

Marisa Ciappara, currently a Secondary School teacher within the Maria Regina College, has recently graduated from the Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership and Management course from the University of Malta. Ciappara's Masters course was carried out following the award of a Tertiary Education Scholarships Scheme (TESS). Her qualitative study was based on five Maltese Heads of School from both Middle and Secondary State schools within the Maltese Islands. It explored whether the numerous responsibilities and work to be carried out by Heads of School tend to render a senior headship role a stressful job or not. In her study, Ciappara also gained an insight into the life of Heads of School on how they manage to maintain a self-controlled image which gives confidence and reassures the minds of members of staff. Moreover, Ciappara also explored barriers and challenges that Heads of School constantly face in their everyday life and what their daily schedules entail. Furthermore, Ciappara also identified strategies that Heads of School employ to overcome stress so as not to affect their personal lives outside work.

The Heads of School in Ciappara's study were specifically chosen, as in her study she tried to analyse two different categories of leadership – those newly appointed (not more than five scholastic years) and experienced Heads of School (already occupying the leadership role for more than five years). Through semi-structured interviews and a set of pre-determined questions, Ciappara conducted a one-time interview with the five different Heads of School. From the results gathered, Ciappara concluded that the major part of Heads of School tend to find the role quite stressful, especially those still in their early years of headship.

Ciappara's results further shed light on the fact that in order to fight stress, Heads of School first need to find time to dedicate for themselves, to which they confessed is not always possible due to the continuous expectations; not only from staff, but especially from the Education Authorities. All Heads of School interviewed in Ciappara's study are aware of the importance of safeguarding their mental wellbeing alongside that of their staff and students, however time is rather scarce to focus on this area. Some Heads of School in Ciappara's study admitted that they even feel powerless in the school they lead in, since no decision can be implemented without first obtaining the necessary approval from Central Authorities. Suggestions for the future which could be implemented to aid Heads of School to safeguard their wellbeing were also mentioned.

Consequently, Ciappara's research concluded that stress is a predominant factor amongst Heads of School and even though wellbeing is a topic frequently spoken about, Heads of School still feel that their wellbeing is sometimes put aside to safeguard that of their staff.