experience stress less intensely as compared to white and Indian police officers. Additionally, Kaur, Chodagiri and Reddi (2013) found that that personality characteristics for instance, extroversion, psychoticism and neroticism linked to coping mechanisms such as denial and blame motivated the development of high levels of psychological stress in both male and female police officers.

According to Sokolova (2011), which is supported by earlier research by Straub (2000), individuals with a low socio-economic status rely less on problem-focused strategies than individuals with high socio-economic status. Those who come from low socio-economic backgrounds experience circumstances as hopeless and perceive that they have little or no control while those from a higher socio-economic bracket are more resistant to stress and are able to problem solve effectively. Pienaar and Rothmann (2003) suggest that race and culture affects the reaction of individuals to challenges as some cultural scripts encourage self-reliance, social support and religiosity as significant coping methods and others do not. A mediating factor in terms of stress related illnesses in the work place is age. Matin, Kalai and Anvari (2012) report that the rate of younger employees emotional exhaustion and stress related illness is greater than those employees who are in their thirties or forties. Their research concluded that stress related burnout and de-personalisation reduced as employees' age advanced while their sense of personal accomplishment increased.

Differences in rank in police forces and its relation to stress intensity may exist but has not been well researcherd (Bushara & Parvaiz, nd). Research in South Africa looking at differences in rank and stressor intensity is scarce. Early research by Marks (1995) suggests that African police officers have had difficulties with regard to promotion which resulted in dissatisfaction and thus stress. Later research by Rothman and Pienaar (2006) found that constables suffered less stress than other ranks in the SAPS than other ranks however, in their study constables were only 7% of the sample.

It must also be taken into consideration that stressors that affect male and females is different, which could be the same for police officers (Barnett, Niener & Baruch, 1987). Some research suggests that female and male police officers perceive stressors differently and often

adopt different coping strategies (He, Zhao & Archbold, 2002). Their research suggested that both the organisational culture inherent to policing and the external work environment are more disadvantageous to female police officers. These authors found that female and male officers experience of the work environment was similar and that constructive coping mechanisms were used by both genders. However, Martin (1993) found that sexual harassment can cause female police officers to experience stressors more intensely than male officer.

3.7 Coping

Antonovsky's (1979) theory of coping is used in this study and was presented in chapter 2 however, more literature is added here to further contextualise the concept.

Segal et al. (2015), state that coping is the process by which people try to manage the apparent discrepancy between the demands of a stressful situation and their emotional resources. According to Anshel (2000) and Madu & Poodhun (2006), police officers often use coping strategies which are maladaptive, such as taking both non-prescription and prescription drugs, over-using alcohol and overeating.

When it comes to the definition of coping, Aldwin (2007) sees coping as a process which is viewed as stabilising factor that can help individuals deal with, and adjust to life during stressful periods (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Dewe et al. (2010) perceive coping as a defence mechanism, where individuals use various techniques to adjust the meaning of the stressful event so that they can manage any distress it caused. According to the authors the use of established defences promotes better health and well-being than the use of immature defences (those used in childhood) which, in adulthood, are often associated with some sort of cognitive pathology.

Arnold et al. (2010) define coping as the efforts people make, through their behaviour and thoughts, to alter their environment and manage their emotions. According to Cackinberk (2011), there is a difference between coping strategies and coping styles. Strategies refer to the behaviours directed towards specific stressors, for example, to manage work demands by using time management techniques or delegating work to others. Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) define coping styles as relatively usual ways of dealing with stressors, for example, using a problem-focused coping style to change a situation. On the other hand the use of emotion-focused coping is focused on changing the individual's perceptions, cognitions and emotions

towards a stressor. Individuals usually display different coping styles but strategies may vary depending on the nature of the specific stressor and the coping style which the individual perceives as more effective (Cackinberk, 2011).

Coping is regarded as a dynamic process that changes over time in response to changing demands and appraisals of the situation (Cackinberk, 2011; Devi, 2011). Another supposition is that the human being contributes to the state of their psychological well-being contingent on the dynamic interaction between the stressors. According to Monteiro, Balogun and Oratile (2014) Individual uniqueness plays a role in how a stressful situation is perceived, responded to and coped with. In general, it was suggested that coping styles that are active and problem or emotionally focused are related to better psychological and physical well-being in relation to those styles that are problem avoidant.

Masefako, Fourie, and Terre Blanche (2013) found that the main approaches to coping, in a sample of SAPS officers, were either emotion or problem focused (using re-appraisal and minimal avoidance). It was concluded that these approaches were not sufficient and needed to include more inner (intra) coping strategies. In order to do this interventions such as critical stress-debriefing needed designing specifically tailored to the various types of incidents that police officers deal with on a day-to-day basis. Govender (2008) in a study looking at personality and coping mechanisms in SAPS officers found that the sample in his research used problem and emotion focused coping strategies and not dysfunctional coping strategies (for instance, alcohol and other substances).

3.7.1 General themes in understanding coping

The following paragraphs describe several general approaches to coping.

The first approach focuses on characteristics of the personality that are indications of how an individual will cope with a situation. Wheaton (1983) suggests that characteristics related to fatalism and inflexibility suggest negative coping mechanisms. Kobasa (1979) proposes that personality characteristics associated with hardiness and resilience suggest positive coping mechanisms (Anderson & Burgess, 2011). According to Folkman et al. (1986), the assumption underlying this approach is that these personality characteristics allow an individual to cope in ways that either weaken or facilitate their adaptability to stressful situations. Conversley, other researchers state that there is little evidence that these

personality characteristics significantly influence actual coping processes (Cackinberk, 2011; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The assumption underlying the second approach to coping is that the way in which a person copes with one or more stressful events is representative of the way he or she copes with stressful events in general (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This involves assessing the way in which a person actually copes with one or more stressful events. The third approach to coping focuses on characteristics associated with stressors that individuals experience. The supposition of this approach is that people who are repeatedly exposed to situations that are difficult, if not impossible, to control experience helplessness and become progressively more passive in their coping efforts, and ultimately experience dejection and depression (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

The fourth approach to coping according to Folkman and Moskowitz (2004), which is supported by research by Cackinberk (2011), deals with the contribution of personality characteristics and coping to psychological outcomes. This approach advocates that personality characteristics and coping responses have different effects that are relative to each other, depending on the nature of the stressful conditions. In terms of this approach to coping some personality characteristics are more helpful to the stressed person in situations where there is little opportunity for control such as work. This type of characteristic would be for instance, patience and tolerance not aggression. In areas in which an individual's efforts to contain a stressful situation for instance, in close inter-personal relationships assertive, self confident characteristics would yield more positive outcomes than lack of confidence and hostility.

3.8 Coping strategies

Coping strategies can also be grouped into problem-focused and emotion-focused approaches (Adler & Snibbe, 2003; Lazarus, 1990). Problem-focused coping is aimed at reducing the demands of the situation and/or helping the individual recognise his or her resources. Emotional-focused coping is aimed at reducing the emotional response to the stressor, generally through behaviour or cognitive approaches. Many techniques for coping with stress are essentially defensive. They reduce the immediate impact of the stressor, but at some personal or social cost. This cost includes socially inappropriate behaviour (as in alcoholism

and or aggressive behaviour, avoidance of problems (as in withdrawal) or self-deception (Almeida & Horn, 2004; Louw & Viviers, 2010).

According to Barling, Kevin and Michael (2005), five types of coping skills are important for individual's to develop. Firstly an individual needs to solicit and obtain the types of information they need for them to function well. Secondly, an individual needs to have coping skills for thinking about, and planning for, the future and thirdly, coping skills involve controlling emotions, for example, a minor disagreement with a spouse should not result in a major argument involving physical or psychological abuse. Fourthly, individuals need coping skills to control their needs for immediate gratification. Lastly, individuals need coping skills which involve identifying alternative ways of approaching a problematic situation and evaluating the pros and cons of each alternative(Louw & Viviers, 2010).

According to Louw and Viviers (2010), police officers are typical citizens in that they tend to have wives or husbands, partners, children or friends all of which are resources and act as a buffer against work stress. However, the same resources can bring stress to the police officer. This is reported by Bakker et al. (2014) who state that when work problems spillover into family life or vice versa this exacerbates stress and anxiety which, in turn, leads to emotional exhaustion.

3.8.1 Coping strategies for stress and burnout

According to Maslach and Leiter (2007), engagement continuum is one of the strategies that promote and reduce the risk of burnout. In a workplace that is designed to support the positive development of the three core qualities of energy, involvement, and effectiveness there should be success in promoting the well-being and productivity of employees, and the health of the entire organization (Bakker & Maslach, 2014). The best defences against burnout are practicing stress-reduction techniques such as lowering workers expectations of themselves and good communication in the organization. It is good practice for example, to provide rest periods in a nice environment between shifts (Etzion, 2003). Individual strategies of coping tend to be ineffective in the workplace, where w person has less control of stressors than in other domains of his or her life (Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, 2003).

Bakker et al. (2014) indicate that social support is one of the largest predictors towards reduction burnout and stress of workers. Creating an organizationally- supportive environment as well as ensuring that employees have supportive work environments to

mediate the negative aspects of burnout and stress. On an individual basis, employees can cope with the problems related to burnout by focusing on the causes, various therapies such as neurofeedback therapy; this type of coping has successfully been linked to reductions of burnout. This is underpinned by earlier research in the SAPS by Myendeki (2008) which notes that certain interventions, such as narrative writing or topic specific training lead to reductions in physiological and psychological stress (Bakker & Costa, 2014).

According to Alam et al. (2012), emotional intelligence (EI) training increasse the awareness of human emotions and improves the ability of listening, effective interaction, emotional expression, conflict resolution, coping with mental pressures as well as reducing reduces burnout. Turner (2016) promtes the use of EI in training police officers in terms of their duties as he suggests it can be a learned skill. Furthermore, this would benefit police forces and enhance job satisfaction and job productivity.

3.8.2 Defensive coping

Defensive coping mechanisms that are used by individuals are denial, repression, rationalisation, regression, withdrawal, fantasy, displacement and projection plus intellectualisation and reaction formation. According to Negiri (2014), defensive coping is a set of actions aimed at reducing and eliminating any changes threatening individual biopsychic integrity and stability. Etzion (2003) believed that defence mechanisms operate unconsciously to protect the ego from anxiety which stems from the recognition of unacceptable ideas and impulses. However, many of these defences are viewed as habitual, and not necessarily unconscious. An individual's way of responding to stress is reinforced by the reduction of discomfort, anxiety, or frustration that they feel when using these mechanisms. These mechanisms are used by all human beings and only become problems when they become the only means an individual uses to cope with stress.

Defensive coping mechanisms have the following meanings which have not changed over time thus both older and more modern references are used.

3.8.2.1 Denial

Many people simply deny sources of danger. For instance, smokers refuse to believe that they are at risk for developing cancer risk. Denial reduces the immediate impact of stressors, but denies the chance to take effective action towards offsetting these threats (Etzion, 2003; Krauss – Whitbourne, 2011). Avoiding the awareness of various painful aspects of reality by

negating sensory data helps the individual defend agains the affects of reality. Essentially, the individual tries to block out all sources of external reality which cause him or her stress. Denial is used by individuals who are in a so-called normal state and those who experience pathological states (Krauss – Whitbourne, 2011).

3.8.2.2 Displacement

According to Etzion (2003) and Krauss-Whitbourne (2011), ideas or impulses are transferred from a threatening or unsuitable object to an acceptable object. Freud (1856 – 1939) displacement as an essential aspect for developing mature sexual relationship. He also argued that people develop lasting attachments to adults of opposite sex by transferring, or displacing into emotions that we first experience towards parents which is supported by Gillies (2014). Displacement refers to diverting emotional feelings from their original source to a substitute target which frequently occurs in families for instance, when a father is angry with his spouse but takes the anger out on his children (Etzion, 2003).

3.8.2.3 Intellectualisation

Threatening events are viewed with emotional detachment for example, doctors try to distance themselves from their patients' immediate discomfort, so that they can apply their knowledge and skills without excessive emotional arousal (Etzion, 2003; Shirom, 2003). When an individual tries to intellectualise something he or she becomes more *objective a*bout the issue (trauma, or problem at hand) thus emotions become displaced and cause less distress (Krauss – Whitbourne, 2011). However, the author notes that intellectualising issues, while useful in the short term, may cause an individual more stress in the long-term as problems have not been properly dealt with.

3.8.2.4 Reaction formation

According to Etzion (2003) unacceptable ideas and impulses are kept unconscious through the exaggerated expression of opposing ideas and impulses, for example, someone who is over polite and does not seem to have a care in the world, but who is in a very hostile situation. Shirom (2000) stated that another avenue for dealing with unacceptable impulses is reaction formation, with taking an exaggerated position that opposes true feelings. Reaction formation is also defined as a defensive process in which emotions and impulses that are perceived to be unacceptable in which an individual perceives true feelings and desires to be socially unacceptable (Krauss-Whitbourne, 2011).

3.8.2.5 Regression

Stress that sometimes leads to regressive behaviour which means that an individual adopts the characteristics (behaviour) of younger people or children (Krauss-Whitbourne, 2011). Under severe stress for instance, a female who suffers emotional and/or physical abuse from her partner may chew her nails and play with stuffed toys (Shirom, 2003). According to Krauss – Whitbourne (2011), regression is an attempt to return to an earlier phase of functioning to avoid tension and conflict induced at the individuals present level of development. It reflects the inclination for individuals to gain instinctual satisfaction at a period when he or she is less-developed (usually a childhood period of development). In the long term regression is likely to become pathological if an individual does not face issues at his or her adult level of development.

3.8.2.6 Rationalisation

An individual who engages in rationalisation is usually practicing self-deception (Krauss-Whitbourne, 2011). The individual finds justification for unacceptable ideas, impulses and behaviours. These usually have some truth but do not, in anyway, justify the behaviour. Shirom (2003), found that people who cheat on their income-tax returns often rationalise the fact that government programmes cost too much, do not help them, so they should not have to pay tax. Krauss- Whitbourne (2013) states that excessive rationalisation helps individuals avoid showing *affect* or mood. Individuals who rationalise issues often do so in order to avoid contact with people and in order to avoid expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings. Rationalisation offers rational explanations with which individuals are aple to justify their (or others) attitudes particulary about behaviours which are commonly found unacceptable.

3.8.3 Other coping mechanisms

Stress is manageable through systems of social support in the work place for instance, administrative management, empathic immediate superiors and colleagues (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2003). Effective stress management is a key factor in enabling people to live fulfilling, healthy, satisfying, and productive lives (Davis, McKay & Eshelmen, 2000; Devi, 2011). According to Devi (2011), an individuals personality characteristics are directly linked to how they cope.

Davis et al. (2000) report that the three most constructive approaches to stress management are, changing the thought processes about a distressing event, changing the context of the

distressing event and not continually thinking about the distressing event by thinking about something else. Devi (2011) however, reports that three of the most destructive ways that people use to relieve stress involves overuse of alcohol and other types of substance abuse and, under or over-eating. Compulsive over-eating is one of the most usual and unhealthy way of temporarily relieving stress. Suicide is the most destructive way of escaping stress as it destroys families. It also has a major impact on the social and work environment the individual who commits suicide leaves behind.

According to Strumpfer (2003), when coping resources are not adequate stress results in psychological, physiological and/or other behavioural problems, which may be short or long term. Secondary appraisals are evaluated in terms of the controllability or stressfulness of the situation based on an individual's prior experience. Successful coping mechanisms increase an individual's level of self-efficacy (confidence), but unsuccessful coping mechanisms reduce it. In successful coping, there is a change in primary appraisal and a situation will be judged as less of a threat (Sincero, 2016; Stanton, Bower & Louw, 2006).

Effective stress management is a major factor in enabling people to live fulfilling, healthy, satisfying and productive lives. There are a variety of ways to stop thinking about a distressing event, such as relaxation approaches for instance, deep-breathing, relaxation, imagery relaxation, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, and bio feedback (Davis et al., 2000; Sincero, 2016). Some research has identified the fact that religion can be an important positive coping component in dealing with life's challenges (Kinney, Ishler, Pargamemt, & Cavanaugh, 2003). This can be clearly seen in individuals with medical disorders as those who use positive coping strategies comply better with health and medical interventions than those individuals using negative coping mechanisms (Falcone, Dickstein, Sieke & Franco, 2014; Webster - Markton & Glaser, 2008). According to Coetzee and Ganz (2012), negative coping strategies cause harm to and inhibit individuals performance. However, Anderson (2000) found that when individuals use active coping strategies, feelings of de-personalisation decrease and a sense of personal accomplishment is increased.

Sincero (2016) states that individual stress reduction techniques, such as coping, health promotion, and counselling work well if individuals comply with these stress interventions. An important aspect of coping seems to be individual's level of optimism. According to Shirom (2003) optimism is important for healthy personality and is related to coping because optimists seem to believe that they can handle stress. Strumpfer (2003) agrees with the

importance of optimism. From this study on college students, optimism was divided into three levels. Results indicated that those individuals who scored highly on the highest level of optimism had the maximum overall quality of life. Those who scored highly on the middle level of optimism also reported a moderately good quality of life satisfaction but reported using more alcohol as a coping style than the high optimists. In case of individuals with low levels of optimism, the author noted the use of more alcohol and disengagement as coping styles (Sincero, 2016).

Disengagement is portraying inhumane behaviour as though it has a moral purpose in order to make it socially acceptable (Fiske, 2004). For example, torture, in order to obtain information necessary to protect the nation's citizens, may be seen as acceptable. Another disengagement technique is advantageous comparison. Moral judgments of conduct can be influenced by structuring what the conduct is compared against. In social comparison the morality of an act depends more on the ideological loyalties of the labellers than on the acts themselves (Lent & Schwartz, 2012).

Another coping style that is often believed to be healthy is the use of exercise. In a study that investigated the psychological well-being of individuals who exercise regularly, results indicated that exercising increases psychological well-being and low stress levels (Weir, 2011). Individuals who employ active and healthy coping styles such as exercising may become more psychologically more resilient. Active coping strategies are more often employed by individuals with extroverted personality characteristics and emotional stability. On the other hand, passive coping styles are more related to neuroticism and low agreeableness (Campbell, 2008; Weir, 2011).

Carducci (2009) states that Neuroticism refers to a fundamental personality characteristic characterised by anxiety, moodiness, worry, envy, and jealousy. Individuals who score high on neuroticism are more likely to experience feelings of anxiety, anger, envy, guilt, and depressed mood. They respond poorly to stress and interpret ordinary situations as threatening and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult. Individuals are usually self-conscious and shy. Neuroticism is a risk factor for the internalising many cognitive problems which were traditionally called neuroses which are caused by stressors and high anxiety. On the other hand according to Matsumoto and Juang (2012), Agreeablenessis a personality trait in which individuals behavioural characteristics are noted as kind, sympathetic, cooperative, warm and considerate. People who score high on this dimension tend to believe that most

people are honest, decent, and trustworthy while individuals scoring low on agreeableness are less concerned with others well-being and report having less empathy and are therefore able to deal with stress more effectively (Lent & Schwartz , 2012).

It must be noted that an individual's style of coping is important in predicting resilience as well as the development of specific mental disorders for instance, PTSD in times of trauma (Toker & Biron, 2012). Resilience, in terms of psychology is an individual's ability to positively adapt to life tasks when placed in difficult or adverse situations (American Psychological Association, 2014).

3.9 Overview of different types of coping

Different ways of coping have been found to adaptive for specific individuals displaying different personality characteristics. In an early meta-analysis, Suls and Fletcher (1985) compiled studies that examined the effects of various coping modes on several measures of adjustment to illness. The authors concluded that *avoidant* coping strategies seemed to be more adaptive in the short term whereas *attentive-confrontative* coping is more adaptive in the long term. There have been many attempts to reduce the total of possible coping responses to a narrow set of coping dimensions. Some researchers for instance, note two basic dimensions for instance, *instrumental and vigilant, or confrontative coping* on the one hand, in contrast to *avoidant, palliative, and emotional coping* on the other (Schwarzer & Knoll, nd). Internal coping mechanisms such as humour, emotional restraint and self-motivation were found useful and effective in promoting emotional well-being in a sample of SAPS officers (Masefako et al., 2013).

Coping has also a chronological aspect. Individuals can cope before a stressful event takes place, while it is happening (for instance, during the progress of a disease), or afterwards. Schwarzer and Knoll (nd) distinguish between five situations that create a particular time-based context. 1) Preventive coping: this occurs long before the stressful event occurs, or might occur for example, a smoker can stop smoking when still young in order to avoid the risk of lung cancer. 2) Anticipatory coping, this occurs when the event is anticipated before long. An example of this is when an individual takes medication to calm them when waiting to see a medical practictioner (anticipating bad news). 3) Dynamic coping, this occurs when an event is ongoing. For example, an individual who suffers chronic pain tries to divert their attention by doing something that engages their mind. 4) Reactive coping occurs after an

event has happened. This can happen after an accident where an individual loses a limb and has to learn to cope with their new life situation. 5) Residual coping occurs long after an event. The individual has to content with long-term effects; for example, controlling intrusive thoughts years after a traumatic accident has happened.

In a study conducted by van Wyk (2004) which noted the dimensions of burnout and coping strategies related to stress it was found that effective coping strategies lower the effects of de-personalisation, whilst avoidance coping is more likely to predict de-personalisation than approach coping. It was further found that the support of friends was positively related to a sense of personal accomplishment which prompted better problem solving. Furthermore, in another study it was found that there were no significant differences found between the position of the individual within an organisation and the level of stress that is experienced (Masefako et al., 2013; Miller, 2014).

3.9.1 Personal coping resources

Personal characteristics may influence receptiveness to stress, the interpretation and response to stressful events plus the degree to which stressful events are dealt with. These characteristics influence an individuals reaction to chronic stress and burnout (Anshel, 2000). Personal characteristics associated with coping include self-esteem, optimism, coping style, hardiness, extraversion, neuroticism, self-confidence, andperfectionism. The abovementioned characteristics shape a police officers appraisal of stress and consequent ability to cope under pressure. Krauss - Whitbourne (2011) suggests that individuals cope with stress by moving towards their goals while leaving the goals behind that are perceived as unattainable. Pienaar, Rothmann and van der Vijver (2007) used a variety of scales in a study they conducted amongst SAPS officers (The Adult Suicide Ideation Questionnaire, the Police Stress Inventory, the Personality Characteristics Inventory, and the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) and reported that tose who scored high on avoidance coping weree more likely to experience suicidal ideation.

Another personal coping resource is religiousity for instance, many police officers take time to pray individually when handling traumatic cases. This strategyinvolves communication with for instance, the Christian God, about their views regarding cases. This type of prayer is used as the highest form of asserting their policing responsibility as they declare this responsibility to humanity (Rani & Kumar, 2012). Prayer is mostly used to escape the effects

of victim contact, both physically and spiritually. The officers also gain the mental strength tocontinue working and gain emotional relief in the form of achieving astate of composure (Rothmann, Jorgensen, & Hill, 2011). Putman, Lea and Eriksson (nd) examined the effects of religious coping styles on personal distress, cross-culturally. The results of their investigation indicate that some forms of religious coping are related to a lower likelihood of depression during stressful event and may protect an individual against anxiety. Religious coping styles were associated with positive mental health while others. Rothmann et al. (2007), in their study of stress related factor amongst SAPS officer, reported that low scores on religious are linked to suicidal ideation.

3.9.2 Social coping resources

An individual's style of coping is important in predicting resilience. According to Davis et al. (2000), coping strategies can be categorised into positive and negative coping strategies. Positive coping strategies include spending time with family and friends, sharing stressful experiences with others as well as having religious beliefs. Negative coping strategies include self-destructive behaviours such as smoking and avoiding contact with family and friends. Different coping styles seem to affect the lives of individuals differently. Some coping styles may act as a modifying factor between stressors and depressive symptoms by modifying negative emotions. Barling, Kevin and Micheal (2005) suggest that all coping styles involve finding solution to problems and stressors of any type. The authors add that some coping styles can exacerbate the effects that stress has on an individual and may compromise future adjustment. Promotion of healthy coping skills, physical health, personal support systems such as peers and family, and meditation or relaxation practice combat burnout symptoms on a personal front, while supervision or mentorship, peer consultation and an environment of caring service is beneficial on workplace (Bakker & Maslach, 2014). However, it must be noted that personality involves, a person's characteristic patterns of thoughts, behaviour, and feelings (Carver & Scheier, 2005) and is unique to each individual making it difficult to predict resilience (Matsumoto & Juang, 2012).

Social support can lessen or totally eliminate the negative effects of stress. People with good social support systems believe that they are cared for and loved, and have a valued communication network. Stress occurs when there is a substantial imbalance between environmental demand and the response capability of the focal organism (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Workplace relationships for instance, those with clients, colleagues and supervisors

can also be a source of emotional stress. However, work relationships can also be rewarding and used as a resource for coping with job stress (Bakker & Maslach, 2014; Shirom, 2003). A study by Mostert and Joubert (2005) found that social support helped SAPS officers deal with stress and anxiety related to their work.

According to Davis et al. (2000), the major reason for abusing alcohol and drugs is to get relief from stress and unwanted emotions. For instance, people who over-eat compulsively are using eating as a temporary measure of relieving stress. Eventually, the person becomes obese or morbidly obese but continues eating to relieve the stressors associate with the condition. This type of destructive behaviour is a negative coping mechanism. Another way of escaping stress is suicide which many people attempt (para-suicide) as a cry for help. If this is not recognised the individual will eventually go on to kill him or herself. This is an individual destructive behaviour which has wide implications for friends, partners and family in terms of how they cope with stressors surrounding untimely, self-inflicted death. Otte (2011) found that intervention programmes directed at the individual which used training in psychotherapy counselling, communication skills, adaptive skills decreased the symptoms of stress. Devi (2011) suggested that sharing feelings with co-workers was also likely to decrease stress levels and subsequent

Police officers need to have healthy coping mechanisms that are effective for them. Anshel (2000) suggests that for police officers, exercise is an excellent positive social coping mechanism which reduces depression and anxiety while increasing the body's natural endorphins which results in a *feel good factor* for the person engaged in exercise. Another active coping mechanism for stress relief is engaging in a hobby which has been found to lower tension levels significantly. The author also states that social support is extremely important in managing a police officer's stress, anxiety and related burnout levels.

According to Wiese, Rothman and Storm (2003), stress is a direct results of demands of a specific job and social support is a necessary coping mechanism. Stress can lead to exhaustive cynicism which can be lessened through emotional support (Matsumoto & Juang, 2012).

3.10 Burnout

Although burnout is not measured in this study it must be referred to as the results of ongoing stress and poor coping mechanisms result in burnout. There are various definitions proposed

by researchers for explaining burnout. Mateen and Dorji, (2009) define burnout as a cumulative stress reaction to on-going occupational stressors. Burnout is further defined as a work related syndrome that most often occurs in those working face - to – face with the public and who experience a sense of cynicism and no sense of accomplishment. Burnout is exhaustion, de-personalisation and lack of accomplishment. Shirom (2003) adds another dimension to the definition of burnout as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job which is fairly stable over time. Evans (2013) reported that occupational stress results from prolonged exposure to excessive job demands, specifically interpersonal demands at work and is distinguishable from stress in other environments, because it represent a set of responses to chronic work demands.

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by a long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding (Bianchi, Truchot, Laurent, Brisson & Schonfeld, 2014). According to Cackinberk (2011), burnout appears in the first years of an individuals profession, it detected that overall burnout decreased and personal accomplishment increased as employees became more tenured. Devi (2011) also defined burnout as the index of dislocation between what people can do and what they have to do. Burnout is also reported as the concluding phase of a breakdown in adaptation to a situation and the consequence of a sustained imbalance of demands and resources caused by chronic stressors (Mostert & Joubert, 2005).

Maslach and Jackson (1986) define burnout as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization which is a negative, callous and detached attitude towards a person or persons that one works with. These individuals tend to have reduced personal accomplishment as they feel resentful in some way. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally over-extended and an individual experiences a strong depletion of emotional resources. A more recent description of burnout by Rosool and Botha (2011) supported by Coetzee and Ganz (2012) suggests that burnout occurs when an individual cannot cope with the demands of work and the experience differs from person to person. Prolonged stress and the inability to cope with negative conditions are additional contributors to burnout which tends to remain unnoticed for a long period of time before some kind of breakdown occurs.

Lent and Schwartz (2012) suggest that the development of burnout and anxiety related disorders, as a result of stressors are linked to personality traits and coping styles. People

who score high on the personality trait of Neuroticism tend to use emotional or avoidant coping and experience moderate high levels of burnout. Therefore, people who score high on the personality traits of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness, and Conscientiousness are morel likely to use task-oriented coping and, as a result,experience low levels of burnout and stress related anxiety (Burgess, Irvine, & Wallymahmed, 2010). Salami (2011) determined that the personality trait of Neuroticism was related to Emotional Exhaustion, De-personalisation and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

Burnout is recognised as a work-related stress induced condition and has associations with depressed moods, sense of inadequacy, fatigue and memory problems. It is a very costly phenomenon for organisations, because it manifests in a number of ways, namely, low morale, absenteeism, job turnover, poor performance, vandalism and lack of organisational commitment (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). Police officers operating under severe and chronic stress may be at greater risk of error and over-reaction that can compromise their performance and public safety. The experience of stress is subjective because of the perception of whether an event or situation is stressful varies amongst individuals. The response to stress is also variable, with coping strategies differing significantly among individuals (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2003). Because of subjective nature of stress perceptions and the wide range of possible responses, theorists have developed several definitions of the causes of stress (Maslach et al., 2014).

Factors related to the onset of burnout are associated with personal changes (Maslach et al, 2014). There are three types of burnout namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and diminished personal accomplishment. Emotional burnout and exhaustion however, still remain the central component of burnout. Individuals experience depersonalisation and start to see and treat people as objects. Individuals experiencing a diminished sense of personal accomplishment are unable to take pride in what they do. Antecedents of job burnout are a variety factors that contribute to the development and severity of the problem. These problems fall into two major areas, work factors and personality factors. The most common work responsibility factor is work overload and having too heavy a workload over an extended period of time. The most common personality factors relating to burnout are type A personalities who have little patience and who are often overly assertive.

There is a lack of agreement about what actually produces burnout Schaufeli, Maslach and Marek (1993) and Thomas et al. (2014) suggest that initially, the main focus of burnout studies revolves around job and personal factors. These factors were originally studied in isolation. Recently, theorists have suggested that burnout should be seen as a combination of work demands and individual coping resources (Maslach et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2014). This integrative approach to burnout has moved the focus from the individual to the individual placed in a specific situation or context.

Bakker and Maslach (2014) report that stress related illnesses and burnout are not a matter of weakness or poor attitudes in individual employees, but are caused by major mismatches between the nature (personality) of the person doing the job and the nature of the job itself. Research on burnout suggests that certain coping strategies have been found to be effective in reducing burnout, while other strategies increase levels of burnout. When individuals used active coping strategies, feelings of cynicism lessened and a sense of professional efficacy increased. However, Wiese et al. (2003) found that personal accomplishment was the only component of burnout associated with coping strategies.

3.10.1 Work factors related to burnout

According to Maslach et al. (2014), burnout is composed of three interconnected but different components namely exhaustion, cynicism and detachment from the job. They suggest that because of this burnout depletes individuals, physical, cognitive, and emotional resources which leads to exhaustion. A second major contributor to burnout is the loss of personal control in the job environment. The final sets of problems related to an individual's role in the workplace are role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. These role-related difficulties lead to high levels of stress. Interpersonal relationships in the workplace are considered to be an individual stress experience entrenched in a context of complex social relationships. It involves the individual's conception of both self and others on the job.

Interactions with supervisors, peers, subordinates, and clients are all potential sources of stress and may range from lack of support to interpersonal conflict (Toker & Biron, 2012). In its lesser forms interpersonal peer issues are often mild and produce low levels of stress however, over time these can also be problematic. According to Magnavita and Garbarino (2013), burnout includes few individual factors and more situational ones. Halbesleben (2010) suggests that job resources, optimism and self-efficacy are positively related to work engagement while pessimism and lack of self-confidence are more related to burnout. Elwér

et al. (2013), in their research concluded that different patterns of gender inequality in the workplace are also associated with psychological distress (thus burnout) for women but not for men. Women in the workplace often have to have more masculine persoanlities, particularly in patriarchal socieites, which is likely to add to stress and burnout (Morash & Haarr, 2012).

3.10.2 Personality factors related to burnout

According to Morris and Maisto (2012), personality is an individual's unique pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviour that persist over time and across situations. Morgan and De Bruin (2010) conducted research on this phenomena and reported that they are of the opinion that the Five Factor model of personality (Bigman, 1990) is the best and most comprehensive classification of personality when used in the work context. These authors view personality as a system defined by personality traits and dynamic processes which affects the way in which an individual functions socially, as well as in a work context (See appendix 4 for an overview of the Five Factor Model of personality).

Personality factors related to burnout are individual traits that relate to individual personalities. Problems for individuals range from work, family issues to transportation problems. The most consistently found characteristics of persons who suffer burnout or do not suffer burnout include Neuroticism, which predicts greater degrees of burnout, and hardiness, which buffers the effects of burnout. Individuals who are unable to balance their non-working and work commitments are likely to experience job burnout. Non-working factors, such as financial difficulties, commuting time, multiple jobs, personal relationships, worries about violence and terrorism and even stressors such as getting married or having children also contribute to the problem (Maslach & Leiter, 2007). Bianci et al. (2015) state that when burnout is ignored exhaustion typically correlates with stress symptoms such as headaches, chronic fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension hypertension, cold or flu episodes and sleeping disturbances. Psychological issues also result such as depression and, in the case of police officers, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

According to Maslach and Leiter (2007), poor job behaviours are associated with various forms of job withdrawal such as absenteeism, intention to leave the job and staff turnover. When people who stay in work they dislike it leads to lower productivity, decreased job satisfaction, decreased effectiveness at work and reduced commitment to the job. In general, burnout scores are higher for people who have less hardy personalities, who have a more

external locus of control and who score around 5 on the neurotic scale of the Five-Factor Model of personality. There are few consistent relationships of burnout with demographic characteristics. People who are older tend to have lower burnout scores. It must also be noted that the only consistent gender differences on burnout scores is the tendency for men to score slightly higher on cynicism than women. In support of this Alvinia and Ahmadzadeh (2012) report that individuals suffering from burnout lose concern or respect for other people and often have a cynical, dehumanised perception of other individuals and tend to speak in a derisory manner about peers and work colleagues.

In a systematic review of literature on burnout amongst police personnel it was found that occupational stress related to staff shortages, work overload, long hours, politicisation of the work environment and poor pay resulted in poor performance and a lack of commitment by personnel generally (Kapade – Nikam & Shaikh, 2014). In the SAPS in KwaZuluNatal, South Africa, it was found that stressors linked to the demands of the job are associated with exhaustion (burnout). This also made police officers more cynical in their approach to their work. Lack of resources, needed to do their job effectively, impacted on the overall professional efficiency of the SAPS in this province (Wiese et al., 2014).

3.10.3 Consequences of burnout

Exposure to a stressful situation leads to physiological changes in the body which causes over activation of the sympathetic nervous system (Chesney et al., 2006). In support of this Schultz and Schultz (2010) found that during stress, adrenaline released from the adrenal glands speeds up all bodily functions, namely a rise in blood pressure, heart rate, and adrenaline is released into the bloodstream. Too much exposure to stress and prolonged activation of these bodily functions have negative health consequences on an individual in the long term which promotes burnout and chronic stress (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

According to Robbins (2003), people who experience burnout can have a negative impact on their colleagues, both by causing greater personal conflict, and disrupting job tasks. Problems on the job fall into three broad categories: emotional, biological and behavioural. In emotional exhaustion psychological changes occur and the most consistent job attitudes will be negative due to less interest in job involvement, job commitment, organizational commitment, and increased job frustration. These negative attitudes often connect strongly to negative health outcomes, for example, hypertension, and behavioural changes which involves increased health care rates. Pienaar and Rothmann (2003) state that burnout creates

additional behavioural changes in workers which directly affect organisational productivity. It also decreases job performance, with individuals accomplishing less and leads to other individuals having to bear a greater workloads. Individuals who go missing for hours or are not at work, and who are often rude to colleagues, are also likely to be suffering job burnout (Bakker & Maslach, 2014).

Hedgley (2007) postulated that burnout in police officers threatens the quality of service delivery, due to their exhaustion and lack of commitment. Furthermore, he suggested that police officers who suffer from burnout have negative feelings which results in a poor attitudes to peers and victims of crime. Police officers who are usually optimistic and enthusiastic become detached and fatigued because of this. As a result of this it is commonly accepted that extreme levels of workplace burnout and stress drastically decreases employee productivity (Dodge & D'Analeze, 2012).

Dodge and D'Analeze (2012) assert that employers have to realise that burnout exists among all age groups and it is necessary to take the time to research why stress and eventual burnout exists in different places of work. They note that employers have a responsibility to their employees, which is directly linked to the overall well-being of employees in the workplace as it directly affects both individual and overall group performance. However, some research suggests that in policing younger age groups are related to more stressor intensity than younger age groups (Balakrishnamrthy & Shankar, 2009).

3.10.4 The effects of burnout

Ali - Yassin, Abdiaziz and Abdiqani (2013) suggest that when overload is related to a prolonged negative work conditions, there is little opportunity to rest, recover and restore an individual's balance. Estevez and Rui-Gomes (2013) state that asustainable workload and workplace conducive to good relationships provides opportunities to use and refine existing skills as well as to become effective in new areas of activity. According to Evans (2013), police officers who use unhealthy mechanisms (for instance negative coping mechanisms such as alcohol abuse or substance abuse) to cope with burnout and stress have a greater chance of developing physical and psychological health problems such as sleeping disorders, gastrointestinal tract, exhaustion, high blood pressure and anxiety disorders.

3.11 Examples of research on police relating to stress and coping mechanisms globally

The prevalence of workers who report dystress (psychological dystress is a general term used to describe disagreeable feelings or emotions that impact an individuals day-to-day functioning). Yoo and Franke (2011) report that when dystress reaches clinical relevance it is defined as a stress-related disorder. This term includes a variety of clinical conditions, which are collectively labelled as common mental disorders (CMDs) and one of the most common diagnoses is depression. This underpins research from across the globe indicates that the phenomenon of occupational stress in police is widespread and increasing exponentially. A key of finding of a national survey conducted in 2002 on occupational was that approximately 50% of Australian police taking part in the survey were at the risk of psychological illness, compared with only 19% of the Australian population overall (Carson & Heath, 2007). Moreover, the authors found that a study conducted in 2004, at the University of Luton and the University of Leeds on stress in the British police force, concluded that 69% of police in Britain experience high levels of job stress. This resulted in much work absenteeism.

Hakan (2015) states that in America stressors, within a policing environment, are classified in terms of organisational practices and inherent police stressors. His research found that generally American police officers use adaptive coping strategies, such as excercising and going for counselling in order to help them relieve stress and anxiety. Furthermore, police officers as compared to the general population reported to much higher levels of depression, burnout and anxiety-related mental health conditions. The author further found that overll police officers have a life expectancty more than 10 years less than the general population.

According to Andersen et al. (2015a), police officers around the world acknowledge that their work is challenging. In a National survey study of police officers in the Finnish national police force, more than 40% of survey respondents reported high levels of stress when attending critical incidents which had resulted in some officers experiencing mental health problems.

Arnetz, Arble, Backman, Lynch and Lublin (2013) reveal that police organisations in democratic societies such as Europe, Canada, America, England and Australia provide high

quality training and many resources to help their officers fufill their work objectives. However, even when such training is provided police officers still need counselling and sometimes psychological therapy after life threatening and dangerous incidents. They always require some form of de-briefing. The authors further indicate that if police stress is not addressed the impact of trauma exposure and other stressors related to critical incidents can result in permanent mental and physical health problems. Interstingly, Elliot and Lal (2016) found that police officers who were from lower socio-economic classes were more likely to suffer from high blood pressure than those from higher earning police officers and female officers blood pressure rose (more than male officers) during shift work.

According to Yoo and Franke (2011), who investigated the association of a dystress with the presence of self-reported symptoms of depression, anxiety and burnout, in the Italian police concluded that those officers who were single, had a shorter length of service, lived in barracks, had a lower rank and who were closer to their families had a higher short-term sickness absence risk. In another study by Kingdom and Smith (2012) conducted in the United Kingdom (UK), police officers, with good social support systems, described themselves as much more emotionally stable and slightly to moderately more extraverted, agreeable, conscientious and open to experience than the general population and that some personality traits (for instance, emotional stability and agreeableness) were associated with lower perceived stress levels or reactivity to environmental stressors.

According to Magnavita & Garbarino (2013), psychosocial factors at work reveals the relationship between the psychological demands of a job and the development of depression. Dystress and mental health problems caused by work also affect the performance of professional activities for instance, law enforcement. The authors also note that depression isone of the main causse of early retirement, suicides, murder–suicides, domestic violence, unnecessary violence and aggression for police officers internationally.

Kingdom and Smith (2012) suggest that investigating stress in police officers is particularly difficult because they are afraid of being identified as individuals who have been compromised by stress. They fear that this might then cause them to be discriminated against in their careers, removed from active duties and relegated to office work. Their study found work stress to be the first cause of sickness absence and a reduction in operational duties, as well as the leading cause of ill-health retirement in police officers. Job strain was associated

with cardiovascular risk in female police officers, musculoskeletal disorders in special police forces and poorer mental health levels in correctional and urban police officers. Underpinning these finding is research by Magnavita and Garbarino (2013) who report that police officers with greater perceived work stress in the first year of police service showed more severe depression symptoms.

According to Wood (2012) after a five-year study of the Buffalo Police Department in New York, America, nearly half (46.9 percent) of 464 officers who participated in the research, worked a night shift compared to just nine percent of all workers in America. It was noted that shift work leads to increased stress thus researchers postulated that shift work combined with police work was likely to lead to high stress levels in respondents. The study also found that shift work is a contributing factor to in an increase in metabolic syndrome, which is a cluster of symptoms which includes abdominal obesity, hypertension, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes and propensity for a cerebrovascular incident (CVA) or stroke. Forty percent (40%) of the officers who participated in the study were obese, compared with 32% of the general population, More than 25% of the officers had metabolic syndrome versus 18.7% of the general population. Female officers experienced the highest level of self-reported stress while male officers were six times more likely to have poor sleep quality. It was also reported that males were at increased risk of developing Hodgkin's lymphoma. Taylor (2000) states that lymphoma is a group of blood cell tumours that develop from lymphocytes Taylor). It is sometimes used to refer to just the cancerous ones rather than all tumours. Symptoms may include enlarged lymph nodes that are not generally painful, fevers, sweats, itchiness, weight loss and feeling tired among others. After 30 years of service it was also found that suicide rates were more than eight times higher in working police officers than they were in officers who had retired or left the police force (Wood, 2012).

> "This finding challenges the common assumption that separated or retired officers are at increased risk for suicide however, the need for suicide prevention efforts remains important for both active and retired officers. It must be noted that while police officers do have health insurance, the culture of police departments often goes against the goal of improving health (Wood, 2012, p.345).

Shirom (2003) conducted research in America and found that there is a common belief that a police officer should be physically strong, masculine and muscular. Effective police are believed to be those who work on the streets as opposed to offices, and should have a strong record of arrests which involves force and aggression. This popular image of a police officer is stressful for those members who are in small in build, not very muscular and who work in offices or behind a desk. The author suggests that the consequence of this popular image is that many effective police officers, who prefer not to use brute force and work more effectively behind the scenes, are often the recipients of discrimination and from management in terms of promotion, but also from peers and colleagues (in terms of bullying disguised as being playful).

According to Pienaar and Rothmann (2003) in many African police forces for instance, Nigeria it is commonly accepted that use of withdrawal or avoidance (passive) coping strategies is associated with high levels of stress and burnout, while lower burnout levels are associated with constructive or active coping strategies.

3.12 Examples of research on police relating to stress, burnout and coping mechanisms in South Africa

South African research that has been presented in the literature review thus far may not be repeated here. However, some studies may be presented again in order to give greater insight and more depth.

Early research by Guile, Tredoux and Foster (1998) looked at stress within the SAPS using a sample of officers from the Western Cape. They used Spielberger's Police Stress Sirveu to identify various stressful areas in police work. It was concluded that the SAPS in the country has many organisational stressors which adds to the intrinsic stressful nature of the job.

Mostert and Joubert (2005) used the Police Stress Inventory (PSI) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory plus a coping questionnaire to determine if coping strategies moderated the relationship between occupational stress and emotional exhaustion (burnout). It was found that avoidance coping moderated relationships between occupational stress and burnout. Furthermore, it was concluded that approach coping had an independent effect on emotional exhaustion.

Pienaar, Rothman and van de Vijver (2006) looked at suicidal ideation amongst SAPS officers. They used a cross-sectional survey research design using the PSI and COPE as well as the Adult Suicide Ideation Questionnaire and the Personality Characteristics Inventory. The authors concluded that low scores on approaches to coping, personality factors such as conscientiousness and emotional stability as well as high scores on avoidant coping are linked to suicidal ideation.

According to Preadhashni (2012), suicidal ideation amongst South Africa police officers is related to high alcohol consumption, one of the commonly used maladaptive coping strategies, and is a good predictor of suicidal ideation. Police officers, because of their differing personality components and resilence levels, also have different emotional reactions to occupational stress. The degree and frequency of exposure to occupational stress also differs which impacts on how officers perceive work related stressors (high work loads, job demandes, etcetera). The authors research also indicates that the events that show the highest correlation with emotional intensity include violence in the line of duty, such as shooting, chasing an armed suspect, responding to a scene where a child has died, and being involved in a motor vehicle accident with departmental car. These incidents are related to highly stressed and emotional responses by the police that are linked out to stress related illness and burnout. The study concluded that officers who felt more supported by their co-workers were more willing to be motivated in their work and more likely to show resilience to burnout and stress.

Research by Myendeki (2008) found that police officers suffer physical and psychological stress on a daily basis, and suffer anticipatory stress on their way to work. It has further been found that vulnerability to anxiety disorders, as well as depression and fatigue, are increased by stressful circumstances at work. The highest level of stress is experienced right before a critical event and police typically do not experience relief from the stress until they leave their shift (Campbell, 2008). Long-term exposure to occupational stress often results in burnout. The stressful events that form part of a police officer's work, as well as the frequent injuries that occur, make police officers common victims of the negative consequences of occupational stress, anxiety and burnout (Myendeki, 2008).

Jonker (2004) also found a negative relationship between stress and personality traits, particularly, conscientiousness which was found to adversely correlate with job demands which lead to stress. Additionally, SAPS members with a willingness to work hard and who

were high achivers (conscientiousness characteristics) were most negatively affected by stress. The author reported that it has been found that roughly 40% of police officers smoke cigarettes which is a negative coping mechanism in dealing with stress as it leads to negative health issues Among police officers, alcohol is used for social and bonding purposes and serves as a stress reliever. This also has negative health and negative social consequences.

The Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa, in 2012, on the opening of a medical facility (POLMED) in Lynwood, Pretoria, stated that about 3000 to 4000 SAPS men had received debriefing via the Health and Wellness Services within the SAPS in 2011 - 2012. He noted that this was because in 2010, eighty four police officers attempted suicide due to depression and stress (SaNews, 2012).

Maabela (2015) reported that stress related incidents in the workplace could led to PTSD amongst SAPS officers. She concluded that if SAPS officers were diagnosed with the disorder worry and stress amongst families was high. It was also reported that they coped by supporting one an other. It was concluded that the provision of intervention programmes which included counselling as well as life-skills would help both the SAPS officers and their families cope with the affect that PTSD had on the lives of all involved.

Chantel (2015) compared the stressors of South African police officers with officers in America. South African police officers identify lack of administrative skills and police misconduct as sources of stress while those in America perceive their overall work as the prime stressor. It was concluded that police officers in both countries are at risk of developing suicidal ideation because of lower levels of approach coping, turning to religion, emotional stability and conscientiousness and higher levels of avoidaince coping.

2.12.1 Crime statistics for the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area

It was thought appropriate to provide local crime statistics as stress in policing is worsened when there are high crime rates in all spheres of criminality (Jarret, 2015). According to Local news (Letwaba Herald, 2015) dated 20 December 2015, The Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area has the highest number of sexual offences in the province (for the fourth) consecutive year. The statistics are reported as 85 sexual offeces in the years 2013/2014 to

an exponential rise of 765 in the years 2014 to December, 2015. There were major increase sin robbery, 65%, burglary, 52%, theft-out- of motor vehicles 10%, theft of ammunition 7%, truck hijacking 2% and robberies at residential and business premises 71%. Incidents of public violence rose by 8% and the ill-treatment and kidnapping of children by 30%.

3.13 Resilience

According to Castro and Murray (2010), resilience is an individuals ability to interact with environments and use processes that encourage well-being in order to protect gainst the negative influence of risk factors. They suggest that it is an individual's ability to properly adapt to stress and hardship. Stress may be related to family or relationship problems, health problems, or workplace and financial stressors, amongst others (Robertson, 2012). Individuals demonstrate resilience when faced with difficult situations.

According to Robertson (2012) resilience is found in most individuals (to a lesser or greater degree) and it can be learned and developed by almost by anyone. However, professional resilience is the way an individual reacts in extreme situations within a specific professional context (for instance, medical doctors or police men/women). Positive professional resilience is also indicative of the degree to which an individual is flexible and is able to return to usual behaviour after a stressful event. Resilience is therefore a positive adaptation to a stressful or adverse situation and is indactive of an individual's ability to rebound back to their routine after a negative experience. It allows a person to recover from adversity as a strengthened and more resourceful person.

According to Hopf (2011), an individuals ability to cope successfully with stressors increases their resilience which enables them to adapt to their internal and external environments. It is not only the individual's capacity to cope up with pressure, demands and frustrations but also the opportunity and capacity of individuals to steer their way to psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain their well-being and develop their overall capacity to deal with life challenges over-time. Resilience must be viewed as the phenomenon of recovery from prolonged or severe adversity or from an immediate danger or stress.. This is supported by Anderson et al. (2015b) report that an individual's resilience increases and strengthens with age if stress is dealt with in an effective and healthy manner. Good problem solving skills give the individual the ability to manage challenging intra and inter personal situations.

Castro and Murray (2010) and Hopf (2010) report that resilient people do not experience negative emotions, thoughts and optimism in all situations. Resilience is seen in individuals who effectively steer their way through crises and utilise effective coping mechanisms. People who demonstrate resilience are people who demonstrate positive emotions. They are able to balance negative emotions with positive ones. The key factor in resilience is having positive and supportive relationships.

Honig (2016) reports that police officers who show resilience are found through effective pre-employment selection strategies and intensive repetitive training techniques. If police officers are supported by peers, good organisational support and preventative care strategies that identify early warning signs of distress and lack of resilience any disruption to normal (habitual) functioning can be lessened. The author notes that studies indicate that there are several factors which develop and sustain an individual's resilience for instance, the ability to make realistic plans and being capable of taking the steps necessary to follow these strategies, positive self-concept and confidence in individual strengths and abilities, communication and problem-solving skills and the ability to manage emotionality in a proactive rather than reactive manner. Anderson et al. (2015a) suggests that training to develop emotional intelligence is an effective technique for improving an individual's resilience to stress in any situation**.**

3.13.1 The professional resilience of police officers

Seligman (2014) states that intrinsic motivation also correlates with positive perceptions of career choice (for instance, choice to become a professional police officer). A wrong career choice is likely to discourage intrinsic motivation and increase the chance of losing professional resilience. Motivation and professional resilience are linked to organisational factors such as good leadership and organisational support which also positively correlates with professional resilience. An organisation lacking support generally displays inadequate decision-making and poor communication systems which have a negative influence on workers professional resilience.

According to research conducted by Peres et al. (2011), the majority of police personnel are regarded as a resilient however, a lesser group display mental ill health problems as a result of extreme situations which results in sick leave and absenteeism. There is neurophysiological evidence of resilience in a high-risk group for PTSD. The authors suggest that Psychotherapy may help in narrative interventions that build resilience further.

3.14 Summary

The chapter reviewed relevant literature in terms of stress, burnout and coping mechanisms related to the phenomena under investigation. It seems clear from the literature that international and South African police officers are vulnerable to many stressors. The following chapter describes the research methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research procedures used in the study. It presents the research design, sampling method, data collection, data analysis, study hypotheses and ethical procedures used in the investigation.

4.2 Research design

A cross sectional survey design was selected for the study as it assisted the researcher in obtaining information from various cases in the sample population. Brysbaert (2011) stated that it is a type of observational study that collects data at a specific point in time (cross sectional data).

4.3 Area of study

The study was conducted in Tzaneen, Limpopo Province in the Mopani District which falls under the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

4.4 Population and sample

The population from which the sample was drawn from all police officers stationed at SAPS Police Stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality (Maake, Ritavi, Letsitele and Tzaneen police stations). The total population of SAPS officers at these stations, at the time of the study, was 317.

4.4.1 Permission to conduct the research

Permission to conduct the research was granted b the regional SAPS office who allowed research to take place at all police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality (see appendix 3). Furthermore, the Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee (TREC) also granted ethical clearance for the research.

4.5 Sampling method

Stratified random sampling was used so that each member of the population had an equal chance of participating. Stratification is the process of dividing members of the population into homogeneous subgroups. In this research for instance, police constables, police sergeants and detectives were divided into subgroups (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This was achieved by asking for a list of individuals in the aforementioned ranks who serve in the police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Muncipality which was reflected in the letter, to the regional SAPS office. The strata was mutually exclusive, on each element in the population that was assigned to only one stratum (Terre Blanche, Durreheim & Painter, 2009).

The strata was collectively exhaustive, with no population element from the aforementioned groups excluded. Then simple random sampling was applied within each stratum. This improved the representativeness of the sample by reducing sampling error, reduced administrative bias and allowed the use of inferential statistics. As the total population was 317 the estimated sample size was +-175 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The determination of sample size table can be found under appendix 5.

According to Brysbaert (2011), in survey research where sub-populations within an overall population vary, it is useful to sample each sub-population (stratum) independently. The respondents were both female and male police officers at all Tzaneen regions (Ritavi, Lenyenye, Letsitele and Tzaneen police stations). Overall a simple random sample (for all the different sub-populations) of 175 was generated using a list of SAPS officers from each sub-population, from each police station (See appendix 6). However, 71 of the SAPS officers at the 4 police stations, who were identified by the random sampling, did not want to take part in the study and a) returned the questionnaire to the researcher not filled in or b) indicated to the researcher when she collected the questionnaires that they did not want to participat. In all, 104 SAPS officers from the different sub-groups participated in the study. This was an overall response rate of 59% (attrition rate 41%). This was an acceptable response rate as the sample was representative (Fincham, 2008) of SAPS officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area.

4.5.1 Inclusion criteria – all male and female SAPS officers serving in the Greater Tzaneen municipality police stations namely the Maake, Ritavi, Lenyenye, Letsitele and Tzaneen police stations.

4.5.2 Exclusion criteria – Officers who were being treated for PTSD or another mental disorder were excluded as the medication used to treat them might have affected their ability to fill in the questionnaire objectively.

4.6 Data collection

Quantitative data was collected by means of questionnaires. The questionnaires were self-report in nature and self-administered. Each officer, randomly selected, was sent a letter asking if they would like to participate in the survey. The letter and the questionnaires were delivered to the four police stations with the officers SAPS number on the front. The covering letter explained the research and confidentiality agreement (See appendix 1). There was a section that informed the officers that they did not have to participate. If this was the case they were asked to return the protocols unanswered.

The questionnaires were placed in envelopes in a booklet form with a cover page of general instructions which the participant followed when completing the questionnaire (see appendix 2). All participating police officers were asked to read the contents of the questionnaires carefully. Data were collected from 05 December 2015 to 22 january 2016 individually. The researcher visited the different police stations and asked gave an information session to prospective respondents who were available. All respondents signed the consent form which explained ethical issues, such as anonymity and confidentiality and which constitutes an important, and necessary, aspect of the research process. Respondents were informed, on the protocol information letter, that if they experienced any distress after filling in the survey protocol they should inform the researcher so that she could refer them to a counsellor who had agreed to help for de-briefing. No respondents contacted the researcher for de-briefing.

The researcher obtained permission from the SAPS Head Office to conduct research in police stations in the Tzaneen area. The researcher chose this area as it has high reported crime levels, poor resources and job high demands (Personal communication station Commander Tzaneen, 6.11. 2014). Station management also played a significant role in allowing the researcher to access respondents. The involvement of unit commanders assisted in the administering of the survey protocol to the SAPS officers participating in the study

4.7 Study instruments

The questionnaires are reliable, valid and standardised. The COPE (1989) Inventory is in the public domain, as is the Police Stress Inventory (PSI) thus they were used for research in an academic setting. The survey protocol was presented as one questionnaire with three parts part A, a demographic section; part B, The Police Stress Inventory (PSI) and part C the COPE questionnaire (See appendix 2). The PSI was used to measure respondents organisational stress, it focuses on common in work situations that often result in psychological strain. Each of the 88 items describes a job-related stressor event and assesses both the perceived severity and frequency of the occurrence of that event. The PSI was developed by (Pienaar & Rothman, 2003). Since then it has been used multiple times and found to be valid although there was some criticism by Lord (1991) who suggested it was more likely to measure job satisfaction in police officers than occupational stress. Three internally consistent factors were extracted, namely Stress - Job Demands (α = .92), Stress - Lack of Job Resources (α = .92), and Police-specific Stressors (α = .89).

The COPE Inventory (COPE = coping questionnaire) was used to measure respondents coping strategies (See appendix 2). It is a multi-dimensional 75 - item questionnaire that indicates the different ways in which individuals cope in different circumstances. Chesney et al. (2006) report that the COPE is scored on a four-point rating scale. These authors used exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses which revealed that problem-focused coping (6 items, α = .91), stop unpleasant emotions and thoughts (4 items, α = .91), and get support from friends and family (3 items, α = .80). It was noted that the Internal consistency and test–retest reliability are strong for all three factors and others on the COPE. Concurrent validity analyses indicated that these factors assess self-efficacy for different types of coping. Predictive validity analyses revealed that residual z scores in using problem - and emotion-focused coping skills were predictive of reduced psychological distress and increased psychological well-being over time.

In this research Cronbach Alpha (α) was high and thus excellent for all scales (Kline, 2000). On the PAI the entire inventory was α = .94, on the Organisational Stress Sub-scale α = .95 and on the Inherent Work Stress Sub-scale α = .93. On the Coping Inventory the whole inventory α = .88; the Avoidance Coping Sub-scale α = .75; the Emotionally Focused Coping Sub-scale α = .75 and the Problem Focused Coping Sub-scale α = .84 (See appendix 9)

4.8 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to obtain means, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of the independent and dependent variables. Brysbaert (2011) states that descriptive statistics helps researchers to organise, summarise and simplify the results obtained from the research study (Sheskin, 2004). The Pearson (p) product-moment correlation coefficient was also used to specify the relationship between the variables. According to Sheskin (2004), an independent t-test is defined as an inferential statistical test that determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means in two unrelated groups. An independent t-test was used to see if there was any significant difference on variables between male and female police officers.

An independent t-test was used to see if there were any significant differences between the groups. As the group sizes (between male and females, for instance) differed greatly the data was transformed, using the statistical programme so that it was normally distributed. An independent t-test assumes that the variances between the groups being measured is equal, if they are not a Type 1 (this error is what is termed a false positive, or the incorrect rejection of a true null hypothesis). Homogenity of variance was therefore tested using Levene's Test of Equality of Variances. If the variances of the two groups that are measured are unequal the Type 1 error rate is higher. The assumption of homogeneity of variance can be tested using Levene's Test of Equality of Variances. This test provides an F statistic and a p-value (significance) which if greater (or equal to) $p = 0.05$ the group variance can be treated as equal. If it is $p < 0.05$ (or equal to) then assumption of homogeneity of variance would be violated. The significance level of 0.05 (5% level) was used as it is less conservative than the 0.01 level (1% level).

4.9 Reliability and validity

The questionnaires are standardised thus are reliable and valid tools. The questionnaires thus measured what they were supposed to measure and are therefore valid, ensuring content validity. The questionnaires were also assessed by relevant University of Limpopo research committees to ensure that they were appropriate for the investigation. An additional strength was that the questionnaires are properly constructed and high measurements of internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) were reported in other investigtiona as well as this one (see 4.7).

4.9.1 Bias - Bias refers to a distortion of the findings from an undesirable influence. Random sampling also lessens sampling bias as every element in the population has an equal chance of being selected (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher made effors to produce findings that are convincing and also reported any negative or inconsiten finding to add to the credibility of the study. The researcher undertook the data collection alone so administrator bias was limited.

4.10 Research hypotheses

Research hypotheses for the study were based on a reading of the reviewed literature. A null hypothesis (H_0) is a hypothesis which a researcher usually tries to disprove, reject or nullify. The null is frequently refers to a common understanding of a particular phenomena, while the alternative hypothesis is what the researcher actually considers the actual reason for a specific phenomenon.

4.10.1 Hypothesis 1:

H_0 Female SAPS members stationed at Tzaneen will experience stress related to their job events in a similar manner to male SAPS members.

H_1 Female SAPS members stationed at Tzaneen are likely to experience more stress related to their job events than male SAPS members.

4.10.2 Hypothesis 2:

H_0 Female members of the SAPS stationed at police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area are unlikely to use positive coping mechanisms when dealing with stress as compared to male SAPS officers.

H_1 Female members of the SAPS stationed at police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area are likely to use positive coping mechanisms when dealing with stress as compared to male SAPS officers.

4.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations for the study included the following, as listed. The ethical form used by the researcher is one that the University of Limpopo supply (See appendix 1) and the letter sent to the Director SAPS Limpopo Province who allowed the research to take place (See appendix 3). The ethical approval letter provided by the university committee is also attached (see appendix 7).

4.11.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality refers to a situation where information is known and recorded by the researcher but not revealed. Respondents anonymity refers to the practice of ensuring that no one will be able to identify the respondents in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Terre Blanche et al., 2009). The police officers who took part in the study did not divulge their names, surnames, rank number and any other important information which might have compromised their anonymity. Information was collected by means of questionnaires that they completed anonymously. The respondents did not put their names or personal information on the protocols. Personal information, such as sex, age and rank were coded into scores that were used in statistical analyses. The persons rank was asked but not his rank number.

4.11.2 Protection from harm

The researcher ensured that respondents were not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm which may have caused them distress (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Terre Blanche et al., 2009). During the investigation the researcher was honest, respectful and sympathetic towards all respondents. They were all de-briefed but none requested any other counselling or therapy.

4.11.3 Informed consent

Informed consent entails the knowing consent of individuals who tke part in research. It should be their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, and pressure or any other unfair incentives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Terre Blanche et al., 2009). The researcher truthfully informed the respondents about the purpose of the study. The police officers were informed that was for an academic masters in psychology and that a journal article would be written out of the dissertation. The respondents also received an explanation of the procedure

that would be followed and a description of any possible adversity that might arise from taking part (distressing feelings, for instance). The information given to the respondents was important and helped them make an informed choice on whether they participated or not. They were informed that they could withdraw at any time from the study and, that if they did, any information they had provided would not be used in the study.

4.12 Summary

The chapter gave a concise and coherent explanation of how the research was conducted and the procedures used. The following chapter presents the results from the survey protocol with a brief explanation.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study demographics followed by the results and analysis from the Police Stress Inventory (PAI) and then the results and an analysis from the coping inventory (COPE). Results and analysis are then presented in terms of the study hypotheses.

5.2 Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the entire population of the SAPS officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area are reported first using a tabular format with an explanation of the table contents. This is carried out so that the human resources of the SAPS in the area is contexualised together with the gender breakdown for each of the 4 police stations (Letsile, Lenyene, Ritavi and Tzaneen).

Tables 1 and 2 provides the sample demographics in terms of language and ethnic groups, religion, marital status, rank, gender and age.

Table 1

Number and gender of SAPS Officers serving in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area

Police Stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality	Rank of SAPS officers	Number of SAPS officers	Male	Female
Letisle Police Station				
	Constables	35	22	13
	Sergeants	5	4	1
	Inspectors	3	2	1
	Captains	4	2	2
	Colonels	2	1	1
	Sub - total number of male and female officers		**31**	**18**
	Sub-total number of officers both genders	**49**		
Lenyene Police Station	Constables	40	25	15
	Sergeants	8	6	2
	Inspectors	12	8	4
	Captains	6	4	2
	Colonels	3	2	1
	Sub - total number of male and female officers		**45**	**24**
	Sub-total number of officers both genders	**69**		
Ritavi Police Station	Constables	45	30	15
	Sergeants	10	7	3
	Inspectors	11	8	3
	Captains	7	5	2
	Colonels	4	3	1
	Sub - total number of male and female officers		**53**	**24**
	Sub-total number of officers both genders	**77**		
Tzaneen Police Station	Constables	79	55	24
	Sergeants	15	11	4
	Inspectors	12	10	2
	Captains	10	8	2
	Colonels	6	4	2
		123		
	Sub - total number of male and female officers		**88**	**34**
	Total male and female officers		**217**	**100**
Overall total population				**317**

Table 1 indicates that the nuber of SAPS officers stationed at the four police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area at the time the research took place. Letsile Police Station had 35 Constables, 5 Seargeants, 3 Inspectors, 4 Captains and 2 Colonels, in total 49 SAPS officers. Lenyene Police Station has 40 Constables, 8 Sergeants, 12 Inspectors, 6 Captains and 3 Colonels, in total 69 SAPS officers. Ritavi Police Station has 45 Constables, 10 Sergeants, 11 Inspectors, 7 Captains and 4 Colonels, in total 77 SAPS officers. Tzaneen Police Station has 79 Constables, 15 Sergeants, 12 Inspectors, 10 Captains and 6 Colonels, in total 123 SAPS officer. The total number of SAPS officers policing the area is 317.

The purpose of this study was not look at gender inequities, in terms of employment numbers, within the Greater Tzaneen Municipal police stations however, as female officers face unique stressors such as the need to gain acceptance from the public and male officers (Marshall, 2013 thus there was the possibility that they experienced more stress hence the numbers are reported. It is also reported that women are under – represented in police forces generally and that in all communities demographics of policing should mirror that of the general population, in order to build trust (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2016). In this study females make up 100 (32%) of the entire SAPS population in the area (Limpopo Strategic Projects, 2016), which does not mirror the population demographic (See appendix 6) where, according to Census (2011), females make up 53.46% (208536) of the population and males 46.54% (181558) of the population. Each station had a female workforce of +- 30%.

The overall breakdown of ethnic groups for the SAPS in the area is 263 (82.9%) Black; 27 (8.51%) White; 2 (0.63%) Coloured and 25 (7.88%) Indians. This means that Black Africans are slightly below the general demographic for the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area and Whites, Asians, Indians and Coloureds are over – represented in the sample, in terms of the broader demographics (See appendix 6).

Table 2

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics		Number of respondents	Percentage %
First language and ethnic groups	Sepedi	48	46.15
	Xitsonga	36	36.34
	English	20	19.23
	Indians	9	8.65
	Coloureds	5	4.80
	Whites	6	5.76
Total number of respondents		**104**	**100.00**
Religion	Christian (African)	67	64.42
	Muslim (Indian and Colured	14	13.46
	Not reported (African/English)	23	22.11
Total number of respondents		**104**	**100.00**
Marital status	Married	58	55.76
	Single	46	44.23
Total number of respondents		**104**	**100.00**
Gender	Male	78	75.00
	Female	26	25.00
Total number of respondents		**104**	**100.00**
Rank	Constables	47	45.19
	Sergeants	18	17.30
	Inspectors	28	26.92
	Captains	08	7.69
	Colonels	03	2.88
Total number of respondents		**104**	**100.00**
Age in years	18-35	46	44.23
	36-65	58	55.76
Total number of respondents		**104**	**100.00**

Table 2 indicates that 48 (46.15%) of the respondents were first language Sepedi speakers, 36 (36.34%) were Xitsonga speakers and 20 (19.23%) were English speakers of whom 9 (8.65%) were Indian, 5 (4.80%) were Coloured and 6 (5.76%) were Whites. The demographics generally reflect those of the Greater Tzaneen Municpal demographics (Census, 2011) where Africans are 96.36% of the total population (See appendix 6). The demographic is slightly different thereafter, as in Census (2011) Sesotho and Afrikaans speakers were represented before English. This is probably is likely because of the fairly high

attrition rate of 41%. The Christian religious group had 67 (64.42%) members while 14 (13.46%) reported that they were Muslims (9 Indians and 5 Coloureds) and 23 (22.11%) reported that they did not have a religious affiliation (Africans and Whites). Fifty eight respondents (55.76%) indicated they were married while 46 (44.23%) reported they were single. Seventy eight (75%) of the respondents were male and 26 (25%) were female. This does not reflect the demographic in the Greater Tzaneen area which indicates that 53.46% of the population is female and 46.54% are male. This statistic suggests that females are under-represented in the SAPS in the area. Ranks of SAPS officers who participated in the study reflect the hierarchal order as more constables would be expected than for instance colonels. Constables in the SAPS in the area who took part in the study numbered 47 (45.19%); 18 (17.30%) were Sergeants; 28 (26.92%) were Inspectors; 8 (7.69%) were Captains and 3 (2.88%) self reported that they were Colonels. The age groups in the study were split into two groups those between 18 – 35 years old numbered 46 (44.23%) and those aged 36 to 65 years old (55.76%). This gave a reflection of younger versus older respondents. This result could suggest that younger people are less likely to want to join the SAPS as a result of negative publicity about crime and policing generally. This is suggested because of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) warning young people not to join the SAPS because they would be putting their lives at risk (Hlubi, 2015).

A breakdown of demographics related to how many SAPS officers serve at the four police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality area are presented in table 2. Interstingly, the population in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality area was in 2011 390 095 (120.30 per km²). This suggests that the SAPS are under-resourced in term of manpower as there is 1 police officer for every 1 230 members of the community. In America, in Arlington (County), Texas (State) there is a population of 386 715 and a a total of 629 police officers (Law Enforcement Officers, 2010). This indicates that there is 1 police officer for every 614 community members. Crime in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area is the highest in Limpopo, with more sexual assault cases reported than in all other provinces (Letaba Herald, 2015). This supports the suggestion that policing in the area is under-resourced.

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Table 3

Breakdown of male and female SAPS officers who took part in the study

Rank	Number of Male Officers	%	Number of female Officers	%	Total %
Constables	34	32.69	13	12.5	45.19
Sergeants	15	14.42	3	2.88	17.30
Inspectors	25	24.03	3	2.88	26.92
Captains	5	4.80	3	2.88	7.69
Colonels	2	4.80	1	0.96	2.90
Total	81	77.88	23	22.11	100.0

Table 3 indicates the gender breakdown of the ranks who participated in the study. Thirty four (32.69%) male and 13 (12.5%) female Constables; 15 (14.42%) male and 3 (2.88%) female Sergeants; 25 (24.03%) male and 3 (2.88%) female Inspectors; 5 (4.80%) male and 3 (2.88%) female Captains; 2 (4.80%) male and 1 (0.96%) female Colonel. This table reflects the wider demographic of SAPS officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal SAPS (See table 1), which does not reflect the overall gender demographic of the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area (Census, 2011), which indicates that female police officers are under-represented.

5.3 Analysis and results of the Police Stress Inventory (PAI)

The PAI is used to measure job stress in police officers and thus was perceived as appropriate for the study as it looks at stressors inherent to policing. Results are presented in a tabular format followed by an explanation of the table contents. An independent t-test was conducted to determine whether there was any statistical significance across the demographic variables.

		Stess Intensity			
	Stress Intensity	Standard Deviation (SD)	n	F	p
1. Gender				2.96	0.01
Female	64.53	12.29	26		
Male	55.48	15.01	78		
2. Rank				2.92	0.01
Constable	53.17	15.65	47		
Sergeant	64.96	11.99	18		
Inspector	61.2	12.34	28		
Captain	54.51	8.41	8		
Colonel	62.36	16.00	3		
3. Religion				2.85	0.04
Christian	55.85	14.88	67		
Muslim	61.35	12.22	14		
No affiliation	60.72	16.12	23		
4. Age				0.69	0.59
18 – 35 years	56.3	14.27	46		
36 – 65 years	59.4	16.25	58		
5. Marital Status				0.65	0.57
Married*	59.4	16.25	58		
Single*	56.3	14.27	46		
6. Language				2.64	0.04
XitSonga	36.46	15.16	48		
Sepedi	57.88	13.53	36		
English	63.01	14.66	20		

Table 4

Demographic data and stress intensity scores (level of significance = $p<0.05$)

Key: * indicates Divorced, single, and widowed respondents' scores were combined into the single variable. Living together and married respondents' scores were combined into the married variable. This allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of demographic variables. This is the same for all tables.

Table 4 reveals several statistically significant differences based on the demographic variables gender, language, religion and rank. Female police officers scored statistically significantly higher stress intensity scores than male officers ($p<0.01$). Christian police officers achieved statistically significantly lower stress scores than other religous groups ($p<0.04$). English-speaking officers scored statistically significantly higher stress scores compared to other language groups ($p<0.04$). Additionally, police officers ranked as

constables and captains scored statistically significantly lower stress scores in comparison to other ranks (p<0.04). No statistically significant differences were found based on age and marital status and stress intensity.

Table 5

Frequency of stressors related to demographic variables

	Frequency of Stressors				
	Frequency of stressors	Standard Deviation (SD)	N	F	p
1. Gender				.225	0.639
Female	4.32	1.18	78		
Male	4.39	1.78	26		
1. Rank				1.24	0.297
Constable	4.28	1.76	47		
Sergeant	4.62	1.32	18		
Inspector	3.97	1.43	28		
Captain	4.81	2.91	8		
Colonel	5	1.53	3		
2. Religion				.309	0.8191
Christian	4.62	1.79	67		
Muslim	4.29	1.24	14		
No affiliation	4.26	1.48	23		
3. Age				.841	0.502
18 – 35 years	4.19	1.56	46		
36 – 65 years	4.47	1.75	58		
4. Marital Status				.841	0.502
Married*	4.47	1.75	58		
Single*	4.19	1.56	46		
5. Language				.785	0.74
XitSonga	4.33	1.87	48		
Sepedi	4.21	1.43	36		
English	4.25	1.17	20		

Table 5 indicates that the demographic variables namely, Gender, Rank, Religion, Age, Marital Status and Language under investigation, have no statistically significant influence on the frequency at which respondents perceive stressors occur.

Table 6

Ranking of stressors

Ranking of Stressors

Police Stressors (number of question on the PAI)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Rank Order
33. Killing someone in the line of duty	4.66	.79	1
34. A fellow officer killed in the line duty	4.55	.86	2
6. Inadequate support by supervisor	3.79	1.17	3
5. Fellow workers not doing their job	3.70	1.14	4
21. Excessive paperwork	3.42	.95	5
36. Having to handle a large crowd/ mass production	3.38	1.07	6
42. Making critical on-the-spot decisions	3.31	1.15	7
41. Insufficient personnel to handle an assignment	3.30	1.27	8
43. Lack of participation in policy-making decisions	3.28	1.15	9
37. A forced arrest or being physically attacked	3.27	1.11	10
38. Having to go to court	3.23	1.10	11
32. Staff shortages	3.20	1.24	12
11. Inadequate or poor quality equipment	3.17	1.18	13
9. Lack of recognition for good work	3.13	1.22	14
13. Period of inactivity	3.11	1.08	15
39. Having to deal with the media	3.04	1.46	16
26. Conflicts with other departments	3.03	.99	17
44. Personal insults from customer/colleague(s)	3.00	1.25	18
25. Poorly motivated co-workers	2.97	1.08	19
14. Difficulty getting along with supervisor(s)	2.97	1.04	20
19. Frequent interruptions	2.96	1.38	21
4. Assignment of new or unfamiliar duties	2.93	1.31	22
12. Assignment of increased responsibility	2.92	1.18	23
3. Lack of opportunity for advancement	2.92	.98	24
17. Poor or inadequate supervision	2.92	1.07	25
35. Racial conflict	2.92	1.16	26
31. Reorganisation and transformation within the organisation	2.87	1.21	27
27. Shift work	2.86	1.25	28
30. Attending to incidences of domestic violence	2.82	1.22	29
28. Too much supervisor	2.77	1.04	30
2. Working overtime	2.77	1.15	31
10. Performing tasks not in my job description	2.73	1.13	32
15. Experiencing negative attitude toward the organisation	2.72	1.01	33
24. Covering for another employee	2.72	1.15	34
22. Meeting deadlines	2.70	.98	35
29. Delivering bad news and/or messages of someone's death	2.70	1.10	36
16. Competition for advancement	2.69	1.15	37
23. Insuffient personal time (for coffee, lunch)	2.65	1.10	38
20. Frequent changes from boring to demanding activities	2.69	1.25	39

18. Noisy work areas	2.65	1.10	40
1. Assignment of disagreeable duties	2.56	1.15	41
7. Dealing with crisis situations	2.56	1.10	42
40. Seeing criminals go free (lack of evidence)	2.56	.98	43
8. Difficulty getting along with colleagues	2.55	1.15	44

Table 6 lists the rank order of the 44 stressors found in the questionnaires used in the research. The table presents the mean and rank of each stressor for the entire 104 research subjects. The 10 highest ranked stressors as per the PAI were items: (33) killing someone in the line of duty; (34) fellow officer killed in the line of duty; (06) inadequate support by supervisor; (05) fellow workers not doing their job; (21) excessive paperwork; (36) having to handle a large crowd/mass demonstration;(42) making cities on-the-spot decisions; (41) insuffient personnel to handle an assignment; (43) lack of participation in policy-making decisions and (37) a forced arrest or being physically attacked.

The ten least ranked stressors were items, (24) covering for another employee; (22) meeting deadlines; (29) delivering bad news of someone death; (16) competation advancement; (23) insuffient personal time;(20) frequent changes from boring to demanding activities; (18) noisy work areas; (1) assignment of disagreeable duties; (7) dealing with crisis situations; (40) seeing criminals go free and (08) difficulty getting along with colleagues.

For the purpose of providing additional descriptive data regarding police stress amongst the research sample the means of the two stress subscales were compared. Firstly, The raw of score for organisational and psychological threats stress subscales were converted to z scores. The z scores were then converted to a t -score. The subjects were then divided into two groups. If a subject on a t - score was below the Mean (M=50) the subject was placed in the upper half stress group. This procedure was conducted for both, organisational pressure and psychological stress threats. A cross-tabulation analysis of the organisational pressure stress group by the psychological threats stress indicated that 24 (35.2%) of the respondents of the organisational pressure stress group were in the lower half group of the psychological threats stress (Table 4), 11 (15.5%) group. Respondents in the lower half of the organisational pressure stress group were in the upper half of the psychological threats stress group.

An appraisal of Table 5, 9 (12.7%) indicates that the respondents in the upper half group of the organisational pressure stress group were in the lower half of the psychological threats stress group. Twenty-six (36.6%) respondents in the upper half of the organisational pressure

stress group were in the upper half group of the psychological threats stress group. These findings suggest that a third of the respondents in the present study perceive organisational stresses in policing just as stressful as the psychological threats posed by the work involved in policing itself.

As a result of this finding an independent t-test examining organisational stess and inherent stress means (level of significance = p<0.05).

Table 7 Independent t-test examining organisational stress and inherent job stress means (level of significance = p<0.05)								
				Paired differences				
	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the difference Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig (2 – tailed)
Paired Intensity	2.02	9.63	.95	.16	3.90	2.15	103	.034
Paired Frequency	.66	1.26	.124	.42	.91	5.4	103	.000

Table 7 present a two sample t-test which was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the organisational and intrinsic job stress subscale means scores. The results of this analysis demonstrated that there was statistically significant difference between the two on both intensity and frequency scores (p<0.05). In terms of the study organisational stressors were more intense and frequent than inherent job stressors.

Table 8

The most frequently occurring stressors within 6 months

Stressors	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Fellow officers not doing their work	8.04	13.33
2. Inadequate or poor quality equipment	5.70	3.37
3. Excessive paperwork	7.19	8.18
4. Poor or inadequate supervision	5.82	6.93
5. Staff shortages	7.21	9.81

Table 8 presents the most frequently occurring stressors for the sample, all of which are organisational in nature, for example, fellow officers not doing their job, inadequate supervison, inadequate or quality equipment, excessive paperwork and staff shortages.

Table 9

Stressor intensity and most frequent stressor

	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Stressor Intensity	57.75	14.27
Stressor Frequency	4.34	1.38

Table 9 indicates the mean and standard deviation scores for both stressor intensity and frequency within the sample. There is a moderate stressor intensity score of 57.75 and frequency score of 4.34. Essentially, the moderate stressor intensity is high with a fairly regular occurrence.

5.4 The Coping inventory (COPE)

The COPE inventory (COPE) was used to measure the respondents coping strategies. The COPE is a multi-dimensional coping questionnaire that indicates the different ways in which people cope in various contexts. Tables 9, 10 and 11 indicate the results of a comparison of coping strategies across the demographic variables. An independent t-test was conducted to determine whether there was any statistical significance across the demographic variables.

Table 10

Demographic data and Emotionally - Focused Coping (level of significance = $p<0.05$)

	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean (M)	n	F	p
1. Gender				.425	.275
Female	.55	2.61	26		
Male	.60	2.55	78		
2. Rank				2.29	.065
Constable#	.63	2.56	47		
Sergeant#	.36	2.93	18		
Inspector	.57	2.44	28		
Captain	.41	2.20	8		
Colonel	.71	2.62	3		
3. Religion				.300	.825
Christian	.65	2.56	67		
Muslim	.43	2.58	14		
No affiliation	.46	2.53	23		
4. Age				1.31	.052
18 – 35 years	.58	2.69	46		
36 – 65 years	.53	2.44	58		
5. Marital Status				1.31	0.52
Married*	.53	2.44	58		
Single*	.58	2.69	46		
6. Language				.121	.947
XitSonga	.67	2.6	48		
Sepedi	.57	2.5	36		
English	.49	2.52	20		

Key #: indicates that a statistically significant difference was found between respondents who were ranked as constables and sergeants in comparison to other ranks ($p = 0.003$)

Table 10 indicates that there were no statistically significant differences on most of the demographic variables and Emotionally Focused Coping. There was a statistically significant differences between respondents who were ranked as constables and sergeants in comparison to other ranks. Constables and sergeants were more likely to use Emotionally - Focused Coping strategies than other ranks.

Table 11

Demographic data and Problem - Focused Coping strategies (level of significance = p<0.05)

	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean (M)	N	F	p
1. Gender				.450	.300
Female	.63	2.56	26		
Male	.57	2.44	78		
2. Rank				2.25	0.69
Constable	.74	2.83	47		
Sergeant	.89	3.19	18		
Inspector	.43	2.65	28		
Captain	.53	2.42	8		
Colonel	.29	3.04	3		
3. Religion				.976	.407
Christian	.78	2.88	67		
Muslim	.59	2.74	14		
No affiliation	.65	2.82	23		
4. Age				1.52	2.00
18 – 35 years	.72	2.96	46		
36 – 65 years	.68	2.77	58		
5. Marital Status				1.52	2.00
Married*	.68	2.77	58		
Single*	.72	2.96	46		
6. Language				2.09	.106
XitSonga	.67	.67	48		
Sepedi	.83	2.67	36		
English	.65	2.80	20		

Table 11 indicates that there were no statistically significant differences on any of the demographic variables and Problem - Focused Coping. This suggests that no matter what age, religion, language, gender, marital status and rank, all respondents are alike in terms of the use of Problem – Focused Coping strategies.

Table 12

Demographic data and Avoidance Coping strategies (level of significance = $p < 0.05$)

	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean (M)	N	F	p
7. Gender				1.87	3.25
Female	.50	1.90	26		
Male	.49	1.88	78		
8. Rank				.448	.773
Constable	.48	1.89	47		
Sergeant	.49	1.48	18		
Inspector	.54	1.96	28		
Captain	.45	1.80	8		
Colonel	.49	1.88	3		
9. Religion				1.49	2.21
Christian	.52	1.86	67		
Muslim	.48	1.97	14		
No affiliation	.377	1.84	23		
10. Age				2.43	0.52
18 – 35 years	.52	2.02	46		
36 – 65 years	.433	1.73	58		
11. Marital Status				2.43	0.52
Married*	.433	1.73	58		
Single*	.52	2.02	46		
12. Language				1.47	.351
XitSonga	.52	1.98	48		
Sepedi	.48	1.78	36		
English	.39	1.83	20		

Table 12 indicates that there were no statistically significant differences on any of the demographic variables and Avoidance Coping. This suggests that no matter what age, religion, language, gender, marital status and rank, all respondents are alike in terms of the use of Avoicance Coping strategies.

Table 13

The most frequently used coping strategies

Coping strategy	Mean M	Standard Deviation(SD)
1. I try to see it in different light, to make it seem more positive	2.96	.98
2. I look for something good in what is happened	2.93	.92
3. I try to come up with a strategy about what to do	2.92	1.00
4. I try to find comfort with my religion	2.88	1.02
5. I think hard about what steps to take	2.84	.95
6. I think about how I might best handle the problem	2.83	1.01
7. I pray every day	2.82	.98
8. I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it	2.76	1.07
9. I believe the ancestors will help me	2.75	.97
10.I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience	2.74	1.07

Table 13 indicates that the most frequently used coping strategies by the police officers sample. The results reveal that respondents were more likely to use problem-focused strategies, although 3 (nos: 4: 7 and 9 could be considered more emotion focused) in addressing stressful events and are thus less likely to use Avoicant Coping strategies.

Table 14

The least frequently used coping strategies

Coping strategy	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. I drink alcohol or drugs in order to think less	1.38	.81
2. I admit to my self that I cant deal with it, and quit trying	1.47	.86
3. I act as though it has not even happened	1.51	.82
4. I blame my self	1.61	.79
5. I drink too much as stress reliever	1.67	.87

Table 14 indicates the mean and standard deviation scores of the least frequently used coping strategies. Although some of these avoidance focused coping strategies are used, they are the least frequent thus the sample generally uses more problem or emotion focused strategies (not avoidance coping strategies, as reported in table 13 & 15).

Table 15

Mean (M) and Standard Deviations for the COPE factors

COPE factors	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Problem - Focused Coping	2.63	.71
Emotionally - Focused Coping	2.51	.63
Avoidance Coping	1.88	.49

Table 15 indicates the mean scores and standard deviations pertaining to the three COPE factors. The three factors were labelled Problem - focused Coping, Emotionally - focused Coping and Avoidance Coping. In this study Emotionally - Focused coping indicated a mean score of 2.51 (SD= .63). The second factor, Problem-focused Coping, indicated a mean score of 2.63 (SD .71) and Avoidance Coping showed a mean score of 1.88 (SD .49). In terms of the study this means that respondents are more likely to use Problem Focused Coping strategies when addressing stress, then Emotionally Foused Coping strategies and are least likely to use Avoidance Coping strategies

5.5 Study results pertaining to the research hypotheses

The purpose of this section is to test the hypotheses by means of inferential stasticis using an independent t - test. The results will be discussed in terms of whether the null hypotheses can be accepted or rejected.

5.5.1 Study results hypotheses 1

H_o Female SAPS members stationed at Tzaneen will experience stress related to their jobs in a similar manner to male SAPS members.

H_1 Female SAPS members stationed at Tzaneen are likely to experience more stress related to their jobs than male SAPS members.

	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean (M) Diff	Std. Err. Diff	95% Confidence	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.05	0.821	1.846	104	0.066	4.347	2.355	-0.280	8.937
Equal variances not assumed			1.840	89	0.067	4.347	2.362	-0.302	8.995

Table 16

Tests for equality of variances and equality of means (Independent - test) gender groups and experience of stress related job events (level of significance = p<0.05)

Table 16 indicates that Levenes test for equality of variances revealed that homogeneity of variance was met (p = 0.821). There was no statistically significant difference between the male and females in the sample. The independent sample t – test statistics of t = 1.843, df = 104 and p = .0.066 (level of significance 0.05) reflected this. In this instance, the null hypothesis (H_o) is supported.

In this instance the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which was based on a review of the literature, was rejected. For instance, Van Wyk (2005) reported that women police officers experience more stress, related to their jobs, than men in the workplace. Additionally, Naghavi and Redzuan (2011), in their research, established that women police officers experienced greater stress levels than men related to their jobs. However, Bennie and Huang (2010) found that male and female police officers experience stress in a similar manner, which does support the findings of this study. In this study no significant difference between male and females in terms of how they experienced job related stress events was found. In this case the null hypothesis is accepted (H_o).

5.5.2 Study results hypotheses 2

H_o Female members of the SAPS stationed at police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area are less likely to use positive coping mechanisms when dealing with stress as compared to male SAPS officers.

H_1 Female members of the SAPS stationed at police stations in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area are likely to use positive coping mechanisms when dealing with stress as compared to male SAPS officers.

Table 17

Tests for equality of variances and equality of means (Independent t - test) gender groups and use of positive coping mechanisms in dealing with stress (level of significance = p<0.05)

	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean (M) Diff	Std. Err. Diff	95% Confidence	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.05	0.801	1.759	105	0.058	4.593	2.363	-0.291	8.935
Equal variances not assumed			1.750	87	0.059	4.593	2.365	-0.301	8.997

Table 17 indicates that Levenes test for equality of variances revealed that homogeneity of variance was met (p – 0.801). There was no statistically significant difference between the male and females in the sample. The independent sample t – test statistics of t = 1759, df = 107 and p = 0.058 (level of significance 0.05) reflected this. In this instance, the null hypothesis (H$_0$) is rejected.

In this instance the alternative hypothesis (H$_1$), which was based on a review of the literature, was accepted. For instance, He et al. (2002) stated that male and female officers used similar coping mechanisms, usually positive ones, when dealing with stress. In this instance, the althernative hypothesis is supported.

5.6 Discussion of results underpinned by the theoretical framework of the study and relevant literature

In this section the study results are discussed, and integrated with, the theoretical framework underpinning the study, namely Lazarus and Folkmans (1984) Interactional Model of Stess and Antonovsky's (1979) Model of Coping and relevant literature.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) found that individual differences help explain how stressors produce different responses in people based on a cognitive appraisal of the event or situation. An appraisal of a stressor is a fucntion of personality, beliefs, values, attitudes, support structures, goals and individual experiences (Cho et al., 2014). This is turn facilitates specific coping mechanisms in the individual. In this study the following two statements were

reported under the top ten coping mechanisms namely, *I seek Gods help* and *I pray every day* (See table 13). This suggests that many in the sample could be determined as having emotional self-knowledge, in terms of Antonovsky's (1979) model of coping and General Resistance Resources (GRR, as they used religion as a positive ecoping mechanism. The response, *I believe the ancestors will help me,* which was on the list of the 10th most common coping mechanisms used by the sample, was seen as appropriate to the socio-cultural context of respondents and similar to a religious coping mechanism with an emotional focus.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) some individuals see a specific demand or stressor as a threat while others see the same stressors as an opportunity (or challenge). The role of individual experience in the appraisal of a stressor, and how it could be coped with, is illustrated by respondents who rated themselves high on, *I accept the reality of the fact that it happened*. This was the 10th most common coping strategy (see table 13) which implies that many respondents recognise the reality of a situation and, by that acceptance, are likely to mobilise personal coping resources. This is linked to which related to, *I think about how I might best handle the problem*, (the 6th most common coping strategy in the sample). This suggests that many SAPS officers in the sample have problem focused coping strategies. This reinforces Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model which highlights the role of cognitive appraisal in the perception of potential stressors when forming an appropriate coping response. This supports findings in a study of occupational stress and work engagement of SAPS dog unit members by Preadhashni (2012). The author found significant differences in individual responses to stress can be credited to the process of cognitive appraisal.

Situational characteristics particularly in police work are potently dangerous, threating and challenging. Policing, according to Preadhashni (202) reports the several of the following characteristics related to work in the SAPS namely, unpredictability, ambiguity and uncertainty. However, Naghavi and Redzuan (2011) suggest that the work-related stress of police officers can be ascribed to a mixture of situational factors and poor coping skills, rather than the inherent nature of police work. Preadhashni (2011) found that challenge appraisal was associated with approach coping and threat appraisal was associated with avoidance coping on stressful events. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest that researchers must identify individualand situational factors that mediate the appraisal of the stressor. In this study situational stress factors ranked in the top 10 (See table 5) include, *Having to handle a large crowd/ mass demonstrations, A forced arrest or being physically attacked* and

Having to go to court. These are all ambiguous, uncertain and unpredictable situations. In this study there was a moderate stressor intensity score which was high (M = 57.75; SD = 14.27) and had a fairly regular incidence. Coping strategies included in the top 10 (See table 13) used by respondents in the study indicate the use of problem focused strategies with a cognitive and behavioural component for instance, *I try to come up with a strategy about what to do* and *I think hard about what steps to take.*

In this study the null hypothesis, based on a review of the literature which indicated that women police officers experience more job related stress than male police officers (Naghavi & Redzuan, 2011; Van Wyk, 2005), was rejected. Gender, in this study, did not play a role in the experience of job related tressors delineated in the survey protocol. However, Bennie and Huang (2010) conducted research which also indicated that female and male police officers experienced job related stress in a comparable manner. Conversely, female police officers scored statistically significantly higher stress intensity scores (amount of stress) than male officers (p<0.01). Although this seems an anomaly rsearch which suggests that females experience stress differently to males (Barnet et al., 1987) and that they identify stressors in a dissimilar manner (He et al., 2002) may account for the finding. Martin (1993) also indicated that the intensity of stress may be more severe for female as opposed to male police officers (although inherent work stressors are experienced in a similar manner) because of issues such as sexual harassment.

No statistically significant differences were found based on age and stress intensity. This is different to that found in other studies where police officers in the younger group (below the age of 36 years) experienced more stress than those who were older (Balakrishnamurthy & Shankar, 2009). However, it does support findings by Dodge and D'Analeze (2012) who suggest that emotional exhaustion (burnout), and thus stress exists amongst all age groups. In this sample age does not add to stressor intensity.

In terms of marital status no statistically significant differences were found based on marital status and stress intensity. This in contrast to other research which found that single people were morel like to experience stress and burnout than those who were married (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). This infers less ability to cope and suggests that a GRR that includes good interpersonal relationships plus social support are key factors in resilience and positive coping strategies. Being married or having a partner thus is likely, according to Eriksson

(2007) and Antonovsky (1979; 1987) to create a strong sense of coherence within an individual.

Rank and stressor intensity within police forces is not well researcher (Bushara & Parvaiz, nd) spite of the plethora of literature on the relationship between various demographic factors and job-related stress, there was a paucity of empirical evidence pertaining to the interactive effects of rank and gender on the police stress in India. In South Africa research looking at differences in rank and stressor intensity is scarce. Early research by Marks (1995) suggests that African police officers become frustrated and stressed as they had difficulties in terms of getting promoted. Pienaar and Rothmann (2006) however, found that constables, in their study experienced less stress than other ranks in the SAPS (however, only 7% of the sample were constables. The findings of this study support this finding as officers ranked at the level of constables scored statistically significantly lower stress scores in comparison to other ranks. The finding also encompassed the rank of captains who also experienced signifivantly lower stress than other ranks in the SAPS.

The finding that Christian police officers achieved significantly lower stress scores than other religous groups (p<0.04) is notable. It may be that Muslim respondents, who are in the minority, experience stressors related to religious differences. Kinney et al. (2003) noted that religion was identified as a positive coping mechanism which was supported by mechanisms (Falcone et al. 2014; Webster - Markton & Glaser, 2008). Positive coping mechanisms are active strategies that increase resilience and a sense of personal competene.

In terms of language English-speaking officers scored significantly lower stress scores compared to other language groups (p<0.04). This is an interesting finding and needs further research. It may be that, as these officers, are not parts of the majority communities in the area they are not as exposed to some of the policing (in the community) and organisational stressors as they may not be able to understand the vernacular. They may live in in the suburbs and other officers may live in a township environment (which may be inherently more stressful). Conversely, it could be argued that non-understanding of the vernacular could be stressing and add to lack of support amongst different ethnic groups. This finding needs further investigation as, although the groups that speak English may be diverse, they may have GRRs that could be used to further intervention programmes.

Research by Violanti and Aron (1994) concluded that occupational stressors stem from the problems implicit to police work. The changeable nature of the policing environment puts much stress on police officers. Five of the top ten stressors in the study were occupational stressors namely, *Inadequate support by supervisor*; *Fellow workers not doing their job*; *Excessive paperwork*; *Insufficient personnel to handle an assignment* and *Lack of participation in policy-making decisions*. As the moderate stressor intensity score was high (M = 57.75; SD = 14.27), and occurred fairly often, generally the sample experienced high, moderate amounts of stress on a consistent basis. These were handled with generally adaptive coping mechanisms using problem and emotionally focused strategies as indicated by responses in table 13 such as, *I try to see it in different light, to make it seem more positive* and *I look for something good in what is happened.* These findings support those of Preadhashni (2012) who found that police officers experienced more psychological distress in relation to organisational stressors such as administrative problems and paperwork as compared to operational problems. This is further supported by Wood (2012) who found that individuals who do not contribute to decision making have more stress than those who make (or take part) decisions.

Career development for SAPS officers in the police force in the Greater Tzaneen Muicipality does not appear to meet the respondents needs. This is reflected by the stressor ranked number 14, *Lack of recognition for good work*   and stressor ranked no 24 *Lack of opportunity for advancement*. Supported to an extent by stressor ranked 23, *Assignment of increased responsibility* and stressor ranked number 12, *Staff shortages*. An early study by Kirkcaldy et al. (1998) indicates that few police officers in hierarchical organisations (such as police forces). Wood (2012) concurs and reports that this type of organisational constrait becomes source of stress and frustration.

Furthermore, the results reveals that respondents generally do not use avoidance coping strategies such as drinking alcohol or taking drugs, blaming self, denying something has happened and giving up, to in dealing with stressful events (See tables 13 and 14), but instead use problem-focused strategies. A perusal of the tables indicates that avoidance coping strategies are the least frequently used. Nonetheless, although the majority seem to show resilience those minority that do not, and use avoidance coping strategies, need to be identified. Respondents in the sample experienced the most stress because of outcome of an imbalance between work demands and their individual ability to cope. The ranked stressor

scores indicated that police officers perceive the typical occupational stressors encountered within their environment as stressful and demanding. This result does not infer that SAPS officers experience their work context or duties as overwhelming. However, the personal communication (Desk Sergeant, 6.1.2016) vis a vis 5 SAPS officers suicides in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal police forces does suggest that for some police officers stress overload becomes emotional exhaustion or burnout.

5.7 Overall conclusion

It is important to take into consideration that the study was conducted with a sample that, although randomised with an acceptable response rate (59%), was relatively small and had a 41% attrition rate (non-response). However, the general demographics of SAPS officers serving at police stations are similar to those in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area. The minority SeSotho and Afrikaans speakers (who are both far in the minority in the region share certain similaritie. For instance, the SeSotho group is similar to other African groups in the study in terms of a traditional, conservative and patriarchal culture. Afrikaners, on the other hand, share similar characteristic with the White English group namely patriarchal and conservative cultural contexts. Consequently, the results should be generisable to the entire population of SAPS officers serving in the area.

In this study results suggest that no matter what age, religion, language, gender, marital status and rank, all respondents are alike in terms of the use of Avoidant Coping strategies. These are used to some degree but the majority of respondents use Problem Focused Coping strategies together with Emotionally Focused Coping strategies. This points towards the sample being able to handle stressors in a positive manner**.**

It was also notable that of the top ten stressors five were organisational stressors. This finding suggests that the South African Police Services in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area must provide interventions that reduce the effects of work related stressors. They should also recruit more female officers as the gender disparity is a notable one. Overall, a police force that properly reflect the overall demographic of the area will provide a community driven workforce.

5.8 Methodological limitations and strengths of the study

5.8.1 Methodological limitations

The methodological limitations of the study are as follows:

1. The attrition rate was quite high (41%) although the response rate was acceptable (59%). This could have had some impact on the study however, this was mediated to a degree by the random nature of the sample.

2. The respondents were not asked any questions that needed longer, more in-depth answers. A qualitative section to the protocol would have allowed a deeper insight into how the SAPS felt when experiencing any stressors. They could also have explained why they used specific ways of coping.

3. The respondents answered the questionnaire in their own time and returned it to the police station where the researcher picked it up. It was thus unknown if the SAPS officers filled in the questionnaires themselves or were influenced by another person when filling them in. This is a form of administrative bias.

4. The study was conducted with a relatively small sample (n=104) which in real terms was a third of all SAPS officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality police stations. However it was still an acceptable 59% of the actualsample size (175). No Afrikaans or SeSotho speakers participated in the study although this is unlikely to have affected the overall results (as they are small minorities in the SAPS in the area) .

5. Burnout was not explored, in retrospect it would have been beneficial to explore burnout as an additional stress related facet to the study.

5.8.2 Methodological strengths of the study

The study had the following methodological strengths:

1. In researching stress within the police service, the study made use appropriate statisitical procedures both descriptive and inferential.

2. Four police stations from Tzaneen region Limpopo province were chosen to participate in the study, allowing for a diverse sample of respondents (ethnicity and gender).

3. The sampling process was random in nature which allowed the generalisation of study results to the entire population of police officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area.

4. Random sampling ensured less bias and Type 1 errors in the study.

5. The protocols were standardised thus reliable and valid.

5.9 Recommendations arising out of the research

This study has the following recommendations arising out of the investigation

1. The research focused only on the Greater Tzaneen Municipal area. More research on stress and coping amongst SAPS officers should be undertaken in a) other areas of Limpopo Province and b) in South Africa generally.
2. Any further studies in the area should add emotional burnout.
3. A qualitative element should be added to future studies in the field.
4. A comparative study using the perceptions of the different ethnic groups towards stress and coping in the SAPS should be undertaken countrywide.
5. Studies on suicide and suicidal ideation in the SAPS are needed on an ongoing basis.
6. Studies on perceptions of SAPS officers to mental health problems, psychological counselling and therapy should be undertaken countrywide.
7. Research in South Africa is needed on the selection process for the SAPS as personality characteristics impact on resilence, coping and stress.
8. Research into gender inequities in the SAPS is required. The Greater Tzaneen Municipal area police force may not be representative in terms of gender however, this should be explored.

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APPENDIX 1: Covering letter and consent form

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking the time to complete and be part of this survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary. The study forms part of my Master's dissertation, which deals with questions regarding stress and how South African Police Officers cope with it. The purpose of this survey is to find out how individuals are affected by stress and what the sources of stress are in your work place. It will take approximately half an hour to forty five minutes (30 - 45 minutes) to complete the whole survey protocol. Included in this package are a number of questionnaires namely: Demographic Information, The Police Stress Survey, as well as the COPE questionnaire. Please rest assured that all information given or disclosed in the questionnaires will be strictly confidentially that is, it will not be made known to anyone with the exception of the researcher and her supervisor. No names have been asked for which also ensures your privacy and to make sure that you remain anonymous. If a journal article, at the discretion of the supervisor, is written and sent to a journal, the area in which the research has been conducted (Tzaneen) will not be disclosed.

It is important that you respond as honestly as possible. Please respond to every question. It is important to note, that I am interested in your opinion. I would like to know what you personally think. There are no right or wrong answers!!! Try not to think too long about each statement. Usually your first response is the one you come back to in the end.

If, after you have finished the survey protocol you feel distressed or uncomfortable in anyway please do not hesitate to contact me and I will ensure you receive counselling, advice or therapy. Contact me at mrvshwana@gmail com or phone me on Cellular: 073 777 6409.

Your co-operation in this survey is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Mushwana M.R.V.

Student: M A Psychology

Date: 01.01.2016

FORM B – PART I

PROJECT TITLE: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

PROJECT LEADER: MRV Mushwana

DECLARATION

I, the signatory, hereby apply for approval to conduct research described in the attached research proposal and declare that:

1.   I am fully aware of the guidelines and regulations for ethical research and that I will abide by these guidelines and regulations as set out in documents (available from the Secretary of the Ethics Committee); and

2.   I undertake to provide every person who participates in this research project with the relevant information in Part III. Every participant will be requested to sign Part IV.

Name of Researcher: Mushwana Makhawukana Rhulani Venetia

Signature: Mushwana M.RV

Date: 01.01.2016

For Official use by the Ethics Committee:
Approved/Not approved
Remarks:…………………………………………………………………………………...
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
Signature of Chairperson:…………………………………………………………………………
Date:…………………

FORM B - PART II

PROJECT TITLE: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

PROJECT LEADER: MRV Mushwana

Protocol for conducting research using human respondents

1.   Department: Psychology

2.   Title of project: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

3.   Full name, surname and qualifications of project leader:
      Prof Kathryn Anne Nel Counselling Psychologist PhD

4.   List the name(s) of all persons (Researchers and Technical Staff) involved with the project and identifies their role(s) in the conduct of the experiment
      Name: Qualifications of person   Responsible for
      Mushwana Makhawukana   B Psych   conducting research

5.   Name and address of principal researcher: Mushwana Makhawukana Rhulani Venetia P.O.Box 2157, Tzaneen.0850

6.   Procedures to be followed: Handing out self-report questionnaires and collecting them.

7.   Nature of discomfort: The material in the questionnaires may cause respondents to feel uncomfortable

8.   Description of the advantages that may be expected from the results of the study:
      Being able to identify what coping mechanisms are used by the SAPS in Tzaneen. As police officers face the same situations all over the country it will give an indication of what further research is required.

Signature of Project Leader: MRV Mushwana   Date:……………………

PART II: INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS

PROJECT TITLE: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

PROJECT LEADER: MRV Mushwana

1.   You are invited to participate in the following research project: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

2.   Participation in the project is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project (without providing any reasons) at any time.

3.   It is possible that you might not personally experience any advantages during the project, although the knowledge that may be accumulated through the project might prove advantageous to others.

4.   You are encouraged to ask any questions that you might have in connection with this project at any stage. The project leader and her/his staff will gladly answer your question. They will also discuss the project in detail with you.

5.   The participant may feel uncomfortable on responding to questions on the self-report questionnaire. It may make respondents understand how stressed they are and they may recognise that they are not coping. The cell number and e-mail address of the researcher will be given to respondents as well as the supervisors e-mail address. They will be told to contact these numbers/addresses if they feel they need any help. They will then be referred to an appropriate professional.

6.   Should you at any stage feel unhappy, uncomfortable or is concerned about the research, please contact Ms Noko Shai-Ragoboya at the University of Limpopo, Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, tel: 015 268 2401.

PART IV: CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

PROJECT LEADER: MRV Mushwana

I,_____hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the following project: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

I realise that:

1.   The study deals with stress and coping mechanisms.

2.   The procedure or treatment or participation in the envisaged research may hold some risk for me that cannot be foreseen at this stage.

3.   The Ethics Committee has approved that individuals may be approached to participate in the study.

4.   The research project, i.e. the extent, aims and methods of the research, has been explained to me.

5.   The project sets out the risks that can be reasonably expected as well as possible discomfort for persons participating in the research, an explanation of the anticipated advantages for myself or others that are reasonably expected from the research and alternative procedures that may be to my advantage.

6.   I will be informed of any new information that may become available during the research that may influence my willingness to continue my participation.

7.	Access to the records that pertain to my participation in the study will be restricted to persons directly involved in the research.

8.	Any questions that I may have regarding the research, or related matters, will be answered by the researcher/s.

9.	If I have any questions about, or problems regarding the study, or experience any undesirable effects, I may contact a member of the research team or Ms Noko Shai-Ragoboya.

10.	Participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw my participation at any stage.

11.	If any medical problem is identified at any stage during the research, or when I am vetted for participation, such condition will be discussed with me in confidence by a qualified person and/or I will be referred to my doctor.

12.	I indemnify the University of Limpopo and all persons involved with the above project from any liability that may arise from my participation in the above project or that may be related to it, for whatever reasons, including negligence on the part of the mentioned persons.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHED PERSON   SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

_____   _____

Signed at_____ this _____ day of _____ 20___

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY PROTOCOL

PART A – DEMOGRAPHICS: TICK THE CORRECT ANSWER OR WRITE IN WHERE REQUIRED

1. ARE YOU	MALE	FEMALE

2. WHAT IS YOUR RANK?	

3. WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION?	

4. WHAT IS YOUR AGE?	

5. ARE YOU?

MARRIED	DIVORCED	WIDOWED	SINGLE

OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)_____

6. WHAT IS YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE?

_____

This survey will determine your understanding about source of stress in your work. The survey lists 44 job-related items that many employees find stressful. First, you will be times within the last 6 months that you have experienced each event.

In making rating of the total level of stress for each stressor event, use all your knowledge and experience. Consider all required time to cope with stress and coping mechanisms. Therefore, based all your rating on your personal experience as well as what you have seen to be the case for others. Rate the average amount of stress that you feel is associated with each event, rather that extreme.

The first even, ASSIGNMENT OF DISAGREEABLE DUTIES, was rated by persons in a variety of occupations as producing an average amount of stress. This event has been given a rating of "5" and will be used as a standard for evaluating the other events. Compare each event with this standard.

Then assign a number "1" to "9" indicate whether you judge the event to be less or more stressful than being assigned disagreeable duties.

AMOUNT OF STRESS

1A. Assignment of disagreeable duties

If the event listed is more stressful to you than the ASSIGNMENT OF DISAGREEABLE DUTIES, cross out the number appropriately larger than "5". For

Example:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

If the event listed is less stressful to you than the ASSIGNMENT OF DISAGREEABLE DUTIES, cross out the number appropriately smaller than "5". For example

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1B. Assignment of disagreeable duties

Indicate the approximate number of days during the past 6 months on which you have personally experienced the event. For example, if you have experienced the event listed on 4 days in the past six months, cross out the "4". If you have not experienced the event listed on 9 or more days during the past six months, cross out the "9".

If you make a mistake or change your mind on any item, cross out and circle the correct response. For example:

1	2	3	4	5	⬭	7	8	9

AMOUNT OF STRESS - INSTRUCTIONS: for job-related events judged to produce approximately the same amount of stress as the assignment of disagreeable duties, cross out the number "5". For those events that you feel are more stressful than the standard, cross out a proportionally HIGHER than "5". If you think some events are less stressful than the standard, cross out a number appropriately smaller than "5".

Stressful job-Related Events	Amount of stress								
	Low			Moderate			High		
1. Assignment of disagreeable duties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. Working overtime	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. Lack of opportunity for advancement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. Assignment of new or unfamiliar duties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. Fellow workers not doing their job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. Inadequate support by supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. Dealing with crisis situations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. Difficulty getting along with colleague(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. Lack of recognition for good work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. Performing tasks not in my job description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. Inadequate or poor quality equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. Assignment of increased responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. Period of inactivity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. Difficulty getting along with supervisor(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Stressful job-Related Events (I)	Amount of stress								
	Low			Moderate			High		

15. Experiencing negative attitude toward the organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
16. Competition for advancement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17. Poor or inadequate supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18. Noisy work areas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
19. Frequent interruptions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
20. Frequent changes from boring to demanding activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21. Excessive paperwork	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
22. Meeting deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
23. Insufficient personal time (for instance, for coffee breaks, lunch)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
24. Covering for another employee (for instance, if they are late or have not completed work)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
25. Poorly motivated co-workers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
26. Conflicts with other departments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
27. Shift work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
28. Too much supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
29. Delivering bad news and/or message of someone's death	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
30. Attending to incidences of domestic violence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
31. Reorganisation and transformation within the organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
32. Staff shortages	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
33. Killing someone in the line of duty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
34. A fellow officer killed in the line duty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
35. Racial conflict	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
36. Having to handle a large crowd/mass demonstration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
37. A forced arrest or being physically attacked	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
38. Having to go to court	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
39. Having to deal with the media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
40. Seeing criminals go free (for example because of lack of evidence, court leniency)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
41. Insufficient personnel to handle an assignment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
42. Making cities on-the-spot decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
43. Lack of participation in policy-making decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
44. Personal insults from customer /consumer/colleague(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

FREQUENCY OF EVENT - For each of the job-related events listed, please indicate the approximate number of days during the past 6 (six) months on which you have personally experienced this event. Cross out "0" if the event did not occur, cross out the number "+9" for each event you experienced personally on 9 (nine) or more days during the past 6 (six) months.

Stressful job-related events	Amounts									
	Low			moderate						high
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
45. Assignment of disagreeable duties	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
46. Working overtime	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
47. Lack of opportunity for advancement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
48. Assignment of new or unfamiliar duties	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
49. Fellow workers not doing their job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
50. Inadequate support from supervisor(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
51. Dealing with crisis situations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
52. Lack of recognition for good work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
53. Performing tasks not in my job description	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
54. Inadequate or poor quality equipment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
55. Assignment of increased responsibility	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
56. Periods of inactivity	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
57. Difficulty getting along with supervisor(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
58. Experiencing negative attitudes toward the organisation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
59. Insufficient personnel to handle an assignment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
60. Making critical on-the-spot decisions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
61. Personal insult from customer/consumer/colleague(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
62. Lack of participation in policy-making decisions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
Stressful Job-Related Events	Numbers of days on which the event occurred During the past 6(six) months									
63. Inadequate supervision	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
64. Competition for advancement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
65. Poor or inadequate supervision	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
66. Noisy work area(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
67. Frequent interruptions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
68. Frequent changes from boring to demanding activities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
69. Excessive paperwork	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9

Stressful job-Related Events	Numbers of days on which the event occurred during the past 6(six) months									
70. Insufficient personal time (for instance, for coffee breaks, lunch)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
71. Meeting deadlines	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
72. Covering for another employee (if he or she is late or has not completed work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
73. Poorly motivated co-workers	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
74. Conflicts with other departments	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
75. Shift work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
76. Too much supervision	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
77. Delivering bad news to someone and/or a message of someone's death	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
78. Attending to incidences of domestic violence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
79. Reorganisation and transformation within the organisation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
80. Staff shortages	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
81. Killing someone in the line of duty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
82. Racial conflict	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
83. A fellow officer killed in the line of duty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
84. Having to handle a large crowd/mass demonstration	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
85. A forced arrest or being physically attacked	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
86. Having to go to court	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
87. Having to deal with the media	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
88. Seeing criminals go free (for example because of lack of evidence, court leniency)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9

PART C - THE COPE QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: We are researching on how people cope and manage different stressful events in their life as they rise and how they apply various stress mechanism in their different situation. The questionnaire asks you to indicate how you react and approach stressful events in daily life. Stress is a socially reality which does not exist in isolation, but in many social situations, especially work related environments, but think of what you normally do when you are stressed. There are no right and wrong answers, and responses must indicate what you do than what most people do. Indicate how much your reaction is described by each statement. Please make a visible and clear X over 1, 2, 3, or 4.

	I usually don't do this at all	I usually do this a little bit	I usually do this a medium amount	I usually do this a lot
1. I ask people who have had similar experiences what they did	1	2	3	4
2. I refuse to believe it has happened	1	2	3	4
3. I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience	1	2	3	4
4. I force myself to wait for the right time to do something	1	2	3	4
5. I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this	1	2	3	4
6. I take additional action to 7. try and get rid of the problem	1	2	3	4
8. I get used to the idea that it happened	1	2	3	4
9. I talk to someone about how I might best handle the problem	1	2	3	4
10. I think about how I might best handle the problem	1	2	3	4
11. I put my trust in God	1	2	3	4
12. I sleep more than usual	1	2	3	4
13. I drink alcohol or drink drugs, in order to think about it less	1	2	3	4
14. I admit to myself that I can't deal with it, and quit trying	1	2	3	4
15. I let my feelings out	1	2	3	4
16. I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives	1	2	3	4
17. I say to myself, this isn't real	1	2	3	4
18. I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive	1	2	3	4
19. I make sure not to make matters worse by acting to soon	1	2	3	4
20. I try had to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this	1	2	3	4
21. I make a plan of action	1	2	3	4

22. I learn to live with it	1	2	3	4
23. I try to get advice from someone about what to do	1	2	3	4
24. I pray more than usual	1	2	3	4
25. I am quieter than usual	1	2	3	4
26. I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind of things.	1	2	3	4
27. I gave up the attempt to do what I want.	1	2	3	4
28. I get upset and let my emotions out	1	2	3	4
29. I get sympathy and understanding from someone	1	2	3	4
30. I pretend that it hasn't really happened	1	2	3	4
31. I look for something good in what is happening.	1	2	3	4
32. I restrain myself from doing anything too quickly	1	2	3	4
33. I take direct action to get around the problem	1	2	3	4
34. I accept that this has happened and that if can't be changed	1	2	3	4
35. I talk to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.	1	2	3	4
36. I try to come up with a strategy about what to do	1	2	3	4
37. I go to movies or watch TV, or think about it	1	2	3	4
38. I try to find comfort in my religion	1	2	3	4
39. I focus on dealing with the problem, and if necessary don't do other work	1	2	3	4
40. I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem	1	2	3	4
41. I feel a lot emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.	1	2	3	4
42. I talk to someone to find out more about the situation	1	2	3	4
43. I act as though it hasn't even happened	1	2	3	4
44. I learn something from the experience	1	2	3	4
45. I hold off doing anything about it until I think the situation permits	1	2	3	4
46. I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it	1	2	3	4
47. I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities	1	2	3	4

48. I think hard about what steps to take	1	2	3	4
49. I accept the reality of the fact that it happened	1	2	3	4
50. I discuss my feeling with someone	1	2	3	4
51. I just give up trying to reach my goal	1	2	3	4
52. I seek Gods help	1	2	3	4
53. I daydream about things other than this	1	2	3	4
54. I get upset, and am really aware of it	1	2	3	4
55. I keep a distance from my friends	1	2	3	4
56. I blame myself	1	2	3	4
57. I often feel like a traveller who has not yet reached a destination	1	2	3	4
58. I become rude, I lose touch with reality	1	2	3	4
59. I become quiet	1	2	3	4
60. I drink too much as stress reliever	1	2	3	4
61. I stay alone	1	2	3	4
62. I take leave often	1	2	3	4
63. I get upset and ignore people	1	2	3	4
64. I go to church	1	2	3	4
65. I believe the ancestors will help me	1	2	3	4
66. I drink traditional medicine	1	2	3	4
67. I don't let my feelings out	1	2	3	4
68. I pray more often	1	2	3	4
69. I exercise daily	1	2	3	4
70. I become too lenient	1	2	3	4
71. I discuss my feelings with God (not friends or family)	1	2	3	4
72. I don't believe in stress	1	2	3	4
73. I eat more than usual	1	2	3	4
74. I play sports	1	2	3	4
75. I blame others for my problems	1	2	3	4
76. I pretend as if nothing happened	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX 3: Letter to the SAPS (Limpopo, Province)

University of Limpopo

Department of Psychology

Private bag X1160

Sovenga, 0727

To: <u>The South African Police Service: The Head Strategic Research and Management, Psychological services, Limpopo Province</u>.

Pretoria, 0001

Attention: Director SAPS

RE: <u>REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH</u>

This letter serves as application to conduct a study in the South African Police Service (Tzaneen Police Stations). My name is Mushwana Makhawukana Rhulani Venetia, student number: 201222066, ID NO: 8811150718080. I am currently registered for a Masters of Arts in Psychology by full dissertation at the University of Limpopo, under the supervision of Prof K. A. Nel - email: Kathryn.Nel@ul.ac.za

The research topic is: STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE OFFICERS IN TZANEEN, LIMPOPO PROVINCE. The research approach will be quantitative in nature, since the aim is to investigate what influences stress and coping mechanisms of police officers, and what their coping strategies are at the following levels: police constables, police sergeants and detectives. Results of the study will be forwarded to you after the successful completion of the research. Your assistance in granting permission for this study will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Mushwana M.R.V. Cell: 073 777 6409 e-mail address: mrvshwana@gmail.com

APPENDIX 4: A brief explanation of the Five Factor model of personality (adapted from Goldberg, L. R. (1993). The structure of phenotypic personality traits. *American Psychologist*, *48*, 26–34).

The Big Five personality traits, also known as the five factor model (FFM), is a model based on common language descriptors of personality (lexical hypothesis). These descriptors are grouped together using a statistical technique called factor analysis (i.e. this model is not based on experiments). This widely examined theory suggests five broad dimensions used by some psychologists to describe the human personality and psyche. The five factors have been defined as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, often listed under the acronyms *OCEAN* or *CANOE*. Beneath each proposed global factor, a number of correlated and more specific primary factors are claimed. For example, extraversion is said to include such related qualities as gregariousness, assertiveness, excitement seeking, warmth, activity, and positive emotions.

- Openness **to experience**: (*inventive/curious* vs. *consistent/cautious*). Appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, curiosity, and variety of experience. Openness reflects the degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty and variety a person has. It is also described as the extent to which a person is imaginative or independent, and depicts a personal preference for a variety of activities over a strict routine. High openness can be perceived as unpredictability or lack of focus. Moreover, individuals with high openness are said to pursue self-actualisation specifically by seeking out intense, euphoric experiences, such as skydiving, living abroad, gambling, et cetera. Conversely, those with low openness seek to gain fulfilment through perseverance, and are characterised as pragmatic and data-driven—sometimes even perceived to be dogmatic and closed-minded. Some disagreement remains about how to interpret and contextualize the openness factor.

- Conscientiousness: (*efficient/organized* vs. *easy-going/careless*). A tendency to be organized and dependable, show self-discipline, act dutifully, aim for achievement, and prefer planned rather than spontaneous behaviour. High conscientiousness are often perceived as stubborn and obsessive. Low conscientiousness are flexible and spontaneous, but can be perceived as sloppy and unreliable.

- Extraversion: (*outgoing/energetic* vs. *solitary/reserved*). Energy, positive emotions, assertiveness, sociability and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others, and talkativeness. High extraversion is often perceived as attention-seeking, and domineering.

Low extraversion causes a reserved, reflective personality, which can be perceived as aloof or self-absorbed.

- Agreeableness: (*friendly/compassionate* vs. *analytical/detached*). A tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others. It is also a measure of one's trusting and helpful nature, and whether a person is generally well-tempered or not. High agreeableness is often seen as naive or submissive. Low agreeableness personalities are often competitive or challenging people, which can be seen as argumentative or untrustworthy.

- Neuroticism: (*sensitive/nervous* vs. *secure/confident*). The tendency to experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, anxiety, depression, and vulnerability. Neuroticism also refers to the degree of emotional stability and impulse control and is sometimes referred to by its low pole, "emotional stability". A high need for stability manifests as a stable and calm persona3:

APPENDIX 5: Determining sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)

APPENDIX 6: **Population** **Sample and** **Final** **Sample**

Stratified Random Sample **From 317** **Police** **Officers in** **the**
Greater Tzaneen Municipal Area

Letisle Police Station

		Number of officers	Proposed sample size	Actual sample (those who participated
	Constables	34	19	7
	Sergeants	5	3	3
	Inspectors	3	2	4
	Captains	4	2	1
	Colonels	2	1	0
Sub-total number of officers		**48**	**27**	**16**
Overall response rate for this police station	**59%**			

Lenyene Police Station

		Number of officers	Proposed sample size	Actual sample (those who participated
	Constables	40	22	10
	Sergeants	8	4	4
	Inspectors	12	7	6
	Captains	5	3	2
	Colonels	3	2	1
Sub-total number of officers		**68**	**38**	**22**
Overall response rate for this police station	**58%**			

Ritavi Police Station

		Number of officers	Proposed sample size	Actual sample (those who participated
	Constables	45	25	11
	Sergeants	10	6	4
	Inspectors	11	6	7
	Captains	7	4	2
	Colonels	4	2	1
Sub-total number of officers		**77**	**43**	**25**
Overall response rate for this police station	**58%**			

Tzaneen Police Station		Number of officers	Size of the Sample	Actual no. participated
	Constables	80	44	18
	Sergeants	15	8	7
	Inspectors	12	7	11
	Captains	10	6	3
	Colonels	6	3	1
Sub-total number of officers		**123**	**68**	**40**
Overall response rate this police station	**58%**			

- The sample size was worked out statistically on an Excel spreadsheet .
- General response rate for all the Greater Tzaneen Municipal areas on a sample of 175 = **59%**

		Number of officers	Size of the Sample	Actual no. participated

APPENDIX 7 : Demographics of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality (from Greater Tzaneen local municipality from Census 2011)

Area: 3242.58 km²
Population: 390095 (120.30 per km²)
Households: 108926 (33.59 per km²)

Gender	People	Percentage
Female	208536	53.46%
Male	181558	46.54%

Population group	People	Percentage
Black African	375904	96.36%
White	11561	2.96%
Indian or Asian	1409	0.36%
Coloured	674	0.17%
Other	546	0.14%

First language	People	Percentage
Sepedi	179572	46.21%
Xitsonga	159074	40.94%
Sesotho	16815	4.33%
Afrikaans	10063	2.59%
Other	9964	2.56%
English	6129	1.58%
isiZulu	1713	0.44%
Tshivenda	1675	0.43%
Setswana	972	0.25%
isiNdebele	946	0.24%
SiSwati	658	0.17%
Sign language	600	0.15%
isiXhosa	384	0.10%
Not applicable	*1529*	

APPENDIX 8: TREC approval form

Appendix 9: Cronbach Alpha for this study PAI and COPE

Instrument	N (items)	Alpha
Stress		
- Police stress survey	60	.94
- Organisational Stress Subscale	30	.95
- Inherent work Stress Subscale	30	.92
Coping		
- Brief Cope Inventory	28	.88
- Avoidance Coping Subscale	12	.75
- Emotional-focused coping strategies	09	.75
- Problem- focused coping subscale	07	.84

The table shows the Cronbach alpha coefficients for Police Stress Survey and COPE Inventory. The reliability coefficient results for Police Stress Survey is comparable to results achieved previous authors and suggests acceptable reliability. The coefficient achieved for the measure is 0.95, while alpha score for the organizational and inherent subscales are 0.95 and 0.92 respectively. Therefore, coefficients results are comparable and lower than coefficient. The reliability coefficient scores for Brief COPE Inventory are lower than those reported for Police Stress Survey but are still above the normal standard criteria. Alpha coefficients for the measure are. 88, while avoidance (a=.75), emotion –focused (a=75), and problem-focused coping (a=.84) reliability coefficients are slightly lower.

Appendix 10: Permission to conduct research from SAPS