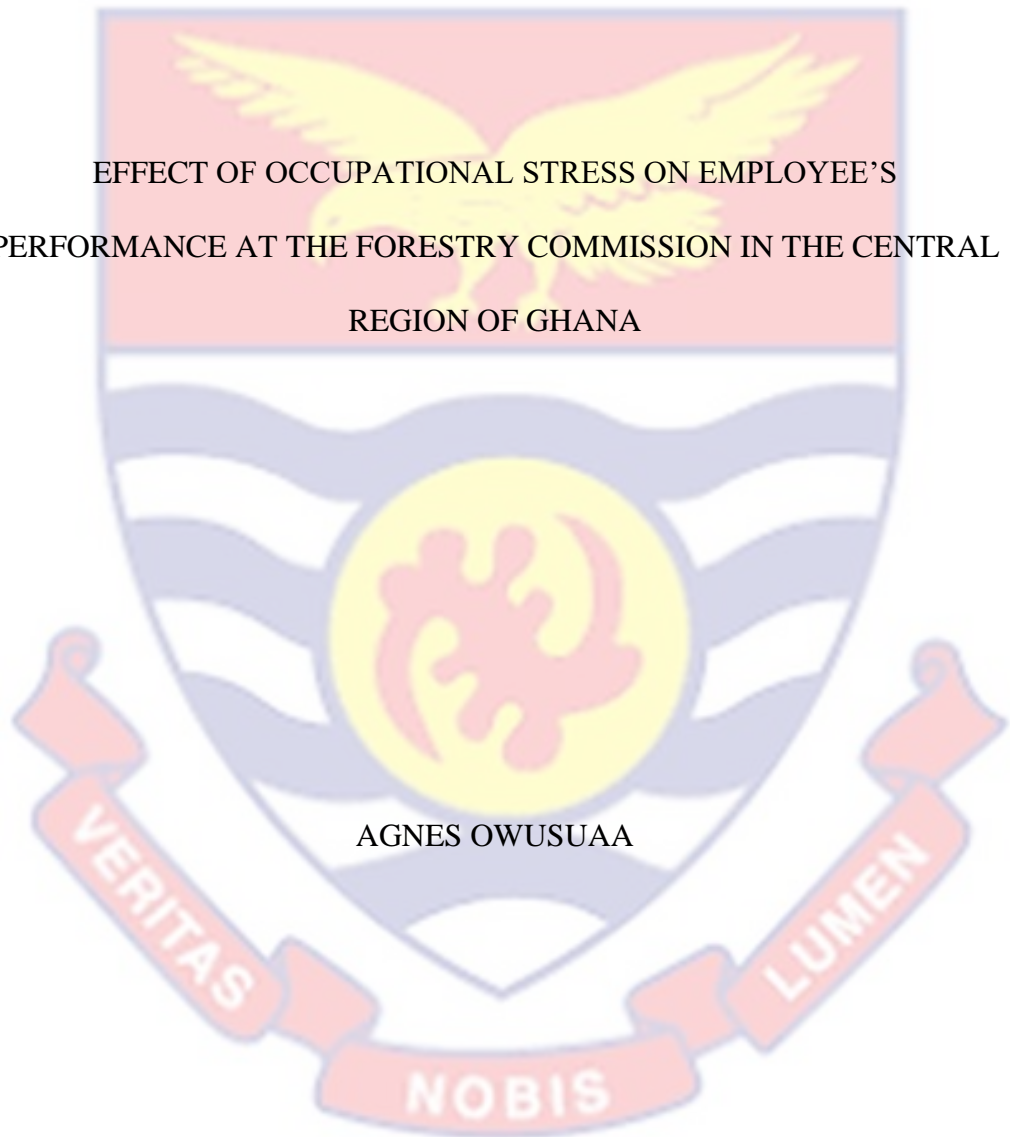


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EFFECT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON EMPLOYEE'S
PERFORMANCE AT THE FORESTRY COMMISSION IN THE CENTRAL
REGION OF GHANA



AGNES OWUSUAA

2022

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BY

AGNES OWUSUAA

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Human Resource Management of the School of Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for an award of Master of Business Administration Degree in Human Resource Management

FEBRUARY 2022

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

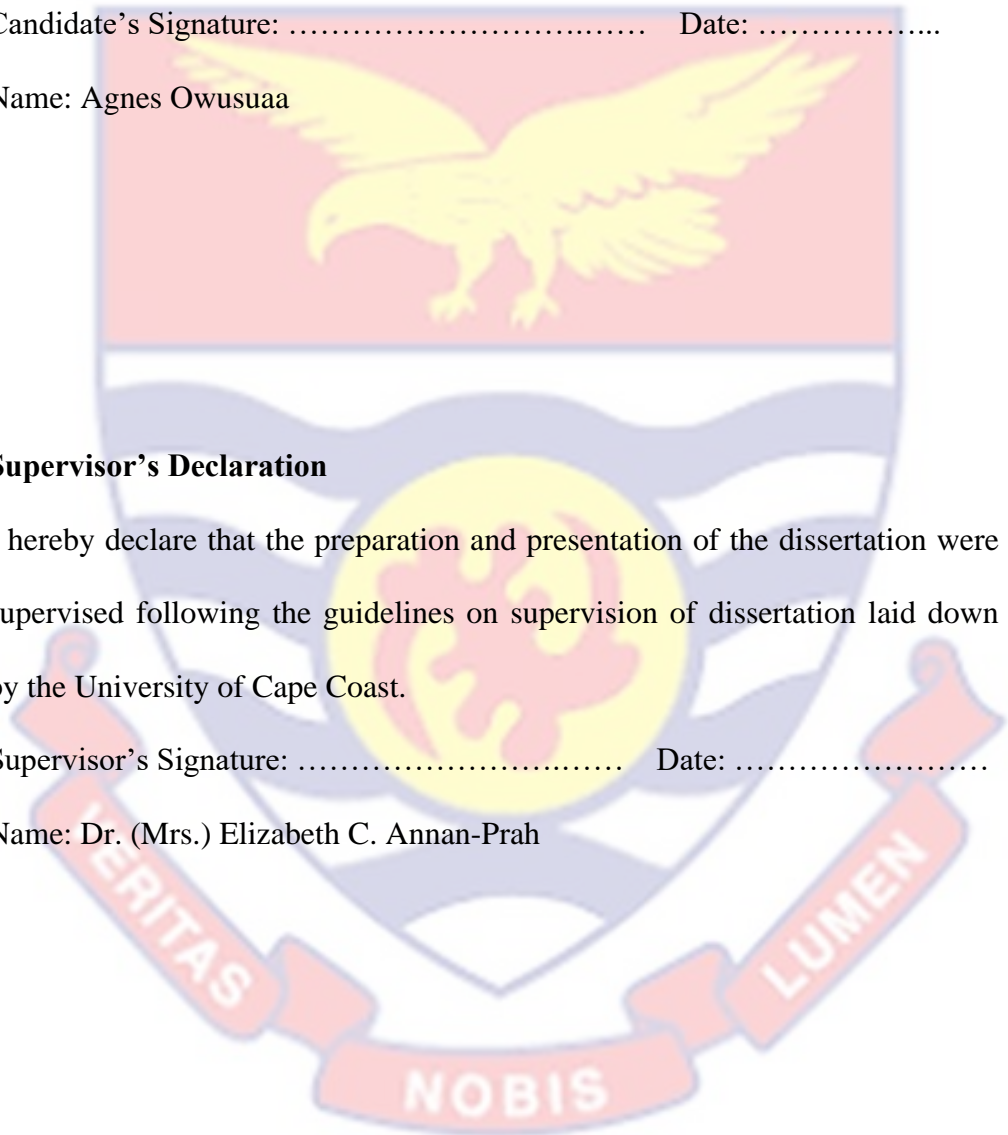
Name: Agnes Owusuaa

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised following the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Dr. (Mrs.) Elizabeth C. Annan-Prah



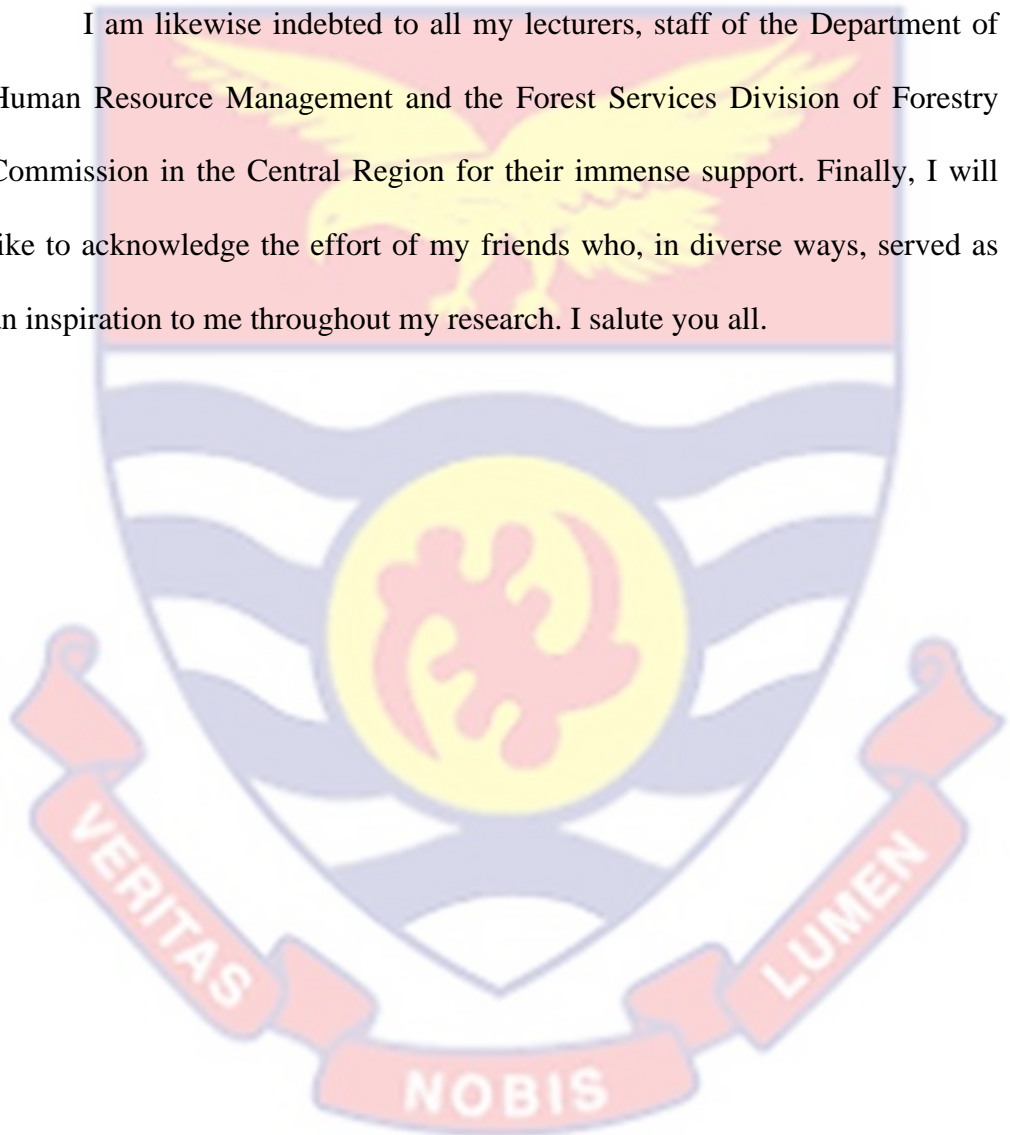
ABSTRACT

This study purposively explored the effects of occupational stress on employees' performance. Three research questions and a research hypothesis guided this study. This research employed a descriptive survey along with a quantitative approach where questionnaires were used to collect the data. The current study was surveyed on the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana with a sample size of 117 staff members who were randomly chosen. This study found that occupational or work-related stressors statistically have significant negative effects on employee's performance in the Commission. As a result, there are many constraints on employees' performance due to occupational stress at workplace. Respondents ascribed occupational stress to turnover and increased absence, lower work quantity and quality, reduced job happiness, result to poor communication and among others. However, the study found that the provision of counselling services, building stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability, providing medical assistance, and granting flexible work schedules and leave days among others can reduce the issue of occupational stress. It is recommended that policymakers and management should put strategic recommendations in place to minimise negative workplace stress at the Commission to improve staff performance levels which could expand both financial and non-financial support services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am utmost appreciative to the Almighty God for giving me life in every circumstance. I also wish to outspread my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. (Mrs.) Elizabeth C. Annan-Prah for her inspiration and supervision throughout this journey of writing this dissertation.

I am likewise indebted to all my lecturers, staff of the Department of Human Resource Management and the Forest Services Division of Forestry Commission in the Central Region for their immense support. Finally, I will like to acknowledge the effort of my friends who, in diverse ways, served as an inspiration to me throughout my research. I salute you all.



DEDICATION

To my grandparents: Joseph Ofori and Philomina Ofori



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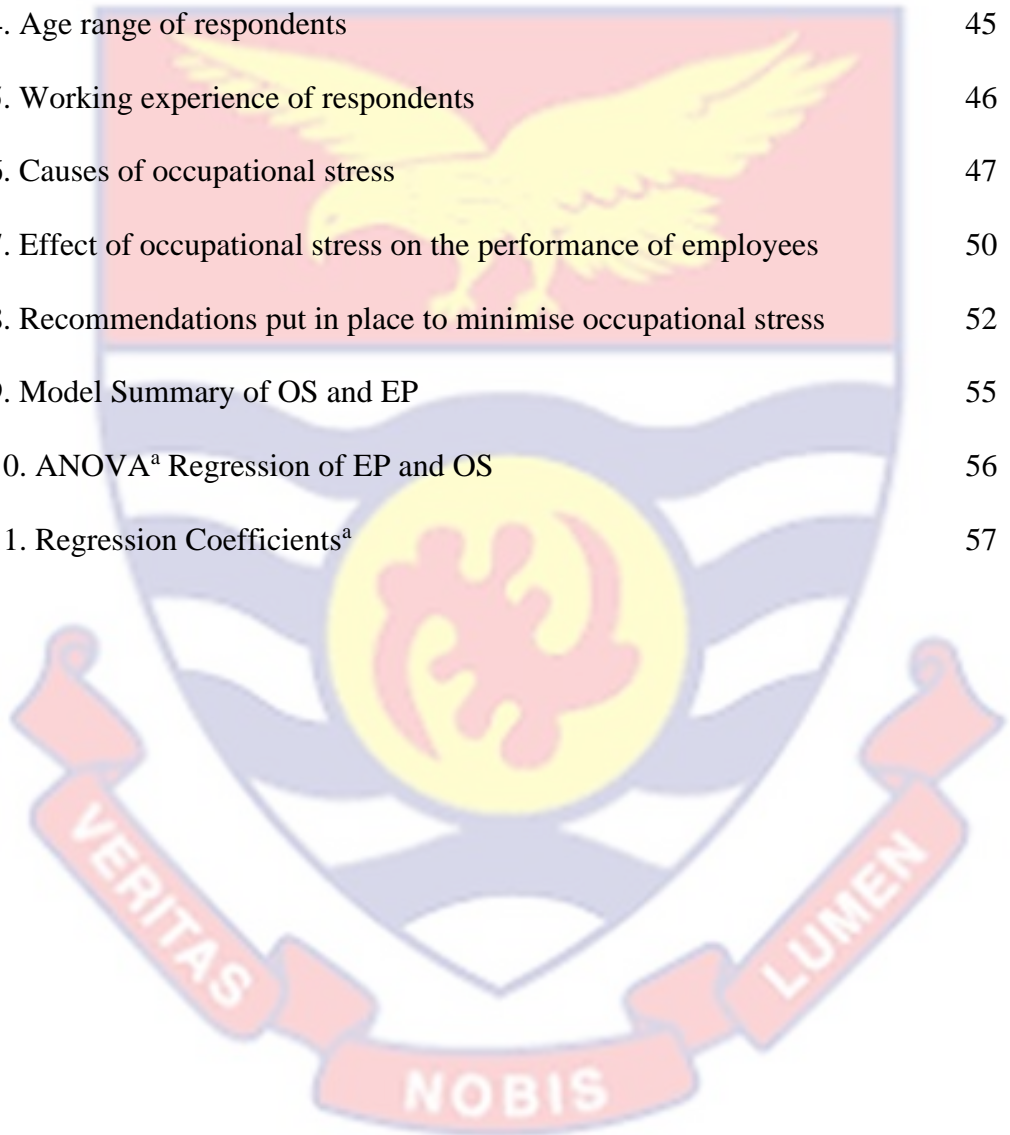
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Occupational stress is a major factor that causes behavioural, psychological and physiological effects on employees at a given occupation. In a sequence, this has a severe effect on the employee's performance. This has contributed to the rise of the most common type of stress, now known as occupational stress, in various organisations. Due to this, the study seeks to assess the occupational stress effects on employees' performance in the Forestry Commission. The chapter focuses on the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, research hypothesis, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and organisation of the study.

Background to the Study

Bowing and Harvey (2001) opined that many stresses do happen when individuals interact with their locational environments to produce emotive straining which affects such persons' mental and physical condition. Stressors do cause stresses when events from which stresses are created bring a state of instability inside individuals. Bowing and Harvey further postulated that too much stress has high-rate costs on the organisations, individual workers and the society at large. This is because many employees are afflicted with disorders, stress-related illnesses and anxiety. Khosa, Tiriyo, Ritacco and Lowies (2014) also orated that occupation-related stress is acquired through the employees' dealings and the workplace circumstances.

Stress situations that may affect sensitive responses ranging from discouragement, depression, anger, exhilaration to anxiety (Amfo-Otu & Agyemang, 2017) are responsible predominantly for countless health challenges that employees face mentally and physically. This could decline immensely individuals' performances in an organisation (Kataoka, Ozawa, Tomotake, Tanioka & King, 2014). This agrees with the transactional theory which Lazarus and Folkman (1984) implied to mean that cognitive tests play an essential role in the employee's stress phase. This transactional stress theory emerges from a certain basic environmental demand that is about to drain human resources and energy which thereby affect the welfare of individuals (Faraji, Ramazani, & Hedaiati, 2015).

Once more, the Health and Safety Executive (2005) described occupational stresses to mean an unfavourable response to actions that people may have because of unreasonable pressure or other forms of demand placed on them. Malta (2004, p.14) similarly averred that "occupational stress is characterized as any distress that is felt and perceived at a personal level and caused by cases, events or circumstances that are too severe and regular in nature to exceed the coping skills and resources of an individual to deal with them properly." Occupation-related stress is recently becoming a critical issue for companies due to its proclivity for contributing to employees' inefficiency, turnover intentions, and poor job satisfaction.

Vanishree (2014) agreed by claiming that occupational stress has become a formidable task for companies due to its link to reducing employees' productivity, increasing employees' absenteeism and other related issues such as hypertension, cardiovascular sicknesses and drug abuse. Different levels of

stress are faced by employees in different workplaces. Some job stress is unavoidable (Mills, 2013) while other sources of workplace stress can be avoided. This makes Taylor (1995) focus on dimensions of stress thereby stating that the four major stress types are, chronic acute, episodic acute and traumatic stress.

Under the acute stresses which are mostly recognised and the most commonly known form of stress, the individual employees know precisely why they are stressed. With the traumatic type of stress, there exists a severe type of stress with reactions that arise out of disastrous events or forceful experiences, for instance, life-threatening accidents, sexual assault, natural disaster, or combat participation. Beneath chronic stresses, some relentless pressures and demands seem endless time which wears down the individual daily and yearly without any evidence of escape. With the episodic acute stress, the situation becomes very chaotic as it gets uncontrolled as it always seems worrying situations when the individual's life experiences this type of stress.

While Taylor highlighted the types of stress and stressors, Matthews (2001), on the other hand, indicated that there are four primary sources of stress and stressor: the environmental one, social type, physiological one and thoughtful stress. Under environmental stress, the stressor can be bombarded with powerful and challenging demands before one adjusts to the stress. With the social stress, also, the stressor may experience multiple stresses that arise out of different social demand roles such as caregiver, married person, parent, and member of staff that they play. Under physiological stress, the stressor can affect situations and conditions distressing the individual. With thoughtful

stress, also, it is the brain perceives and interprets situations as difficult, stressful, pleasant or painful.

Workplace stresses can be detrimental to employees and their performance, productivity, and service quality as well as increase turnover rates, increasing expenses for both the employee and the firm (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Villanueva & Djurkovich, 2009). Moreover, occupational stress poses several signs and symptoms that are classified as physical, emotional, and behavioural symptoms (HFRS, 2011). There are recommendations, however, put in place to minimise stress. This is what Felton, Coates and Christopher (2015) and Sweet, Pitt-Catsoupes and James (2016) highlighted to mean providing counselling services and medical assistance manage techniques that eliminate environmental stressors, grant flexible work schedule and leave days and reduce vulnerability alongside minimising stresses through setting personal priority measures and creating positive attitudes.

The Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2005) estimated that 22% of European employees reported being stressed. In addition, the World Health Organisation (WHO) stated in 2017 that stress is responsible for 60% of all known ailments. Chronic stress is linked to a variety of mental problems in addition to negative physical health results. Usrof and Elmorsey (2016) had surveyed to evaluate the occupation-related stress impact on employees' turnover and performance in Egypt. The study used secondary data obtained from journals, newspapers, and books to analyse the research questions. The study revealed that workload is one of the factors associated with occupational stress.

Numerous countrywide studies done in Ghana by the *Weekly Mirror* (2006) indicate that nearly 58% of organisational workforces suffer stress-related problems. The implication is that stress may be considered as destroyer in most organisations in Ghana and the Forestry Commission is not exceptional. Despite everything, Riketta (2002) whose study focuses on the job-related stress effects on a Ghanaian worker's performance posited that time limitations and work overloads are substantial factors to work stress on the part of community nurses. Hence, occupational stress has become a rapidly expanding global problem in this area. More so, there are few studies on the effects of occupational stress on employees' performance in Ghana particularly workers at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana.

Malik and Noreen (2015) reported that stress among workers is still present, but by enhancing working conditions and the quality of benefits in organisations, it can be reduced. Despite the extremely damaging consequences of occupation-related stress on the employees' physical body and their execution of work at the Commission, some organisations not excluding the Forestry Commission, have not laid down any drastic procedures to reduce/minimise these stress conditions that harmfully affect the execution of jobs. It is from this background information raised that it is very necessary to conduct a study of this nature to discover the effects of occupation-related stresses on employees' execution of work at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

Stress-related issues have become problematic amongst workers in Ghana (Akrani, 2013; Martin, 2014). Long work hours, heavy workloads, and competing work demands make employment for the Forestry Commission fundamentally stressful. Employees at the Forestry Commission are predominantly prone to high levels of stressful activities attributable to their psychological and physical demands. Health-related expenditures, habitual lateness, reduced work efficiency, and sick leave increment are all symptoms of stress. This, in the long run, harms employees' morale and performance. Many Forestry Commission employees have visited hospitals and have been diagnosed with stress as a result of their work demands such as work overload, styles of management and career growth, time pressure, inadequate pay packages, relationships with workplace colleagues and job insecurity.

Heart disease, cognitive impairment, depression, weariness, anger, and other mental illnesses have all been reported by workers on several occasions (Akrani, 2011; Martin, 2014). Owusu and Tawiah (2014) and Amfo-Otu and Agyemang (2017) postulated that these difficulties expose the Forestry Commission's employees to unreasonable role conflicts, procedural injustice, job demands, role ambiguity, and inflexible working hours which lead to occupational stress. However, evidence regarding the occupational stress effects on employees' execution of work at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana is anecdotal which necessitates further investigation.

Nonetheless, most of the works in the field generally relate to the magnitude and impact of occupational stress among secondary school teachers, occupational stress and work-related wellbeing, the effects of

occupational stress on the management of an organisation, and many others. On the other hand, the causes of occupational stresses at the Forestry Commission, the effect of occupational stress on the performance of employees at the Forestry Commission, and the recommendations put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission have not crept into the conversational analysis of major scholars; hence, the scholarly literature is deficient in providing the effect of occupational stress on employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana.

It seems scholars have neglected the effect of occupational stress on employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana. This has thereby created an insufficiency of research on effects of occupational stress on employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana. This current study, therefore, serves to identify the causes of occupational stresses at the Forestry Commission, the effect of occupational stress on the performance of employees at the Forestry Commission, and the recommendations put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission.

Purpose of the Study

The study's main purpose was to explore the effect of occupational stress on employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana. Specific objectives are to:

1. examine the causes of occupational stresses at the Forestry Commission.
2. determine employee's performance at the Forestry Commission

3. ascertain the effect of occupational stress on the performance of employees at the Forestry Commission.
4. identify the recommendations put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission.

Research Questions

The following were the questions that are guiding the research study:

1. What causes occupational stress at the Forestry Commission?
2. What are the employee's performances at the Forestry Commission?
3. What effects do occupational stress have on the performances of employees at the Forestry Commission?
4. What recommendations are put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission?

Research Hypothesis

The ensuing were the study's hypotheses formulated:

1. H₀: There is no statistically positive substantial connection between occupational stress and employees' performance among the Forestry Commission staff.
H₁: There is a statistically positive significant connection between occupational stress and employees' performance among the Forestry Commission staff.

Significance of the Study

After understanding the causes, effects and measures of occupational stress, the study will be relevant for stakeholders and workers who will implement effective strategies that will minimise occupational stresses of employees thereby improving their performance at workplaces. The findings

from the study will assist management in implementing stress management techniques that will improve the organisation's turnover. The analysis would potentially act as a source of reference material for scholars and researchers.

Delimitation of the Study

The study which enclosed only a carefully chosen portion of a Division within the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana was circumscribed to the Forestry staff.

Limitation of the Study

Time, money, exhaustion, and material resources played a role in the study's limitations. Because of these constraints, the study could only be conducted in Central Region. Nonetheless, because the sampled organisation shared features with the rest of the Region's organisation, the data acquired was reliable and legitimate, resulting in respectable results. Again, there was a general lack of cooperation on the part of the respondents, since they had not benefited from the previous years' study.

Organisation of the Study

The current study is divided into five chapters of which chapter one outlined the background to the study, statement of the problem and purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, and organisation of the study. Chapter two paid attention to reviewing related literature on the topic of study. Chapter three addressed issues concerning the research methods alongside research design, population sample, research instrument and data analysis. Chapter four intensively dealt with discussing the results as data was obtained from the field. The final chapter, five, presented the research summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Chapter Summary

The chapter focused on areas such as the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, research hypothesis, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and organisation of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Drawing from the previous chapter which mulls whether the variables in the study have any relationship, the core aim is to study occupational stress on employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana. Given this, this chapter reviewed related literature on occupational stress and employee performance. It focused on theoretical review, overviews of occupational stress and performance, empirical reviews and conceptual framework of the study.

Theoretical Review

Theoretical models have been developed to explain the relationship between the consequence of occupation-related stress on the employees' execution of work. The study is underpinned by two theories, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional stress theory and Karasek's (1979) demands-control theory are both concentrated on the workplace stress effects on the performance of employees.

Transactional Stress Theory

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) echoed that the transactional theory implies that cognitive tests have essential roles to play in the employee's stress phase. The transactional stress theory emerges from certain basic environmental demands that try to wear out energy and human resources thereby affecting the individuals' well-being (Faraji, Ramazani, & Hedaiati, 2015). Transactional perspectives are naturally cognitive as they concentrate on the dynamic interaction that exists between the environment and

individuals in terms of both emotional and mental processes (Cox, Betts, Jones, Spall, & Totterdell, 2000). An individual's judgment of a particular event in terms of his or her well-being is included in this evaluation technique. The encounters were categorized into irrelevant, benign-positive and stressful (Truxillo, Cadiz, Rineer, Zaniboni & Fraccaroli, 2012). Employees in an organisation can cope with the procedures which encourage reappraisal processes based on these appraisals. This theoretical model studies more on cognitive approaches.

Conclusively, transactional theory studies the cognitive tests that have essential roles to play in the employee's stress phase. Simply put, the perspectives are naturally cognitive as they concentrate on the dynamic interaction that exists between the environment and individuals in terms of both emotional and mental processes. Therefore, the use of this theory is never a deviation in any way since the activities within occupational organisation demand job demand and control strategies. This section leads us to the demands-control theory.

Demands-Control Theory

Karasek's (1979) demands-control theory which emphasises the two psychosocial job characteristics namely job demands and job control possibly is now the utmost prevalent explanation of stress in the workplace (Kompier, 2003). The demands-control theory argues that a somewhat work environment may be defined by a combination of two dimensions: the level of control staff and psychological work demands that need to meet such demands (Karasek, 1979; Theorell, Karasek, & Eneroth, 1990). One major strength of the demands-control theory is that employees who are sufficiently provided a free

will to decide on the skills offered to be used by him or her may adapt to “active-learning tasks” that are effective ways of solving problems even though the jobs may be highly stressful (Mark & Smith, 2008).

Those other scholars who also criticised the demand-control theory posit that the theory only explains the basis of workload rather than any other demands (Cox et al., 2000). More so, it is assumed that the high control is continually a wanted state of argument. In this way, some people may realise that control in a job remains continuously undesired whereas other people may even have a low sensitivity in its self-effectiveness; hence, seeing the stressor control as just within (Mark & Smith, 2008). Therefore, the demands-control theory is hereby used to examine the level of control staff and psychological work demands which are in the employers’ quest to meet such demands. Interpretively, the transactional and demands-control theories are very significant as they help develop and lead us to the conceptual frameworks that guide the study under scrutiny.

Stress

It is vital to remember that stress is created by stressors, which are conditions that cause an individual to be out of balance. Bowing and Harvey (2001) go on to say that stress has an unquestionable cost for people, companies, and society. This is because stress causes workers to experience a lot of worry and stress-related disorders, which leads to lower employees’ productivity. “Stress is more likely to occur in some situations than others and in some people’s conditions than others” (Michie, 2002). Steve (2011) averred that stress is the outcome of an employee’s reaction when they are presented with demands, pressures, and professional factors that do not match their

knowledge levels at workplaces. This thereby poses a threat and challenge to the employees' capabilities which sequentially create a workplace struggle for existence. This implies that stress exists the minute environmental situations show a threatening demand to exceed an employee's resources and capabilities (Steve, 2011).

Accordingly, the employee's capabilities will be challenged and threatened. This may give rise to a fight intended for survival as one is employed at a workplace. The implication may be that stress may occur once an external condition creates a threatening demand to surpass an employee's talents and resources (Steve, 2011). Descriptions could affirm that stress may be an excessive demand affecting physical and psychological conditions of a person's well-being. This has become a frequent occurrence for employees who go about their mundane tasks. Similarly, stress is the non-specific response of the body to slightly positive or negative demands placed on the body (Selye, 2006). Stress is once again depicted negatively in entertainment media, in health classes and at the workplace (Shchuka, 2010).

Occupational Stress

Abebe and Alemseged (2016, p.12) opined that "occupational stress includes physical or emotional factors resulting in bodily and mental imbalances of employees at the workplace." In the same way, workplace stress is seen as a pressure-emitting state of physical and psychological mental illness (Desa, Yusoooff, Ibrahim & Kadir, 2014). Nwokeocha (2015) sees workplace stress as the reaction that workers encounter when their expertise, skills and abilities are beyond the job demands and pressures. Similarly, stress is the body's psychological and biological response to aggressiveness

(Dumitrescu, 2014). Occupational stress is also caused by a variety of psychological and physical demands that workers face (Sohail & Rehman, 2015; Rizwan, Waseem & Bukhari, 2014).

Once there exists a disparity between the workplace's necessities and the demands of a worker's capability to perform job obligations as Narban, Narban and Singh (2016) had posited, occupational stress occurs as well. In line with that assertion, Mosadeghrad (2014) determined that occupational stress is caused by a variety of reasons including individual, organisational, and environmental issues as well as the occupation itself which includes duties, requirements (responsibilities), and excessive (heavy) workloads that contribute to the number of occupational stresses employees would be confronted with. Occupational stress is a known identifiable health risk that adversely implies behavioural, psychological and medical diseases. Just as everybody has a unique stress response, individual differences here are great (Quick & Henderson, 2016). In the same vein, Bhui, Dinos, Miecznikowska, De Jongh and Stansfeld's (2016) study gave noteworthy occupational stress drivers that have differences between effort-reward ratio and working conditions and high demand situations but low control.

Recent studies concerning occupation stress describe views that could comprehend a way suggesting how occupation stress would be categorise to oppose a completely unlike concept. Therefore, occupation stresses can better be comprehended that the repetition of stress responses be it acute or chronic may happen at a working time. In this way, Mustafa, Illzam, Muniandy, Hasmi, Sharifa and Nang's (2015) study further supported the abovementioned view of occupational stress by stating that occupation stresses

are described as the modification in a mental or physical state to respond to the working environment changes.

Also, occupational stress is any intense distress generated by events, instances or situations frequent in nature that a person perceives and feels when he or she could not cope with and handle adequately such exceeding capabilities and resources (Malta, 2004). Considering the studies done, occupation stresses are comprehended as a variable or a factor that causes the individual's stress-related responses within the context of workplace environments. Hence, the occupation stress phenomena must be considered as a whole so long as it is in association with emotionally unpleasant states which people undergo as a result of their work. This makes Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (2001), for instance, define occupational stress as the unpleasant emotional experiences such as anxiety, tension, depression, frustration and anger that people bear at workplaces. Newton (2009) has extensively used this explanation in the occupational stress literature.

Stress Types

Taylor (1995) who stated the four major types of stress namely acute, traumatic, chronic and episodic acute respective explained them in the following ways. For the "acute stress", she elucidated that it is the most commonly known and identifiable form of stress that make individuals recognise precisely why he or she is stressed. Taylor illustratively maintained that when the body rests the stress events stop and life returns to its normalcy since these stressful events have short-term effects as they cause no permanent or severe impairment to the body. With the traumatic stress, she clarified that this type is severe with reactions that emanate out of intensive experiences or a

catastrophic event such as life-threatening accidents, sexual assault, a natural disaster or participation in combat.

In a such manner, ensuing subsequent emotional shock and initial fallout, many trauma sufferers gradually start to recuperate, except for some other people, the physical and the psychological signs that the shock generated do not leave as the sufferers' bodies do not recuperate to normal life equilibrium. Unlike traumatic stress, chronic stress is relentless pressures and demands that seem perpetual periods that wear the sufferer down daily and yearly without any evident escape. This, for instance, grinds away the individual's emotion and health which lead to the victim's collapse and even death. Considering the episodic acute stress, Taylor (1995) posited that it is out of control and very chaotic as it always seems to be multiple stressful situations when the victim's life experiences this stress.

Most often, "TYPE A" personalities are those who are inclined to episodic acute stress, and they always take on too many projects, handle too many demands, and are in a rush but always late although they might not be aware of it or admit it. Unfortunately, people with episodic acute stress might have a lifestyle that they may find so habitual which encourages stress. Such people struggle for their lifestyle changes until a severe physical symptom is experienced.

Causes of Occupational Stress

As an evitable part of organisations, occupational stress has been recognised in that regard (Ashill, Rod, Thirkell & Carruthers, 2009; Nair, 2013). As such, many researchers across various fields have identified sources of occupational stress.

Organisational Factors

Organisational styles, culture, the structure of management and career growth are organisational factors that trigger stress (Jins & Radhakrishnan, 2013). Management styles, long working hours, inadequate pay parcels and non-working variables such as family affairs and working colleagues are the key causes of stress. In addition, it should be remembered that workplace stress affects and costs both workers and organisations at both monetary and non-monetary terms (Jins & Radhakrishnan, 2013).

Job Characteristics

Contextualising of job characteristics, intrinsic job demands such as repetitive nature of the job, an unwarranted job for a person, insufficient challenge and autonomy degree where there is insufficiency to meet the job's demands or the expectation of job holder are the causes of stresses (Blickle, Wendel & Ferris, 2010). Moreover, role conflict which also forms part of organisation expectations could be insufficient to job-holders' contractual terms and expectations and or could lead to confusion.

Work Relationship

In a divergent view, work relationships with the supervisors and colleague workers remaining as an identifiable factor also cause stress. Most often, some leaders find it very difficult when they deal with their staff's demands. Others may also find it stressful when they agree on customers, suppliers and other outsiders' demands, particularly individuals who all day long deal with customers' grievances (Badar, 2011).

Work Overload

Work overload is often regarded as a significant determinant that creates tension in the work environment. Job overload includes intense task distribution, unreachable deadlines and long hours of work (Shah & Hasnu, 2013). Yaşlıoğlu, Karagülle and Baran (2014) claim that job overload arises when workers experience strain beyond themselves and a situation's requirements are greater than they can manage. Ali, Raheem, Ahmad and Imamuddin (2014) found that some of the causes of stress in workers that contribute to a decline in employee capacity are workload, role conflict and insufficient monitoring incentives.

Personal Factors

Life changes, for instance, are one of the major causes of stress at the workplace. In this modern society, many events such as pregnancy, retirements, outstanding personality, marriage and achievements that people consider positive causes stress (Asagba & Atare, 2010). These events habitually interfere with employees' aptitude to effectively execute or accomplish tasks as they are frustrated with these everyday situations and events. Evident from experience shows that daily hassles have contributed immensely to complete stress behaviours. When a civil servant looks for a misplaced file or replaces a not working floppy disk or answer query from superior officers (Akrani, 2011; Martin, 2014) is a typical example.

Badar (2011) likewise acknowledged that both outside life and domestic issues such as home life cause stress. Furthermore, personal factors such as temperament, change adaptability, individual perceptions of job or

role, one's tolerance level of ambiguity and motivation are also acknowledged to be stress causers.

Environmental Factor

Christo and Pienaar (2006) also suggested that some other factors contributing to the causes of occupational stress of employees include sitting for a long time, lack of job place autonomy, lack of equipment and resources, work schedules leading to late work accomplishment or organisational overtime weather, perceived loss of job, heavy load hefting, lack of security, the complexity of repetitiveness.

Employee Performance

Employee's performance refers to an individual's productivity in comparison to such employee's colleagues on a variety of job-like behaviours and results (Sarwar, Ketavan, & Butt, 2015). Employee's performance can also mean action or work allocated to an individual that he or she completes successfully irrespective of the standard limits of reasonable resource use. Equally, the comparison of these effects that results from a specific level of expenditures is known to be performance (Sarwar, Ketavan, & Butt, 2015).

The factors influencing motivation are also seen as determinants or factors of performance (Daniel & Metcalf, 2015). These factors satisfy a need and stimulate people to bring out their natural drive in accomplishing a given task. Employees can therefore be motivated in the best way by providing them with meaningful rewards. Studies have revealed that, employee's performance in an organisation can be determined on the basis of task, contextual or counterproductive work behaviours (Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, De Vet & Van der Beek, 2014).

Task performance or work behaviour can be defined as the proficiency (i.e. competency) with which one performs central job tasks (Koopmans et al., 2014). It can also be defined as the effectiveness with which an individual performs an activity that directly or indirectly contributes to the technical core of organisations by implementing an aspect of its technological process or providing needed materials or services (Jex & Britt, 2008). Other labels sometimes used for task performance are job-specific task proficiency, technical proficiency, or in-role performance. It includes for example work quantity, work quality, and job knowledge.

Contextual work performance or behaviour can be defined as individual behaviours that support the organisational, social and psychological environment in which the technical core must function (Koopmans et al., 2014). It also refers to behaviours that go beyond the formally prescribed work goals, such as taking on extra tasks, showing initiative, or coaching newcomers on the job. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) stressed that, contextual work behaviour's activities contribute to the social and psychological core of the organisation and thus considered equally important as task performance. Contextual performance assesses performance qualities that are significant in the job but are not tied to precise tasks which include putting in extra effort, embracing the organisation's goals, volunteering, cooperating and following rules and procedures. The descriptions above imply that performance is the consequence of an employee's ability, effort, experience, opportunity, and commitment to work as measured by the quality and quantity of work completed.

Counterproductive performance or work behaviour is an employee's behaviour that goes against the expectations and interest of his/her organisation (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). These behaviours harm the well-being of the organisation or people such as customers/clients, or patients in the organisation. Simply put, counterproductive work behaviour as a negative behaviour exhibited by employees has been on the rise in recent times and it includes absenteeism, complaints, expectations, lateness for work, engaging in off-task behaviour, theft, and substance abuse (Ahmad, Hashmi & Akhtar, 2016). These work behaviours have been found to directly influence performance thus formed part.

Effects of occupational stress on employee's performance

Stress issues, to some extent, have positive outcomes on employees in any given organisation. Many studies done on occupational stress have indicated that occupation stress could lead to innumerable adverse effects for both working individuals and the working environments (Oginska-Bulik, 2006). Nevertheless, when occupational stress surpasses a certain threshold, its benefits can be realised as a negative correlation because the influence of occupation stress on job commitment and satisfaction is enormous. With this, job gratification is the positive degree of effect to job components. More significantly, the characteristics of the individual workers and the job determine the organisation's corporate working environment. Propensity to leave and higher turnover rates are linked with displeasure at the workplace (Lu, Xing, & Ren, 2012).

Commitment to the organisation also foresees work variables like employees' turnover, behaviour and accomplishment of work. Conflict

decreases, worker's accomplishment of tasks and ambiguity role are completely linked to the workers' send-off probability in the organisation (Badar, 2011). Jing (2008) and Bytyqi, Reshani, and Hasani (2010) highlighted that stress in an organisation has a straight outcome on the employee's behaviour and health physiologically and physically and their performance positively as it motivates employees and negatively as it increases frustration, tardiness and anxiety which can destroy the economic profitability of the organisation gradually (Ongori & Agolla, 2008; Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Waris, Ejaz, Fatima, & Sherazi, 2012).

The outcomes of suffering out of detrimental chronic stress are separated into three groups namely physiological consequences which involve heart burns, headaches, high blood pressure, bad temperament, nervousness and unhappiness. These emotions may lead to a lack of indecisiveness, concentration and absenteeism. Divergently, disease and death which may have increased risk could compromise back pain, headaches and immune system, sleep disorders, exhaustion, lack of appetite, dizziness, gastrointestinal issues (Addison, & Yankyera, 2015; Moen, Kelly, Fan, Lee, Almeida, Kossek, & Buxton, 2016).

More so, Gatchel and Schultz (2012) indicated that efficiency, morale, absenteeism, decision-making skills, precision, imagination, attention to personal appearance, organisational skills, courtesy teamwork, effort, competence, alertness, perseverance and tardiness are likely to be impaired by stress and occupational stress which may lead to low job execution (Elovainio, Kivimaki, & Vahtera, 2002). Although job stress has a demeaning effect on slightly individual's task obligation and organisation, it also shapes calamitous

outcomes when it is related to health issues (Mimura & Griffiths, 2003). Moreover, job stress has become a challenging issue for most employers as they increase absenteeism, are addicted to alcoholism and drug abuse and increases a host of cardiovascular problems and hypertension thereby resulting in low-slung output, and making a collection to employee's difficulties such as anxiety (Michie & Williams, 2003; Meneze, 2005).

Malik (2011) illustrated that employees who have lack financial rewards, unsupportive management system and have no control over their work encounter solemn physical problems liken to blood pressure increment, heart disease and head pains. Pediwal (2011) declared that occupation stress distresses the financial, mental and physical balance of the employees. Resulting from an increment of stress, workers absent themselves from an organisation which influences the organisational performance (Shehzad, Ha, Subhan & Lee, 2011). The outcomes of constant stress such as damaged relationships with clients and colleagues, higher accident rates, early retirement due to health issues, inefficiency, high staff turnover, and even untimely deaths, sickness absence on individuals and business are worrying. Stress may have physiological and psychological destructions on employees' health which may lead to their low contribution to the organisation (Yilmaz, 2013). Not only do individuals suffer, but turnover, work-related coincidences, impaired decision making and absenteeism also affect the organisation (Badar, 2011).

Salami, Ojokuku and Ilesanmi (2010) posited that stress interdependently disturbs the workers' task obligation directly. Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) also defined work contacts, work home interface, job

security, role ambiguity, compensation and benefits, lack of job autonomy, lack of management support as the crucial sources of creating job stress which negatively affect the performance of employees (Nowack, 2010). The estimation is that 40%-60% of all employees' rates of jobs stress have an extreme effect on their family balance and health. Over 70% of USA workforce accept as true that there is no health links between their family's work and lives whereas above 50% of women in the USA decided to quit from proficient careers after investing largely in formal education and training.

Studies show that occupation stress has adversative effects on the employees' task obligation. A host of factors that include insufficient monetary, workload and rewards role conflict have shown that there is an increase in occupational stress which worsens the effects on employee's performance (Celine, 2018). Here, there is a probability that the presence of stress rather decreases the performance of employees, increases absenteeism and the loss of functional processing capacity of employees. The latter affects the performance of employees in two diverse ways namely short term of which stress harms employee's performance through overwork of attention resulting in subpar ability to perform, and long term (chronic) that which allows stress to weaken the intellectual functioning of the brain which affects performance (Matthews, Wohleber & Lin, 2019). This finding displays a notable contrast relationship between occupational stress and decreased performance.

The literature has extensively shown a relationship between the beneficial and harmful effects of stress whereas settling more heavily on the destructive effects. The advantageous effects of stress deal with homeostasis

upkeep which then develops prospects for survival. The adversative effects of stress, explicitly chronic stress, overshadow the positive types. Chronic stress places a key role in intensifying negative health effects as it disrupts the immune system through diseases and different pathological conditions (Bosnjak, Dobovski-Poslon, Bibib, & Bosnjak, 2019).

An overtiredness of the body's capacity for an appropriate reaction under chronic stress may bring about far lifelong immunologic dysfunctions. This can have serious ramifications on the overall quality of health and life (Bosnjak, et al., 2019). A continued period of chronic stress makes the body undergo chronic hypersecretion of glucocorticoids which reduces the hippocampus and hypothalamus volumes. The functioning of the immune system under chronic secretion of cortisol could also be altered as a result of big risk factors that cause diseases, for instance, autoimmune disorders.

In 2017, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated about 60% of known diseases are caused by stress which results in many mental disorders; hence, an increase in physical health outcomes. The essential organ perceiving and determining whether or not the received signal is grouped as a threat for maintaining homeostasis or not is the brain. The human brain can display structural and functional plasticity to respond to stressful happenstances. Brain plasticity is the brains' ability to change and adapt to a new state of affairs grounded on earlier experiences (Mceven, 2017).

However, chronic stress can cause brain inequalities in the neural circuitry which could have adversative results on a person's decision making, mood, anxiety and cognition. As indicated earlier, studies have given the undesirable connection between chronic stress and cognitive functioning in

individuals. For chronic stress weakened the required functioning of action from the prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus. Both acute and chronic stress have displayed the reduced execution of tasks demanding high intellectual capability (Sandi, 2013).

Massey and Bashir's (2007) estimation made was that approximately 100 million workdays are wasted as a result of stress. Closely, 50%-75% of diseases are akin to stress. Stress increases absenteeism; hence, employment losses. The ratios of stress-affected employees in organisations have an alarming rate of increases, and this affects both the employee's performance and achievement goals set (Subha & Shakil, 2009). In that way, Massey and Bashir (2007) avowed that the influence of stress on employees in organisations is the consequential effect of spurring internal or external mental strain or both that prevents people from answering irrespective of his or her department, any form of discrimination against as male and female employees and the kind of organisation.

Dean and Flett (2002) viewed work-related stress to be the leading cause of workplace low productivity. Agreeably Gaumail (2003) believed that stress affects the organisational outputs when there are increases in absenteeism, decreases in performance and dissatisfactions on the parts of employees. In the same way, Dessler (2000) beforehand agreed that the organisational stress results are far-reaching and they lead to quality and quantity reduction of job execution. Frost (2003) later divulged that meticulous and respected workers who have undesirable experiences at their workplaces have ruined hopes, derailed goals and undermined confidence. He further asserted that organisations ought to attempt to recognise emotional

pains when they occur and to execute intervening mechanisms that will potentially reverse the forthcoming lethal situations at the workplace.

Many researchers stated in the same way that stress at workplaces affects employees' task obligations. Elovainio, Kivimaki and Vahtera (2002) equally opined that occupation stress paves ways for the organisation's performance to decrease. As stress is being compared to chronic diseases, these workplace situations depressingly affect employees' performance. For the simplest definition, stress could be a regular experience occurring in a situational reaction causing employees to rise above challenges. Considering this assertion, stress has a constructive influence as it enables an employee to progress in their duty to increase such employee's motivation at work, problem-solving and innovation. Similarly, Deshpande and Chopra (2007) agreed that good stress (*eustress*) is scientifically a constructive outcome of worrying incidences that motivate people to rise above the challenges they face. To some extent, stress could, however, be reduced if not its negative effects may cause the employee's work inefficiency.

Recommendations put in place to minimise occupational stress

Folkman and Lazarus (1988) suggested that there exist two types of coping mechanisms explicitly problem-focused and emotion-focused coping mechanisms. The problem-focused coping mechanisms hold that the stressors are either changed or removed whereas the emotion-focused coping mechanisms which constructively deal with stress hold that employees learn to adapt themselves to the situations as the employees apply strategies such as relaxation, companionship, exercise and recreational activities (Bloisi, Cook, & Hunsaker, 2007). The difference that lies between problem-focused coping

mechanisms and emotion-focused coping mechanisms is the stressor in the problem-focused is being tackled directly, be it transformed or eliminated, while the people in emotion-focused coping mechanisms learn, change or adapt to the stressor (Bloisi, Cook, & Hunsaker, 2007).

Felton, Coates and Christopher (2015) and Sweet, Pitt-Catsoupes, and James (2016) provided that the recommendations laid down to minimise stress are the provision of counselling services and medical assistance, elimination of environmental stressors, building stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability, setting personal priorities, creating a positive attitude and granting flexible work schedule and leave days. Additionally, Hordacre, Howard, Moretti and Spoehr, (2014) stipulated that job requirements evolve together with matching tasks with abilities, knowledge and capacity, providing ongoing training to improve abilities, applying a proper management style; creating a positive working culture, encouragement, providing opportunities for career growth and personal advancement are some of the measures to put in place to minimise the occupational stress.

Similarly, some of the suggested steps to reduce workplace stress (Moen, Kelly, Fan, Lee, Almeida, Kossek, & Buxto, 2016; Sweet, Pitt-Catsoupes, & James, 2016) include encouraging flexible work schedules such as obligation, authority, clarifying task assignments and requirements for performance assessment, granting autonomy after a delegation of authority, decision criteria, clarifying priorities and establishing improved working conditions. Studies have also shown that, negatively, occupational stress affects the immune system. Robbins (2004) divergently indicated that through relaxation alongside its techniques individuals could decrease stress and

tension by meditating, biofeedback provision and hypnosis. For the objective of relaxing comfortably, the employee must feel bodily stress-free by detaching the body from sensations and the environment (Robbins, 2004).

In this way employee reduces blood pressure, lessens heart rates and other physiological signs of stress as he or she performs relaxation exercises as well as individually opening up to or confiding in other people to mitigate a personal crisis. Although employees might find it very difficult to deliberate on a multifaceted personal traumatic issue with others, self-confession can ease stresses thereby giving such a person a positive outlook in life. This makes Robbins (2004) suggest that regular basis fair entries in a diary may achieve this purpose.

Many employees have articulated that their jobs cause them the major sources of their stresses in life. However, when their workloads are reduced, management and supervision are improved, better payments and benefits are made, and vacation times are provided, the stresses among employees can be reduced (Thomson, 2006). Likewise, Rolfe (2005) elucidated the relevance of job stresses by emphasising that employers placed a premium on management and reduction of stresses through practical strategies such as fair workload, provision of a conducive working environment, balancing of work-life, and open communication. Essentially, the management of the organisation ought to check employees' stress levels to reduce an excessively stressed employee's non-performance at the workplace.

Employees ought to be given the essential training to develop their abilities and skills. Robbins (2004) explained further that the organisation approach to manage stress which includes effective upward and downward

communication in organisation, employee's training programmes, improvement in personnel's good welfare policies and packages, pension schemes, incentives, improvement in the physical work environment and good job design should provide technical support to employees. Humara's (2002) conduction of a review concerning programmes such as sports performance had found some common mechanisms across the programmes evaluated. The review results indicate that programmes tend to be the most effective mechanisms to improve performance and reduce anxiety which will aid in positive thinking, focusing attention, goal-setting, relaxation, situation restructuring, and imagery and mental rehearsal.

Martin (2014) who cited Jordan (n. d) emphasised that various organisations' stress management strategies include a strategy called counselling and life management, or the CALM programme which has been developed to provide staff with lifestyle education and health and confidential support to assist in problem-solving and resolving conflicts that occur both in and outside of work. The implication is that a wide range of emotional topics such as managing anxiety, coping with bereavement, tackling stress, maintaining close relationships, dealing with harassment at work and dealing with family problems is made available to employees.

Empirical Studies

The findings of a study conducted at King Abdullah public hospital in Jordan revealed a statistically significant relationship between stress and nurses' performance (Al-khasawneh & Moh'd Futa, 2013). Using a random sample of 120 nurses, researchers were able to determine this negative outcome of stress. According to the findings of Karaman, Tu, and Yayla

(2016), nurses who experienced burnout had lower levels of performance than those who did not. The level of performance and efficiency within nurses who experienced burnout was significantly lower than that of nurses who did not (Karaman *et al.*, 2016).

Another investigation into the relationship between workplace stress and employee performance has been conducted by Hasan, Batool, and Fatima (2015). The study revealed a negative relationship between workplace stress and employee productivity among teachers in private and public schools. Similarly, Olaleye and Arogundade (2013) on university administrators in South West Nigeria, discovered an adverse relationship between workplace stress and workers' performance.

Occupational stress, in addition, has been linked to poor job performance, according to Gatchel and Schultz (2012), owing to its psychological effects on both staff and employers in general. Also, Ali, Hassan, Ali, and Bashir (2013) and Fajana, Obisi, and Oke (2011) have demonstrated that occupational stress has a negative relationship with work attitudes, self-confidence, life dissatisfaction, and an increase in the likelihood of leaving a job and they provided evidence to support this conclusion.

Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua, and Stough (2001) investigated how new technologies and software packages were implemented in Austrian universities, they discovered that a third of the employees complained of workload and stress experience. The reason has been that they lack adequate training and insufficient time allocated to adopting the necessary skills and technical know-how to use these systems productively. Thus, the work

overload and insufficient time resulted in unrealistic pressure and significantly increased levels of work stress among the employees.

Occupational stress is now considered a global issue that affects individuals' performance as well as organisations' performance (Watson, Goh, & Sawang, 2011). Watson et al. (2011) examined the variations between men's and women's stress levels and how they dealt with stress in the workplace in different ways. The study sampled 258 workers from a variety of professions for study, comprising 106 men and 152 females. When faced with a stressful situation at work, the study revealed that men and women form distinct groups and use different coping mechanisms. However, women were found to be more exposed to stress factors than men, as stress among the women was high.

Nigerian managers' performance and stress were examined by Salami, Ojokuku, and Ilesanmi (2010). The study sampled 135 managers with at least five years of managerial experience for the study. Nigerian managers were found to have poor concentration, mental blockage, and poor decision-making skills as a result of workplace stress factors, such as psychological strain, workload, role ambiguity and so on. In light of these findings, the researchers suggested that organisations should implement job redesign techniques to curtail the stress indicators. Counselling and stress reduction workshops, for example, should be offered more frequently in organisations.

Employees of a large North American multinational corporation in Malaysia (N = 305) and Pakistan (N = 325) were studied by Jamal (2007) for the impact of occupational stress on their performance. Employees' responses to a structured questionnaire about work stress and turnover intentions were

analysed. The company's records were used to gather information on employee performance and absences. Stress and performance are negatively correlated in both countries, but the evidence in support of this relationship is stronger in one than in the other. In all, stress was found to harm performance.

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework is based on the ideas and the variables resulting from the research. Occupational stress (work overload, physical environment, individual factors and management styles) may affect employees' performance (productivity, health of employees, morale, and job quality).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

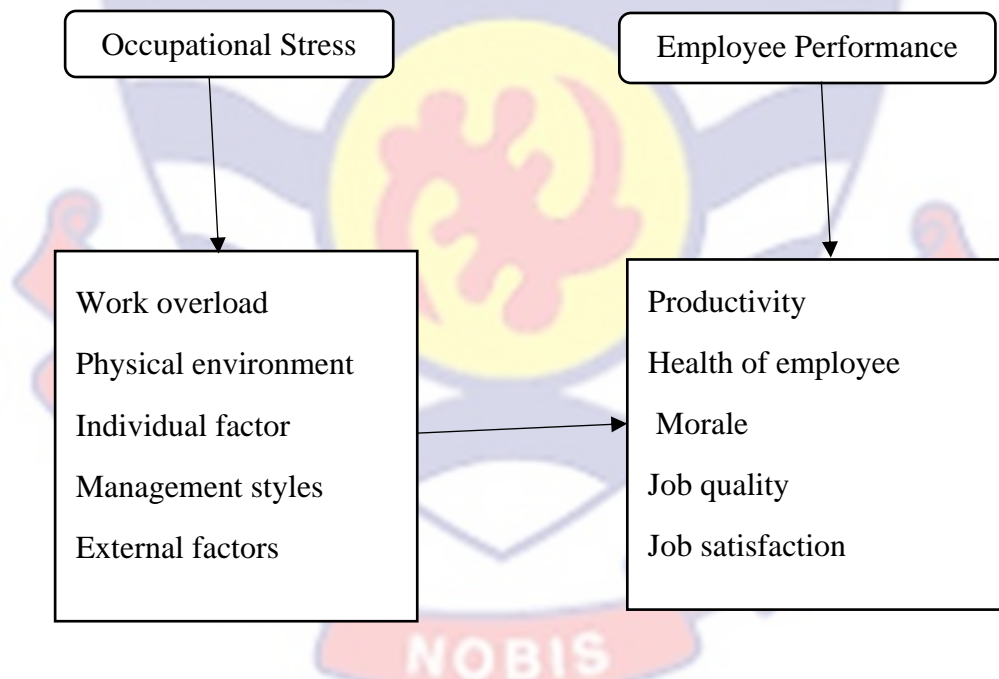


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of occupational stress on employee's performance in the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana.

Source: Author's construct (2021).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

Building upon this study's purpose and reviewing relevant literature in the second chapter, this chapter looks at the methodology work with in the study. It covers the research design, the population, sample and methods of sampling, description of instruments, procedure for data collection and data analyses procedures as well as the study's ethical issues.

Research Approach

The research approach plays important role in scientific research. Creswell (2014, p.80) averred that a study approach is "a plan or procedure for a study which spans the steps from wide-ranging expectations to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and discussions." Here, Creswell acknowledged three (3) key research methods namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method approaches respectively. A qualitative research approach explores for insights and understanding about an individual's perception of events. It is basically an inductive data analysis from themes and patterns, and from particular to general (Yin, 2016). According to Creswell, it also explores a program, activity, process, individual or groups in their natural setting.

Finally, the mixed approach involves conducting a research that involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative and qualitative research. It is used when the study is intended to provide a better understanding of the research problem (Salaria, 2012). A quantitative method is an approach in which inferential statistics and descriptive forms of quantitative techniques define the study's problems (Creswell, 2014). This

approach allows the researcher to collect and analyse data as he or she quantifies the terms to achieve his or her purpose. Given the purpose and population of this research, a quantitative approach is considered the most (Robson & McCartan, 2015). It is to note that, the choice of an approach relies on the purpose of the study.

Research Design

The research used a descriptive survey design. This design allows the data to be collected, and also, to test the hypotheses to answer questions about current persons under the research as proposed by Amedahe (2002). Leedy and Ormrod (2013) argue that descriptive design involves either defining the features of an exploration of potential associations or the phenomenon between variables being studied. A condition in its natural state is analysed by Descriptive Survey Design. Babbie (2007) further suggests that the researcher studies what will be found in its natural state and then explains it. The descriptive design of the survey requires the use of questionnaires, interviews and data collection observations to enable the researcher to examine the effects of occupational stress on employees' performances at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana.

Creswell (2014) argues that the nature of descriptive surveys is realistic and flexible in that it defines present situations and points to specific needs. It offers data on which a rational decision can be cantered. Consequently, the descriptive survey design is suitable for this analysis. Creswell (2014) reiterated that one of the drawbacks of descriptive survey design is that the findings could be affected and often skewed by two variables based on the respondents' identities and the nature of the questions being

asked. Three shortcomings in the use of the descriptive survey method for study have been found by Babbie (2007). These include the difficulty of ensuring that items labelled on the questionnaire or interview guide are very clear to avoid participants getting difficulty in responding correctly to the provided question, and to avoid the difficulty of completing the questionnaires in time.

Population

Ampofo, Amoah and Peprah (2020, p. 89) averred that population “is the total aggregation of cases that meet a specified set of criteria”. Notwithstanding, the population targeted for the study comprised all the employees at the Forestry Commission within the catchment areas in the Central Region. The total population is 170 workers.

Sampling and Sample Procedure

A variety of criteria which include the size of the variables control the sample size, the research design, the proportions of the available population, and the analytical method of the data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). To select the sample from the population of forestry workers, Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) sample size determination table was used. In this study, 117 forestry workers in the Central Region were selected through the use of a stratified sampling technique to select samples from four (4) districts namely Cape Coast, Winneba, Assin Fosu and Dunkwa Forest districts all in the Central Region. Stratified sampling was employed because there was the need to get a representation of all workers in the Central Region.

Furthermore, the researcher selected a subset of participants from the population by using simple random sampling of which Gavetter and Forzano

(2015) avowed that it represents probability sampling that the researcher casually decides on his or her subsection of partakers from a population. To choose respective members of the population, there is an identical likelihood of choosing anyone in this selection. This method appears to be the simplest of all the possible sample approaches as it warrants only a single casual selection. This could help it have excellent both internal and external validity due to the randomisation. The logic behind simple random sampling is that it removes bias from the selection procedure and should result in representative samples, according to (Gravetter, & Forzano, 2015, p. 101). This decision was also influenced by the study's goal, which calls for findings to be generalised.

To be more specific, the respondents were chosen at random using the lottery method. The researcher got a list of all responders from the Forestry Commission’s Human Resource Department before assigning figures to an individual. The figures were then placed in a ballot box and drawn at random up until the sample size was reached. The target demographic was represented by the numbers chosen at random. Table 1 shows the districts, the population size and the sample size chosen.

Table 1: Districts and the sample

District	Population	Sample
Assin Foso Forest District	37	26
Winneba Forest District	32	22
Cape Coast Forest District	47	33
Dunkwa Forest District	54	36
Total	170	117

Source: Field survey (2021)

Research Instrument

The questionnaire is the primary data gathering instrument used in this investigation. The use of a questionnaire is justified because it is a rapid

approach to obtaining data. Moreover, if well-structured, it is proven to be extremely valid and reliable (Neuman, 2000). Despite the advantages present in using a questionnaire in research, there exist some disadvantages. According to Burns and Grove (2001) questionnaires have been known to be to have a question of validity and accuracy. For this reason, Polit and Beck (2006), the data-collection instrument must be precise and consistent to reflect real scores of the attributes under inquiry while minimising error. Respondents may provide any response they think may please the researcher causing valuable information loss and also answers that are sometimes short.

The questionnaire made use of a mixture of multiple-choice questions and a 4-point Likert scale. The 4-point Likert scale questions were used to solicit information from the respondents that best represents occupation stress effects on employee performances of the Forestry staff. The choices of the response used were “Strongly Agree– 4, Agree –3, Disagree– 2, and Strongly Disagree– 1.” The instrument used encompassed three unlike segments which are A, B, and C. Section A entailed likely causes of the occupational stress. Section B highlighted the occupation stress effects on employees’ work execution. The final section was comprised of the measures to be taken to minimise occupational stress.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

An instrument’s validity is as critical as its reliability. A test is not valid if it does not perform its intended role well. There are four categories of validity, according to Remmers (2005): content, contemporaneous, construct and predictive validity. Content validity discusses the nature of the content (how well) that the test samples the subject matter. Concurrent validity

assesses how closely test results match commonly used performance indicators. Predictive validity is concerned with how well the test's predictions are validated by future evidence. This form of validity has no bearing on the current research. The construct validity of a test refers to the psychological properties of a test measure. When the other three categories of validity are insufficient, this sort of validity is applied.

The questionnaire items were vetted by the researcher's supervisor before the data collection began. The questionnaire was pre-tested at one of the forestry commissions in the Western Region of Ghana, this organisation was chosen because is of the same characteristics as the one that was sampled for the study. In this study, the purpose of the pre-test was to test its reliability and content validity and to identify and rectify problem areas in the questions. The questionnaire was administered to a trial test outside of the study area to assess its reliability. The questionnaire was given to 30 employees who were excluded from the study. The instrument's core reliability used was determined by using the Cronbach's Alpha method of determining reliability co-efficient. The reliability co-efficient for sections B, C, and D as well as the total items were 858, 823, and 946 respectively. Roland and Idsoe (2001, p.101) echoed that these scores are regarded as significant for a research purpose.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought the approval of the organisation where the study was carried out. Beforehand, a letter of introduction had been acquired from the Department of Human Resource Management to seek out permission from the authorities of the organisation. The authorities of the organisation were

informed about the study. Having sought the consent of the management of the organisation, the staff who were selected to participate in the study were contacted.

The opinion poll was personally administered and the items on the questionnaire were clearly outlined to the respondents before any responses are made. This ensures that the staff responds consistently and appropriately. It must be emphasised that, the researcher administered the questionnaires personally to the respondents. It should be pointed out that, the questionnaires were administered and collected within a period of three weeks. In all, 30 minutes was given to the respondents to respond to the items on the instruments. The returning rate of the questionnaire was 99.2% successful.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data collection is only useful in the study when it is organised, summarised, and observations are described in detail (Nassè, 2019; Ampofo, 2019; Ampofo, Nassè, Amoah & Peprah, 2020). To ensure clarity and work accuracy, the data obtained from the field were sorted, edited and coded before all items were run in the SPSS version 23. To interpret and present the findings, statistical descriptive methods such as frequencies, mean, percentages and standard deviation were used to purposefully analyse the data. The study of the research questions used frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation.

Ethical Considerations

An ethical consideration refers to the standards or norms for conduct that differentiate between right and wrong. Ethical considerations therefore help to determine differences between acceptable and unacceptable

behaviours in research (Creswell, 2014). In pursuance of ethical issues, the right to privacy, voluntary participation, no harm to participants, anonymity and confidentiality were held in high esteem. It was emphasised that student leaders have rights to privacy and as a result, these rights must be respected at every point in time.

In this light, the rights of privacy of respondents in the study were respected and under no circumstances were respondents studied without their knowledge or consent. In addition, one of the key components regarding ethical issues in research has to do with respondents' voluntary participation. Responding to questionnaires in the study of this nature demanded a lot of time and energy which can lead to the disruption of the regular activities of respondents. It is for this motive that the researcher explained the objectives and significance of the study to the respondents and therefore, allow respondents to exercise their voluntary right in their participation of the study.

Another ethical issue in educational research has to do with the fact that, the exercise should not cause an injury to the participants under study irrespective of whether they volunteer or not to participate in the study. The concept of harm as used in this regard can be physical, psychological or emotional. In pursuance of this, questions were framed in a way that gave the respondents several alternatives and freedom in selecting the answers that were most appropriate to them.

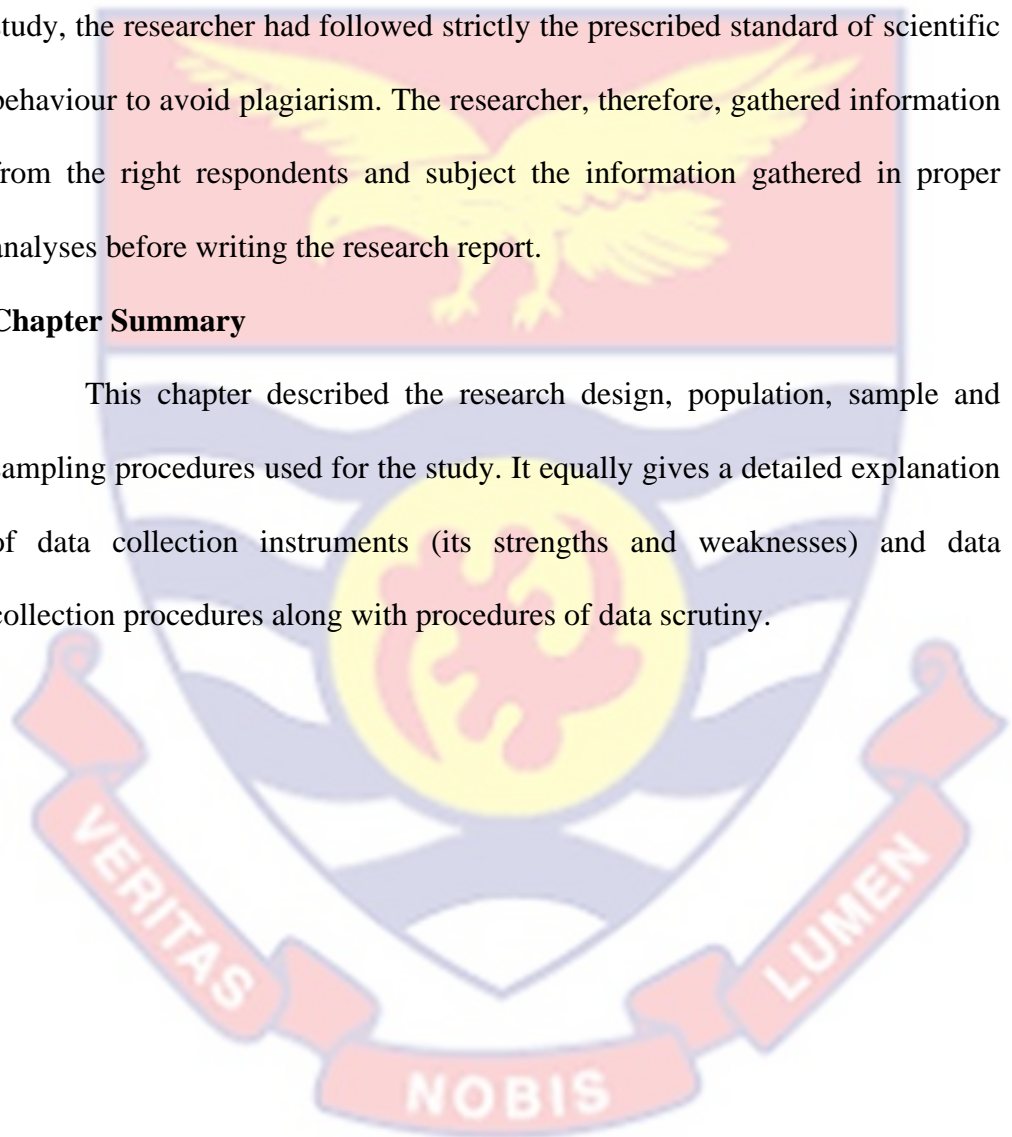
Furthermore, as part of the ethical issues in research, the ultimate goal is to protect and safeguard the well-being, interest and the identity of the respondents. In pursuance of this, the researcher adopted anonymity and confidentiality techniques such as disclosure of respondents' names in

ensuring the protection of respondents. The respondents were therefore assured that the information they were providing would be kept confidential.

In addition, it is said that in research, unethical behaviour which include plagiarism is not welcomed. This normally originates when a researcher falsifies, distorts data or plagiarises other peoples' works. In this study, the researcher had followed strictly the prescribed standard of scientific behaviour to avoid plagiarism. The researcher, therefore, gathered information from the right respondents and subject the information gathered in proper analyses before writing the research report.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures used for the study. It equally gives a detailed explanation of data collection instruments (its strengths and weaknesses) and data collection procedures along with procedures of data scrutiny.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter which presents the findings also discusses the results of the research findings. It offers the general description of the respondents' biographic data followed by the results of the data analysis relating to each of the research questions.

Table 2: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	82	70.1
Female	35	29.9
Total	117	100.0

Source: Field survey (2021)

Inferring from Table 2, out of the 117 respondents who were involved in the study, 82 were males representing 70.1% while 35 were females representing 29.9%. Thus, the majority of the respondents were males. This, therefore, reinforces the clarion call to improve upon the ratio of females as compared to males.

Table 3: Academic qualification of respondents

Academic qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate A	15	12.8
Diploma	19	16.2
First Degree	54	46.2
Masters	16	13.7
HND	3	2.6
SHS	5	4.3
JHS	5	4.3
Total	117	100.0

Source: Field survey (2021)

The academic qualification of the respondents as indicated in Table 3 revealed that 15 respondents representing 12.8% of the respondents sampled for the study had certificate A while 19 respondents representing 16.2 had a

Diploma certificates. Again, 54 respondents who constitute 46.2% of the 117 respondents sampled had First Degree while 16 of the respondents representing 13.7% had Master’s Degree. It was further revealed that 4.3.0% of the respondents had Senior Secondary Education while 5 (4.3%) also attained the level of Junior Higher School. However, a minority of about 3 (2.6%) had HND education. The result of the analysis of the academic qualification of the respondents is an indication that most participants are literates.

Table 4: Age range of respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 25 years	4	3.4
25-30 years	41	35.0
31-35 years	28	23.9
36-40 years	12	10.3
Above 40 years	32	27.4
Total	117	100.0

Source: Field survey (2021)

Table 4 showed that 41 out of the 117 respondents were between the ages of 25 and 30 years, representing 35.0% while 32 were within the ages of above 40 years, representing 27.4%. Again, 28 out of the 117 respondents were between the ages of 31 and 35. However, only 12 out of the 117 respondents were between the ages of 36 and 40, representing 10.3% while 4 were within the age range of below 25 years. However, most of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 30, indicating that most of the respondents were the active class and were very sensitive to issues that affected them and also picked up habits that could turn out to be permanent in their lives. Indeed, the active class would always want to learn, explore, experiment and know its effect.

Table 5: Working experience of respondents

Working experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 year	10	8.5
1-2 years	27	23.1
3-4 years	27	23.1
5 years and above	53	45.3
Total	117	100.0

Source: Field survey (2021)

Table 5 showed that 53 out of the 117 respondents sampled for the study were in the working experience of 5 years and above representing 45.3% whiles 27(23.1%) respondents were within 1-2 years and 3-4years of working experience respectively. However, only 10 out of 117 representing 8.5% were in less than 1-year of working experience. This indicates that most of the employees at the Forestry Commission are not new and it does not require more intense training and development or workshop for them to be able to meet various targets and standards set by the organisation. Thus, the firm will not invest in training and development sessions to keep them abreast with the practices.

Objective One: Causes of Occupational Stress at the Forestry Commission

The foremost purpose of this research question was to identify the causes of occupational stress at the forestry commission. Standard deviation and mean were used to analyse the data. To find the test value of the criterion measure, the four-point Likert scale scores ranging from 1 to 4 were identified. The cutoff point of the mean score established for each indicator was 2.50. Thus, $1+2+3+4=10/4=2.5$. The analysis of the results is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Causes of occupational stress

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The physical environment's problems such as extreme temperatures and excessive noise	2.91	.906
The quality of work problems such as an excessive pace, lack of diversity or too little work	2.81	.850
Conflicts in responsibilities or role ambiguities	3.15	.791
Peers, supervisors and subordinates' poor relationship	3.00	.965
Career development stressors such as perceived obsolescence, lack of job security, and inadequate advancement	2.90	.814
External environments such as political changes, competitiveness, economic situations, and the arrival of new technology	2.96	.845
Personal factors like family issues and age	3.20	.801
Lack of motivation	3.91	.879
Work overload (Long working hours)	3.26	.855
Time pressure	3.14	.909
Inadequate supervisory/management support	2.85	.773
Low co-worker support	2.85	.812
Bureaucracy	3.04	.865
Inability to match the task with abilities	3.03	.845
Lack of resources and equipment	3.26	.882

Source: Field survey (2021)

The result in Table 6 showed that averagely ($M = 2.91$; $SD = .906$) respondents agreed to the statement that the physical environment's problems such as extreme temperatures and excessive noise cause occupational stress. Respondents again believed that quality of work problems such as an excessive pace and lack of multiplicity causes occupational stress ($M = 2.81$; $SD = .850$). The respondents strongly agreed that conflicts in responsibilities or role ambiguities ($M=3.15$; $SD=.791$), peers, supervisors and subordinates' poor relationship ($M=3.32$; $SD = .788$) and occupational development stressors such as perceived obsolescence, lack of job safety, and insufficient advancement ($M=2.90$; $SD = .814$) cause occupational stress.

It was also revealed that external environment such as political changes, competitiveness, economic situations, and the arrival of new technology (M=2.96; SD =.845), personal factors like family issues and age (M=3.20; SD =.801) were agreed on as issues causing stress. Again, respondents agreed to the statement that lack of motivation (M=3.05; SD=.977) causes occupational stress. Also, work overload (Long working hours) (M=3.26; SD=.855) and time pressure (M=3.14; SD=.909) was strongly perceived as causes of occupational stress. It was further revealed that inadequate supervisory/management support (M=2.85; SD=.773) and low co-worker support (M=2.85; SD=.865) were averagely agreed on as causes of occupational stress.

Finally, bureaucracy (M = 3.04; SD =.865), inability to match task with abilities (M = 3.03; SD =.845) and lack of resources and equipment (M = 3.26; SD =.882) were strongly agreed on as causes of occupational stress. It was no surprise when respondents agreed to most of the statement. This result postulated that there exist a host of occupational stress sources and these sources emanated from several factors as suggested in the literature. For examples, the respondents agreed that the physical workplace environment has a direct influence on the employees' health and safety, performance, comfort, productivity, concentration, morale and job satisfaction. The unfavourable and improper workplace environment leads to work stress which may be the main source of job stress since the employees might not work diligently in an uncondusive working environment.

Again, respondents settled that, among the Forestry Commission workers, work-life conflict is a major source of job stress. The implication is

that the Forestry Commission workers who experience conflicting roles in both home and at the workplace could invariably increase their work demands; hence, the increase in stress levels. Similarly, the respondents ascertained that the level of peers, supervisors and subordinates' poor relationship had become job stress' major source. This suggests that the more there exists good relations among management and employees and/or between colleague employees there is the tendency of resolving higher levels of job stress. Debatably, individual workers' bad relations in an organisation may result in internal conflicts that could affect employees' commitment, teamwork, invariably employee performance levels and job satisfaction levels.

This study supports the researches by (Ali, Raheem, Ahmad & Imamuddin, 2014; Blickle, Wendel & Ferris, 2010; Malik & Noreen, 2015). Ali, Raheem, Ahmad and Imamuddin found that some of the causes of stress in workers that contribute to a decline in employee capacity are workload, role conflict and insufficient monitoring incentive. According to Blickle, Wendel and Ferris, there are six broad sources of stress that is external environment, organisational factors, job characteristics, work relationships, domestic factors and personal factors. There are some occupations that generate more stress than others, and work relationships, organisational variables, personal factors and role characteristics are the wide causes of occupational stress (Malik & Noreen, 2015).

Objective Two: Effects of Occupational Stress on the Performances of Employees at the Forestry Commission

The main purpose of this research question was to ascertain the effect of occupational stress on employees' performance at the forestry commission.

The analysis of the data was done through the use of standard deviation and mean. To find the test value of the criterion measure, the four-point Likert scale scores ranging from 1 to 4 were identified. The cutoff point of the mean score established for each indicator was 2.50. Thus, $1+2+3+4=10/4=2.5$. The analysis of the results is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Effect of occupational stress on the performance of employees

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increased absenteeism and turnover	3.00	.841
Less creativity in problem-solving	3.00	.754
Reduction of work quality and quantity	3.13	.772
Reduction of job satisfaction	3.03	.725
Poor communication and increased conflict	2.98	.719
Stress may lead to drug abuse, alcoholism, a host of cardiovascular problems and hypertension	3.14	.840
Stress causes forgetfulness	3.16	.731
Conflict decreases and role ambiguity of worker's performance	3.11	.740
Negative effects of stress on the immune system increases the occurrence of the common cold	2.97	.737
Stress demotivates employees	3.16	.669
Stress affects the individual physiological, physical health and behaviour	3.32	.772
Stress causes premature death	3.17	.746
Stress affects the productivity of the employees	3.31	.675

Source: Field survey (2021)

The outcome in Table 7 showed that averagely (M = 3.00; SD = .841) respondents agreed that occupational stress increases absenteeism and turnover is a part of the effects of occupational stress on the performance of employees. Averagely (M = 3.00; SD = .754), respondents agreed to the statement occupational stress increases less creativity in problem solving. It was further revealed that reduction of work quality and quantity (M = 3.13; SD = .772) and reduction of job satisfaction (M = 3.03; SD = .725) were also perceived as the effects of occupational stress on the employees' performance

at the Forestry Commission. Again, the respondents averagely ($M = 2.98$; $SD = .719$) agreed that poor communication and increased conflict was the effect of occupational stress on employees' performance at the forestry commission. Stress may lead to drug abuse, alcoholism, a host of cardiovascular problems and hypertension as respondents strongly ($M=3.14$; $SD =.840$) agreed to the statement.

Similarly, stress causes forgetfulness ($M=3.16$; $SD =.731$) and conflict decreases and role ambiguity of worker's performance ($M=3.08$; $SD=1.086$) were also perceived as an effect of occupational stress on employee's performance at the Forestry Commission. Respondents strongly agreed with the statements that negative effects of stress on the immune system increase the occurrence of the common cold ($M=2.97$; $SD=.737$) and stress demotivates employees ($M=3.16$; $SD=.669$). Again, respondents believed that stress affects the individual physiological, physical health and behaviour ($M=3.16$; $SD=.669$), stress causes premature death ($M=3.16$; $SD=.669$) and stress affects the productivity of the employees ($M=3.16$; $SD=.669$) at the Forestry Commission.

From the participants' point of view, it was settled that occupational stress negatively influences the staff's performance of the Forestry Commission. The findings confirmed the research by (Celine, 2018; Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Waris, Ejaz, Fatima, & Sherazi, 2012; Bytyqi et al., 2010; Salami et al., 2010). A host of factors that include insufficient monetary, workload and rewards role conflict have shown that there is an increase in occupational stress which worsens the effects on employee's performance (Celine, 2018). Again, stress negatively as it increases frustration, tardiness

and anxiety which can destroy the economic profitability of the organisation gradually (Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Waris, Ejaz, Fatima, & Sherazi, 2012). Salami et al (2010) iterated that stress which is interdependent of employees' performance affects the employees' performance directly.

Objective Three: Recommendations Put in Place to Minimise Occupational Stress at the Forestry Commission

The main purpose of this research question was to identify recommendations put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission. Standard deviation and mean were used to analyze the data. To find the test value of the criterion measure, the four-point Likert scale scores ranging from 1 to 4 were identified. The cutoff point of the mean score established for each indicator was 2.50. Thus, $1+2+3+4=10/4=2.5$. The analysis of the results is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Recommendations put in place to minimise occupational stress

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Provision of counselling services	3.02	.809
Building of stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability	2.98	.682
Provision of medical assistance	3.11	.740
Minimisation of environmental stressors such as economic situations, competitiveness and political changes	3.00	.754
Granting flexible work schedules and leave days	3.29	.777
Adequate supervisory support	3.21	.741
Provision of necessary training to improve/ enhance skills and abilities	3.21	.749
Provision of opportunities for career growth and personal advancement	3.18	.667
Applying a proper management style; creating a positive working culture and encouragement	3.15	.702
Provision of effective channels of communication in an organisation	3.20	.710
Management should provide technical support to employees	3.24	.665
Matching tasks with abilities	3.21	.693

Relaxation techniques such as biofeedback, hypnosis, and meditation can help individuals decrease stress	2.97	.793
Stress can be decreased by opening-up	3.09	.783
Personnel policies such as good welfare packages, pension schemes and incentives are improvement strategies that can help reduce stress	3.08	.811

Source: Field survey (2021)

The outcome in Table 8 disclosed that participants strongly believed that the provision of counselling services ($M = 3.02$; $SD = .809$) was identified as one of the recommendations to minimise occupational stress at the forestry commission. Also, respondents viewed the building of stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability ($M = 2.98$; $SD = .682$) as one of the recommendations since respondents averagely agreed to the statement. Again, provision of medical assistance ($M = 3.11$; $SD = .740$) and minimisation of environmental stressors such as economic situations, competitiveness and political changes ($M = 3.00$; $SD = .754$) were strongly seen as recommendations. Also, the respondents averagely agreed that granting flexible work schedules and leave days ($M = 3.29$; $SD = .777$) was believed to be one of the ways to curb occupational stress. Adequate supervisory support ($M = 3.21$; $SD = .741$) as respondents averagely agreed to the statement.

Similarly, provision of the necessary training to improve/enhance skills and abilities ($M=3.21$; $SD =.749$), provision of opportunities for career growth and personal advancement ($M=3.18$; $SD=.667$), applying a proper management style; creating a positive working culture and encouragement ($M=3.15$; $SD =.702$), provision of effective channels of communication in the organisation ($M=3.20$; $SD =.710$), management should provide technical support to employees ($M=3.24$; $SD =.665$), matching tasks with abilities ($M=3.21$; $SD =.693$), relaxation techniques such as biofeedback, hypnosis, and

meditation can help individuals decrease stress ($M=2.97$; $SD =.793$), stress can be decreased through opening up ($M=3.09$; $SD =.783$), personnel policies, for example, pension schemes, incentives and good welfare packages are enhancement strategies that can help reduce stress ($M=3.08$; $SD =.811$) were also perceived as recommendations to be put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission.

All the indicators of recommendations to improve job performance of employees had a mean score between 2.97 and 3.29 which represents high determinants. This indicates that the workers' performances at the Forestry Commission can be highly determined by the stated recommendations to improve employees' overall performance levels as the management pays attention to the measures stipulated by the forestry workers. Participants believed that in the workplace, for instance, "employees who are content with the physical working environment are more likely to give better work" output than those in an uncondusive environment. Air quality, temperature and noise conditions in the forest affect work concentration and productivity. Similarly, the result shows that employees perform better, they are more productive and engaged when they focus on their skills than just observation and hearsay. Again, respondents were of the view that communication as a very crucial organisational element is necessary for creating collaboration within the work environment to improve workers' performance and organisational decision making.

The findings confirmed the researches by Moen, Kelly, Fan, Lee, Almeida, Kossek, & Buxto (2016), Sweet, Pitt-Catsoupes, and James (2016), Felton et al., (2015), Howard, Hordacre, Moretti, and Spoehr (2014), Thomson

(2006) and Robbins (2004). The recommendations to minimise stress are matching tasks with abilities, knowledge and capacity, providing ongoing training to improve abilities, applying a proper management style encouragement and personal advancement are some of the recommendations to put in place to minimise occupational stress.

Research Hypothesis

1. H₀: There is no statistically significant correlation between occupational stress and employees’ performance among the forestry commission staff.
2. H₁: There is a statistically significant correlation between occupational stress and employees’ performance among the Forestry Commission staff.

Analysing the hypothesis through linear regression, the employees’ performance (EP) represented the dependent variable whereas the occupational stress (OS) represented the independent variable. Three tables consisting of model summary, ANOVA and regression coefficient was used to interpret the regression analysis. Table 8 gives the model summary of the output.

Table 9: Model Summary of OS and EP

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.287 ^a	.082	.074	3.07899

a. Independent Variable: (Constant), Occupational Stress

b. Dependent Variable: Employees Performance

Source: Field survey, (2021)

There were R, R squared, and standard error as given in Table 9. The amount of variance in the dependent variable that the regression model explained is represented by the R squared. The range in employee performance in the forestry commission may be explained by occupational stress, which accounts for 8.2 percent of the variance. However, the Adjusted R2 of 7.4 percent clarifies the dependent variable’s variation that a change in the regression model or equation of the independent variable explained. A 7.4% difference in employee performance may be attributed to an adjustment in occupational stress.

Table 10 presents the ANOVA findings which indicate the test significance for R and R2. The rule of thumb is that, if the significant value of the F statistic is significant (<0.05) then Occupational Stress OS performs a decent job explaining the variance in the Employees Performance.

Table 10: ANOVA^a Regression of EP and OS

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	98.001	1	98.001	10.337	.002 ^b
	Residual	1090.221	115	9.480		
	Total	1188.222	116			

a. Dependent Variable: Employees Performance

b. Independent Variable: (Constant), Occupational Stress

Source: Field survey (2021)

Table 10 indicated a p-value was less than 0.05 which was the significance threshold as shown by the ANOVA result. This implies that the relationship as a whole was statistically significant, and therefore occupational stress at the forestry commission can significantly influence employees’

performance. These results suggest that the occupational stress which is an independent variable is good analysts of employees’ performance that which an F statistic of 10.337 and a probability (p) value of 0.002 supported although the study had rejected this null hypothesis.

Table 11 displays the regression coefficient of the influence of occupational stress on the performance of the employees among the Forestry Commission Staff.

Table 11: Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	18.957	1.806		10.495	.000
1 Occupational Stress	-.122	.038	-.287	-3.215	.002

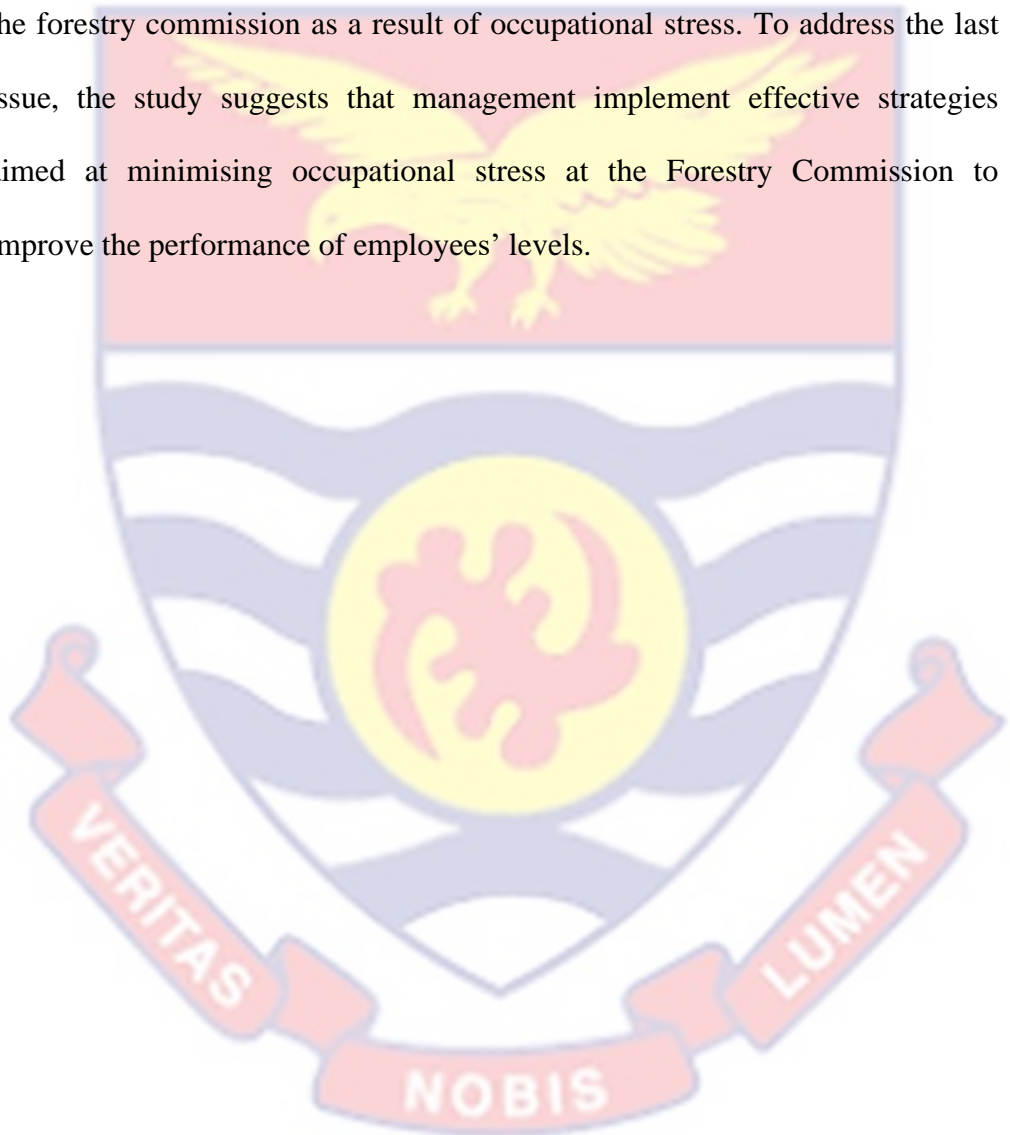
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Field survey (2021)

Table 11 indicates a negative correlation between occupational stress and employees’ performance, whose beta coefficient (using standardised coefficient) is -0.287. This implies that a unit change in occupational stress indicators will result in a negative change in employee performance at the forestry commission. A 28.7 percent decline in employee performance might be attributed to stress, according to this study. The results of this analysis and discussion indicated that occupational stress at the Forestry Commission significantly has a negative impact on employees’ performance. The findings are in line with the researches by Karaman, Tu, and Yayla (2016), Hasan, Batool, and Fatima (2015), Ali, Hassan, Ali and Bashir (2013), Olaleye and Arogundade (2013), Fajana, Obisi, and Oke (2011) and Watson, Goh and Sawang (2011). They accepted that there existed an adverse relationship between occupational stress and job performance.

Chapter Summary

This chapter had interrogated the results of the research study's objectives. The findings from this study in general are evident to conclude that occupational stress affects employees' performance. It can be drawn from the second objective that there are many constraints on employees' performance at the forestry commission as a result of occupational stress. To address the last issue, the study suggests that management implement effective strategies aimed at minimising occupational stress at the Forestry Commission to improve the performance of employees' levels.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, the findings are summarised, the conclusions of the whole study are drawn and the necessary recommendations for further research are presented.

Research Summary

The study's purpose was to scrutinise the effects of occupational stress on the employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region. Specific objectives are to:

1. examine the causes of occupational stress at the Forestry Commission.
2. ascertain the effect of occupational stress on the performance of employees at the Forestry Commission.
3. identify the measures put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission.

A quantitative research approach was employed to present the findings of the study in a quantitative format. The study employed both descriptive and inferential research design with all employees at the Forestry Commission within the catchment areas in the Central Region as its population. The administration of a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument was randomly used to collect responses of 117 from the informants sampled from the strata in a target population of 170 employees. All the 117 questionnaires administered for the study which obtained a response rate of a hundred percent (100%) were reliable and valid. The SPSS version 23 was used to process the data obtained from the field whereas descriptive and

inferential tools such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and regression-ANOVA were used to describe the data.

Summary of Key Findings

The following summaries are the study's key findings.

The research objective one was engrossed with examining the causes of occupational stress among the employees at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana. The study found: lack of motivation; work overload (Long working hours); conflicts in responsibilities or role ambiguities, supervisors and subordinates' poor relationship, peers, and subordinates; personal factors like family issues and age, time pressure; bureaucracy; and inability to match the task with abilities as major sources of occupational stress among the staff in the Forestry Commission. These issues were, therefore, recognised as key causes or high stressors among the employees at the Forestry Commission. Also, the study found that: the physical environment's problems such as extreme temperatures and excessive noise; the quality of work problems such as an excessive pace, lack of diversity or too little work; vocation development stressors such as perceived obsolescence, lack of job safety, and inadequate advancement; external environment such as economic situations, competitiveness, the arrival of new technology and political changes; inadequate supervisory/management support; low co-worker support are the average sources of stress amongst the staff. The outcome of the result implies that the more employees are unprotected from the major causes of occupational stress, the more stressed they get and, as a result, perform below average.

The second research objective highlighted the effect of occupational stress on the performance of employees at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region. In all, the study revealed that occupational stress negatively influences performance among the employees at the Forestry Commission. There are many constraints on employee performance due to occupational stress in the Forestry Commission. Respondents ascribed occupational stress to turnover and increased absence, lower work quantity and quality, reduced occupation happiness, result to poor communication and increased drug abuse, alcoholism, host of cardiovascular problems and hypertension. The findings also revealed that occupational stress result in forgetfulness among the employees, decrease employees' performance, demotivates employees, result in premature death; affects the productivity of the employees, resulting in less creativity in problem-solving, and affects the individual physiological, physical health and behaviour of the employees. In addition, the research hypothesis revealed occupational stress predicts the performance of employees.

Finally, the third objective of the research paid attention to identifying the recommendations to put in place to minimise occupational stress among the employees at the Forestry Commission. These are appropriate recommendations that need to be taken to overcome occupational stress among the employees at the Forestry Commission. Respondents believed that: Provision of counselling services; Building of stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability; Provision of medical assistance; Minimisation of environmental stressors such as economic situations, competitiveness and political changes; Granting flexible work schedule and leave days; Adequate

supervisory support might aid decrease occupational stress among the employees at the Forestry Commission. Also, the finding revealed that provision of the necessary training to improve/ enhance skills and abilities, provision of opportunities for career growth and personal advancement, applying proper administration style; creating a positive working culture and encouragement, provision of effective channels of communication in organisation, provision of technical support to employees, matching tasks with abilities, relaxation techniques like meditation, hypnosis and biofeedback, personnel policies, for example, incentives, good welfare packages and pension schemes are improvement strategies are the recommendations to be taken to reduce occupational stress among the employees.

Conclusion

Based on the key findings the study concludes that:

1. stress among the employees comes from three different dimensions such as organisational factors, external environment and personal factors. However, it is evident to conclude that these factors among the employees create avenues for dissatisfaction within the working environment and this, in turn, affects their performances. These factors lead to high stress amongst the employees at the Forestry Commission.
2. occupational stress was discovered to have a detrimental impact on the performance of employees at the Forestry Commission. The stress among the employees results in increased absenteeism and turnover, inefficiency, job dissatisfaction, poor communication and interpersonal conflict. This is evident to conclude that the more employees are unprotected from stress factors the more their output level diminished.

3. occupational stress can be reduced by providing of counselling services, the building stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability, providing medical assistance, minimisation of environmental stressors such as economic situations, competitiveness and political changes and granting flexible work schedules and leave days. The aim of the work is to assess the effect of occupational stress on employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana. Specific objectives are to examine the causes of occupational stresses at the Forestry Commission, ascertain the effect of occupational stress on the performance of employees at the Forestry Commission, identify the recommendations put in place to minimise occupational stress at the Forestry Commission. In all, I could realised that the aim of the work has been achieved per the outcome of the results obtained.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn on occupational stress among employees at the Forestry Commission, the following recommendations are provided to the Forestry Commission management.

The study suggested that policymakers together with management and employees ought to create recommendations such as providing medical assistance, minimisation of environmental stressors such as economic situations, competitiveness and political changes and granting flexible work schedules and leave days that aim to strengthen existing interrelationships between management and colleagues.

In the light of the enormous work overload on the employees, it is recommended that the Forestry Commission should make effort to increase the number of employees at the various sectors of the Commission. Also,

reallocation of assignments ought to be encouraged to assist the employees in reducing excessive work stresses and, as a result, reducing current workplace stress.

Lastly, the study suggests that the management must implement effective strategies such as provision of counselling services, building of stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability provision of medical assistance; minimisation of environmental stressors such as economic situations, competitiveness and political changes, granting flexible work schedule and leave days, adequate supervisory support many others aimed at minimising occupational stress at the Forestry Commission to improve levels of staff performance.

Suggestions for Further Research

Though the research gives a helpful understanding of job stress and the work output of employees at the Forestry Commission, the findings are unable to be applied to the whole Forestry Commission in Ghana. Thus; the research concentrated on the views and ideas of Forestry Commission's employees in the Central Region. As a result, the study suggests that future research should concentrate on a larger scope study by involving other Forestry Commissions around the country. This would aid in the generalisation of findings throughout the country's Forestry Commission.

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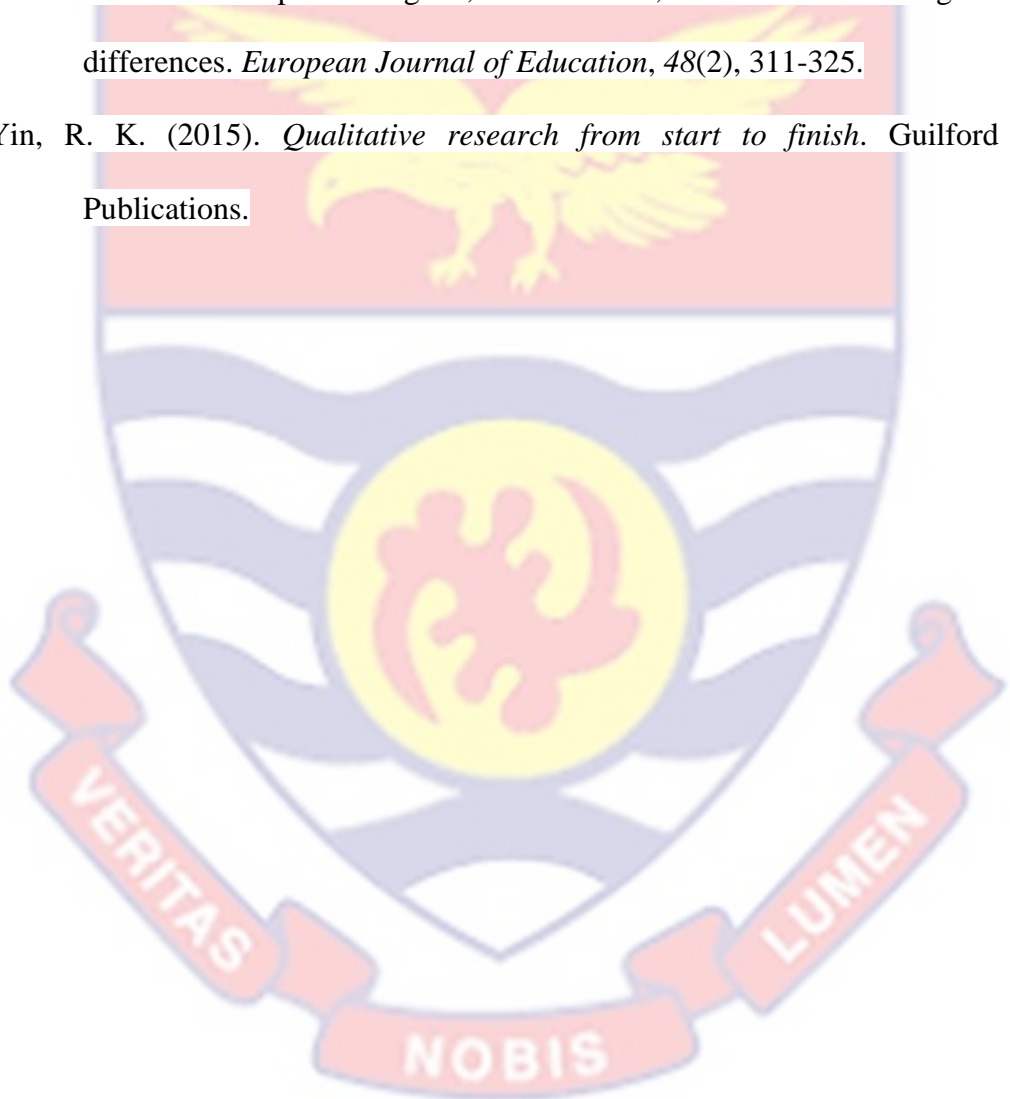
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APPENDIX A
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: **SB/DHRM/PGS/21/11**
Your Ref:

17th June, 2021

The Regional Manager
Forest Services Division
Cape Coast

Dear Sir

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

The bearer of this letter, **Agnes Owusuuaa**, is an MBA (Human Resource Management) Student of the University. She is currently conducting a research on the topic "**Effect of Occupational Stress on Employee's Performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana**".

The student would want to use your establishment as her unit of study. We would be grateful if you could help her with the necessary assistance, especially with regard to data collection.

We appreciate your anticipated assistance.

Yours faithfully

Prof. Nana Yaw Oppong
(HEAD)

APPENDIX B

TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE FOR A FINITE POPULATION

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970



APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am a research student from the University of Cape Coast who wants to investigate the effects of occupational stress on employees' performance at the Forestry Commission in the Central Region of Ghana. I humbly seek your approval to partake in this study. This survey is purposely for academic reasons only and the information you shall give shall be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

You shall indicate your choice of responses by ticking (✓) the spaces provided.

SECTION A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sex:

Male [] Female []

Academic Qualification:

Certificate A []

Diploma []

First Degree []

Masters []

Others (Specific).....

Age:

Below 25 years []

- 25 – 30 years []
- 31 – 35 years []
- 36 – 40 years []
- Above 40 years []
- Years of work experience

- Less than 1 year []
- 1-2 years []
- 3 – 4 years []
- 5 years and above []

SECTION B

Causes of the occupational stress

You shall indicate your choice of responses by ticking (√) the appropriate column to indicate the extent to which you agree to the statements that likely relate to the causes of the occupational stress.

Ratings: 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree and 4- Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4
The physical environment's problems such as extreme temperatures and excessive noise				
The quality of work problems such as an excessive pace, lack of diversity or too little work				
Conflicts in responsibilities or role ambiguities				
Peers, supervisors and subordinates' poor relationship				
Career development stressors such as perceived				

obsolescence, lack of job security, and inadequate advancement				
External environments such as political changes, competitiveness, economic situations, and the arrival of new technology				
Personal factors like family issues and age				
Lack of motivation				
Work overload (Long working hours)				
Time pressure				
Inadequate supervisory/management support				
Low co-worker support				
Bureaucracy				
Inability to match the task with abilities				
Lack of resources and equipment				

SECTION C

Effect of occupational stress on employee's performance

You shall indicate your choice of responses by ticking (√) the appropriate column to indicate the extent to which you agree to the statements that likely relate to the effects of the occupational stress on employees' performance.

Ratings: 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Agree and 4- Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4
Increased absenteeism and turnover				
Less creativity in problem-solving				

Provision of medical assistance				
Reduction of work quality and quantity				
Poor communication and increased conflict				
Stress may lead to drug abuse, alcoholism, a host of cardiovascular problems and hypertension				
Stress causes forgetfulness				
Conflict decreases and role ambiguity of worker's performance				
Negative effects of stress on the immune system increases the occurrence of the common cold				
Stress demotivates employees				
Stress affects the individual physiological, physical health and behaviour				
Stress causes premature death				
Stress affects the productivity of the employees				

SECTION D

Recommendations to put in place to minimise occupational stress

You shall indicate your choice of responses by ticking (✓) the appropriate column to indicate the extent to which you agree to the statements that likely relate to the recommendations to be put in place to minimise occupational stress.

Ratings: 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree and 4- Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4
Provision of counselling services				
Building of stress management techniques to reduce vulnerability				
Provision of medical assistance				
Minimisation of environmental stressors such as economic situations, competitiveness and political changes				
Granting flexible work schedules and leave days				
Adequate supervisory support				
Provision of necessary training to improve/ enhance skills and abilities				
Provision of opportunities for career growth and personal advancement				
Applying a proper management style; creating a positive working culture and encouragement				
Provision of effective channels of communication in an organisation				
Management should provide technical support to employees				
Matching tasks with abilities				
Relaxation techniques such as biofeedback, hypnosis, and meditation can help individuals decrease stress				

Stress can be decreased by opening-up				
Personnel policies such as good welfare packages, pension schemes and incentives are improvement strategies that can help reduce stress				

SECTION E

Measurement of employee performance

You shall indicate your choice of responses by ticking (√) the appropriate column to indicate the extent to which you agree to the statements that likely relate to the measurement of employee performance.

Ratings: 1- Very Low, 2- Low, 3- High and 4-Very High

Statements	1	2	3	4
I complete my work roles adequately				
I am loyal to the organisation				
I complete assigned tasks with quality				
I am punctual to work				
I perform the task that is expected of me professionally (Quality of work done)				
I fulfill the responsibilities specified in my job description on time				
I have adequate control over the stressful conditions of my work				
I am responsive to all those who need my services at the organisation				

THANK YOU