OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

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(ABSTRACT)

Occupational stress is a contemporary phenomenon worthy of study. Inquiry into this problem thus far has been limited to occupations other than those of higher education, and particularly lacking is research and theory in community colleges. Occupational stress can have a detrimental effect on employees, the organizations as a whole, and ultimately, society in general.

This research examines the phenomenon of occupational stress among professional community college employees in administrative and instructional roles. Using the grounded theory research technique of Glaser and Strauss, 27 community college personnel across four functional levels were interviewed. Findings identify factors within employees' perception of barriers to fulfillment of role expectation that can affect and contribute to perceived stress stemming from their roles in community colleges. A theoretical framework is developed which focuses on barriers to role fulfillment, factors external to the individual that comprise those barriers, their sources, and the interactions and relationships that result in stress.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is a pervasive problem in most organizations. Organizations such as the Center for Occupational Mental Health, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and the International Committee on Occupational Mental Health share the mutual goal of bringing about a healthier relationship between employee and employer. A vast body of occupational stress data has been compiled by these and other organizations; however, the research remains largely unfocused (McLean, 1979) and leaves many phenomena unexplained. Little theory exists, for example, to systematically explain occupational stress in higher education. It is the absence of stress related theory that provides motivation for this study within the community college setting.

Definitions of Stress

Stress is defined imprecisely and variously (Appley & Trumbull, 1967; Cox, 1978; Lazarus, 1966; Selye, 1974; Weitz, 1970). Much of the difficulty in stress research stems from the absence of a generally accepted working definition of the term (McLean, 1979). The term is used, for example, to describe environmental conditions that have adverse effects on individuals (Beehr, 1976, French & Caplan, 1973; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snock, & Rosenthal, 1964) and to describe bodily responses to internal and external stimuli (Selye,

1974). Selye is often credited, in fact, as the first
researcher to make a significant breakthrough in stress
inquiry forming the foundation on which much of the current
research is based (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). Selye's
working definition of stress is "the nonspecific response of
the body to any demand made upon it" (Selye, 1974, p. 27).
In his 1950 volume entitled Stress, Selye altered the focus
on his definition of stress to encompass the internal con-
dition of an organism that reacts to evocative agents, sug-
gesting that the agents be referred to as stressors (Selye,
1950). This alteration of terms influenced research in
stress factors and current terminology (Ivancevich &
Matteson, 1980).

Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) grouped accepted defini-
tions of stress into three categories: (a) stimulus defini-
tions, (b) response definitions, and (c) stimulus-response
definitions. Each of the three types of definition include
the interactive nature of external environment and individual.
The stimulus definition refers to stress as the stimulus and
the individual's response as the reaction to the stress. The
response definition identifies the stress as the response
with a stressor as the stimulus. The stimulus-response
definition encompasses both the stimulus and the response as
a total definition for stress.

For this study, a form of the response definition will serve as the working definition of stress. Occupational stress in the community college is defined as <u>the negative adaptive response of an individual resulting from some action, event, and/or situation (actual or perceived) relating to the performance of a professional role in a college</u>. This adaptive response may be physical, psychological, or both, and is mediated by individual characteristics, traits, personality, and/or predispositions.

It is recognized that stress and the stress response may have positive aspects, particularly as it might contribute to an individual's motivational level, determination, and sense of challenge. Selye (1974) distinguishes between the positive and negative sides of stress by labelling them "eustress" and "disstress" respectively. However, given the primary focus of this research, the positive aspects are not considered as part of this study.

Background for the Study

Occupational stress research has led to an increased awareness of coping skills necessary to maintain a state of psychological and physiological well-being (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). A re-evaluation of the concept of the overall well being of individuals has taken place and the commonly accepted definition of

health as "the absence of any substantial symptoms which would suggest an underlying disease process" has been questioned (Albrecht, 1979, p. 28). Cardiologists Friedman and Rosenman (1974) identified specific behaviorial traits that seem to precede coronary artery and heart disease. As a result of their patient studies, their approach to patient care changed from one of examining and treating a specific illness to one of evaluating the entire patient to include not only the individual's physical symptoms but psychological fears, anxieties, and hopes as well. A holistic approach to health is rapidly coming to the forefront in American medicine (Leonard, 1980). The World Health Organization's (W.H.O.) current definition of health reflects this broader view of wellness, implying a continuum scale encompassing both psychological and physical wellness. W.H.O. defines health as the "physical, psychic, and social well-being, not only freedom from disease" (Albrecht, 1979, p. 30). The implication is that a high level of human functioning carries with it a high level of well-being.

The functional human being is the determining factor in productivity of all types. Without coordinated, productive efforts, nothing of significance is likely to result, nor can individuals grow, develop, and aspire to higher levels of life, whether in the personal or the organizational realm. Many American organizations now realize the vital link between

employees' well-being and their productivity levels. Lit-
erally hundreds of organizations are implementing special
programs and activities to enhance employees' physical and
emotional well-being (McGaffey, 1978), and, thus, to provide
organization members with a resiliency to the pressures
accompanying their work.

When viewed from the extreme, the positive link between
employee health and higher levels of production becomes a
negative, dysfunctional productivity factor as individual
well-being diminishes because of unmanaged job-related
stress. The literature supports this negative impact in many
occupations and organizational types, but contains little
that is pertinent for higher education, and particularly for
community colleges.

Detailed stress studies have been conducted in such
diverse occupational areas as heavy equipment manufacturing
(Abdel-Halim, 1978), law enforcement (Kroes, Hurrell &
Margolis, 1974), engineering and accounting (Burke, 1976),
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Caplan, Cobb &
French, 1975), telegraphy (Ferguson, 1973), research and
development (Hall & Mansfield, 1971), manual labor (Paffen-
barger & Hale, 1975), government (Singer, 1975), and manage-
ment at all levels (Stewart, 1976). Typically, studies of
these types identify factors of the job that contribute to
employee stress and how they contribute to decreased health,

productivity, and job dissatisfaction.

Existing literature in the area of stress and educational occupations is largely focused on teaching and administrative roles in elementary and secondary settings (Bardo, 1979; Hodge & Marker, 1978; Humphrey & Humphrey, 1981; Johnston, Healey, & Swift, 1981; Landesmann, 1978; Wahlund & Nerell, 1977). As with research in other occupational areas, stress factors were identified and related to teacher/administrator health and effectiveness. Consistent findings in elementary and secondary education emphasize role demands and conflict, teacher/administrator relationships, and the increasing element of violence in the classroom.

Voluminous community college literature exists that examines specific roles and responsibilities within the college, but this literature falls short of explaining those roles with respect to specific stress factors of the job. Authors such as Matthews (1983), Pappas and Ritter (1983), Anderson (1984), and Campbell (1983) write of the need for presidents and other administrators to recognize societal shifts, technological advance, and the accompanying challenges to their leadership roles in community colleges. Smith (1983) and Sbaratta (1983) emphasize the critical role of academic deans in the pursuit of teaching excellence in community colleges and challenge individuals in those roles to rise to the occasion.

Hammons (1984) approaches the periphery of the stress problem for community college division chairpersons in his explanation of the role, frustrations, and challenges faced by those individuals. The focus of his writing, however, is on the call for college personnel in other roles to assist the division chairpersons in their pursuit of leadership excellence.

Community college literature addresses the role and responsibilities of faculty in various areas. Alfred and Nash (1983) recognized the growing need for faculty retraining as a response to changing resources and technology. The personal concerns of teaching faculty were surveyed by Armes and Watkins (1983). The major factor detrimental to effective teaching was found to be excessive time demands, but no attempt was made to relate these time constraints to faculty stress levels. Also evident in the literature is a growing concern for the decline of teaching excellence and commitment of community college faculty (Roueche, 1983), and recommendations for teaching skill improvement (Andrews & Marzano, 1984; Conger, 1984; Rabalais & Perritt, 1983).

Indicative of the limited occupational stress literature related to higher education is that by Carlton and Bennett (1980), Duea (1981), and Vaughan (1982). The focus of these works is on the role and requirements of college presidents and the pressures realized from the increasing demands placed

upon them. However, the work of French, Tupper, and Mueller (1965) did examine stress factors for both administrators and faculty comparatively. These researchers were able to distinguish between defined qualitative and quantitative stress factors for each group.

The contemporary problem of occupational stress is receiving more recognition from researchers than ever before. It would appear, however, that higher education, and particularly the community college, has been slighted as an area of stress inquiry. It is for this reason that this study was undertaken.

Need for the Study

Researchers in the field of personal and occupational stress are concerned about the neglect of this area of study (American Psychological Association Task Force on Health Research, 1976; Beehr & Newman, 1978; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980; McLean, 1979). Kahn et al. (1964) make a strong call for more research to examine the social-psychological factors in the contemporary environment. It is their belief that these factors have major effects on the physical and psychological well-being of the person. They point to the fact that many of the theories of psychological health are historical in nature and that to repair effects of past stress, one is forced to create an enlargement in present

understanding and contemporary theory. Their call is similar
to those of Adams (1980b), Beehr & Newman (1978), Carruthers
(1970), French and Caplan (1973), Goldberg (1978), Ivancevich
and Matteson (1980), McLean (1979), McQuade and Aikman (1974),
and Friedman and Rosenman (1974). The commonality in the
writings of these authors is the necessity to recognize the
current factors that are responsible for stress reactions so
that one may develop more effective individual and super-
visory stress management plans. The literature concerned
with recognizing and coping with personal and job stress
stems from diverse disciplines such as sociology, psychology,
cultural anthropology, and occupational and internal medicine
(McLean, 1979). More recently, writers in management,
personnel, industrial, and organizational psychology have
begun to make contributions to the literature (Abdel-Halim,
1978; Bass & Barrett, 1973; Beehr, 1976; Costello & Zalkind,
1963; Douglas & Douglas, 1980; Drucker, 1980; Kiev & Kohn,
1979; Likert & Likert, 1976; McGaffey, 1978; Yates, 1979).
McLean (1979) declared a pressing need for cross communication
between disciplines. Rose (1977) supported this need in
stating that research findings and conclusions are not
disseminated adequately for application beyond the initiating
field. This lack of application results in costly ineffective-
ness. These increasing costs to organizations make this call
even more pertinent. Adams (1980a) said that the costs are

immense and largely hidden with Americans spending $120

billion annually on health care. Goldberg (1978) relates

the health care costs to American productivity by stating:

1.   Premature employee death costs American industry
      $19.4 billion a year.

2.   An estimated $10 to $20 billion is lost through
      absence, hospitalization, and early death among
      executives.

3.   Alcoholism costs industry about $15.6 billion
      annually due to absenteeism and medical costs.

4.   About 32 million workdays, and $8.6 billion in
      wages is lost annually to heart-related diseases.

5.   According to the American Heart Association, the
      cost of recruiting replacements for executives
      felled by heart disease is about $700 million a
      year. (p. xi)

The link between American productivity and American

health is apparent. The well-being and improved health of

organizational members will have a resulting effect on the

welfare and effectiveness of the organization. This connec-

tion between employee health and productivity has not been

widely recognized until recently, however. Beehr and Newman

(1978) explain the relative lack of activity in this research

domain because of the prevailing notion that employee health

is not as important as other work-related events such as job

performance, output, and organizational skills. Accompanying

this notion is the belief that employee health and illness

are caused primarily by physical rather than psychological or

social factors. Insight is growing about the fallacy of
these ideas. Researchers are beginning to show that illness
and psychosocial events are related (Cassel, 1970; French &
Caplan, 1973; Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Glass & Singer,
1972; Jenkins, 1976; Levine & Scotch, 1970).

Implications for Higher Education

The problem drawn from the literature with respect to
higher education and contemporary stress research is one
that relates to institutional effectiveness and individual
well-being. Perceived stress and stress factors lead to
decreased organizational productivity and individual well-
being (Anderson, 1976; Burke, 1976; Welford, 1973). Stress
factors in colleges may influence the effectiveness, produc-
tivity, and health of administrators and faculty members.
Institutional health and well-being may suffer as a result.
Individual stress levels contribute to internal pressures,
conflicts, uncertainty, and decreased morale. While these
conditions are apparent from the occupational stress litera-
ture in a general sense, it is clear also that little is
known of the particular effects of occupational stress in a
community college setting.

Given the projections of educational analysts for the
coming decade, stress among college administrators and faculty
is likely to become more significant, both for the individuals

concerned and for their colleges (Anderson, 1980; Heyns, 1968; Mood, 1973). Stress research in community colleges should prove beneficial, both for individuals involved and for the administrators of the colleges.

Statement of the Problem

The problem statement of this study is based on the inadequacy of occupational stress literature established in the background of the study. Much has been done to establish the existence of stress and to identify stress factors in many occupations. Evidence is that levels of occupational stress seem to be increasing at a rapid pace. However, available theory pertaining to stress factors is inadequate to explain certain phenomena believed to be associated with differential levels of stress of professional community college personnel at various levels within the community college organization. Not surprisingly, assessment procedures are inadequate for use with college populations.

A review of stress theories and models is presented in Chapter 2. This review largely centers on the concept of person-environment fit. Person-environment fit theory is recognized as perhaps the best available predictor of occupational stress but possesses certain inadequacies. At the current level of development, person-environment fit theory generalizes the sources and degrees of stress

resulting from some mismatch of the individual and the job environment. Organizational, job, and individual characteristics are confined to the broad areas of needs and need fulfillment, but unidentified are the specific factors establishing the degree of fit or misfit resulting from these needs. This lack of specificity therefore limits the value of this theoretical base, particularly in a specific organization such as a community college, but nevertheless offers guidance to focus an exploratory study such as this one.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the literature in the administrative utilization and application of stress-related research for improved institutional life, effectiveness, and productivity. Existing literature shows limited application for the manager in any type organization, and seems to be of little use to the higher education administrator. The identification and increased understanding of stress factors should be useful to the practicing administrator as well as other functioning professionals within the college.

The underlying thesis is that an increased awareness of stress factors operating within the college setting would give administrators and faculty information from which plans could be developed to deal with identified stressors. An

administrative perspective of the stress factors could lead
to increased institutional effectiveness and an improved
life quality of those institutional members. The goal of
this study, then, is to identify those stress factors exist-
ing in community colleges at all professional levels that
contribute to perceived stress levels of college personnel.

Even though somewhat generalized, the existing theory
of person-environment fit will be used to orient an inquiry
into factors pertinent to understanding stress in the
community college. However, in order to go beyond such
general treatment and attempt to identify specific stress
factors and their interrelationships, it is necessary to
employ a research method that allows for exploration of
locally relevant factors and for theory building. The
method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) meets such criteria and
is employed in this study as a step toward development of a
theory of occupational stress in the community college. It
is expected that this inquiry can describe conditions and
identify factors involved in the complex stress phenomenon,
and that in a modest way, a theory development process may
begin.

Structure of the Study

The study is detailed in a sequential fashion in the
following chapters. Chapter 2 contains a review of the
related literature supporting the problem of organization

and occupational stress as an area of feasible study and research, particularly in the realm of higher education and community colleges. The method utilized is described in Chapter 3, including rationale, procedures, and limitations.

The analysis of the data is reported in Chapter 4 yielding core and conceptual categories and their properties. The resulting theory developed from the data analysis is found in Chapter 5, while Chapter 6 summarizes the study and provides recommendations for advancement of the developed grounded theory.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter includes a literature review organized into a historical overview of the stress concept, a review of stress factors found in occupational stress literature, a review of representative models of stress used to understand the multidimensional character of stress, a review of the limited stress research in the particular setting of higher education, and a concluding discussion of the inadequacies of occupational stress research as it pertains to community colleges.

History of the Stress Concept

The literature of stress reveals little agreement regarding definitions and stress properties. Even though there is no definitional consensus, the term stress is used widely (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). Its derivation is from the Latin "stringers," which means to draw tight (Skeat, 1958).

Stress research stems from the initial work of two individuals. Cannon (1922) introduced the term homeostasis in referring to the maintenance of an internal balance during emergencies. This work included the terms "stress" and "critical stress levels" which he defined as those levels

bringing about a collapse of the homeostasis mechanisms. It was Cannon's notion that the arousal reaction to stress was preparing the body to react in one of two ways that he called the fight or flight syndrome (1932). It was this concept that was later elaborated by Selye (1936) in the first publication of the stress concept that began modern stress research. Selye's International Institute of Stress is a major clearinghouse of stress research today.

Stress Factors

The purpose of this section is to review those components identified in the literature as "stress factors" or elements that contribute to an individual's perceived stress level. The intent of this discussion is to provide insight into previous occupational stress research conducted in areas other than community colleges so that existing information may be integrated into the purpose, need, and results of this study.

Stress studies may be classified by psychological and sociological factors. A common theme, however, is that job-related stressors and individual psychological/sociological factors both contribute to an individual's perceived level of stress (Adams, 1980a; Beehr & Newman, 1978; French & Caplan, 1973; Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980; Levine & Scotch, 1970; McLean, 1979; Selye, 1974).

The occupational stress factors identified in the literature seem to be consistent in their broad context. Factor definition and identification seem to center around the theory of person-environment fit and the overall "supply and demand" requirements perceived by the individual.

This concept of the goodness of fit between the person and environment is a factor in the theory presented by several stress researchers (French & Caplan, 1973; French, Rogers & Cobb, 1974; French, Tupper & Mueller, 1965). The theory put forth is that two kinds of fit are involved in increases in anxiety, depression and low job satisfaction, and ultimately in the physiological stress response.

The first is the extent to which the person's skills and abilities match those required by the job and the environment of the job. The second is the degree to which the needs and values of the individual are maintained within the environment. French and Caplan (1973) state that the degree of misfit between these two factors contribute to the stress level of the individual. Cox (1978) supports the person-environment fit theory and suggests that the importance of achieving a good person-environment fit is best assessed in terms of the impact and effects of an ill fit. Other stress researchers and authors advocate the improving of person-environment fit as a stress management strategy in organizations (Buck, 1972; Cameron, 1971; Caplan 1976; Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison &

Pinneau, 1975; French, 1973; French & Caplan, 1973; Harrison,
1975; Kahn & Quinn, 1970; Lutz & Ramsey, 1976; Sleight & Cook,
1974).

Concern for the fit of person and environment was also
expressed by the Center for Occupational Mental Health and
the International Committee on Occupational Mental Health at
their conference in 1977. Their mutual goals were stated to
be a more successful match between the individual and the
work (McClean, 1979).

Beehr and Newman (1978, p. 669) stated that "the job
stress phenomenon involves complicated interactions between
person and environment." In their analysis of job stress and
the individual's professional and personal environment, Beehr
and Newman defined job stress as "a situation wherein job-
related factors interact with a worker to change (i.e.,
disrupt or enhance) his or her psychological and/or physio-
logical condition such that a person (i.e., mind-body) is
forced to deviate from normal functioning" (1978, p. 670).

Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison, and Pinneau (1975)
identified two types of job stress as the demands of the
job which the individual may not be able to meet or insuffi-
cient need fulfillment by the organization for the employee.
Their definition of stress is the existence of job environment
characteristics which threaten the individual. Similarly, the
theory of person-environment fit developed by French, Rogers,

and Cobb (1974) involved these same two factors of demand and supply. The degree of misfit between the needs of the individual and those supplied by the organization as well as the lack of fit between the job demands and skills of the individual contribute to job stress in their definition.

Likewise, McGrath (1976) states "there is a potential for stress when an environmental situation is perceived as presenting a demand which threatens to exceed the person's capabilities and resources for meeting it, under conditions where he expects a substantial differential in the rewards and costs from meeting the demand versus not meeting it" (p. 1352).

Margolis and Kroes (1974) cited work conditions interacting with worker characteristics as the forces disrupting psychological and physiological homeostasis, while Frew (1977) specified eight sources of work-related stress:

1. the unwritten psychological contract between employee and employer as to expectations of what the job will provide

2. the stressors related to career growth and expansion

3. the negative effect on the family of job demands

4. the fear of change as it relates to obsolesence

5. the concern for organizational obsolesence

6. the stress derived from meeting job demands

7. the anticipation of demands of superiors

8.   the ideology of the organization. (p. 28)

In a 1979 survey conducted for the American Management Association, Kiev and Kohn concluded that the major sources of stress for some 1,422 top executives and 1,237 middle managers were work and non-work related. The most serious stress-producing work related factors were task and time pressures, disparity between the goals of the individual and the organization, the climate of the organization, and inadequate feedback on job performance. The non-work related stressors centered around day-to-day living and were identified as financial problems, problems with children, and physical problems.

Cooper and Marshall (1976) identified the two central features of stress at work as the dimensions or characteristics of the person and the potential stress sources in the work. The interaction of these two factors determine coping or maladaptive behavior. They equated these two factors to what Lofquist and Dawis (1969) labeled the Person-Environment Fit.

A 1971 survey (Wahlund & Nerell, 1977) carried out by the City of Stockholm Personnel Committee showed that company doctors pointed to the following factors as particularly important stress sources at work:

1.   excessively wide ranging duties

2.   excessively qualified duties

3. insufficiently qualified duties

4. teamwork, for elderly persons who are unable to match the working pace of younger colleagues or do not share their values

5. concern for the future in connection with reorganization processes

6. contact with the general public in controversial questions, in social welfare or in nursing

7. heavy demands for co-operation with superiors and subordinates. (p. 66)

Paradoxically, stress factors on-the-job appear to stem from the over or under abundance of the very elements that workers seem to require for job satisfaction. Levi (1978) listed those needs as:

1. the need for a job to be reasonably demanding other than sheer endurance, and to provide an optimum of variety

2. the need to be able to learn on the job, and to continue learning

3. the need for some area of decision-making that the individual can call his own

4. the need for some degree of social support and recognition in the work place

5. the need to be able to relate what one does and
    produces to one's social life

6. the need to feel that the job leads to some
    desirable future. (p. 219)

Representative Models of Stress

Stress models are reported in the literature to help
explain the multidimensional characteristics of the pheno-
mena. Beehr and Newman (1978) utilized a facet design to
delimit and make explicit the elements of stress for exami-
nation. Their design conceptualized the major facets or
dimensions of job stress and employee health and depicted the
job stress phenomenon by its complex sources. The facet
design included seven separate components that the authors
felt deserve additional study and research. The facets
included the following:

1. Environmental facet

    a. job demands and task characteristics
    b. role demands or expectations
    c. organizational characteristics and conditions
    d. organization's external demands and conditions

2. Personal facet

    a. psychological condition (personality traits
        and behavioral characteristics)
    b. physical condition
    c. life-stage characteristics
    d. demographics

3. Process facet

    a. psychological processes

        b.   physical processes

4.   Human consequences facet

        a.   psychological health consequences
        b.   physical health consequences
        c.   behavioral consequences

5.   Organizational Consequences

6.   Adaptive responses facet

        a.   adaptive responses by the individual
        b.   adaptive responses by the organization
        c.   adaptive responses by third parties

7.   Time Facet. (p. 672-674)

French and Caplan (1973) theorized that organizational stressors affect individual strains that contribute to coronary heart disease; this model groups the factors by occupational/ environmental stressors that affect individual strain, including role ambiguity, role conflict, role over- load (quantitative and qualitative), organizational bound- aries, responsibility for people, relations with others, and participation. Individual personality variables serve to condition the effects of strain. Included in the personality variables are individual needs and abilities, predisposition for introversion or extroversion, tendencies toward flexi- bility or rigidity, and personality type of A or B as defined by Friedman and Rosenman (1974).

In another model, House (1974) attempted to integrate existing data on the relationship of occupational stress

to heart disease. The components of his model indicate that
the stress experience is a subjective response resulting
from combining the interactions of social and organizational
characteristics with particular personal traits and charac-
teristics. House's model is a general one that depicts the
relationships of conducive stressful social conditions to
the conditioning variables, either individual or situational.

Cooper and Marshall (1976) identified sources of stress
at work as factors intrinsic to the job (boredom, physical
working conditions, time pressures and deadlines, exorbitant
work demands, etc.), one's role in the organization (degree
of role conflict, ambiguity, etc.), career development
(security, under/over promotion, etc.), relationships at
work, and the organizational structure and climate. In
addition to these sources of stress, they posited factors
external to the organization that affect the individual.
External sources are said to be adult developmental stages,
family and marital problems, financial difficulties, and
commuting to and from work. These two sets of stress factors
are mediated, according to the model, through the individual's
personality, needs, goals, and behavioral predispositions to
contribute to systems of excessive stress including hyperten-
sion, depression, heavy drinking and smoking, drug addiction,
and high cholesterol levels.

McLean's (1979) model of stress introduced the concept of context and vulnerability interaction with a specific stressor to produce stress-related symptoms. He defined context as the external environment in which an interaction takes place. The intraorganizational context included factors such as structure and climate, perceived morale, management styles, behaviors, and philosophy. The extra-organizational context involved family, community, the economy, and other psychological and sociological factors external to the organization. Vulnerability was seen as one's personal characteristics relating to genetic and developmental influences.

In perhaps one of the most intriguing discussions of currently existing models of stress, Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) critiqued stress models with regard to manager/administrator utility. Their conclusion was that the stress models of researchers such as Selye (1974), Lachman (1972), Mechanic (1962), House (1974), and McGrath (1976) all fall short in their application and practicality for operating managers. As a result of this comparison, Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) classified stressors by intraorganizational and extraorganizational factors. Included in the intraorganizational factors were those stressors related to the physical environment (light, noise, pollution, etc.), stressors related to the individual level

(overload, role conflict, ambiguity, goal discrepancy, responsibility for people), stressors at the group level (group conflict, dissatisfaction, status incongruence, lack of cohesiveness), and stress factors at the organizational level (climate, management styles, technology, job design, and characteristic). Extraorganizational stressors were said to be those factors relating to family life, economic concerns, race and class positioning, and residential problems.

Stress in the Higher Education Setting

Stress research has been conducted primarily in settings outside higher education. Much of the research has been in the area of manufacturing, assembly-line operations, flight operations and controls, and executive stress (Miller, 1970; Timio & Simonetta, 1976; Weiman, 1977).

In what perhaps is the most significant stress-related study conducted in a university setting, French, Tupper, and Mueller (1965) found a distinct difference in stress factors of professors and administrators. The study involved quantitative and qualitative role overload. Quantitative overload was defined as the sum total of work required. The individual, for example, may have too many tasks to complete in a given period of time. Qualitative overload referred to the amount of skills, abilities, and knowledge required for an individual to complete a task. Stress would result therefore

from a feeling of inadequacy for the assignment. French,
Tupper, and Mueller found that qualitative overload, or the
work that requires perceived skills, abilities, and knowledge
beyond what the person possesses is a greater stress factor
for professors than is quantitative overload, or the sum
total of tasks. Qualitative overload was not found to be
significantly linked to stress for administrators, however.
Administrators seem to realize more stress from the sheer
number of tasks required of them than from their perceived
qualifications to perform their administrative roles.

Wahlund and Nerell (1977) reported that a Swedish survey
of stress factors in the working environment of white collar
workers showed that teachers experience stress from such
factors as seeking administrative positions (promotion
prospects), conflicting role demands (pupils, parents, and
school authorities), and responsibilities, and decision-
making. They ranked causes of mental strain at work
accordingly:

1.   heavy responsibility and close concentration

2.   shortage of time

3.   excessive work load

4.   demands and expectations of outsiders. (p. 66)

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and
Health actively supports work in the area of work-related
stress and compiles research findings in stress-related

disease by occupation. In <u>A Review of NIOSH Psychological</u>

<u>Stress Research--1977</u>, Smith, Colligan, and Hurrell reported

on a study conducted involving health records of some 22,000

workers in some 130 occupations. From the 130 occupations,

they determined the twelve occupations showing the highest

stress-related disease to be laborers, secretaries,

inspectors, clinical laboratory technicians, office managers,

managers and administrators, foremen, waitresses/waiters,

machine operators, farm owners, mine operators, and painters

(nonartists). Interestingly enough, included in the twelve

occupations showing the lowest level of stress-related

diseases were hucksters and college/ university professors.

These data may very well explain the minimal amount of stress

research that has been conducted in higher education settings.

Inadequacy of Occupational Stress Research

The literature reviewed in this chapter contains much

valuable information in the realm of occupational stress.

Many studies have verified the existence and consistency of

certain occupational stress phenomena in many varied occupa-

tional fields. The value of such research is not questioned

by this study. What is challenged, however, is the adequacy

and/or pertinence of current studies, theories, and informa-

tion and their explanatory power for the occupational stress

phenomenon in community college personnel. The literature

does not recognize the existence of occupational stress in
the specific organizational arena of community colleges,
perhaps because of the relative youth of community colleges
as organizations. Community colleges were chosen by the
researcher because of extensive experience as a college
·
employee and, because of this experience, an awareness of
an increasing degree of occupational stress realized and
reported by colleagues within community colleges.

The literature reviewed in this chapter establishes
the existence of many stress factors across many occupational
fields. Even though these studies were conducted in occupa-
tions ranging from blue-collar to top executive levels
in business, industry, and government, the stress factors
identified can provide valuable comparative information for
this study of stress factors in community colleges.

Thus, occupational stress research appears not to per-
tain to higher education and community colleges as an occupa-
tional area. Research in higher education focuses on
administrative conflicts, projected enrollment decreases,
and financial restraints in the college/university setting
(Anderson, 1980; Likert & Likert, 1976; Mahan, 1978; Medrano,
1978). These elements may or may not be perceived by college
personnel as stress factors, but current writers do not
approach these concerns from a stress viewpoint. The
possible effects of the stress reaction upon both individual

and college health and effectiveness are not addressed.
Therefore, as an initial inquiry into the stress phenomenon
in community colleges, and because of the complex realities
of the stress reaction, a discovery and grounded theory
method of research would seem most appropriate for a study
of this type.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The method of this study is described in this chapter,
including why it was chosen, how it was applied, and how the
data were analyzed.

Owing to a lack of knowledge of occupational stress in
the community college setting and to an apparent literature
void of theoretical perspective to explain stress related
factors associated with improved institutional life, effect-
tiveness, and productivity, a research method allowing for
the explanation of social and organizational stress phenomena
seemed most appropriate to accomplish the stated purposes of
this study.

Research Method

The research method for this study is taken from
grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), naturalistic
inquiry (Brandt, 1972; Guba, 1978), and field research
(Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). Naturalistic inquiry, field
research, and grounded theory focus on a discovery mode
during research rather than on a verification mode. Further,
these methods emphasize qualitative rather than quantitative
techniques and allow for the development and elaboration of

concepts as they emerge during the research process. The

greatest reliance on a particular method, however, was on

grounded theory.

The Grounded Theory Approach Explained

Grounded theory is a sociological method of research

with the basic goal of theory generation. In The Discovery

of Grounded Theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain the

approach to have originated from broader social research

data.

> Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses
> and concepts not only come from the data, but are systema-
> tically worked out in relation to the data during the
> course of the research. (p. 6)

Darkenwald (1980) expands this notion to include an inductive

procedure

> ...that focuses on social interaction and relies heavily
> on data from interviews and observations to build
> theory grounded in the data rather than to test
> theory or simply to describe empirical phenomena. (p. 64)

The notion of a theory grounded in research data is

consistent with discovery needs of field research and of

naturalistic inquiry. Thus, the data yield theory which is

a major goal of any research.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), theory induc-

tively derived is an integral part of the research process

and contrasts with logicodeductive theory in its merits of

prediction, explanation, and relevance. Inductively moving from the data to the theory through the use of the elements of the research process allows for the development of theory:

> (1) to enable prediction and explanation of behavior; (2) to be useful in theoretical advance in sociology; (3) to be usable in practical applications - prediction and explanation should be able to give the practitioner understanding and some control of situations; (4) to provide a perspective on behavior - a stance to be taken toward data; and (5) to guide and provide a style for research on particular areas of behavior (p. 3).

Grounded Theory and This Study

A qualitative method of inquiry was chosen for this study because of the highly individualistic nature of the stress reaction and the unfocused definitions and descriptive factors in the literature. Many stress factors, or sources, are identified in the literature as are suggestions of probable individual responses to them. The assumption of singular reality of the "scientistic" model of research did not seem appropriate for research of this type (Guba, 1978). Factor complexity and attendant reactions indicate multiple realities, indicating a need for an inquiry method capable of considering them as discovered (Brandt, 1972; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guba, 1978; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973).

The idea that stress level depends on the perceptions of those involved also supports a naturalistic and grounded theory approach in this research. Stress research and

grounded theory generation are well suited for one another
in that the properties, categories, conditions, and conse-
quences of perceived occupational stress within the college
setting can be recognized, duly noted, coded, and analyzed
by the techniques of the process during the research. The
research should occur in the normal environs of subjects, in
a natural, non-contrived fashion.

Data Collection

The data collection method chosen for this study was
that of interviewing community college personnel. This
method was selected for several reasons. Because of the
unfocused definitions of stress in the literature and the
role of individual perceptions as determinants of the stress
response, it was felt that actual contact and dialogue with
subjects would yield data with the highest potential explana-
tory power. Secondly, an on-site interview would provide the
researcher with a broader perspective of subjects and their
functioning environments, possibly providing an additional
source of insight into the stress phenomenon. Thirdly, it
was thought that a consistent interview format with all
personnel would facilitate the comparative process of data
from subject to subject. The structure of the interview was
altered after the first series of interviews and is discussed
in the section of "Initial Interviewing and Coding" found in

the method application section of this chapter. The revised
interview questions were as follows:

1. What does the word stress mean to you?

2. What are the symptoms that accompany stress for you?

3. What are the aspects or circumstances in your job
   that cause you to realize these symptoms?

A revision of the interview questions was necessary to
allow subjects to identify and discuss specific stress
factors in their professional roles. Data analyzed in this
study were derived from responses to question number three
(See Appendices B and C).

Components and Characteristics of Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocated the use of constant
comparative analysis as the fundamental component of a
grounded method. It was their view that experimental and
statistical methods use the logic of comparison as well, but
that the value of grounded theory method is in the purpose of
discovery rather than verification.

> ...there is no fundamental clash between the purposes and
> capacities of qualitative and quantitative methods or data.
> What clash there is concerns the primacy of emphasis on
> verification or generation of theory - to which heated
> disucssions on qualitative versus quantitative data have
> been linked historically. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 17)

The constant comparative analysis generates the primary
elements of the theory which consist of core and conceptual

categories, properties, and propositions or hypotheses. A
conceptual category is an element or construct of the theory
composed of one or more properties, a core category is a
grouping of interrelated conceptual categories, and a property
is a description or characteristic of a category. By follow-
ing the steps of the constant comparative approach, the
elements of theory emerge.

The constant comparative method includes: (a) comparing
incidents applicable in each category, (b) integrating cate-
gories and their properties, (c) delimiting theory, and (d)
the actual writing of the theory. The first stage in the
constant comparative method is the comparison of incident to
incident so that each piece of evidence is compared to data
or evidence previously gathered. This comparison is done by
coding each incident in the data into as many categories of
analysis as possible. As this comparison is done, more and
more categories emerge while data begin to surface that fit
an existing category. As these categories develop, they may
be eliminated, modified, or ratified on the basis of new
evidence. The coding of the data can range from a simple
notation process to an elaborate recording of lengthy notes
and files. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stressed the basic,
defining rule for the constant comparative method in stage
one to be: "While coding an incident for a category, compare
it with the previous incidents in the same and different

groups coded in the same category" (p. 106). The coding of qualitative data requires a study of each incident and constant comparison of incident to incident. As this coding process continues, the researcher may raise questions about the data, encounter conflicts within the data, or develop insight into the unfolding story.

To record these questions, insights, or conflicts, a system of continuous memo writing is used. The memoing procedure is valuable in allowing the researcher to advance the grounding of thoughts in the actual data in a logical sequence rather than by sheer speculation. The ideas, questions, or insights may very well occur spontaneously and must be captured. The memoing process can lead to additional valuable theoretical impressions, notions, or ideas.

A progression occurs as the coding continues so that the second integrating stage evolves. "The constant comparative units change from incident with incident to comparison of incident with properites of the category that resulted from initial comparison of incidents" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 108). As this occurs, the diverse properties themselves begin to become integrated. As the different categories and their properties unify, the theory begins to develop as the researcher is forced to relate the theoretical essence of each comparison.

The third stage of delimiting the theory is aimed at a

logical reduction process while the theory itself begins to
solidify. The delimiting stage brings into the process an
element of feasibility to what otherwise might be an over-
whelming task. The scope of the theory and the categories
are restricted in that "the analyst may discover underlying
uniformities in the original set of categories or their
properties, and can then formulate the theory with a smaller
set of higher level concepts" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.
110). The delimitation stage reduces terminology and allows
for a generalization by constant comparison. Glaser and
Strauss stated that these steps enable the researcher to
achieve a "(1) parsimony of variables and formulation, and
(2) scope in the applicability of the theory to a wide range
of situations while keeping a close correpondence of theory
and data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 111). As the researcher
becomes more involved and committed to the theory, a reduction
of the original list of categories is likely to take place.
The theory should begin to grow while the mass of qualitative
data becomes better ordered and more compact. More and more
time can be devoted to analyzing a smaller set of categories.
As the point of theoretical saturation is approached, cate-
gories begin their final delimiting stage. Theoretical
saturation is that point at which new incidents no longer
contribute new information and only add to the bulk of coded
data. Once the point of saturation is reached, incidents

need no longer to be coded as they contribute nothing to the theory but only confirm what has already been discovered.

The fourth and final stage of the constant comparative analysis is the actual writing of the theory. It is at this point that the analyst possesses the necessary components of the theory consisting of coded data, a series of memos, and the theory itself. When the writer is convinced that the analytic framework contains a substantive theory, is a reasonably accurate statement of the study area, and is usable to others, the results are ready to be published. Memos collated by each category form the basis for the writing.

Theoretical Sampling

Qualitative researchers cannot interview everyone (nor gather all evidence) with any bearing on the topic of research; therefore, limits must be set and directions focused. Theoretical sampling, according to Glaser & Strauss, allows the researcher to accomplish this.

> Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection
> for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly
> collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what
> data to collect next and where to find them, in order to
> develop his theory as it emerges. The process of data
> collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether
> substantive or formal. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45)

Statistical sampling differs from theoretical sampling in that statistical samples are identified prior to data

gathering. Theoretical sampling identifies the next data collection point based on the emerging categories, properties, and theory. This sampling must be done simultaneous to the collection, coding, and analysis of the data in hand.

A study may begin with a general sociological problem or perspective not based on a preconceived theoretical framework. A few principal features of the structure and process may be designated as the originating point of the study. If the researcher has a generalized problem as an area of interest, and selects the interview as the data gathering mechanism, the theoretical sampling might begin with a few individuals designated as initial interviewees who are obviously involved in the problem. As the initial interviewing proceeds, the analyst then begins the theoretical sampling process by selecting other individuals or groups for study. The two criteria for further subject selection are theoretical purpose and relevance. Individuals or groups for further interviews are chosen for their ability to advance the development of emerging categories. Preplanned inclusion or exclusion of groups or individuals usually is inappropriate for this type research. It generally is unknown what direc-tion the study might take and who is to be included in the sample prior to the study. Therefore, theoretical sampling and theory discovery research do not allow the researcher to designate the types and numbers of subjects to be studied

until the research is underway. The principal point of theoretical sampling is that the purpose of the research is theory development and that the sampling process does not hinder discovery by preconceived subject groups, individuals, or ideas. The sampling procedures of this study are explained in the following section. Figure 1 schematically represents the research process detailed thus far.

Application of the Method

The interview was used to collect data for this research. The subjects were professional college personnel from selected community colleges in Virginia. The goal of the study was substantive theory development of occupational stress in the community college setting. The constant comparative analysis can result in either substantive or formal theory. Substantive theory is that which is developed for an empirical area of inquiry such as community colleges, while formal theory is that developed for a broader or conceptual area of inquiry. With the focus on the substantive area of community colleges in this study, the generation of theory was achieved by a comparative analysis between groups within colleges.

Sampling

Figure 1 schematically depicts the data collection and analyses schema beginning with the point of entry. The entry was initiated after approval by the researcher's committee.

Constant Comparison
(Conducted Jointly)

Entry ----------------> Collection ------------------------------> Coding ----------------> Analysis

(Theoretical   (Categories/
Sampling)   Properties)   (Memos)

No   Data Saturation
Yes

Refine, write
Theory/Hypotheses
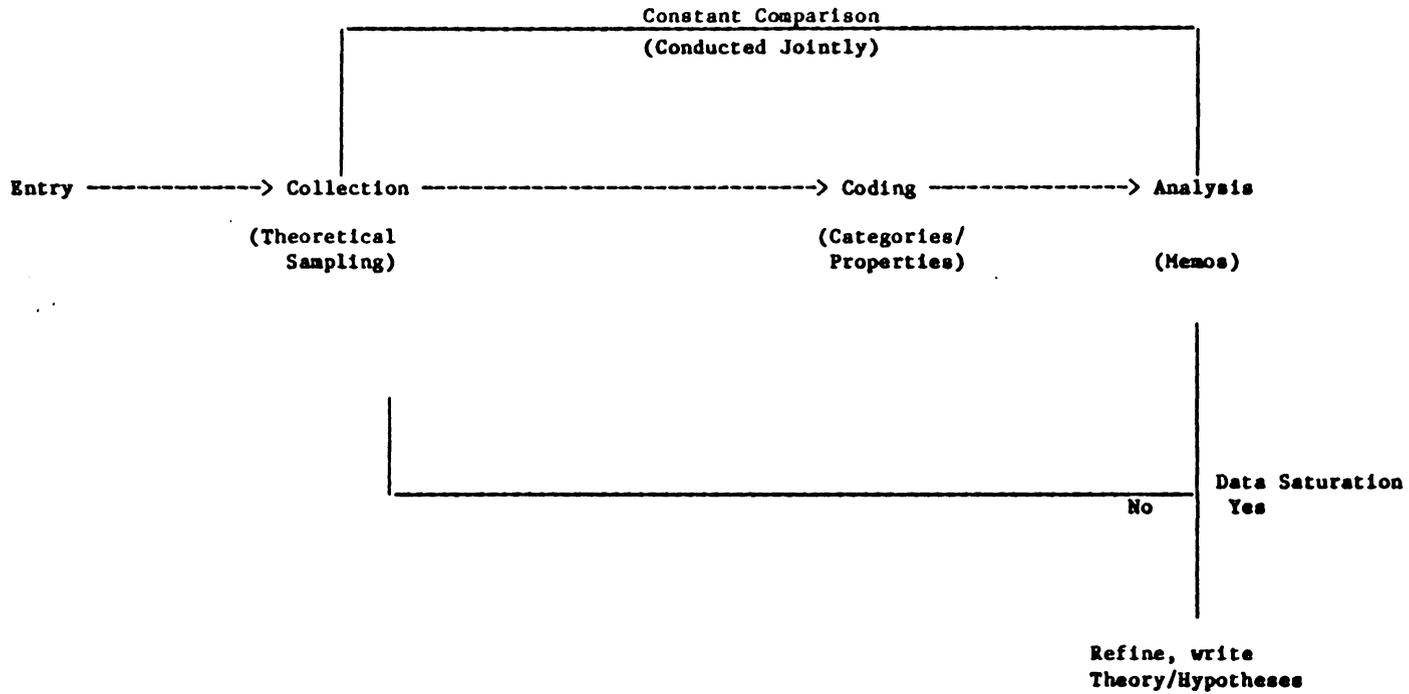
Figure 1.   Data Collection and Analyses Schema

The approved preplanned points of entry consisted of two Virginia Community Colleges, Wytheville Community College in Wytheville, Virginia and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, located in Richmond, Virginia. These colleges were selected and approved because of the researcher's experience in both schools and because of reported stress by personnel in each college. The sampling began with interviews of professional personnel reporting stress and agreeing to participate. As the collection and comparison process progressed, the developing categories and properties of the data suggested that the sample be increased to include a third college. The additional school was included to pursue data saturation that was not accomplished with the data from the first two colleges (See Figure 1). The third college chosen was Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville, Virginia.

All community colleges in the Virginia Community College System are organized to include common functioning levels for the professional staff. Broad categories of administrative and instructional personnel seemed non-descriptive for the purpose of this study; therefore, more specific role levels of personnel were identified in hopes of improving understanding of stress by type of position in logical groupings held at the college. Four functional levels operating in the community college were designated as base sample groups:

<u>Level I, Executive Level</u> - Presidents and Deans

<u>Level II, Administrative, non-instructional</u> - Directors,
Assistant Directors, Managers, and Coordinators

<u>Level III, Administrative, instructional</u> - Division Chair-
persons

<u>Level IV, Faculty</u> - Full-Time Instructional Personnel

Theoretical saturation was achieved in this study after inter-
viewing twenty-seven professionals in three colleges. The
members within each level varied as indicated by the applica-
tion of theoretical sampling procedures (See Appendix A).

Initial Entry Assumptions

Initial assumptions were shaped by a knowledge of
previous research reported in the literature and by a belief
that community college professionals are at least equally
vulnerable to stress as are employees in other occupations.
It also was assumed that the community college environment
offered a fertile field for the development of occupational
stress theory.

Preparation of the Researcher

Prior to formal data gathering, practice interviews were
conducted by the researcher with individuals known to him and
known to be interested in the topic of stress in the college.
The purposes of these practice interviews were threefold.
The first was to validate the entering assumptions of the
presence of stress in the community college and that the

sources of stress could be identified. Both of these assump-
tions were supported by subjects' responses in practice
interviews. The second purpose was to develop and improve
the interviewing skills of the researcher. These interviews
did provide opportunity for skill development and helped to
develop initial impressions of typical concerns of community
college personnel. Third, the practice interviews were used
to develop and improve note taking and coding abilities.
This preparation enabled the researcher to begin the formal
field study with sharpened skills and techniques and provided
a degree of analytical insight that proved to be valuable
later in the study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) held the
opinion that the insights of the researcher can be a critical
element in the comparative analyses. "The root sources of
all significant theorizing is the sensitive insights of the
observer himself" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 251).

Initial Interviewing and Coding

The initial "field" for this study consisted of two com-
munity colleges in Virginia with a third added by the theore-
tical sampling process. The schools were selected for the
previously stated reasons. The initial research steps
were:

1. obtained permission to conduct interviews from
    the campus president

2.   obtained a list of available professional personnel
     from the campus personnel office staff, and
3.   scheduled initial interviews with the help of the
     president's secretary.

A total of twenty-seven interviews eventually were con-
ducted. The first stage of interviewing was conducted over
a three-day period in late October, 1981, with Wytheville
Community College personnel. The second stage was conducted
with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College personnel in
December, 1981 and January, 1982, and the third and final
stage conducted at Piedmont Virginia Community College took
place in the Spring of 1982. The subjects interviewed by
functional level and job title are shown in Appendix A.

Interviews followed a semi-structured format (See Appen-
dices B and C). The first round of data gathering required
three days. All interviews were tape recorded with the per-
mission of the subjects. The recordings were supplemented by
the researcher's notes, recording impressions, thoughts, and
perspectives. The tape recordings proved to be valuable in
the coding and analysis process allowing the interview to be
reviewed many times in its original form and content. As
Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized, the joint collection,
coding, and analysis of data is fundamental in the grounded
theory method of research. Coding of the data began

immediately from the first interview. At the end of each interview the researcher formulated impressions and insights into the completed interview and expanded field notes resulted. This was done by open coding which initially coded different examples and incidents into as many categories as possible. As the number of interviews grew, the comparison of incident to incident allowed each piece of evidence to be compared to data previous gathered.

The initial set of questions (Appendix B) was established as recommended by members of the researcher's committee prior to the entry stage. At the completion of the first round of interviews, the coding by the researcher was cross validated by the researcher's advisor by reviewing recorded interviews and comparing the coding by the student with that of the advisor. Memoing and field notes at this stage suggested a structural change of the interview for the second group of subjects. The memos and notes revealed that questions three and four of the interview guide were addressed in responses to questions one and two and that the responses were less focused with regard to stress factors. Subjects spoke of their roles in terms of job descriptions and generalized impressions of the community college mission and philosophy. The semi-structured guide was revised to that as shown in Appendix C. These questions expedited the subject's identification of those factors of perceived occupational

stress and allowed an improved comparison of incidents and development of categories.

Initial Formulations

At the completion of the second round of interviews conducted at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, a total of twenty-two subjects from the four functional levels had been interviewed. The constant comparative method of analysis was employed throughout the interviewing process. As the categories began to emerge, a theoretical grid, shown as Figure 2, was developed that proved valuable for two purposes. The first was that the initial model or theoretical grid supported the importance and theoretical significance of the four functional levels within community colleges. The four levels were clearly recognized by college personnel as designations of both responsibilities and status within the organizational structure. Secondly, the model proved to be a major step in understanding and testing the efficacy of the core and conceptual categories and properties as they had emerged. By using the model as a theoretical code for the data, it became clear that the theoretical sampling needed to be extended to another college, both for validation and for generalization. Data saturation had not yet been achieved. Once this was realized, the third roud of interviews was scheduled and conducted in Piedmont Virginia Community College.

Core Categories	Conceptual Categories	Properties by Functional Level			
		I Executive	II Administrative- Non-Instructional	III Administrative- Instructional	IV Faculty
Task —	Role Expectations	Perceptions and Conflict	Diversity and Routine Duties	Expectations and Volume	Expectations and Pressures
	Productivity	Productivity and Service Conflict	Productivity and Service Conflict	Productivity and Service Conflict	Productivity and Service Conflict
Operational Integration	Communication	Internal and External Complexities	Process Weaknesses	Linkage	Us/Them Dilemma
	Personnel	Team Concerns	Time and Skill	Faculty Management	Faculty Interaction
Process	Management Issues	Past and Present	Style of Superiors	Crisis Orientation	Effect Instruction

Figure 2. Initial Model of Occupational Stress in Community Colleges

Revised Formulations

As the third round of interviews was conducted, the point of theoretical saturation became apparent. The data began to contribute nothing new to the study but did confirm what had been discovered during previous data collection. The integrating stage of the analysis had begun to unify different categories and their properties. As the point of theoretical saturation was approached, the delimiting step of the constant comparison method caused the analysis to reach a higher conceptual level. As the scope of the study was restricted and reduced by collapsing and combining uniformities in the categories and their properties, it became apparent that the theory formulation should be done with a reduced set of higher level concepts. This delimiting step resulted in a revised and more compact model containing the categories and properties of the initial model but at a higher level conceptually. The revised model, shown as Figure 3, allowed for greater theoretical power even though delimited in scope.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this section is to illustrate and provide examples of the constant comparative analysis process that led to the findings presented in Chapter 4. Three factors supported the data analysis process. The first was the field notes and memos generated throughout the research. The

Core Category	Conceptual Categories	Properties	Functional Level			
			I Executive	II Administrative- Non-Instructional	III Administrative- Instructional	IV Faculty

Content of
Barriers

A. Lack of Clarity	AI	AII	AIII	AIV
B. Difficulties in Task Completion	BI	BII	BIII	BIV
C. Concerns For Production	CI	CII	CIII	CIV
D. Difficult Relationships	DI	DII	DIII	DIV
E. Too Little Time	EI	EII	EIII	EIV

Perceptions of Barriers to Ful-fillment of Role Expectations

Source of Barriers

F. Internal	FI	FII	FIII	FIV
G. External	GI	GII	GIII	GIV

Figure 3. Final Model of Occupational Stress in Community Colleges

analytical notes and memos allowed the process to advance to

higher conceptual levels as more data became available and as

the categories and properties emerged. The second factor was

the tape-recorded interviews that enabled the subject's

comments to be evaluated and analyzed in the original form

and context repeatedly as the level of analysis reached the

higher conceptual levels. The third facilitating element

was the validation of the entire analysis process and model

development by the researcher's advisor. This contributed

to more advanced conceptual levels as the categories and

properties were integrated into that level.

Types of Data Discovered

Data of three types were elicited by the interview ques-

tions: (a) that which defined stress, (b) that which

described effects of stress, and (c) that which identified

the causes of stress. The questioning format allowed respon-

dents to describe stress from their unique perspectives.

This was helpful in view of the different meanings of the

term as represented in the literature. Respondents consis-

tently reported that they thought of stress as "anxiety,"

"frustration," "unpleasant," "pressure," "dissonance,"

"tension," "strain," and "undesirable."

Data pertaining to effect emerged from the follow-up ques-

tion, "What are the symptoms that accompany stress for you?"

The symtomatic effects of stress consistently were reported as having both physiological and psychological dimensions. Respondents discussed such physical symptoms as muscular tension, stomach disorders, insomnia, nervousness, increased heart rate, exhaustion, and feelings similar to "having a rubber band around your head." Psychologically, stress symptoms were described as a sense of insecurity, internal feelings of discomfort, irritability, a loss of creativity, behavioral change, and "taking it home with me."

Stress factor data were generated from the question, "What are the aspects or circumstances in your job that cause you to realize these symptoms?" The first two questions served the purpose of putting stress into a personal perspective so that the causes would be delineated as specifically as possible. The sole purpose of the first two questions was to set the stage for the third. A common quality of responses to the third question was the degree of energy and detail with which subjects answered. Stress factor data characteristically fell into one of two general areas of task and process. Task was defined as the perceived job of the subject and the accompanying requirements of the role as defined by the college and the individuals themselves. Typical task data discovered were the expectations of self and of others relating to job, and the emphasis on quantitative measurement of productivity. These data reflect goals

and outcomes. Process data were related to how the job must be carried out and through what channels. Typical process data centered on interactions and communications with others inside and outside the college, personnel issues between supervisors and subordinates, and management styles of administrators.

Constant Comparative Analysis

Immediate comparison of the data began with responses to the third question. As respondents identified the sources of their perceived occupational stress, incident to incident comparison became feasible and categories began to emerge. As the data grew, the constant comparative units began to change from comparison of incident to incident to comparison of incidents with properties of the categories resulting from earlier comparison. As respondents discussed their perceived origins of stress, the coding of the data suggested how the job itself and the job environment represented the generalized sources of stress. As respondents identified problem areas, these areas were initially coded into one of these classifications. If a subject discussed a perceived problem such as the numbers of required tasks in the job, that source was coded under the job classification. If the same subject spoke of inadequate communication within the college, the coding was that of job environment. As the coding continued,

memos were compiled that began to clarify the identified issues and their properties. Memos took the form of questions raised by the research such as, "Do all functional levels report factor data about the job and about job environment? If so, how are these factors similar or dissimilar? Do all quantitative task requirements have the same properties? Are all sources of stress factors internal to the college?"

Initial Model Development

The model shown in Figure 2 evolved after the completion of the first two sets of interviews. The model is shown to display two core categories of task (job) and process (environment). Five conceptual categories were thought to be contained within the two core categories. Task contained the categories of role expectations and productivity while process contained the categories of communication, personnel, and management issues. Properties of these categories were displayed by functional levels.

Revised Model Development

As discussed earlier, the process of theoretical sampling and theory delimiting allowed the combining and collapsing of uniformities in categories and properties that allowed theory development at a higher level conceptually with a reduced set of concepts. The delimiting process brought the realization that Figure 2 was a preliminary

formulation, representing a low level of conceptualization.
The higher level of analysis, shown as Figure 3, merged and
advanced the core and conceptual categories. After theoret-
ical data saturation occurred, discovery was made that the
preliminary core categories of task and process were included
in the perceptions of barriers to fulfillment of role expec-
tations. Barriers to fulfillment of role expectation as
the core category delimits the conceptual categories to
those of content of barriers and source of barriers. The
properties of each are displayed by functional level and are
discussed in Chapter 4. The model in Figure 3 is suggestive
of substantive theory which is presented in Chapter 5.

Shortcomings of the Findings

Certain limitations were imposed upon the findings
because of the selected interview questions, and particularly
because of the weight given responses to the final question,
"What are the aspects or circumstances in your job that
cause you to realize these (stress) symptoms?" The data and
the analysis are based on subjects' responses to this ques-
tion alone. There was no attempt to systematically analyze
data from the first two questions nor was there any effort
made to pursue ideas or thoughts from subjects beyond the
third question.

Secondly, the very nature of the question did not lead

naturally to admission of inadequacies of self and may have
biased the subjects toward "blaming others" rather than
"blaming self." In order for the discussion of the findings
and the theory to maintain a proper perspective, these limi-
tations must be acknowledged.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The findings from this research are presented in this chapter. The previous chapter included how the data were collected and analyzed. The meaning of the data is the subject of this chapter. The reader is referred to Figures 2 and 3 found in Chapter 3 for this discussion.

The major phenomena of interest in this study were the perceived stress factors of community college professionals. The utility of such knowledge rests on its explanatory power to improve institutional life, effectiveness, and productivity. The data were of three types: that which defined stress as perceived by individual subjects, that which described the perceived effects of stress on the individual subjects, and that which specifically identified the perceived factors of that occupational stress of each individual subject. The last were the data analyzed and that within which the theory of Chapter 5 is grounded.

Data of the first type revealed that respondents defined stress to be a negative aspect that detracted from their overall well-being and achievement of objectives and goals of their professional life. Describing stress definitionally led rather naturally into subjects describing

personal manifestations of stress. These manifestations described by respondents were twofold--those felt physically and those of a psychological nature. Subjects consistently reported effects of stress as undesirable and distracting from the pursuit of responsibilities in their professional roles at the college. Having described stress and its effects, subjects talked freely of their perceptions of the causes or sources of stress. Initial formulations described below emerged from these data.

Initial Formulations

As the data were coded and compared constantly, two generalized sources of stress emerged. One source was the job or role (task) itself, and the other was the environment and all its complexity (process) where the job was conducted. The initial formulations resulted in the model shown as Figure 2. The initial model contained (a) four functional levels within the colleges, (b) two core categories of task and process, (c) conceptual categories of role expectations, productivity, communication, personnel, and management issues, and (d) property cells of each conceptual category by functional level. Each of these preliminary components is explained below.

Functional Levels

The justification of the four functional levels in the

analyses rests on two premises. The first is that based on

the study by French, Tupper, and Mueller (1965) discussed in

Chapter 2. Their study, conducted in a university setting,

found that distinct differences in stress factors existed

between faculty members and administrators. Administrators

realized more stress from quantitative overload or from the

total number of tasks required of them than did faculty.

Professors realized stress from qualitative overload, or

that work that required abilities, knowledge, and skills

beyond the level that they possessed. This finding suggests

that differing levels within the college be examined.

Secondly, the designated levels were found to be impor-

tant and theoretically significant as supported by the data.

Subjects readily admitted to and recognized the levels within

their respective schools and saw each as having its own

responsibilities and status within the organizational struc-

ture of the school. The inclusion of these four levels was

substantiated from the beginning and throughout the study.

Two Core Categories

The initial core categories were defined as task and

process. The task category originally was believed to contain

those factors that related directly to the subjects' jobs

and the accompanying responsibilities of the assigned roles.

When subjects talked of stress sources that were linked to

perceived job-based tasks, the identified factors were coded within this core and placed within one of the two conceptual categories thought also to be contained in this core classification.

The process category was thought to contain those factors relating to the environment, conditions, and characteristics within which the task was accomplished. When respondents identified stress sources as related to conditions, individuals, or interactions within the college, these items were theoretically coded within the process core.

Conceptual Categories

Each of the initial core categories was shown to possess certain conceptual categories. The original task core reflected the two classifications of role expectations and productivity. These two data groupings were believed to describe issues of the perceived task because data revealed all functional levels to have reported stress stemming from these two elements. Subjects at each level stated that their perceived role and the accompanying expectations contributed directly to their perceived stress levels. Also reported consistently throughout was the stress of each respondent originating from productivity requirements accompanying their role. The productivity stress factor in the study stemmed from requirements for quantitative measurements of performance at all levels.

The process core originally reflected those conceptual
categories thought to be related to how and through what
channels the task was accomplished. The communication
factor described sources of stress resulting from the
ineffectiveness and inadequacies of the communication
process throughout the levels. Personnel stress factors
included items resulting from required interactions and
deficiencies involving individuals with whom the subjects
worked. The management issues illuminated stress factors
pertaining to the administrative requirements of job level.

Properties by Functional Level

Properties of each initial conceptual category by func-
tional level were displayed in the model by cells, with each
cell containing a unifying descriptor. As an example, the
conceptual category of role expectations across each of the
four levels showed cellular descriptions of the properties in
each of the cells. At Level 1, the properties were described
by "perceptions and conflict," meaning that the properties
at that level centered on the subject's perceived role and
the conflicting perceptions of others of that subject's
role. "Diversity and routine duties" described the properties
at Level II. Subjects identified the many differing duties
required of them as well as the tedious, day-to-day routine
tasks characteristic of their role expectation. Level III

individuals identified the "volume" of expectations in their roles as concerns while Level IV subjects revealed the "pressures" of the instructional role accompanied by increasing noninstructional tasks.

Model Advancement

As the coding through the initial model advanced, two discoveries caused the researcher to begin to view the original model as preliminary. The first stemmed from theoretical sampling deficiencies aroused by concerns over validity and generalizability. It appeared simply that theoretical saturation had not been reached. The second discovery was that the two core categories of task and process seemed more and more operationally integrated as the data were studied. The initial model had not captured that integration in a conceptually satisfactory manner. It was at this point that the third series of interviews was scheduled and conducted.

Derived Model of Occupational Stress

Delimiting the concepts and reaching theoretical saturation allowed substantial advances toward the final model, shown as Figure 3. By combining and collapsing uniformities in the categories and properties of Figure 2, a higher conceptual understanding emerged allowing for the merger and advancement of the core and conceptual categories.

Category Advancement

The major discovery after theoretical saturation was
that the preliminary core categories of task and process both
were contained within the subjects' perceptions of barriers
to their individual roles and the accompanying expectations
of those roles. With this realization, the initial two core
categories were collapsed into one called "Perceptions of
Barriers to Fulfillment of Role Expectations." With percep-
tions of barriers as the core classification, the preliminary
conceptual classifications were advanced by the delimiting
process to the dual categories of content of barriers and
source of barriers. Content of barriers is that grouping
explaning what is perceived by the subjects to be impeding
the fulfillment of the expectations of their professional
role. The source of barriers explains who is perceived by
the subjects to initiate those obstacles. This advanced
core clearly contained the two previously designated core
classifications of task and process as well as the originally
designated conceptual categories. The operational integra-
tion of task and process is contained in and explained by
the new core category. Through this theoretical advancement,
the location and impact of properties came sharply into focus
and provided a modular "snapshot" of the theory base.

Model Explanation

The core category, perceptions of barriers to fulfillment

of role expectation, encompasses both content and source

of barriers, and possesses major theoretical explanatory

power of the interrelatedness of stress factors and stress

reactions. The story within this data has as its major theme

the perceptions of barriers to fulfillment of role expecta-

tions and represents the theoretical source of occupational

stress in the community college. An explanation of the model

demands that the core serve as the centerpiece of discussion.

Functional levels, conceptual categories, and resulting inter-

active patterns of factors are understood vis a vis perception

of barriers to role fulfillment.

Functional Levels and the Core Category

    The four functional levels shown in Figure 3 were vali-

dated throughout all stages of the study as authentic and

accurate representations of the assigned roles in the sample

schools. Members of each of the levels recognized the exis-

tence of the others and agreed that the roles of others

differed from their own. It must be stated, however, that

data saturation was reached through some twenty-seven inter-

views with varying numbers of subjects in each level (See

Appendix A). The levels, therefore, may be viewed as genera-

lized to some degree because of relatively small numbers of

subjects per level. Subjects in each level discussed percep-

tions of their role expectations in terms of how others'

perceptions affected their performance and ultimately their
stress levels. The perception of role expectation explained
the existence and necessity of each operating level in the
colleges. Subjects at all levels described an understanding
of their respective roles but felt an element of conflict in
how others viewed their roles. Level I subjects, presidents
and deans, saw their roles as that of an executive in that
their responsibilities were broad and that their actions held
potential impact upon the entire college. Level II indivi-
duals, administrative noninstructional personnel, perceived
their roles as supportive of roles upward and downward from
their own and to contain administrative and coordinating
responsibilities. Division chairpersons, Level III subjects,
saw their roles as integral to the quality of instruction
offered at the college. Faculty members in Level IV believed
their roles to be based in the delivery of instruction and in
the academic development of their students. A key finding
was that stress at all levels resulted largely from inter-
actions with others, both in the same and at different func-
tional levels. Variations and common features in perceptions
of barriers to role expectation are the essential ingredients
of the final model of occupational stress in community colleges.

Conceptual Categories of the Core

Two conceptual categories emerged from the core: (a) the

content of barriers and (b) the source of barriers. These two
concepts are best understood as what is perceived to be inhibit-
ing the fulfillment of role expectations and who is the origi-
nator of these perceived barriers. Each of these categories
possess discrete qualities and characteristics represented in
the model as properties. These properties are descriptive of
stress producing aspects and suggest potential subject reactions.

Content of Barriers

The first category explaining perceptions of barriers to
role fulfillment is content, or those elements comprising what
is perceived to be impeding the successful fulfillment of role
expectations. Each level of subjects attributed stress in their
roles to certain conditions, characteristics, or properties
that were seen as negatives and obstacles to their successful
completion of what was expected of them. These properties
shown in Figure 3 and their definitions are as follows:

A. Lack of Clarity - Defined as the element of the
category relating to the degree of ambiguity or confusion
perceived to exist regarding the individual's professional
role within the college.

B. Difficulties in Task Completion - Defined as the
elements of the category relating to the perceived obstacles
preventing successful completion of duties and responsi-
bilities contained within the role of the individual.

C. Concern for Production - Defined as the elements of the category relating to quantitative demands of the role of the individual.

D. Difficult Relationships - Defined as those elements of the category involving negative interactions with others but required by the role of the subjects.

E. Too Little Time - Defined as the elements of the category referring to issues and pressures as they temporally relate to the professional role of the individuals.

Content Properties Discussion

A. Lack of Clarity

Level I or executive level administrators interviewed consistently referred to stimuli in their environment which lacked clarity in terms of what response on their part would be most appropriate. Job expectations, for example, were not universally held by Virginia Community College System personnel, colleagues, or subordinates. The lacking clarity property with this group of individuals was exemplified by such phrases as "competing expectations," "negative expectations," "conflict of perception of the job," and "unrelated areas of responsibility." "I don't know that they know" was a statement typifying this lack of clarity by executive personnel.

Level II individuals also held clarity concerns of
unclear expectations by others of the Level II role.
Subjects spoke of concerns regarding role multiplicity,
conflicting views, superfluousness of role and responsibi-
lities, and inadequate information for role clarification.
Respondents believed others' expectations of them to be
unrealistic and conflicting. Examples of comments reinforc-
ing the clarity property were, "I'm not sure which way the
ground is sliding," and "I'm faced with unrealistic expecta-
tions, both internally and externally."

The administrative-instructional personnel of Level
III had the fewest clarity concerns of the four levels but
did identify to a lesser degree the problem of unclear
expectations of others. Statements like, "I'm not sure what
he expects of me" clearly relates to this property. Of the
four levels, division chairpersons voiced the fewest complaints
about clarity and these findings may be interpreted to mean
that Level III personnel have a better understanding of their
roles and how others affect clarity than do the other three
levels.

The property of lack of clarity by faculty (Level IV)
was evidenced in several ways. Concern was expressed about
expectations of the administration regarding the role of
faculty, particularly as experience with the incumbent
administration differed from experiences with previous

administrations, as was the case in some subject settings.
Stress stemming from the perceived problem of having to do
the work of others that did not fit their perceived faculty
role also surfaced frequently as did concern with the tenuous-
ness of contract periods. Clarity of their role was confused
by interactions with students as well, particularly where
faculty's expectations of students were unmet. Peer expecta-
tions were identified as a contributing factor also. Faculty
seemed to be unsure of what fellow faculty members expected
of them and expressed this in a discomforting way. Examples
of revealing comments by faculty included, "We have to do
the work of others," "We have too much red tape from adminis-
trators," and "More and more requirements are being placed on
faculty."

B.   Difficulties in Task Completion

This property at level I was characterized by factors
inhibiting the individual's efforts to complete successfully
tasks and goals included in the perceived professional
role. Typifying those factors were such obstacles as the
requirement to do more with less, size of the college,
conflicting operational views and philosophies within the
college, indecision of others, and inadequate planning.
Individuals at this level consistently reported stress
because of these. Phrases supporting this property by

subjects were, "The bureaucrats expect us to do more and more with less and less," "The faculty don't think like administrators," "The bigger the school, the higher the stress level," "Indecisiveness impacts on my operation," and "Planning in universities is more systematic."

The task completion difficulty property at Level II centered around philosophical differences, pressures from outside groups and agencies, inadequate and misplaced resources, and psychological and physiological pressures. Specifically identified obstacles were special interest groups, routine tasks and problems, feelings of helplessness, budgetary problems and insufficient resources, unpredictibility of events, and auditors and the bureaucracy. Pertinent comments and phrases characterizing this property were, "My stress comes from barriers I can't overcome," "Unexpected data requests," "I must respond when the phone rings," and "We operate under a microscope because of the auditors."

Factors perceived as obstacles in completing their functions as division chairpersons were more acute than were the clarity issues. The interviewees designated inadequacies of the college administration, inadequacies of available resources, inadequacies of self, and the cumbersome requirements of the bureaucracy as significant areas of concern. Specific problematic items were named to be management style, or crisis management, of the president and administration,

procrastination by the subjects themselves, budgetary short-
falls, and the bureaucratic structure of the community
college system as a whole. Enlightening responses regarding
this property included, "My stress is related to crisis
management in the organization," "Procrastication - I cause
it," "Division chairmen are accused of being at fault for
our financial problems," "The president supports verbally
but not otherwise," and "The VCCS is offensive to my ideals."

The perceived difficulties to the faculty regarding
their instructional role within the college showed con-
siderable diversity. The characterizing factors centered
around duties and perceived conflicts in those duties,
including student evaluations of faculty. Also of major
concern were organizational elements, both physical and
psychological. Specific obstacles were multi-campus settings,
continuous interruptions, organizational politics, self-expec-
tations, cumulative duties, student evaluations of faculty,
and conflicts in classroom instruction. Indicative responses
supportive of this property were, "This campus is second
best," "I can't stay current in my field for the classroom
because of continuous interruptions," "The other campus is
the favored nation," "Faculty are called on too much to do
too many things that others should do," and "Student evalua-
tions are affecting faculties' grades."

C.   Concern for Production

The key characteristic of this property at Level I and
at all other levels was the reported pressure realized from
quantitative requirements placed upon college personnel.
Subjects consistently reported that their "productivity" was
measured by numerical criteria, typically centering around
college enrollment, student headcount, the numbers of full-
time equivalent students, and the standards set for college
funding based on these factors. The feeling was that instruc-
tional quality was sacrificed to maintain numerical standards.
The quality and level of services conflict with available
financial resources. Production concerns were the most
consistently reported across all functional levels. Comments
at Level I exemplifying this property were, "My concern
is the quality of instruction versus the numbers," "We're
sacrificing quality of instruction to maintain numbers," and
"My job is to make sure faculty has the dollars available to
maintain instructional quality, and I don't deliver as well
as I should."

Similarly, Level II members reported stress stemming
from quantified requirements contained within the role
expectation of their specific job. Subjects characterized
this factor by strong concerns of the overwhelming pressures
for increasing their productivity through increasing fulltime
equivalent students, headcount, the number of courses and

classes offered, and the willingness of administrators, both within and without the college, to sacrifice the quality of instructional offerings to maintain high numbers. Typical comments were, "We've got to get 100 FTEs (fulltime equivalent students)," "The number of students and dollars are a prob-lem," "Budget cuts cause anxiety," "Headcount is stress producing," and "We do programs for numbers, not service."

Level III subjects maintained the same concerns. Division chairpersons reported elements relating to perceived quantitative factors and demands of their individual roles. Characteristic of this group were such elements as budget, enrollment, and instructional quality standards. Associated comments included, "I feel a conflict between students versus efficiency versus budget," "The conflict between numbers and quality results in a lessening of commitment," and "I feel pressure for FTEs."

Level IV faculty strongly expressed this same constant concern for numerical measures as a consistent stress factor in their role at the college. Repeatedly expressed was the measure of individual and college productivity through the quantitative measure of numbers of students reflected in FTEs, headcount, number of courses taught, and the conflict between quality of instructional programs and the mandated numbers of students for college funding. Indicative reactions by faculty to this factor were, "They (administrators) keep

asking all these questions," "Somebody else's rules are imposed on my objectives," "There's always something that they (administrators) want done," "I'm beginning to feel recruitment pressures," "There is pressure for projections," and "You need a certain number of students in each class."

D. Difficult Relationships

The stress associated with this property was directly attributable to individuals with whom Level I interviewees were required to work and interact, both inside and outside the college. The difficult relationship property was characterized by such descriptors as hostility, selfishness, subordinate personnel problems, inadequate communication, lacking response and respect, and the unofficial status ranking of individuals within this functional level. Reporting individuals felt strongly that their efforts were going unrecognized by those individuals with whom they were supposed to professionally interact. Relevant statements characterizing this property as it related to subjects' role expectations were, "There's a communication breakdown in the instructional side of the house," "My stress comes from the bureaucrats outside the college," "Things go down that I don't know about," "Faculty have self-interests," "There's a pecking order of deans," "My expertise is not recognized," and "Relationships with people who report to me are my problem."

The relationship property at Level II focused on un-
desirable day-to-day interactions with superiors, peers, and
and subordinates. Identified issues and characteristics were
resentment by others, poor communication, immature and
unprofessional subordinates, territoriality and isolation
issues, the generalized lack of recognition and response by
others, and mistrust at all levels. These were exemplified
by such statements as, "He withholds information from me,"
"I don't give a damn if they don't know what I do," "I have
as minimum interchange with her as possible," "My people play
petty games like children," and "Most of my stress comes from
people."

Division chairpersons voiced two major classifications
of concerns contained within the difficult relationships
property. Consistently reported was stress stemming from
personnel problems caused by those individuals who occupy
subordinate roles, primarily faculty personnel issues.
Indications of these problematic areas were statements such
as, "The president's indecision causes the faculty to be
reluctant to support the college, and my problem comes from
having to deal with the faculty on this," "Things are not
planned for, and resolving one sets up another," "Seven
months out of twelve, I'm putting out fires," "Face to face
personnel matters are a problem for me," "The nursing faculty
is a problem for me," and "I should have changed things when

I came here."

The difficult relationships property at Level IV centers on two sets of relationships, those of the administration of the college, and those with peers. Stress results from the perceived unresponsiveness of the administration and the normal day-to-day management approach of the president and deans. Peer relationships were characterized by personality conflict issues, feelings of resentment and territoriality. Subjects described themselves as left out and unrecognized by both their peers and by the management of the college. Faculty specified these concerns by such statements as, "There's a lack of planning by the administration and a lack of management skills throughout," "Faculty interaction with top administration is almost nonexistent," "There's a lack of response to the faculty by the administration," "You've got to be careful who you talk to," and "Other faculty are being paid more to do less."

E.   Too Little Time

Significant factors of this property were temporal issues impacting upon the interviewee's perceived role and responsibilities as Level I employees. Time issues included the pace at which decisions are made and implemented, the amounts of time required to complete the required duties within their roles, and the rather constant pressures realized from imposed deadlines by others. Supportive of this property

were such statements as, "My stress comes from the bureau-
cratic incompetence of the VCCS (Virginia Community College
System)," "Indecisiveness impacts upon my effectiveness,"
"Deadlines set by the VCCS cost me," and "I don't have
enough time."

Level II subjects focused their temporal factors on the
exaggerated amount of time required for routine paperwork.
Consistently mentioned as stress factors were the imposed
deadlines by others, time spent waiting on responses,
decisions, and reactions of others, and a generalized pressure
from time necessary to carry out routine, diverse, and some-
times unrelated duties. Appropriate supportive remarks by
subjects of this property were, "The smaller day-to-day
problems cause the stress," "Report deadlines cause me to
have a short fuse," "Unexpected data requests take time,"
"Waiting on answers causes me stress," "Paperwork is a real
time problem," and "I have to be careful not to spend an
inordinate amount of time on one program."

Temporal issues were less focused with functional Level
III respondents than with other levels. The two key factors
identified by division chairpersons with time related problems
were the "reactive" philosophy of the administration and the
imposed time pressures of graduate study in their professional
fields. Respondents identified stress stemming from the
administration's tendency to manage after the fact rather than

before. Subjects felt that reactive management ultimately caused time constraints. Also identified were the time issues accompanying graduate study pursued by the subjects. Pertinent to this property were comments and phrases such as, "I'm crunched by meeting after meeting," "We run this school like a general store when it should be like a supermarket," "Crises come from no organization in terms of anticipation; hurry up and wait," "Doctoral studies cause me a tremendous amount of stress," and "My stress (from graduate study) comes from not being there (on campus)."

Level IV members consistently reported stress stemming from temporal issues of imposed deadlines, the hours required for noninstructional tasks, and work hours required by unpredictable teaching schedules. Faculty generalized their time problems by voicing complaints about paperwork, reports, and meetings that are required but which make no contribution to their instructional role in the classroom. This property is described in such remarks as, "I've got too much to do and not enough time," "I have a recordkeeping problem," "I don't have enough lead time," "We have too much red tape from administrators," "Other things keep me away from class preparation," "Deadlines are dictated without enough lead time," "As a teaching faculty member, I find deadlines stress me," "I work unnormal hours and it causes problems," and "I have to take work home with me."

Source of Barriers

The second conceptual category in perception of barriers to fulfillment of role expectations is that of source (see Figure 3), or those elements comprising the origin of barriers. Each level saw their respective roles to contain stress partly because of the content of barriers or what is perceived to be inhibiting success. In addition, subjects at all levels identified individuals, groups, and agencies believed to initiate the content. Content properties are those that contribute to subjects' stress levels based on what is blocking role accomplishment while source properties are those that identify who is the initiator of those barriers. Source properties shown in Figure 3 and their definitions are as follows:

Internal--Defined as initiators of barriers within the college.

External--Defined as initiators of barriers outside the college.

Source Properties Discussion

Internal

Level I subjects identified virtually all segments of the college as an internal source of barriers. Respondents classified their sources as students, staff, other administrators, and faculty. The finding suggests that executive employees in the community college perceive stress from all

functional levels as well as from students. Statements
supporting this property were, "The students are apathetic
and I wish they would do more," "Students won't express their
needs," "Some staff members won't carry their load," "I have
a credibility gap with other administrators," and "Faculty
don't care about what what's going on in the next office."

Level II personnel cited internal sources of stress to
be the <u>college president and administration</u>, <u>faculty and
staff members</u>, and <u>immediate supervisors</u> and <u>subordinates</u>.
Within this functional level there was no apparent concern
with students as a source of stress. Characteristics of
this property were views such as, "I'm not getting good
reinforcement from the people I work for," "I report to
the president but I don't attend his staff meetings," "My
staff people are like children," "The Dean of Instruction
is the key to my problem," "The dean loves to manipulate
people," "I make no effort to defend myself with faculty,"
and "Substandard performance by the staff that reports to me
causes me stress."

Division chairpersons identified identical internal
sources as Level II professionals. Also, as in Level II,
this group of subjects did not mention students as an internal
source of stress. Indicative comments were, "If the dean
would tell me what he wants, I would give it to him," "There
is a conflict between me and my supervisor; I can't be a

mindreader," "I can't be a good guy and be their boss," "Faculty members are physically and psychologically unable to handle the classroom," and "There is a lack of support from the president's office."

All content properties previously described at Level IV are attributable internally to all levels within the college, including students. Faculty identified the president and administration, immediate supervisors, peers, and students as the internal sources of role content stress. Subjects specified these sources through data statements such as, "The administration asks for too much input," "The president and dean are both biologists," "There's a lack of cooperation among peers," "There's a lack of cooperation among other program heads," "There's always something they (administrators at all levels) want done," "Faculty salaries are tied to grades," and "I have grade disputes and personality problems with students."

External

The origins of barriers at this level were associated with "bureaucrats" within the State Legislature and Virginia Community College System, board members of the individual colleges, members of the community, and external auditors. Executive subjects identified external sources by statements such as, "The community has diverse and competing expectations of the college, and the board is a microcosm of the community,"

"Stress comes from the bureaucrats outside the college," "Our board has special interests," "Bureaucrats have no excitement about anything," "I try to anticipate the auditors (Federal and State)," and "Deadlines by the VCCS are a problem."

The external sources of barriers of Level II were associated with excessive productivity and funding require- ments, imposed deadlines, unrealistic expectations, and a generalized sense of tentativeness regarding individual roles and careers within the colleges. Identified as primary external sources of perceived stress were the Virginia Community College System, and other regulatory sources such as the Federal Government and the State Legislature. Identi- fying statements included, "There is no fiscal uniformity within the system," "The auditors keep us under a microscope," "There are pressures within and without the college that demand that I produce at a greater rate than should be expected," "We're required to produce numbers because of dic- tates," "Continuing education is the stepchild of the VCCS," and "Because of Title III, I'm not really one of them."

As was true for Levels I and II, Level III division chair- persons identified the stress-inducing problems of productivity pressures, conflicts between numbers of students and funding, and bureaucratic requirements as being directly traceable to the Virginia Community College System. Examples of support- ing data included, "The VCCS causes my job to have clerical

aspects," "The VCCS creates policies and politics," "Our budget (for this operating year) is not set and the year is half-over," and "There is external pressure for FTEs."

The external sources of barriers for faculty were clearly identified as related to the increased concern for quantitative issues and the accompanying pressures realized by faculty members because of this factor. The identified external source of faculty stress was the Virginia Community College System in its requirements for quantitative measures of productivity. As with all other levels, faculty voiced complaints of this source through statements such as, "There is an emphasis on FTEs," "System constraints and expectations cause stress," "Policies that filter down cause us problems," "Funding and enrollment problems cause stress," and "Financial resources don't exist to the degree necessary."

Interactive Analysis

It is helpful now to move away from the technical language employed thus far in this chapter. Stressors will be used rather than conceptual categories and stress factors instead of properties.

Stress factors derived from this analysis are not discrete. They may overlap and resemble other elements except in tone, but they can be described separately, as shown in Figure 4, and classified according to factor. Note, for

Lack of Clarity

Degree of confusion about job
Ambiguity in new instructions
Relatedness of particular assignment
Realism about job demands
Threat related to motive of new assignments

Difficulties in Task Completion

Resource limits
Indeciveness in others
Lack of planning guidelines
Lack of data
Feeling of constant observation by others
Too many things to do
Feeling second class

Concern for Production

FTEs/$
Service demands/low budget
Efficiency vs. quality
Playing by rules prescribed by others
Recordkeeping

Difficult Relationships

Interunit rivalry
Interpersonal conflicts
Interinstitutional conflicts
Chain of command issue

Too Little Time

Deadlines
Unexpected assignments
Waiting on information or answers
Distribution of effort across projects
Lack of preparation time

Figure 4.   Stressor Elements in Content of Barriers to
             Fulfillment of Role Expectation.

example, that "relatedness of particular assignment" classi-
fied as a clarity factor may share characteristics of "un-
expected assignments" classified as a time factor. They
differ in effect on the individual but resemble each other in
substance. These elements are derived directly from the data
and are reasonably exhaustive according to the subjects
studied.

Figure 4 therefore contains the necessary ingredients
to analyze the interactive nature of the major stress factors.
It is of fundamental interest to understand how each factor
operates in concert with all others if explanatory power is
to be achieved of stress conditions in the community college.
Do they operate independently or are they associated or
patterned with others in some unique way?

Careful analysis of stress factors--those environmental
aspects which give rise to stressful conditions--suggests a
dominant interaction pattern as shown in Figure 5. Applying
the criterion, "How does each factor affect each other
factor?," a pattern of independence and dependence emerged.
It seemed apparent, for example, that Task Difficulties, Time
Concerns, and Difficult Relationships were relatively un-
affected by Productivity and Clarity concerns but that the
reverse was true. Indeed, the factors shown in Figure 5 as
independent factors each displayed a clear and consistent
effect on productivity, while only the Relationship factor

Independent Factors   Dependent Factors
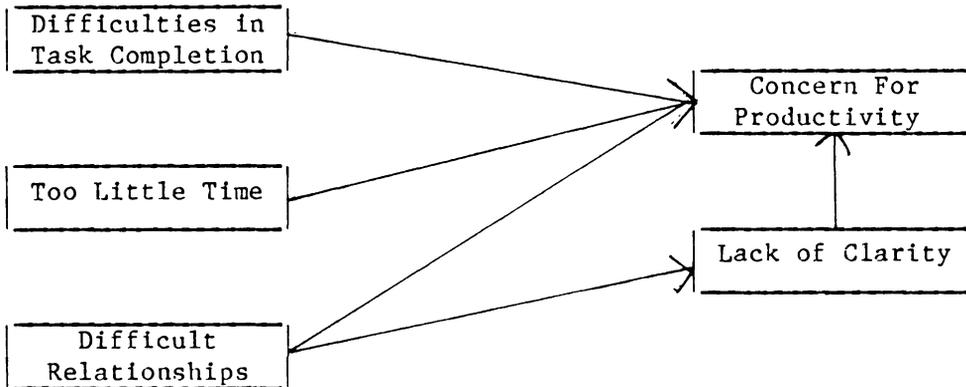
Figure 5. Principal Interactions Among Content Stressors.

was so associated with Clarity.

The individual factors of Difficulties in Task Completion, Time and Relationships were found to be unrelated to one another. That is, subjects viewed each of these independently and identified each as an individual element, existing separate from the others. The commonality of these stress elements, however, lies in the cumulative effect upon Productivity and Clarity. These elements seem to form the distinctive patterns of effect of Figure 5. Difficulties, Time, and Relationships appear to operate collectively to affect Productivity. Clarity operates in its own distinctive manner, dependently associated with Relationships but independently associated with Productivity.

Lack of Clarity appears to be a key stressor for community college professionals. When expectations of role are clear, especially when relationships are strong and positive, productivity requirements can be met within short time frames, even when numerous barriers exist. Conversely, when expectations are unclear, effects of stressors are more acute though productivity requirements be modest.

The data indicate and Figure 5 presents the relationship between the Productivity factor and all others. Taken to a logical extreme, it might appear that the Productivity stress element alone provides an adequate summary explanation of the stress phenomenon in community college personnel.

However, the independent factors are in fact critical. The Productivity element seems to serve as the mediating factor and gives a certain amount of order, force, and valence to the others. Without the structural character of the productivity element, the relationships are unclear.

Therefore, no one stressor, regardless of its origination, appeared adequate alone to explain the variations in stress on employees. Only when combined to form the multidimensional <u>Perception of Barriers to Fulfillment of Role Expectation</u> was sufficient power gained to explain the observed and reported stress in community college employees.

Figure 6 depicts those elements fundamental to the factor identified as a source. As with those elements of content, they may overlap to some degree but can be readily classified as either internal or external. By application of the same criterion used in the analysis of content elements, it is apparent that the sources of stressors pervade throughout all identified stress elements. That is, both internal and external sources to the college directly contribute to and perpetuate the stress reaction realized by employees from all elements. This interaction is displayed in Figure 7.

<u>Internal</u>

Administration
Colleagues
Faculty
Students

<u>External</u>

VCCS
Regulatory boards
Advisory boards
Government agencies
Influential persons
Professional groups
Accrediting agencies
Special interest groups
Potential employers of students

<u>Figure 6</u>.   Elements of Stress Sources.

Source   Content

```
┌─────────────────┐                        ┌──────────────────────┐
│    Internal     │────────┐          ───│  Task Difficulties   │
└─────────────────┘        │              └──────────────────────┘
                           │              ┌──────────────────────┐
                           │          ───│   Too Little Time     │
                           │              └──────────────────────┘
                           │              ┌──────────────────────┐
                    ───────┤          ───│  Difficult           │
                           │              │  Relationships       │
                           │              └──────────────────────┘
                           │              ┌──────────────────────┐
                           │          ───│  Productivity         │
                           │              │  Concerns             │
┌─────────────────┐        │              └──────────────────────┘
│    External     │────────┘              ┌──────────────────────┐
└─────────────────┘                   ───│   Lack of Clarity     │
                                          └──────────────────────┘
```
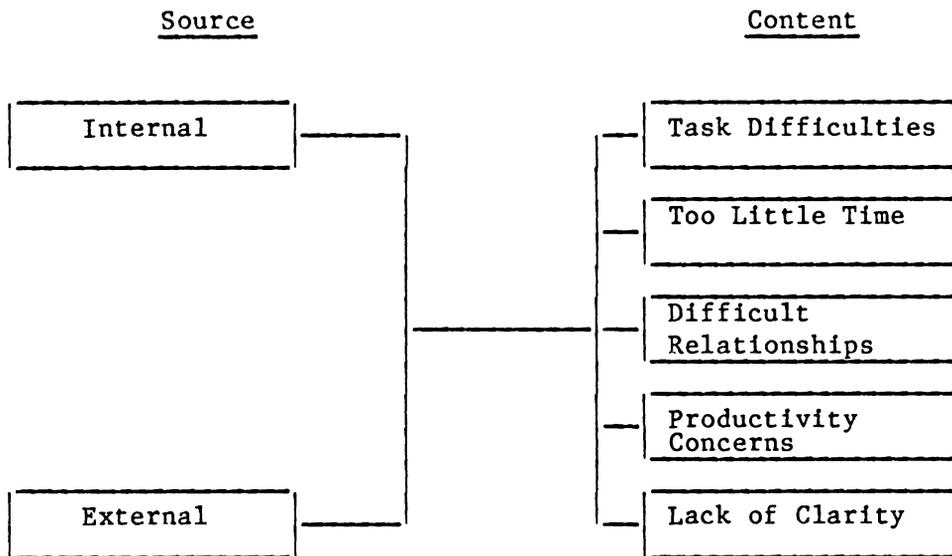
Figure 7. Relationship of Source to Content of Barriers to Fulfillment
            of Role Expectation.

CHAPTER 5

A THEORY OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS
IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction

To set the stage for presentation of the theory,
certain parameters must be established relating to occupa-
tional stress as a generalized phenomenon in the sphere of
community colleges. The uniqueness of community colleges
determines the specific form of the theoretical expression
and, because of this, components of the stress phenomenon
need to be explained as they exist within the community
college arena. Following the precedent established in
Chapter 4, the language of this chapter will be nontechnical
in a methodological sense.

Causes of Occupational Stress

The stated definition of occupational stress in Chapter
1 compels the view that the cause of job-related stress may
be either real or perceived. A stress reaction may occur in
individuals in either case. It appears that the reality of
stress rests with the individual, in the sense that stress
is not caused by experiences (action, event, or situation)
per se, but rather by how one internalizes those actions,
events or situations.

adaptive processes, the inadequacies of contemporary stress research become more understandable. Nevertheless, the theory development charge of this study moved the researcher to explore and explain the stress phenomenon from the external stimuli which result in the stress reaction to varying degrees, dependent upon the individual.

Occupational stress in the community college is a result of specific reactions of job holders to a perception of barriers to the fulfillment of role expectations. These barriers include lack of clarity of role expectation, difficulties in completion of role requirements, the lack of time to complete tasks of role, difficult relationships with others, and productivity demands on the occupied role, and are mediated by the nature of the community college, nature of the professional jobs in the community college, and the nature of individual job holders, especially selected personality and career dimensions.

Elements of the Theory

The theory presented in this section is grounded in the data analyzed in Chapter 4 and, obviously, extends from it. But the analysis presented thus far stemmed from the raw data, thus reflecting the perspective of the subjects as analyzed by the researcher. Understanding of the theory presented here is facilitated by a broader perspective, that is, how occupational stress may be associated with certain

special features of the typical community college. These
features may not be completely unique, as is often thought,
especially by community college employees, but they are
distinctive and operate to shape certain environmental
conditions which give rise to stress.

Nature of the Community College

The historical legacy of offering post secondary
education first to special clientele and later to all
adults occupies a commanding position in the imagery of
community college employees. They learn in their employment
interviews that the community college carries a special
burden--one shouldered happily, but heavy nevertheless--to
educate all who request it regardless of traditional academic
prowess. It feels much like an omnipontent appointment to
carry a responsibility shunned by others. They are reminded
of "singleness of purpose" time and again during the normal
course of their jobs.

While most community college employees may be relatively
unaware of the specific details of this special mission as,
for example, how it may be linked to the concept of universal
education espoused publicly by the Truman Commission over
thirty years ago, they remain acutely aware they work in an
educational setting different in some important way from
sister institutional types. Shouldering a special burden

may give rise to stress and, in this case, is associated with a special characteristic of the community college to promote equal access to and equal opportunity in higher education in America.

Many community colleges were created originally as extensions of high schools and that legacy haunts them yet with respect to prevailing leadership styles. Unlike their counterparts in other forms of higher education who often depend on a collegial model of internal governance, the most dominant pattern of internal governance in community colleges is bureaucratic. Leadership comes from the top down and everyone knows it.

Some may liken community colleges to a factory production line in the way they process students in, through, and out of the system and suggest that a pyramidal, hierarchal administrative structure is most appropriate for such an organization. The result is pressure on the employee, regardless of the accuracy of the notion, who feels a demand to act like a self-directed professional but who must yield to administrative requests submissively.

Nature of the Job

Zwerling (1976) labeled the community college second best. Others like Gleazer (1968) see it as a uniquely American experiment offering the best hope for an educated

adult citizenry. Leaders in universities and in liberal
arts colleges recognize the contribution of community
colleges to post secondary education, but often distinguish
this purpose from higher education. In other words, the
purposes of community colleges are seen as important, but
not as important as the purposes of other types of colleges.

In their jobs, community college employees are acutely
aware of these arguments or issues and know that they remain
unresolved in the world of higher education. Not liking to
be second best, they feel pressure to overcome public
criticism, perhaps by working harder, or longer, or with
greater commitment or devotion, ultimately leading to higher
stress levels.

Individual Characteristics

Definitionally, the adaptive response to stress is
mediated by individual characteristics, traits, personality,
and/or predispositions. This individuality intensifies the
complexity of stress research. Community colleges have in
their employ individuals possessing an array of personality
extremes. While this study has focused on community college
jobs at various levels and variables within these jobs that
contribute to the perceived levels of job-related stress, it
is recognized that the individual is perhaps the key to
stress and stress reactions. Community college personnel

vary dramatically in their personal views on life, psycho-logical needs, values, attitudes, and tendencies. Many factors internal to the individual may contribute to these variances and are undoubtedly related to the stress response an individual may experience. Past experiences, successes and failures, family and career concerns, and many other variables surely play a part in the determination of one's occupational stress level and the degree of responsiveness one may feel and report.

In this study, professional response to stress was examined only in the context of factors originating external to themselves and specifically related to their jobs. A major limitation of the theory, therefore, is the omission of those individual and other external factors and stimuli and the contributing stress-provoking roles that they may play. This limitation makes it difficult to predict with any degree of certainty what level of stress one may possess or display. However, by recognizing and understanding those specific elements of the job that were determined to be stress factors, users of the theory might be able to identify critical points of entry for an alleviating and improving process or intervention.

Stress as a Function of Perception of Barriers to Fulfillment of Role Expectation

Community college professionals are susceptible to stress

in direct relation to their view of what is expected of them in their prescribed role. These views, or perceptions, are shaped to some extent by individual characteristics of the employee but more significantly by elements in the environment which combine to possess the force of stress factors. These combined factors may be described as lack of clarity of role expectation, difficulties in completion of role requirements, the lack of time to complete tasks of role, difficult relationships with others in similar roles, and productivity demands on the occupied role.

These factors may be seen as indicative of the content of barriers to role fulfillment and determine the substance of stressful conditions. Perhaps these stressors also may be seen as the factors most manipulatable to control stress levels in employees, either by self or by persons with authority to shape certain conditions in the environment.

The substance of occupational stress has its origins in others. The content of barriers comes from expectations of others of a particular role and is controlled by them to a significant extent. Self-imposed stressors were not examined in this study and relatively few incidents were reported by subjects. The compelling nature of the sense of being controlled by others' expectations was reported consistently by subjects.

The origin of factors may be classified into those

within and outside the college. Those within may be grouped
roughly as colleague patterns, that is, administrative
sources, other faculty sources, and sources within staff
group or students. Those outside form more of a discrete
list of sources tied to occupational contexts related to,
but separate from, the college, such as the VCCS, governance
boards, governmental agencies, and local community groups.
Sources of barriers originating outside the college appear
to have a stronger influence on the content of stressors
than do those originating inside the college.

This may be true because of the unusually powerful
role of productivity demands in precipitating occupational
stress. Productivity, of course, is not unrelated to internal
constituencies but is strongly tied to external ones.
Agencies which control finances, for example, exercise a
powerful control over stressors. Even those which control
procedures, such as the VCCS, hold enormous power to shape
stressful conditions inside a college.

Stressful reactions in community college professionals,
therefore, are associated with, and often caused by, condi-
tions imposed by others but perceived by employees to
affect individual role. Effects may be shaped by the nature
of the expectation and the types of restrictions inherent
therein. Very clear expectations, such as to evaluate
student performance, do not result in severe stress even

though the assignment requires considerable skill and professional competence. More common assignments with unclear goals, such as chairing a committee with fuzzy objectives, may result in debilitating stress. The content stressors are believed to interact with one another as shown in Figure 5, but each plays a part, especially in concert, to form conditions likely to promote occupational stress in community college employees.

Comparative Aspects of the Theory

The review of the literature revealed a certain degree of consistency of occupational stress factors in their broad context. Factor identification and definition focused mainly on the theory of person-environment fit and quantitative/qualitative concerns. The theory developed from this study possesses similarities and dissimilarties that are deemed significant for discussion.

Person-Environment Fit

Many of the studies reviewed in Chapter 2 centered on the so-called goodness-of-fit between the individual and his/her professional environment (Beehr & Newman, 1978; French & Caplan, 1973; French, Rogers & Cobb, 1974; French, Tupper & Mueller, 1965). The studies indicated that fit was determined by (a) the degree of compatability between individuals' needs and the organizations' willingness/ability

to help meet those needs, as well as (b) the fit between ones' job demands and the required skills to meet those demands. Stress levels rise as misfit in these two areas increase, or, the better the fit, the lower the stress.

The theory of this study supports the relationship of 'fit in one area but is nonsupportive of the other. The occupational stress realized by community college personnel centers on the perception of barriers to fulfillment of role expectation and the stress factors within that role. Those factors support the degree of fit or misfit between the professional needs of college personnel and those supplied by the college as a stress determinant. That is, the better the fit between the professional needs-demands of the individual and the needs-supply by the college, the lower the stress level.

However, the degree of fit or misfit between individuals' job demands and the required skill levels to meet those demands was not found to be a factor in occupational stress in community college personnel. At no point in the study did subjects express concern regarding an inadequacy of self and/or professional skills required in their perception of role expectations. Community college personnel feel that they are skilled in their area of expertise and do not realize stress from personal inadequacies to carry out their roles. The stress comes from others who perpetuate the

identified factors inhibiting the successful achievement of
professional goals/objectives and thereby results in unmet
professional psychological needs concomitant to role/job
satisfaction.

Quantitative versus Qualitative Concerns

The study conducted by French, Tupper, and Mueller
(1965), cited in Chapter 2 as perhaps the most significant
stress-related study in a higher education setting, provides
another important theoretical comparative base. The finding
of that study was that the stress sources of administrators
and faculty differ significantly. The distinction was
between quantitative and qualitative role overload. Quanti-
tative overload was defined as the sum total of work or
tasks required in one's job, while qualitative overload
referred to the amount of skills, ability, and knowledge
required for an individual to complete an assignment.
French, Tupper, and Mueller (1965) found that work that
required perceived skills, knowledge, and abilities beyond
what the individual possessed was the greater stress factor
for faculty members, while administrators suffered more from
quantitative role overload, or were stressed by the sheer
number of tasks required of them.

The findings of this study refute the notions of quali-
tative role overload in either administrators or faculty.

Given the nature of community colleges as institutions of higher learning, the nature of the jobs within the institutions, characteristics of the individuals, and the barriers to the perception of role expectations, personnel across all functional levels did not display qualitative role concerns, but did report stress from quantitative aspects. The stress elements of clarity, difficulties, productivity, relationships, and time are related to the inability of personnel to complete job assignments and were reported as such. The notion of qualitative inadequacies of either administrators or faculty is not supportable in this study. It appears that community college professionals at all levels feel qualified to occupy their positions but are stressed because of the number of elements inhibiting successful role fulfillment, thereby impacting upon the quality of their work.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, ISSUES, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This exploratory study sought to expand knowledge, insight, and theory pertaining to the phenomenon of occupational stress realized by professional employees of community colleges. The study was driven by the theoretical inadequacies as it pertains to community college and occupational stress literature.

Using a grounded theory approach, a generalized model of occupational stress in community colleges was developed. This model had as its central point the perception of barriers to fulfillment of role expectation. Given the nature of community colleges as institutions of higher learning, the nature of professional jobs within community colleges, and individual characteristics of college personnel, occupational stress is a function of perceptions of those barriers to role accomplishment.

This perception of barriers was found to possess the dual elements of content, or what barriers exist, and source, or who originates that barrier. Realized stress from barriers to role fulfillment stems from specific interacting factors in the college environment. These factors were

identified as <u>lack of clarity</u> of role expectation, <u>difficulties</u> in task completion, <u>too little time</u> to complete tasks of role, <u>difficult relationships</u> with others in professional college roles, and <u>productivity demands</u> on the occupied role. These factors interact in such a way as to explain perceived occupational stress resulting from the perceptions of role.

The sources of barriers were found to be internal and external to the college. The internal sources originated inside the college and were distributed throughout the institution. The external sources were those involved with, but separate from, the college and seemed to be the more influential of the two. The substance of occupational stress of community college personnel was perceived to have its origins in other people and the organization rather than in the subjects themselves.

Methodological Issues

Given the interest in discovering factors contributing to stress in community colleges and in beginning the process of theory development with special relevance for community college administrators, the method of Glaser and Strauss was an appropriate choice for this study. Indeed, the application of the method led to the discovery of interesting, often tantalizing, and sometimes surprising data. At the same time, certain restrictions on the application of the method imposed by the researcher led to some limitations

in data collection and relevance.

Three questions were used in this study to focus responses from the subjects. The first two questions were designed to "get the subject into" the topic. The analysis, presented in Chapter 4, was conducted from responses to question 3. No attempt was made to follow up on information shared by the respondents that went beyond the third question and this a priori decision may have served to limit discovery of data "richness." For example, it was clear from the analysis that stress was perceived to result from the actions of others, not from feelings of inadequacy in the respondent. This finding was reported in Chapter 4, but further reflection of this somewhat surprising condition suggests that the limitations of the interview questions may have permitted subjects to blame others rather than self. Perhaps the researcher should have directed the respondents more precisely to discuss personal inadequacies and their contribution to subject's feelings of occupational stress.

Limitations in the application of the method in this study may also account for the absence of qualitative concerns in the faculty as was found by French, Tupper, and Mueller. Findings in this study suggest that faculty feel adequate to accomplish all role requirements, leading to a conclusion that this study fails to support previous

research findings. On the other hand, when this finding is

viewed in the perspective of the method limitations, another

conclusion may be offered that these data are inadequate to

judge whether French, Tupper, and Mueller's findings are

supportable.

Finally, method limitations may have led to the absence

of expressed concern by either Level II or Level III respon-

dents that students were a source of stress. Certainly,

when division chairpersons fail to mention students as

stressors, it is surprising. Perhaps the researcher in this

study should have probed further.

Theoretical Issues

This study was guided to some extent by known contri-

butions of person-environment fit theory to explain occupa-

tional stress. An exploratory stance was taken by the

researcher as advised by the method of Glaser and Strauss,

but, even so, some orientation to the inquiry was shaped

by existing theory. Despite the inadequacies of existing

theory development of the person-environment type as dis-

cussed in Chapter 1, it was believed that of the available

theory in the literature, principles of person-environment

fit theory offered the most promising possibilities for

contributions to theory based on this study.

The elements of substantive theory grounded in the

data from this study are presented in Chapter 5. The question is, especially given that this was as nearly as possible an exploratory study, are the elements of the derived theory from this study congruent with overall person-environment fit theory? Are the theoretical formulations from this study an extension of existing knowledge or do they make some independent contribution?

Understanding these issues may be assisted by succinctly stating the elements of person-environment fit theory and then looking at the contribution made to that theory by this study.

Major Tenets of Person-Environment Fit Theory

This theory is based on the concept of "goodness-of-fit" between person and environment and suggests that stress is a function of mismatches of the two dimensions. The first tenet, therefore, is that level of stress is determined by the degree of mismatch between the individual's skills and/or abilities. The second major tenet is that stress is determined by mismatch between the individual's needs and/or values and the opportunities in the job environment to meet specific needs and/or values. These tenets are represented in Figure 8.

Contributions of Role Expectation Theory

The major element of the theory derived in this study is that occupational stress in the community colleges is a function of barriers to the perception of role expectation

Person	Goodness of Fit	Environment
Individual skills and/or abilities	?	Specific requirements for skills and/or abilities
Individual needs and/or values	?	Opportunities in the specific job environment to fulfill needs and/or values

Figure 8.   Major Elements of Person-Environment
            Fit Theory

in the individual job holders. Perceptions are formed and
held by individuals or persons, but are shaped by conditions
in the job environment which result in perceived barriers.
It seems justified, therefore, to see the modest theoretical
formulations from this study as an extension of person-
environment fit theory and might be represented as in
Figure 9. Further, it seems reasonable, therefore, to
assert that role expectation theory as tentatively and
modestly drafted from this study is a direct and logical
contribution to person-environment theory. Indeed, further
study is warranted to verify this assertion, but the evidence
appears to justify the claim.

Discussion of Findings

Intensity Issues - Content of Barriers

The final model of occupational stress in community
colleges (Figure 3) contains the categories and properties
of the perceptions of barriers to fulfillment of role
expectations and displays the distribution of these across
four functional levels. The findings were that these
barriers pervade all levels of the organization and possess
a certain distributive consistency.

What the data did not reveal in any systematic fashion
was the degree of intensity from level to level by barrier.
It was discovered for example, that each professional level

Person	Goodness of Fit	Environment
Individual skills and/or abilities	?	Specific requirements for skills and/or abilities
Individual needs and/or values	?	Opportunities in the specific job environment to fulfill needs and/or values
Individual perceptions of role expectations	?	Barriers to role achievement

Figure 9. Extension to Person-Environment Fit Theory

realizes some stress from each barrier, but the degree or intensity of each barrier is unclear. The study verified the existence of barriers at each level but no attempt to assess the degree of variations either by level or by barrier was made. This omission limits the predictive and explanatory power of the theory.

The issue of intensity, therefore, is subject to speculation and further inquiry. However, the importance of researcher insight purported by Glaser and Strauss legitimizes the inclusion of certain impressions relating to the intensity question. It would seem, for instance, that the lack of clarity barrier was more severe for Level II than for other levels. That is, noninstructional administrators felt that their roles differed almost daily while members of other levels reported clarity concerns but not to the degree of Level II individuals.

The degree of difficulties in task completion appeared to be relatively comparable across all levels, the impression being that no one level suffered more than another from this barrier. Productivity concerns, however, were seen as exceptionally consistent across all levels possessing perhaps the highest consistent degree of intensity. All levels felt strongly that productivity demands were unrealistic and contributed directly to higher stress levels.

The difficult relationship barrier was felt to be the

most intense for Level II personnel. There seemed to be a
much higher degree of mistrust reported by this level than
by others. Similarly, these same personnel seemed to
realize the most stress from the barrier of paperwork
carrying designated deadlines imposed by others and that
these concerns were increasing.

Internal/External Issues - Source of Barriers

The advanced model (Figure 3) included internal and
external barriers to expectations. Internal sources come from
those individuals and/or groups within the college while
external sources come from those initiators of perceived
barriers outside the organizational structure of the subject
college. As with the content barriers, all levels reported
both sources as contributors to stress. However, also as
with content barriers, the data is unclear as to degree of
significance or intensity of each source.

Nevertheless, certain impressions were derived by the
researcher with respect to this issue. For example, it
seemed that the external sources, and particularly the
Virginia Community College System, impacted upon colleges
and personnel dramatically. It also appeared that this
source might literally trigger those perceived sources
internal to the college. That is, it seemed feasible that

V.C.C.S. action or a requirement could invade the college and cascade downward through all functional levels. When this occurred, each level blamed other levels above them within the college for the added pressure.

Surprising Findings

As briefly mentioned earlier, several findings of a surprising nature evolved from the study. One such finding was that relating to the quantitative/qualitative overload of faculty and administrators as developed by French, Tupper, and Mueller and discussed in Chapter 2. Their study found that administrators realized stress from quantitative overload while faculty were stressed more by qualitative overload. The findings of this study fail to support the notion of perceived employee inadequacy as a major stressor. Community college personnel were of the opinion that their stress came from the quantitative, inhibiting demands of others rather than the qualitative skill and ability inadeuacies on their part. However, it must be recognized that the structure of the interview itself may have biased the responses as discussed in Chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter.

Another surprising finding was that the data seemed to support the fact that of the four functional levels studied, the least stressed group was Level III, division chairpersons, while the highest stressed group was Level II,

noninstructional administrators. It must be reiterated, however, that intensity measures were not a part of this study so that this finding is speculative to some degree. In a general sense, division chairpersons seemed to be more confident and secure in their roles than did others. Level II members appeared to be pressured rather consistently by heavy demands that were often unrelated and unpredictable, and were never quite sure what their day would hold for them.

Also quite surprising was the fact that students were identified as an internal source of stress for Level I executives and Level IV faculty but were not mentioned at all by Levels II and III. It appeared that noninstructional administrators and division chairpersons felt that they were buffered from student interaction and involvement by faculty, and/or that their role fulfillment did not depend to a large degree on students.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study primarily was descriptive, but did offer some opportunity to begin the process of theory development. Further research in this area should both add to the descriptive aspects of dimensions of occupational stress and seek to verify or confirm suspected tenets of an emerging theory.

Specifically, continued investigation into certain surprising findings in this study seem justified. For example,

would further probing by the method of study reveal admissions of inadequacies in skill or ability of faculty members? Perhaps if not by this method then by some other? Further evidence might be sought to explore why community college faculty felt no concern for qualitative stressors when previous research discovered concern in university faculty. Another example of needed further research is suggested by the surprising finding that division chairpersons seemed least stressed of any functional group studied. This finding is contrary to experience and to literature and it should be determined whether the finding is indeed true in the colleges studied or whether it may have been an artifact of the method.

Further research also is warranted into better understanding of the intensity of stressors and their contribution to occupational stress and into whether quantity of stressors is related to levels of occupational stress. This research suggests an association of both dimensions to stress but leaves very unclear the nature of the associations.

Finally, further research is suggested to verify the appropriateness of the assertion that perceptions of role expectation theory as drafted from this research is an extension of person-environment fit theory. Perhaps certain operational variables could be discerned from this study and hypotheses framed and tested by confirmatory methods to

examine further such issues as the exact contribution of conceptual categories of the advanced model in this study to perceptions of barriers by individuals. Verification also is needed for the assertion that it is the identified content categories which leads to perceptions of barriers to role expectation and not some other content categories.

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APPENDIX A

Subjects Interviewed by Functional Level and Job Title

Level I - Executive
    Six subjects interviewed:
        2 Community College Presidents
        1 Dean of Finance
        2 Deans of Student Services
        1 Dean of Instruction

Level II - Administrative - Non-Instructional
    Eight subjects interviewed:
        1 Title III Coordinator
        2 Directors of Learning Resources Centers
        2 Directors of Continuing Education
        1 Chief Accountant - Business Manager
        1 Assistant Director of Management Program
        1 Coordinator of Library Services

Level III - Administrative - Instructional
    Six subjects interviewed:
        6 Division Chairpersons

Level IV - Faculty
    Seven subjects interviewed:
        7 Full-time Faculty Members

TOTAL SUBJECTS: 27

APPENDIX B

Initial Interview Guide

Question 1 - What kinds of stress/pressures/problems/dif-
ficulties do you feel (or have felt) in your
job/life?

Question 2 - For each of those how have you tried to deal
with them?

Question 3 - Under what circumstances have you been able to
improve the situation with regard to the problem?

Question 4 - For each problem, how has your success or lack
of success in improving the situation affected
your work?

APPENDIX C

Revised Interview Guide

Question 1 - What does the word stress mean to you?

Question 2 - What are the symptoms that accompany stress for
you?

Question 3 - What are the aspects or circumstances in your job
that cause you to realize these symptoms?