

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS
AMONG SENIOR MEMBERS IN SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
IN GHANA**

FOSTER KWASI AGBEMAFLE

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GHANA

BY

FOSTER KWASI AGBEMAFLE

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MANAGEMENT

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Signature: Date:

Name: Foster Kwasi Agbemaflle

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declared that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with guidelines and supervision of dissertations laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Signature: Date:

Name: Mr. Frederick Koomson

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out how stress affects senior members in some selected public Universities in Ghana and the management strategies that can be adopted to influence their work performance. A total of 300 participants were randomly selected from two public Universities in Ghana namely; University of Cape Coast and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. A 34 item questionnaire were designed and administered. The research data was analyzed using the SPSS, the chi square and simple percentage descriptions. Findings from the study revealed that majority of the senior members experienced some form of stress and do not put in any coping or management strategies to avert the situation. Furthermore, the study revealed that length of working in the University and age were not significant factors in the management of stress. Conclusion and recommendations were made to serve as a guide for senior members and other workers in general.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, wife and children.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

The accelerated and hectic pace of modern life styles, the changing nature of the world of work and its attendant problems on workers to perform creditably give rise to a critical assessment of work related stress in organisations and institutions. Educational administrators, especially those of higher institutions have been concerned with making efforts in addressing issues of emotional stability in educational counseling and administration. Greenberg (2002) maintains that good mental health and emotional stability are important for the achievement of organisational and institutional goals.

Stress has become a highly pervasive phenomenon in the world. It is one of the problems affecting high productivity and causing a lot of financial drain on organisations, companies as well as institutions including Ghanaian Universities. People all over the world, (not only senior members of our Universities), experience on and off the job stress. Stress is a necessary and natural life ingredient. The major causes, however, can be found in the home and or societal environments. A major source of stress according to Sylvester (1977) cited in Greenberg (2002) is change, because life changes initiate either pleasant or unpleasant stress within people. Gidson (2000) predicts some stress – related distinction changes like being to jail, experiencing the death of a spouse, or loved

one. Miller (2000) supports this view when he suggested that any event in ones life which causes a change or requires some readjustment is stress producing.

Behavioural scientists believe that stress places special physical or psychological demands on a person. It is anything that may cause an individual's disequilibrium (Ogden, 1976). Even though, man's psychological responses to stress is surprisingly uniform, the forms of stress are numerous. As divorce could be stressful, so also could marriage. Termination of appointment is stressful. It could even be all things that are displeasing or pleasing and perhaps the one common statement that could be made of stress is that everyone feels it at one time or the other.

Stress has been conceptualized by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as a person-environment transaction. This conceptualization of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) takes into account individual differences in perception of event, threat, desirability, personal resources, and the ability to cope and respond to options.

Workers in organisations may experience a spectrum of stresses, ranging from ordinary to severe (Kostelecky, 1997). These stresses may emanate partly from the normal psycho-physical and partly from environmental and socio-cultural factors (Simons, Kalichman and Santrock, 1994). Examples of physical manifestations of stress include respiratory illness, such as frequent headaches (Berger, 1980); peptic ulcers (Baltus, 1997); and total fatigue, mental and physical exhaustion which do not disappear even with a good night sleep. Other physical manifestations include various skin irritations, visual loss or gain in body weight, dizziness and blurred vision.

Psychological manifestations of stress include depression, anxiety, tension, including a lowered tolerance for frustration (Berger, 1980; Greenberg; 2002) low self esteem, general feeling of worthlessness, insecurity, helplessness, cognitive impairment including confused thinking, denial of reality and increased difficulty in making decisions rationally. Experiencing mental and family problems, loss of sexual interest, boredom, feeling of being overworked and overwhelmed and sometimes even total emotional breakdown are additional psychological manifestations of stress.

Differences in the stress experience of individuals on the basis of socio-cultural and other environmental factors have been observed (Haynes and Feinleib, 1989; McBride, 1990; Simon 1991, cited by Ocansey, 2004:56). One socio-cultural factor that plays a role in stress is gender, (Lerner, 1985; McBride, 1990; Rodin and Lekovics, 1990; cited by Ocansey, 2004:56). The individual's socio-economic status and other living conditions are also determinants of the level of stresses they experience. Chronic life conditions, such as inadequate housing, dangerous neighbourhoods, burdensome responsibilities, and economic uncertainties are potent stressors in the lives of people (Simons, Kalichman and Santrock, 1994).

Among workers, other sources of stress such as work overload, social and interpersonal relationship and time related pressures (including rushing to meet dead lines or to be punctual at work place) have been identified (Insel and Roth, 2000). The community and society in which an individual lives can also be a

major source of stress (Insel and Roth, 2000). Such feelings and magnitude of felt stress among University senior members are the concern of this study.

Review of literature on stress and its management reveals that studies on work related stress have become an important issue in today's world. The American Institute of Stress indicates that 43 per cent of all adults in America experience stress – related health effects. This affects the workplace as well. Stress can lead to a reduction in productivity, low levels of morale among workers and an increase in employee turnover among many other adverse effects (Davies, 2000). According to Davies (2000), nearly one million Americans miss work everyday due to stress-related factors. In America companies spend three billion dollars annually to cover the costs of absent workers, lower levels of productivity, employee turnover, medical and legal costs (Davies, 2000).

Furthermore, the American Institute of Stress estimates that 60 to 80 per cent of industrial accidents are caused by stressed workers. The Institute also speculates that 40% of employee's turnover is a result of stressful working conditions. This confirms the observation of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), cited by Trenberth and Dewe, (2005:101), that stress is "a person –environment transaction".

Work stress according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (Levine, 2000). As one can observe, these days, stress management has become a vital topic to companies and institutions wanting to improve their

bottom line. The studies stated above even though can be applicable to the present study, may have some limitations because they were conducted predominantly with white populations (Lazaurs and Folkman, 1984; Davies, 2000; Levine, 2000).

More so, there have been research studies on stress conducted by others. For example, Thoits (1986) indicates that inter-role conflicts arising from the combination of work and family roles have a greater impact on women than on men. Coverman (1993) also studied 249 married women and 687 married men and reported that family conflicts significantly increases women's psycho-physiological symptoms and not men's psycho-physiological symptoms.

In another study Thoits (1983), points out that the impact of multiple roles on psychological well-being generally show support for the positive psychological outcome of multiple roles. Other studies like that of Kessler and Mckae (1991) and Rosenfield (1992) also report psychological benefits for women having both work and family roles. Some of these psychological benefits are experience and resistance to change. Experience is the knowledge or skill gained from being engaged in an activity (Baltus, 1997). That is, one learn from experience about how to solve problems. Experience thereon, teaches one not to repeat an activity that has brought undesirable results. Also, resistance to change, according to Baltus (1997), is part of psychological self-preservation, similar to physical preservation. Baltus is of the view that it is often more comfortable in psychological as well as physical respects to stay as one is.

Similarly, Griffith (1983) in Swanson-Kauffman, (1987), cited in Bedu-Addo, (1999), observes that the combination of work and family roles are more stressful for women than for men. In another study conducted by States and Stats cited by Swanson-Kauffman, (1987) in Bedu-Addo (1999), it was observed that in comparing female and male managers and other professionals, it was found out that women reported higher levels of stress and stressors and these were more family related and not work.

DeFrank and Ivancevich (1998), contend that census data in the US suggests that about 60 per cent of US workers bring work home at night, and this number is increasing, putting greater pressures on these people to not only fulfill their family roles at home, but also to maintain their work roles there as well.

In another development, a research conducted by Saint Paul Fire Marine Insurance Company in the United States cited by DeFrank and Ivancevich (1998) reveals that an estimated 75-90 per cent of visits of workers to physicians are stress related. For example, over 40 percent of workers surveyed by Northwestern National Life insurance company felt their jobs were very or extremely stressful. Such concerns lead to decrease in performance, increased absenteeism, used of drugs, alcohol and lower commitment to the organisation or institution.

In Ghana, though statistical records on work and family stress are not compiled, it is very common to hear senior members complaining about their job schedules as well as their conditions of service. Increased enrollment of students on the campuses of the universities is one of the evidence of work stress that is likely to affect the academic and administrative work of the lectures.

Academically, lectures have to mark more assignment and examination scripts. The lecture periods of the lecturers have also increased as a result of the increased student enrollment. The students are put into groups at times for lectures because they are more than the lecture halls. This development called for the use of public address system. Unfortunately, most of the lecture halls are not provided with the public address system for easy means of talking to the students. Therefore lecturers have to shout at the top of their voices for the students to hear them. Administratively, some of the lecturers are unit heads, departmental heads, dean of faculties, pro vice chancellors and vice chancellors of their various institutions. Some serve on other boards of the university and these positions go with responsibilities.

The state of stress among lecturers does not end on the above discussed issues. In addition, most of the lecturers do not have proper accommodation at the institutions in which they work. Some have to travel from far and near to work everyday. These and other issues expose the lecturers to stressful situations. These are evidence of work stress. Ocansey, (2004) in his study of profile differences among Senior Secondary School Adolescents in the Ashanti Region of Ghana respondents made up of 297 males and 165 females found no significant difference among female and male adolescent in the way they cope with stress.

Also, in another study conducted by Bedu-Addo (1999), on the ‘‘Influence of work related stress on the nuclear family interactions of Bankers in the Kumasi Metropolis’’ it was found out that the level of work stress experienced by banking staff does not depend on gender or age and there is also no significant difference

between the level of work stress experienced by management and non-management staff.

The findings by Bedu-Addo (1999) to some extent may be applicable to the present study which seeks to find out the forms of work stress among University senior members and management strategies adopted, even though, his respondents were bankers, which is different from the current study in which the respondents are senior members in our Universities. Since aside the monetary aspect there are similarities in the work performed by them as senior members in management positions.

Statement of the problem

Stress management has become an additional problem which workers such as the senior members in Ghanaian Universities have to cope with in view of the nature of their jobs. Osarenren (2002) suggests that since stress is a killer, learning to relax and mediate is one way to cut ones chance of high blood pressure or heart attack without risking effects that come from other approaches.

Majority of research in and outside Ghana on the Universities had concentrated mainly on the academic administrators. Lockwood, (1979) cited in Trenberth and Dewe (2005) conducted a study about career administrators where information and knowledge about career administrators is often extrapolated.

Recent intake in the Universities in Ghana, coupled with lack of equipment – computers, televisions for video conferencing, tele-messages, among

others to process information on students and lack of accommodation facilities bring pressure to bear on University administrators.

Senior members are expected to exhibit high level of effective performance for the attainment of the goals and the direction of the institution that they are charged to administer. However, the high intake and lack of equipment and resources combined with the heavy workload of the senior members make their work very difficult, ineffective and stressful. They at times complain about extramural work done to include record keeping for students, marking of assignments, teaching large class size, supervision of project work and fieldwork. Others include fieldtrips, planning and preparations of teaching and learning resources and acting as head of department are some of the things that make them stressful.

Purpose of the study

Workers today are much more aware of occupational stress than they were twenty years ago. This increased level of awareness, plays a significant role in the likelihood that they will report and rate it as high on a questionnaire or in an interview. It is likely that such increased reporting feeds into the overall level of awareness of work stress and contributes to the perception that occupational stress is increasing.

While most research on occupational stress focus on the factors that contribute to work strain and eventual stress, there is also a substantial body of literature documenting how changes in the work place have created new

opportunities and challenges for workers who perceive these changes in a positive light and take advantage of them. These positive reports do not receive the same level of media coverage and are often overshadowed by more negative, sensationalistic reports. It is against this background that this study was initiated to find out how stress affects senior members in their work and the management strategies that can be adapted to influence senior members' performance. Furthermore, the researcher sought to find out the forms of stress among senior members and whether gender, age, and experience have influence on stress management.

Finally, the study sought to throw light on stress manifestations among senior members and if it is revealed that work stress is equally found among senior members, possible adjustment techniques will be recommended which will not only contribute to methods of reducing stress at work, but will also have far reaching implications for counseling and management techniques for senior members experiencing stress in our Universities.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the nature of stress experienced by the senior members
- Examine the stress management strategies among senior members
- Examine the effect of age on the management of stress by the senior members

- Make recommendations to the university council as to how senior members can best manage stress

Research questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised.

- What is the nature of stress experienced by senior members?
- How do the different categories of lecturers manage stress?
- How does age explain stress management among senior members?

Significance of the study

Stress is a recognised phenomenon in all societies. Its effects can be felt both in the work place, where it can reduce productivity and in the home, where, it has been associated with violence against family members. Prentice (1996) posits that everyone experiences stress, because some stress is needed to perform the daily tasks of life and more importantly, to stimulate growth and development. Thus, stress is an unavoidable part of life so the study will help senior members in the Universities to know the kind of stress they experience and its coping /management strategies.

Also, career counselors will be able to understand better the kinds of stress senior members undergo and how it affects their performance. This information can then be passed on to people seeking career information, like graduates from our tertiary institutions. Marriage counselors will also be able to use the findings

from this study to furnish their clients with information on how to help their spouses who are under stress.

Again, the knowledge of stress and its management strategies can lead to the development of a comprehensive stress management curriculum that will serve as a guide in teaching stress management related courses in our tertiary institutions. Also, the results of the study will create greater degree of awareness and understanding among senior members regarding the mechanisms to be adopted in identifying and managing work-related stress.

In addition, the findings of this study will not only add to existing literature on work-related stress, but will also serve as a spring board for the full realization of institutional and administrative efficiency at the universities because research findings have shown that occupational stress if not identified early and managed properly may not only affect the individual characteristics, but can cause many occupational hazards (Blonna, 2005).

Finally, most employers in the universities' establishment are more concerned about the performance of their workers, which most inadvertently is aimed at maximizing profit to the neglect of the total well being of the employees. Thus if employers know about the kinds of stress their employees go through and how it affects their effectiveness at work and family life, they will be able to provide a more humane environment for their staff.

Delimitation of the study

The study will be confined to senior members in two public Universities in Ghana namely, University of Cape Coast and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. The scope of the problem will be limited to issues such as incidence of stress among senior members, its effects on their performance and the management strategies employed by senior members to deal with stress both at work and at home.

Limitation of the study

A research of this nature must have its own limitations. One limitation of this study was the fact that the sample used in the study was the senior members in the selected Universities who might be living under quite different working environments. Also the researcher cannot claim to have been able to control absolutely factors which might affect the finding to some extent. Time constraint given by the University compelled the researcher to limit the study to a limited sample. Added to this were financial constraints which also made it impossible for the researcher to extend the study to other Universities.

Definition of terms

Some concepts and expressions need operational definitions for the purpose of this study are defined below:

Assessment – In this study assessment is concerned with collecting data and making decisions on the performance of the respondents.

Burn out – this refers to a state of fatigue and frustration arising out of unrealistic demands on the personal resources of the worker.

Career – refers to the sequence of occupations, jobs and positions throughout a person's life time.

Coping strategies – these are methods used to reduce the impact of stress or stressful situations on an individual. These may include commonly used ones such as sleeping, relaxation, music therapy, maintaining good dietary habits or speaking to a significant other.

Hassles – this refers to chronic stressors experienced in daily living that cause the individual to experience much stress.

Interaction – refers to both verbal and non-verbal communication on the physical, mental, psychological, emotional and spiritual level between one or more people which enhances the well – being of their relationships.

Role bargains – refers to the situation whereby a person undertakes a particular role in accordance with whether it brings the person satisfaction in addition to giving, the person little or no stress.

Role compliance – this refers to the ability to perform one's role within the parameters set by the job requirements.

Role liberties – refers to the kinds of privileges that accrue to an individual by virtue of his or her status at work. This includes control over work schedules and incentives that go with that particular role.

Role relations – this refers to the relationship between particular roles being performed by a particular individual and other people who are concerned with that particular role.

Role set – refers to a complement of role relationship in which individuals are by virtue of his position within an organisation / institution.

Social roles – this refers to the state in which an individual puts into effect the rights and duties that are associated with the particular status that he occupies.

Example, a mother or a father, Social Status – refers to the position in particular patterns of behavior a collection, of rights and duties.

Stress – this includes demands from both within the individual and the environment requiring the individual to change and the state of psychological and physiological tension resulting from these demands.

Stressors – refers to the environmental demands that lead to a stress response. Stressors can be physical or psychological, universal or unique, intrinsic to a situation or attributed to it.

More experienced senior members – in this study refer to those who have worked in the University for 5 years and above.

Less experienced senior members – refer to those members who have worked in the University for less than 5 years.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher attempts to examine the available literature on the problem. The review is organized under the following headings:

- The Concept of Stress
- Work Stress/Health
- Empirical review
- Stress Management / Coping Strategies
- The Role of Leisure in Managing / Coping with Stress
- Theoretical framework

The concept of stress

Stress as a concept has been defined from different perspectives by researchers. This means the term stress has many meanings attached to it because there are as many different ideas about stress as there are people experiencing change in their lives. Actually, the way a person reacts to events or situations defines stress.

According to Blonna (2005), there are four classic ways of defining stress.

These are:

- Stress as response. People perceive stress as physical response going on within the. For instance, stress can be a tension headache.
- Stress as stimulus. Others who view stress as stimulus define stress as an outside force that puts demands on them. For instance, stress is pressure, that is, having too much to do and too little time to do it. Example of stress as stimulus, are pressure associated with work, school relationships and family life (Blonna 2005).
- Stress as a transaction. For others, stress is a transaction: an exchange between a stimulus, our perception of it, and the response it causes. For instance, a muscle tension one gets when one thinks about giving a speech in front of a class, is a typical example of stress as transaction.
- Stress as a holistic phenomena.

Some describe stress as part of a larger whole. It is a part of an individual's physical, social, spiritual, emotional and intellectual well-being. For example, Blonna (2005) explains that stress as holistic phenomena, is feeling helpless in trying to control your life. This perception of stress takes into account lifestyles and circumstances beyond single events that may trigger a stress response. Each of these definitions is flawed to some extent. The stress as stimulus, stress as a response, and stress as a holistic phenomenon definitions place too little emphasis on the role of perception in a stressful transaction. The stresses as a transaction definition may examine the role of perception but does not take into account the individual's environment and overall level of well being.

Although flawed, each of the four classic definitions contains a valuable piece of the puzzle we call stress. In reality, stress combines elements of each of the classic definitions. All that is needed to complete the puzzle is to assemble the pieces into a new, more comprehensive definition of stress. Therefore, Blonna (2005) sees stress as a holistic transaction between the individual and a stressor that results in the body's mobilization of a stress response. Thus, a holistic transaction is a stress appraisal process involving the potential stressor, the individual, and the environment. An individual's appraisal process is influenced by his or her level of well-being and ability to cope with the potential stressor at that moment under specific environmental conditions surrounding the person and the potential stressor.

Again, Blonna, (2005) sees a stressor as any stimulus appraised by the individual as threatening or capable of causing harm or loss. The stress response is a set of physiological adaptations by the body to maintain homeostasis in the face of threat, harm, or loss. This definition of stress recognizes the importance of perception and coping in the appraisal of potential stressors. Perception of potential stressors is influenced by the individual's overall level of well being and incorporates environmental factors into a model of personal stress. This holistic model emphasizes that stress doesn't occur in a vacuum. Similarly, coping with stress sometimes include resources that extend beyond the individual.

The term stress refers to the responses that occur in the body as a result of what is called a stressor or stimulus (Prentice, 1996). Therefore, stress occurs when the internal balance or equilibrium of the body system is disrupted.

According to Prentice, everyone experiences stress, and some level of stress is needed to perform the daily tasks of life and more importantly to stimulate growth and development. Thus, stress can be beneficial in a way.

Prentice, (1996) further contended that too much stress, especially when it exists for a prolonged period and is unrelieved, can result in physical and mental illness. Therefore, stress is caused or triggered by stressors that may be physical, social or psychological and negative or positive in nature. Therefore, human reactions to positive stressors are called Eustress; that is stress that is beneficial.

Holmes and Rahe (1967) cited in Baltus, (1997), define stress as a stimulus event that presents unusual demands. Stress has also been defined by Thygerson (1989) citing Selye, (1976), Weiten (1983) and Swick (1989) on the non specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. Dunhamel (1992) on the other hand sees stress as a process of behavioural, emotional, mental and physical reactions caused by prolonged, increasing or new pressures which are significantly greater than coping resources. This definition brings to the fore the fact that stress is not a one-shot event but rather an on-going reaction that can affect every part of a person's constitution, if coping resources are unavailable to arrest the trend. One kind of stress associated with Dunhamel's definitions is ambient stress. This refers to the stress experienced in dealing with the day-to-day hassle of the community. It is an accumulation of the stresses in the household, social and leisure pursuits and in work environment.

In another dimension, Mason (1975) cited in Greenberg (2002:9) used the following indices to define stress: The stimulus, the response, the whole spectrum

of interacting factors and the stimulus response interaction. The stimulus response according to Mason (1975), is the stressor. A stressor to Mason is something with the potential to cause a stress reaction (physiological arousal). The response in his definition means stress reactivity includes increased muscle tension, increase heart rate, changes in brain waves, and change in respiratory rate. This reaction prepares the individual for swift action when such response is warranted. For example, most people find that their heart increases when experiencing the stressful memory. This increase occurs despite a lack of any physical activity; just like thoughts increases heart rate. This fact demonstrates two things: the nature of stressor and the nature of stress reactivity (Greenberg, 2002). Thus, stressors may be physical, mental, or social. Examples are, having an illness is a physical stressor, having difficult homework assignment is a mental stressor and having an argument with a friend or a spouse is a social stressor.

Osarenren (2002) conceptualizes stress as the condition when a person's body reacts to outside pressure. Osarenren further contends that stress is the psychological wear and tear on individual experiences when one attempts to adjust to some events which cause him/her emotional and other forms of arousal. This means stress can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can help compel us to action; it can result in a view awareness and an exciting experience perspectives. Also as a negative influence it can result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger, and depression which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, rashes, ulcer, high blood pressure, heart diseases and stroke.

Yet, Baltus (1997) also views stress as a physiological disturbance and psychological frustration caused by unmet and external pressures, real or perceived. This human condition often results from a sense of threat or personal inadequacy. For example, according to this author, environmental factors such as pollution, noise, crowding and climatic conditions can cause undue stress.

Furthermore, stress can be explained using the Transactional Model of stress propounded by Lazarus and associates (1982, 1984), in Weiten (1986). They posit that an event may be viewed as threatening or stressful based on how the individual perceives the event. Weiten (1986; 1988), postulates that the perception of the stress could be influenced by perceived control and predictability of stress, familiarity with the event coping resource imminence and duration of stress and the personality.

Based on this proposed model by Lazarus and associates (1984), stress can be viewed as subjective rather than objective since varied responses will be produced by different individuals depending on how they view the event as either threatening or benign. This is substantiated by Akuamoah-Boateng (1997) when he defined stress as a situation and the state of tension it generates in an individual as a result of his/her perception of his or her existence. This means that it is not the situation that causes stress, but rather the reaction of the individual to the situation.

Applying the Transactional Model of stress by Lazarus and associates (1984) to the definitions of stress by (Homes and Rahe, 1967 and Selye 1996) cited in Baltus (1997), a situation is perceived as stressful when the stimulus

produces a reaction as a result of the psychological frustration and physiological disturbance demand it makes on the body. The resistances of the body to these demands made by the stressors tax the individual's capacities, and may or may not be harmful, depending on how the individual perceives the situations or events. This confirms the view of Weiten (1986), when he defines stress as any circumstance of transaction with the environment that threatens or is perceived to threaten our well-being and thereby tax our adaptive capacities.

Similarly, Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn (1994), added to the assertion on stress being how the individual perceives it by pointing out that, individual needs, capabilities and personality are properties of the individual that influence how he or she perceives and responds to stress emanating from work and non-work sources. This reaffirms the assertion that the individual's perception of what his/her need is, the coping resources he or she has at his/her disposal and his/her very physiological and psychological constitution go a long way to determine how he/she copes with stress.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the basic assumption which underlines the various definitions of stress is that stress is a physiological and psychological relation that results from an individual's belief that they are unable to meet a demand.

Wagenaar and La Forge (1994), define stress as any circumstance of transactions with the environments that threatens or is perceived to threaten our well-being and thereby tax our adaptive capacities. Using and applying Holmes and Rahe (1967) and Selye (1996), model to the definitions of stress, it can be

contended that an event is viewed as stressful when the stimulus produces a reaction as a result of the demands it makes on the body. The coping mechanisms of the body to these demands made by the stressors taxes the individual perceives the events.

Schermerhorn and associates (1994) give credence to this contention in stress as being how the individual perceives it by stating that individual capabilities can generate properties which influence how he or she perceives and responds to stress either emanating from work and non-work situations. This means, the individual's perception of what his immediate need is, the coping resources he has at his disposal and his very psychological constitution (personality) go a long way to determine how he deals with stress.

Psychological distress which is the focus of this study is conceptualized by Mirowsky and Ross (1989) as generally representing an unpleasant subjective state which takes two major forms; depression and anxiety as a prolonged concern about a vague, potential type of threat, and it can also be a moderate but continuous physiological disturbance. On the contrary, Greenberg (2002: 131) defines anxiety as "an unrealistic fear that manifests itself in physiological arousal and behaviours to avoid or escape the anxiety-provoking stimulus".

Both Baltus (1997), and Greenberg (2002), agreed that depression and anxiety can be associated with mood disorders which are expressed in negative feelings by the individual. Some typical symptoms of depression according to Baltus, include uncontrollable sense of sadness; fatigue, having difficulty in

performing ordinary daily activities and having a general sense of feeling that life is not worth the effort.

Langer (1962) cited by Lai (1995), asserts that there are three quantitative measures of psychological distress commonly used in the United States of America (U.S.). These are Langer's index, Gurin's index, and the Depression Scale developed by the Centre for Epidemiology Studies (CES-D Scale). Langer's Index, according to Langer (1962), comprises 22 items which are used to diagnose clinical cases. Symptoms measured by this scale are primarily physiological which includes withdrawal, restlessness, poor appetite, and feelings of depression.

The CES-D scale also measures current level of depressive symptomatology in community populations with an emphasis on depressive moods (Radloff 1977). The components of the scale include depressed mood; feelings of helplessness, psychomotor retardation, loss of appetite and sleep disturbance. According to Lai (1995), four dimensions are prevalent on the scale; depressed affect; positive affect, somatic and retarded activity and interpersonal problems.

Similarly, Gurin's Mental Status Index-(GMS) according to Gurin, Veroff and Feld (1960) consists of twenty items used by psychiatrists to differentiate individuals who have psychological problems from those who do not. The items measure primarily neurotic symptomatology. Evidence on these two scales show that, women especially express more symptoms on the four factors of psychological anxiety, physical health, and physical anxiety than men on the

Gurin's Mental Status Index (GMSSI). Also, on the use of the Gurin's scale, older people express more physical symptoms while young people express more psychological symptoms. However, less educated people also score higher on physical factors notably, and health factors.

Work stress/health

Work stress is often linked with challenge, but the two are very different. Challenge motivates and energizes the individual psychologically and physically to learn new skills and master given tasks. When a challenge is met, one feels a great sense of accomplishment that is relaxed and satisfying. Therefore, challenge is beneficial as it helps increase productivity. This is what people refer to when they say "a little bit of stress is good for you".

Work stress according to Weitman (1988), cited in Greenberg (2002), is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the work do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Work stress results from the interaction of the work. However, views differ on the importance of worker characteristics versus working conditions as the primary cause of work stress. Some view differences in individual characteristics, such as personality and coping style as important in predicting whether certain work conditions will result in stress. What may be stressful for one person may not be a problem for someone else. This view point leads to management strategies that focus on workers and ways to help them cope with demanding work conditions. Although individual differences cannot be ignored, research studies indicate

certain working conditions are stressful to most people (Greenberg 2002). This view places working conditions as key source of work stress and work redesign as well as excessive work load demands and conflicting expectations as the primary management strategies. This position confirms Fleet (1988), when he asserts that stress occurs when a person is subjected to unusual situations to demands that are difficult to handle, or to extreme expectations or pressures.

Furthermore, Fleet (1988), agrees that working long hours is among those things that can induce stress. In addition to causing problems at work, stress can also result in physical problems. Therefore, stress comes about as a result of an individual work schedule, work status, work environment, relationship with boss and peers. Schemerhon and associates (1994) posit that role conflict is a situation in which people feel they are unable to satisfy multiple and potential conflicting performance. For example, you do not expect two people to do the same thing at the same time. Interpersonal conflict is a situation in which people experience upsetting relationship with others or must work with people who are experiencing such hardships. Interpersonal conflict is a situation in which people experience upsetting relationships with others at work and at home.

Above all, work stress refers to the kinds of distress that the performance of one's work produces. Schemerhorn and associates (1994) posit some behavioural characteristics associated with people who are experiencing work-related stress. Such behaviours include:

- Feeling guilty when relaxing

- Being uncomfortable with leisure but worrying about not having time to enjoy life.
- Always moving, walking and eating rapidly.
- Hurrying others being annoyed by waiting.
- Feeling impatient with the pace of work and,
- Trying to do several things at once.

Although individual differences cannot be ignored, research studies indicate that certain working conditions are stressful to most people. This scientific evidence according to Schemerhorn and Associates (1994), places greater emphasis on working condition as key source of work stress and job redesign as the primary prevention strategy. Excessive workload demands and conflicting expectations, for example, are key sources of work stress. Other sources include:

- Work conditions that pose risk to health and safety.
- Infrequent rest breaks.
- Long work hours and demanding work shifts
- Hectic and routine tasks that have little inherent meaning and which do not utilize worker's skills, and provide little sense of control.
- Management style that is lack of participation by workers in decision making, poor communication in the organisation/institution and lack of family friendly policies.
- Interpersonal relationships, - (poor social environment, lack of support From co-workers and supervisor)

- Work roles i.e. conflicting or uncertain job expectations, too many responsibilities.
- Environmental conditions which implies unpleasant physical conditions, such as crowding, noise, air pollution, and work condition that pose risk to health safety.

Short-lived episodes of stress pose little risk. But if stressful situations go unresolved, the body can suffer from “wear and tear” and the ability of a person’s body to repair and defend itself can become seriously compromised (Fleet, 1988). For example, a research by Miller, Fletcher, and Zim (1979), cited in Greenberg (2002), revealed that relationship between psychological functioning and occupational self direction, position in the organisation’s structure, job pressures and uncertainty were generally similar for men and women. However, to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), differences between men and women were, however, found with routinization being generally more relevant for women’s psychological functioning and closeness of supervision more relevant for men’s psychological functioning.

In another study, Karasek and Theorell (1990), note the importance of co-worker support and have found in several studies that social support was an additional risk factor, after taking into account job latitude and job demand, in predicting distress among a sample of male workers. Co-work support has also been regarded as particularly important in explaining the beneficial effects of work for women and it has also been viewed as particularly important for women’s job satisfaction (Miller, 2000; Moos, 1985).

In another dimension Roxburgh (1994), finds that co-worker support has an important effect on both neutral health and job satisfaction among both men and women. Furthermore, Warr and Parry, (1999) also report that in addition to directly affecting well-being co-worker social support may enhance the negative effects of stressful job conditions.

Again LaRocco, House, and French (1980), cited in Bedu-Addo (1999:45) also found evidence that social support moderates the impact of job demands and job control on mental health. Their results also indicate that co-worker support has a somewhat stronger effect than supervisor support. Their research suggests that co-worker social support has important direct effect on mental health, and may also enhance the impact of stressful job characteristics.

The influence of work-related stress according to Kanter (1977) cited in Baltus (1997:170) has been seen to have a powerful constraint on family life. He describes five aspects of family life which have important effects on family life and well being. One of them is the relative absorption of an occupation– the occupation leaves less time, emotion and commitment for family life. The second one is the timing of the work and its effect on the free time left for family activities. Resource is another source of influence of work-related stress on family lives. This comprised the income and reward which may be used for the benefit of the family.

The influence of work activity and work-culture on the value system of the individual is another important domain where work influences family life and behavior. Finally, the emotional aspects of work are strongly linked with the

emotional tone one brings back home; these may be frustration or satisfaction, burnout or feelings of self-realization.

A lot of research studies have established that work stress has an adverse effect on health, both mental and physical (Kornhauser, 1965, Harse, 1974, Syme and Reeder, 1967) in Bedu-Addo (1999). Based on this, Karasek and Theorell (1990) provided a theoretical framework for understanding how job characteristics contribute to stress-related health problems. They proposed a two-dimensional model of occupational stress that focuses on the elements of job demands and job decision latitude. To them, job demands are work characteristics such as not having enough time to do one's work, having conflicting demands on the job having to work too fast. Also, Karasek and Theorell (1990) refer to Job decision latitude as control over the pace of work, control over the pace of one's abilities and control over decision making. Thus, Karasek and his associates believe that psychological strain results from the interaction of job demands and job latitude. Their model is based on the proposition that while job demands are significant sources of risk it is only when demands are coupled with lack of control that stress levels are maximized.

In another development a research conducted by Saint Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company in the United States cited by DeFrank and Ivancevich (1998) revealed that an estimated 75-90 percent of visits of the workers to physicians are stress related. For example, over 40 percent of workers surveyed by Northwestern National Life Insurance Company felt their jobs were very or extremely stressful. Such concerns lead to decrease performance, increased

absenteeism, and theft, use of drugs, alcohol and lower commitment to the organisation. Translating these impacts to the level of the organisation or institution, produces decreased productivity higher rates of turnover, worker conflict and higher health care costs. These outcomes certainly indicate the value to organisations of controlling the levels of stress experienced by their employees.

Another relevant model to this study is the National Institute for Occupation Self Direction (NIOSH) model developed by Kohn and Schooler (1983), in which they claimed that there is a link between specific work characteristics and psychological functioning. They argue that occupational self direction is a determinant of intellectual flexibility and self directedness. They propounded that there are four major structural features of work environment which have a significant effect on psychological functioning. These structures are independent of education, income, job pressures, and other occupational characteristics such as the risk of losing one's job, the possibility of being held responsible for things outside one's control among others. Three of these job characteristics have a moderate effect on psychological functioning, job pressures such as frequency of time pressures, the dirtiness of work, and job uncertainties such as the risk of losing one's job, the possibility of being held responsible for things outside one's control and a possibility of change in income or position. In their model, a fourth feature of work environment is occupational self direction which plays a central role in determining psychological functioning. Kohn and Schooler, (1983:64) define occupational self direction as "the conditions that facilitate or restrict the use of initiative, though and independent judgment in

work”. To them, this is determined by the closeness of supervision, routinization of work and the substantive complexity of the work. Substantive complexity of Kohn and Schooler is the degree to which the work requires independent judgment and thought.

In another study, Kohn and Schooler (1983) noted that occupational self-direction leads to self-directed orientations. Self – orientations in their view is the personal capacity to take responsibility for one’s actions as well as the belief that society is so constituted as to make self-direction powerful. For example, to Kohn and Schooler, men who experienced self – directed work were more likely to be non – authoritarian, more likely to be self-confident, less anxious and less conforming in their ideas. This means that work requiring initiative and independent judgment instills habits of self direction and a flexible approach to problem solving. However, in terms of specific effects of job characteristics, their findings suggest that of the three measures of occupational self-direction only substantive complexity significantly predicts contemporaneous distress (Kohn and Schooler, 1983). They concluded that substantive complexity is the cornerstone of the entire job structure, affected by and in turn affecting other job conditions. Kohn and Schooler’s (1983), study is relevant to this work because it provides guidelines in the identification of job characteristics that are important not only for personality but more importantly for the well-being of the worker.

Empirical review

Finn (1982), in a research on the examination of occupational stress among workers in Canada as published in the annual report from Statistical Canada (1984) showed that workplace stress costs Canadian businesses more than thirteen billion dollars annually and 70% of all employees were at some time experiencing problems that reduced performance due to stress. Some of these stress related problems were decreased productivity, absenteeism, and staff replacement cost.

Wolley (1983) investigated occupational stress among College administrators in Ontario using a survey and found that both type “A” behavior (aggressive) and the quality of interpersonal relationships at work had significant influence on the intensity of perceived occupational stress. Similarly, Grant (1991) surveyed stress factors affecting College educators in Ontario. Results showed that 53% (66 out of 125) who returned the questionnaire rated stress level from moderate to quite stressful. Areas causing stress were; students’ literacy and numeracy skills, indoor air quality, lack of students motivation and resources. The key recommendation in this study was to enhance both corporate and personal wellness.

Furthermore, David and Thaut (1989) found out that physiological patterns could actually be indicative of a variety of pleasant or unpleasant experiences. When participants reported that the experience was subjectively relaxing and anxiety reducing, they speculated that the moderate increases in physiological arousal they observed simply accompanied the enjoyment of the

music and thus facilitated feeling of reduced anxiety and increased relaxation. Miller, Fletcher, and Zim (1997), cited in Greenberg (2002), reveals that the relationship between psychological functioning and occupational self-direction, position in the organisation's structure, job pressures and uncertainty were generally similar for men and women.

In another study, Karasek and Theorell (1990) note the importance of co-worker support and have found in several studies that social support was an additional risk factor, after taking into account job latitude and job demand, in predicting distresses among a sample of male workers. La Rocco, House and French (1980) cited by Bedu-Addo (1999), find evidence to the fact that social support moderates the impact of job demands and job control on mental health. Their research revealed that co-worker social support has important direct effects on mental health and may also enhance the impact of stressful job characteristics.

Stress management/coping strategies

Stress management encompasses techniques intended to equip a person with effective coping mechanisms for dealing with psychological stress. On the other hand, Greenberg (2002:63), posit that stress management involves “setting up roadblocks” on the road leading from life situations through perception, emotional, arousal, physiological arousal and ending at negative consequences as shown in the stress Figure 1.

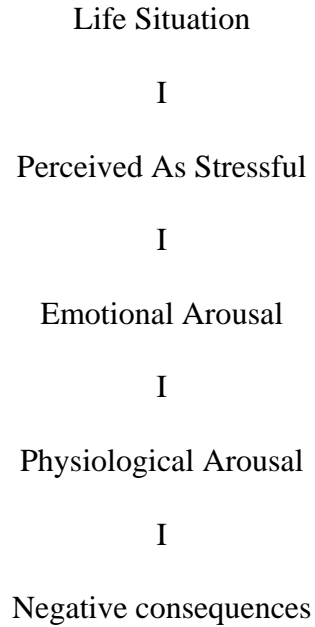


Figure 1: Roadblocks

Source: Greenberg (2002).

Coping consists of the ability to engage in problem solving, to accept what one cannot change, and to make adjustments in oneself (Baltus, 1997). This is because even the most effective problem solvers find it difficult solving all problems to their satisfaction; they must adjust to situations that are not what they would like them to be. They can also learn to accept what they cannot change. Even changes that are desirable require some adjustments. Coping is therefore a constant part of life. Some experiences in life that often require major adjustments are school entry, independent living, marriage, divorce, retirement. Others include job-related adjustments, working hours, changes in supervision and procedures, job-change, unemployment, and numerous other situations.

Baltus, (1997), in another dimension, refers to coping mechanisms as unconscious psychological devices used to maintain self-esteem and to adjust to

unpleasant realities in life. These may include day dreaming, rationalization, regression, fixation, displacement, projection, repression, identification, denial of reality, and compensation. The results of the use of coping mechanisms can range from the relatively harmless to the seriously harmful, depending on how the coping behavior affects those who use it and their relations with others.

Inability to cope effectively causes excessive tension and stress. Thus, Selye (1996), cited in Baltus, (1997:180) refers to the body's reaction to stress as the general adaptation syndrome. According to Baltus (1997), business organisations and institutions and have recognize the problems created by stress in work situations and have taken measures to reduce stress.

Gibson (2000), has developed a "CALM Model" for dealing with stress in the workplace. According to Gibson, the "C" in CALM represents changing the situation. Thus, steps an employee takes in this stage include confronting the stressor, managing time wisely, learning to say "No" and anticipating stress factors. At this point an employee determines the cause of the stress and attempts to handle each cause effectively.

The "A" in CALM stands for accepting what cannot be changed. This involves changing perceptions and attitudes about the situation, not worrying about things beyond personal control and controlling anger. The "L" in CALM signifies letting go. An employee should avoid holding on to less important things. Adding on new task or projects should also be resisted. Finally, the "M" in CALM stands for managing life style and making it fun. This involves developing positive lifestyle behaviour such as eating correctly, exercising, and taking time to

relax. By applying these concepts from the “CALM Model,” employees can manage their stress.

Managing stressed subordinates

One of the leading causes of stress in the workplace, according to Braham (1990), is the bad supervisor or manager. A boss can help alleviate stress in several ways. First of all, employee expectations must be reasonable. Thus, goals should not be impossible to meet. Secondly, all decisions should be made in a timely manner and should be clear to all subordinates. For instance, a supervisor that second guesses or reverses a decision will generate added stress for those who report to him or her.

Individual approach to managing stress

According to Miller (2000), there are many steps an employee can take on their own to keep their stress at a manageable level. First, the greatest thing an employee can do to reduce on the job stress is to choose a position within an organisation/company or institution that matches their personality. A job should be personally satisfying to the individual. For instance, an employee should not worry about things that are beyond their control and maintain a positive attitude in adverse situations. Exercise has proven to be an effective tool to reduce stress. Miller further states that in an attempt to reduce stress, an employee needs to maintain a balance between work and home life. While away from work, an employee should resist the urge to check in at the office or leave any voice mails

or e-mails to the next working day. Time spent with family and friends should be a priority. An employee can utilize alternative work schedules such as flex-time or working at home to achieve an appropriated home balance.

Humour

Gibson, (2000) claimed that humour has become one of the most popular tools for stress relief. Positive effects of laughter include reduced muscle tension, controlled anxiety, that ability to handle unexpected events, and simply the joy of humour. It is also important for managers and administrators to allow employees to have fun. Thus, managers and administrators can bring creative and fun events into the workplace. According to this author, some activities that help alleviate stress include holding theme apparel days or organizing a “Thank Goodness it’s Monday” Party (TGIM) and also generating log-on jokes so that when an employee logs onto the network each day a new joke is displayed.

The role of leisure in managing stress

Trenberth, and Dewe (2005), state that leisure is of growing importance in most people’s lives and that if the impact of stress influences the way in which leisure is used, then the role that leisure plays as a means of coping with work stress presents an important research agenda, because the idea of leisure as a means of coping with stress and maintaining good health has significant implications both theoretically and practically.

Leisure and stress

The word Leisure, as Parr and Lashua (2004:1) suggest, “evokes a variety of thoughts, images and concepts”. In many respects the meaning of leisure has passed through a number of phases expressed more traditionally perhaps in terms of free or unoccupied time. The idea of free time was soon expanded to include: an activity which involves pursuit of truth and self understanding” (Gray, 1974:42), and a state mind where leisure was seen primarily as a condition sometimes referred to as a state of being, and attitude of mind or a quality of experience (Trenberth and Dewe, 2005). In this way, leisure definitions alternated between emphasizing either its objective dimensions (an activity or set of activities) or its subjective dimension (a state of mind, satisfaction and meaning derived from and for engaging in leisure).

According to Trenberth and Dewe (2005), citing Neulinger (1982), the association between leisure and health has been alluded to for some time now. One of the more common themes arising from this literature has been the potential of leisure to reduce stress (Iso Ahoa 1989 and Coleman, 1993). The evidence to support this belief stems from the idea that leisure can be an important means of helping people manage with stress and maintain or improve their health (Iwasaki and Mannel, 2000). The systematic conceptualization that leisure functions as a means of managing with stress (Iso Ahoa 1989 and Coleman, 1993), has strong parallel with the psychological literature particularly the notion that stress is relational in nature involving some sort of transaction between the

individual and the environment (Lazaurs, 1999) cited in (Trenberth and Dewe 2005).

The importance of the transactional view on stress lies in the fact that, it emphasizes the significance of managing the transactional process and the need to systematically investigate what people actually think and do in a stressful encounter (Holroyd and Lazarus, 1982). So, exploring leisure as a method of coping with stress should theoretically contribute to more comprehensively conceptualizing ways or methods of coping (Iwasaki 2003).

From a managing/coping perspective, if coping or managing strategies are classified as problem or emotion – focused, then one of the more common themes emerging from the literature is that leisure may operate as a form of emotion focused coping where leisure motives such as relaxation, compensation, escapism, and independence have stress reducing properties (Lazaurs, 1999; Iwasaki and Schneider, 2003). These leisure motives can be explored using a technique called SEQUENTIAL TREE ANALYSIS. This technique identifies patterns of data and arranges them in hierarchical order to provide a visual display that captures the richness of relationships not always present when more traditional methods are used.

This technique helps to better understand combinations and patterns of stressor before it is possible to determine the exact nature of the presumed emotion-focused role that leisure plays in coping / managing with work stress. Similarly, by drawing a distinction between managing strategies and coping resources, leisure may also operate as a coping resource, because of its social

nature and supportive role, it serves as an avenue for people to develop companionships and friendships (Iso Ahoa 1989 and Coleman, 1993); helping them to cope with stress. These propositions form a backdrop to more systematic attempts to understand the processes through which leisure operates as a means of coping with stress.

Some contemporary findings on leisure-coping stress strategies

Reviews (Iwasaki and Mannel, 2000; Iwasaki and Schneider, 2003), generally begin by pointing to research that has focused on the buffering role of leisure. This approach is embodied in the work of Coleman and Iso Ahola, (1993). According to these authors, leisure functions in two ways to buffer stress. The first is by providing a context for social support and the second by enhancing people's self-determination beliefs about their abilities to undertake various tasks and perform them successfully. Limited support for the buffering role of leisure has led researchers to consider other approaches, for example, one approach has been to examine how different types of leisure activity (example active – passive –supportive) are used in coping with stress. Here, for example, researchers explore the types of leisure activities individuals may engage in when stressed in comparison to those engaged in at other times.

The research by Iwasaki and Mannel (2000:115) into the “hierarchical dimensions of leisure stress coping” represented another important step forward in attempting to understand the different ways in which leisure helps people cope with stress”. The significance of this study lies in the way that it distinguishes

itself generally from held leisure coping beliefs' and from "leisure coping strategies". The former refers to those more general beliefs that leisure helps in coping with stress. Leisure coping strategies on the other hand, are "actual stress coping situation grounded behaviours or cognitions available through involvements in leisure" (Iwasaki and Mannell, 2000:167). Leisure coping strategies are conceptualized as being more situational specific and intentional than leisure coping beliefs and therefore depend on the nature of the stressful encounter.

Iwasaki and Mannell (2000) went on to identify a number of sub dimensions to both leisure coping beliefs and leisure coping strategies. Iwasaki (2003:105) in a later paper established the differing role played by these two types of leisure functions, with leisure coping beliefs providing individuals with it's important health-promoting resources" and, in contrast, leisure coping strategies having a more direct impact on health and well-being. Whilst Kleiber, Hutchinson, and Williams (2002:220) agree that leisure as a way of coping with stress has received considerable attention from researchers, their view "is that far more attention has been given to the benefits of leisure" in inoculating one to the effects of stress" than to the value of leisure as a means of coping with stress. In this respect these authors draw an important distinction between using leisure to manage stress and using leisure as a means of "positive transformation" to rebuild and find new directions for self-development.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for the study focused on the Theory of Role Strain/Conflict, Theory of Role Accumulation and Mark's Expansion Theory.

The theory of role strain

Role Strain/conflict theory according to Lai (1995) citing Goode (1960) states that there is a felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations embedded in role relationships with individuals by virtue of their position. According to this author, role relations could give rise to role strain for the following reasons. First and foremost, no role demand is a spontaneous pleasure and its conformity is not an automatic behavior but involves some kinds of efforts. Also, to this author, there may be inconsistencies in the role obligations within one relationship, such as contradictory norms of quality and quantity of performance.

Thirdly, a role set according to Merton (1957), is defined as relationships with individuals by virtue of their position. Therefore, given a role set, individuals would engage in several relationship with different other individuals and that the individual may not be able to meet all the demands to the satisfaction of all persons who are part of his or her role network.

Role relations associated with different social statuses may entail different obligations. In the performance of these different obligations, there is likely to be conflicts of allocation of time, place and resources. Role strain is often reduced through role bargains, a mechanism through which the individual organizes his or her total role system and performs well or poorly in any role relationship. The

individual can compartmentalize role relationships and ignore the problem or role inconsistency, may delegate role demand, may eliminate role relationships and expand his or her role relations in order to obtain resources that would facilitate other role demands. This confirms Selye (1956) observation when he sees stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand (Stressor) placed on it. According to this author, stress affects the hormones and destroys homeostasis.

The theory of roles accumulation

Seiber (1974), in his theory of Role Accumulation states among other things that every role carries certain rights as well as duties. Yet, Seiber was quick to state also that an individual who has associated himself or herself with many partners is able to compensate for failures in any particular social sphere. Thus, Seiber (1974), conceives that the acquisition of role liberties provides gratification in addition to performance rewards which makes room for meeting the role expectations and protect the individual from exploitation. Also, Seiber (1974) explains that resources could accumulate through multiple roles to yield benefits over and above the cost of meeting role expectations. According to Seiber, some of the strains arising from multiple roles may be converted into prestige, thereby offering some amount of psychic (psychological) compensation. In sum, Seiber acknowledges the fact that multiple roles may produce strains for an individual. However, multiple roles could also produce benefits that compensate for the strain an individual may face. The relevance of Seiber's theory of Role Strain lies in the fact that, this study seeks to find out how senior members in our Universities are

able to cope with their numerous roles and how it helps to improve their work performance.

Mark's expansion theory

Another theory guiding this study is Mark's (1977) Expansion Theory. Whilst Seiber's (1974) Role Strain Conflict theory assumes a natural scarcity approach to human energy. Mark's Expansion theory argues that rather than energy simply flowing out mechanically in response to demands until it runs out, individuals contrast their responses to the demand of others and control their flow of energy into different roles so as to avoid energy exhaustion.

However, in the long run to Mark (1972) and (1977) abundant energy is found for anything to which one is uncommitted to. Thus, the experience of human energy is a product of role bargains and can be non-exhaustive in situations where roles are valued by oneself or society and when the role performances are highly demanding.

This theory is applicable to this study because the work load of senior members in our Universities is so much that they need to know how to respond appropriately to the demands of their subordinates in order to maintain the status quo of the organisation or the institution. This theory also states that individuals need to control their energy at work place in order to avoid exhaustion, as asserted by Meeks and Heit (1997) in their attempt to explain General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) which is a series of changes that occur in the body when stress occurs. The GAS according to Blonna (2005), has three distinguishable phases;

namely: alarm; resistance; and exhaustion. These three phases are sequential, that is, if the source of stress sounds the alarm to initiate the GAS and the stress is not removed or coped with, the body progresses to resistance and eventual exhaustion when the source of stress is removed or coped with effectively. These three theories acknowledge the fact that social roles are not equally regarding or coped with effectively because individuals are able to adjust their energy in different roles.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher dealt with methods used in obtaining information for the research work. It involves the research design, the population for study, sample and methods of sampling, description of instruments, procedure for data collection and data analyses procedures.

Study organisation

The study organisations are two public universities in Ghana. The University of Cape Coast and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Kumasi. The University of Cape Coast is located in the capital of the central region of Ghana. It is one of the rare sea front Universities in the world. The University was established in October, 1962 as a University collage but attained status of a full and independent University in October, 1971.

In response to the changing needs of society and those of the entire Ghanaian Education enterprise, the university cape coast has over the last several years, progressively added to its core function of training graduate professional teachers for Ghana's second cycle institutions and the Ministry of Education in order to meet the manpower needs of the country. From an initial student enrollment of about 155 in 18963, the University of Cape Coast now has a total student population of over 35922(university of cape coast website) staff numbers have also increased dramatically

over the same period. Departments have also evolved from a mere two departments, namely; Arts and science in 1962 to now include: faculty of Education, faculty of social sciences, faculty of Arts, school of medical sciences, school of biological sciences and the school of business. We also have centre for continuing education, institute of education and computer and support services centre. Today, the diversification of programmes has increased the University's capacity to meet the manpower needs of the ministries. University of Cape Coast is now represented by academic faculties, schools, institutes and centres, all of which focus on supporting and advancing specific areas of economic and social activity through learning, teaching, research and consultancy.

The second public university for study is the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Kumasi. The university is a technical university which can be located in Kumasi the regional capital of the Ashanti region of Ghana. It is the second public university to be established in Ghana.

Research design

Descriptive survey was the research design used for the study. Descriptive studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of a phenomenon. According to Koul (2000) information gathered in descriptive studies is directed towards the determination of the nature of the situation as it exists at the time of the study and to draw valid general conclusions from the facts discovered. Koul (2000) adds that such a study reports on issues the way they are.

Furthermore, the descriptive survey research design comprise a cross-sectional design in relation to which data are collected predominantly by questionnaire or by structured interview on more than one case in order to collect

a body of qualitative and quantitative data in connection with two or more variables which are then examined to detect patterns of association (Bryman 2004).

Target population

The population of study was limited to all Senior Member in two public Universities in Ghana, namely, Kwame Nkrumah University of Ghana (KNUST) and University of Cape Coast (UCC). The statistics of all the senior members in the two public Universities is shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of target population by sex

University	Male	Female	Total
KNUST	689	61	750
UCC	453	83	536
Total	1142	144	1286

Source: Planning units of KNUST and UCC, 2000

Sample and sampling technique

Three hundred (N=300) senior members were selected from the two Universities namely Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and University of Cape Coast (UCC). A breakdown of the sample size is as follows; 180 from KNUST made up of (133) males and (47) females, and 120 from UCC made up of (82) males and (38) females. In order to select this

sample for the study, a simple random sampling technique was used. According to Sidhu (2003), this technique enables a researcher to select from the total population in such a manner that all members of the population have essentially the same probability of being selected. Therefore, to obtain the sample size, a list of all the senior members from the two Universities was obtained. The names on the list was numbered (1st), (2nd), (3rd) and (4th), and those who had (3rd) against their names were selected for the study. This approach under the simple sampling technique is also known as sampling from sequential list or sampling by lottery system (Sidhu, 2003). Tables 2 and 3 show the distribution of the sample by University and sex.

Table 2: Distribution of the sample by university

University	No. of senior members	No. sampled
UCC	536	120
KNUST	750	180
Total	1286	300

Source: Field data, 2008

Table 3: Distribution of sample by sex

University	Male	Female	Total
UCC	82	38	120
KNUST	133	47	180
Total	215	85	300

Source: Field data, 2008

Data collection method

The instrument used for the data collection was questionnaire. The reasons for using questionnaire was that it provided a quick way of collecting data from the respondents, since they were all literates with heavy working schedules. In addition, the questionnaire enabled the researcher to provide the respondents with options of responses. Frankel and Wallen (2000) comments that questionnaires provide subjects with options of responding to, standardized questions which make it easier to score and code for analysis.

In addressing the problem it was necessary to device an instrument that could be used to assess or measure the stress levels and management strategies of senior members in the selected Universities. A search of related literature revealed that the United States of America Department of Health and Human Services life Style strategies, Stress log used in identifying the frequency of felt stress among individuals and their ability to respond appropriately to stressful situations was found to be appropriate (Thygerson, 1989). This instrument was studied and adapted for the study.

The questionnaire was structured into three main sections. Section 'A' consisted of bio-data and work data of respondents. The work data dealt with issues like the nature of respondents' work, time of reporting at work and closing from work, working experience in the University and the number of subordinates supervised. Section 'B' mainly dealt with eliciting responses on the form of stress at their work place and at home as well as how they cope and manage stress to either minimizes or eliminate the stressors. Section 'C' consisted of nine (9) self

evaluation items designed to determine the areas and frequency of work related stress experienced by senior members on a three point Likert Type scale.

Validity and reliability of instrument

In an attempt to ensure the validity of the instrument, the draft questionnaire (Appendix A) was given to an assessment specialist and senior lecturers in the Faculty of Educational Studies, University of Education of Winneba, to read and make recommendations. The recommendations of the specialists were then used to improve the questionnaire. An alpha reliability coefficient was calculated for all items on the basis of their try-out-data. The questionnaire had a reliability of 0.90.

The data were collected in February, 2008 the beginning of the second semester of the 2007/2008 academic year. A week was spent in each of the selected University. In all, out of the 300 questionnaires sent out, two hundred and fifty (250) were completed and returned. This represented 84% of the total responses.

Data analysis methods

The data gathered with the questionnaires were put together and edited. The completed questionnaire was coded and tabulated using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) application software. The main statistical techniques applied in the analysis were the chi-square (X^2) test, frequency counts and simple percentage descriptions. These give credence to Olaitan, et al (2000)

that when data are treated in such a way as to describe and summarize them it is referred to as descriptive data analysis. The chi-square was used in analyzing the research data because it can be used in comparing the significance of differences brought between two frequency distributions. In all, a significant level of 0.05 was set for all the three research questions. This alpha level was adapted because Olaitan, Ali, Eyoh and Sowande (2000), claims that researches involving behavioural sciences tend to be complex to the extent that it is unrealistic to set alpha at any level lower than 0.05.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of data and the discussion of findings that were generated through the data collected. It focuses on the background characteristics of respondents. In addition, a five-grade point rating likert scale items was developed for the respondents (Appendix B). The items cover all the major themes in the research questions. Thus the items covered the nature of stress experienced by the respondents, differences in experience in managing stress and management of stress in respect of gender and age.

Background characteristics of respondents

This section describes the background characteristics of respondents in order to put the study in context. The characteristics of the respondents were analysed in terms of sex, age, marital status, number of children, academic qualification and working experience.

Sex of respondents

Table 4 shows that 82.0 percent of the respondents were males and 18.0 percent were females. This is a fair representation of the senior members because

statistics from the two Universities reveal a high number of males than females. The representativeness of the male and female senior members in the study is also indicative of the fact that whatever responses they make about assessing stress at workplace, coping and management strategies would constitute a strong basis for making generalizations and inferences not only on the population studied but also on senior members in other universities in the country.

Table 4: Sex distribution of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	205	82.0
Female	45	18.0
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Age of respondents

Table 5 shows the age distribution of respondents. A striking feature about the distribution is that 200 (80%) of the respondents fall between 31-40 age category. Thirty-five (14.0%) of the respondents fall between 41 -50 age group. Eleven (4.4%) of the respondents are between 51-60 years while four (1.6%) of them fall within the 21-30 age bracket. As senior members one would have expected that majority (80%) of them would have been 40years and above. The account for this deviation could be linked to the educational reforms that have lessened the number of years spent in school. In spite of the age differential

among the subjects of the study, it is reasonable to assume that as senior members they might portray common or comparable experience and make an objective assessment of levels of stress they encounter both at work and home.

Table 5: Age distribution of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	4	1.6
31-40	200	80.0
41-50	35	14.0
51-60	11	4.4
Above 60	0	0.0
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Marital status of respondents

Table 6 shows that 200 (80%) are married; 42 (16.8%) are single; while 5 (2.0%) and 3 (1.2%) are divorced and widowed respectively. This buttresses the fact that respondents are matured and have some level of responsibilities both at home and their work places.

Table 6: Marital status of respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	200	80.0
Single	42	16.8
Divorced	5	2.0
Widowed	3	1.2
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Number of children of respondents

Table 7 shows the distribution of the number of children of respondents. One hundred and fifty (60%) of the respondents have three or less children while one hundred (40%) of them have between four and seven children. None of the respondents had eight or more children. Majority of the respondents have three or less children because they are highly educated and spent more of t

he reproductive years in school and also understand family planning issues better.

Table 7: Number of children of respondents

Number of children	Frequency	Percentage
0-3	150	60.0
4-7	100	40.0
8 or more	0	0.0
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Academic qualification of respondents

Table 8 represents the distribution of respondents by academic qualification. Two hundred and five (82.0%) of the respondents hold Master of philosophy (MPHIL). Twenty (8.0%) fall within the category of respondents who hold Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Planning and Administration (MPA), while fifteen (6.0%) of the respondents hold Master of Science (MSC); Master of Arts (MA) and Master of Education (M.ED) degrees are majority of the respondents (240) hold their master degrees.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by academic qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
P H D	10	4.0
M P H I L	205	82.0
MSC / MA / M.ED.	15	6.0
MBA /MPA /MFA	20	8.0
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Work experience of the respondents

Table 9 shows respondents' working experience and years of working in the university. One hundred and forty-one (56.4%) respondents fall within 5-10 years working experience, while ninety-four (37.6%) of the respondents have 10 years or more working experience at the university. Fifteen (6.0%) of the

respondents fall within the category of those who have worked at the university for less than 5 years. Thus with relatively high level of working experience in the university, one would expect a reliable and objective assessment of stress, its management and coping strategies from the respondents. One can infer from the background characteristics of respondents that they are matured people, have high educational background and several years of working experience in the universities.

Table 9: Distribution of work experience of the respondents

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	15	6.0
5 -10 years	141	56.4
Above 10 years	94	37.6
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

The nature of stress experienced by senior members

Results in Table 10 and 11, shows the nature of stress experienced by senior members. The first item sought to find out whether senior members find their work schedule easy and interesting. Sixty-two respondents representing (80.5%) of the males and eleven respondents representing (61.1%) of the females from UCC disagreed with the statement. The same can be said of KNUST where one hundred and eight representing (84.4%) of the males and twenty (74.1%) of

the females disagreed with the statement. This shows that the majority of the respondents disagreed that their work schedule were easy. This also means that the majority of the senior members of our Universities experienced some level of stress at work.

Again from Table 10 & 11, both males and females from UCC disagreed to the contention that work schedule were beyond their capabilities. Sixty-four representing (83.1%) of the males and ten representing (55.5%) of the females disagreed. The same can be said of KNUST where one hundred and seven (83.6%) of the males and seventeen (63.0%) of the females also disagreed. The implication here is that majority of the respondents disagreed that their work schedule were within their capabilities. This buttressed the findings of Kohn and Schooler (1983) that there is a link between specific work characteristics and psychological functioning. Trenberth and Dewe, (2005) also posit that stress is relational in nature involving some sort of transaction between the individual and his environment.

In responding to item three from Table 10 & 11 which sought to find out whether doing the same work everyday irritates the respondents, fifty-seven (74.0%), of the males and ten (55.6%) of the females disagreed to this fact. The same can be said of KNUST where ninety-seven (75.8%) of the males and twenty-four (88.9%) of the females disagreed that doing same work everyday irritate them. It therefore means that majority of the respondents agreed that doing same work everyday do not irritate them. This runs counter to Schermerhorn and Associates (1994), when they contended that stress comes about as a result of an

individual work schedule, work status, work environment, relationship with boss and peers.

Table 10: Nature of stress experienced by senior members UCC

Statement	Male			Female		
	A	U	D	A	U	D
	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %
I find my work schedule rather easy and interesting.	(10) 13.0	(5) 6.5	(62) 80.5	(5) 38.9	(0) 0	(11) 61.1
I sometimes find that my work schedule is beyond my capability.	(13) 16.4	(0) 0	(107) 83.6	(5) 27.8	(3) 16.6	(10) 55.6
Doing the same work everyday does not irritate me at all.	(9) 11.7	(11) 14.3	(97) 33.3	(6) 33.3	(2) 11.1	(10) 55.6

Source: Field data, 2008

KEY: A = Agree U = Uncertain D = Disagree F = Frequency % = Percentage

Table 11: Nature of stress experienced by senior members KNUST

Statement	Male			Female		
	A	U	D	A	U	D
	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %	(F) %
I find my work schedule rather easy and interesting.	(14) 10.9	(6) 4.7	(108) 84.4	(5) 18.5	(2) 7.4	(20) 74.1
I sometimes find that my work schedule is beyond my capability.	(16) 12.5	(5) 3.9	(107) 83.6	(7) 25.9	(3) 11.1	(17) 63.0
Doing the same work everyday does not irritate me at all.	(12) 9.4	(19) 14.8	(97) 75.8	(1) 3.7	(2) 7.4	(24) 88.9

Source: Field data, 2008

KEY: A = Agree U = Uncertain D = Disagree F = Frequency

% = Percentage

Mean and standard deviation of the nature of stress experienced by respondents

Table 12 shows that the mean scores of respondents from UCC and KNUST was 3.49 and 2.20 respectively for the item “work schedule rather easy and interesting”. The mean scores for UCC and KUST shown in Table 12 also

revealed 3.45 and 2.25 respectively on whether sometimes they find their work schedules beyond their capabilities. Again Table 12 shows that the mean scores for UCC and KNUST staff are 3.18 and 3.47 respectively on whether doing the same work everyday does not irritate them at all.

Table 12: Mean and standard deviation of the nature of stress experienced by respondents

Institution		Work schedule rather easy and interesting	Work schedule beyond my capabilities	Doing same work everyday does not irritate me
UCC	M	3.4851	3.4526	3.1765
	N	101	95	102
	SD	0.9184	0.9264	1.1497
KNUST	M	2.2013	2.2452	3.4662
	N	149	155	148
	SD	0.7595	0.7649	1.0992
UCC & KNUST	M	2.72	2.704	3.348
	N	250	250	250
	SD	1.0365	1.0161	1.191

Source: Field data, 2008

KEY: M = Mean Score N = Number of respondents SD = Standard Deviation

How respondents cope and managed stress

Table 13 shows that 45 (18.0%) of the senior members from both universities agreed to the assertion that they created an environment which minimizes their stress. While 61, representing (24.4%) of the senior members were uncertain about the assertion, 144 (57.6%) of the senior members from the two universities disagreed to the fact that they created an environment which minimize their stress. This means that majority of the respondents asserted that they do not create an environment which minimize their stress. This confirms Corvile and Bernardi's (1999) assertion that companies, organisations, and institutions should promote a balance between work and home to discourage employees from staying late at night by offering a number of personal days of relaxation throughout the year.

Table 13: Creation of an environment which minimize stress

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	45	18.0
Uncertain	61	24.4
Disagreed	144	57.6
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Table 14 shows the responses of the senior members from the two universities on the assertion that their job responsibilities are consistent with their values. 201 (80.4%), of the senior members disagreed to the statement. 11 (4.4%)

of the senior members were uncertain whether their job responsibilities are consistent with their values. 38 (15.2%), of the senior members agreed to the statement that their job responsibilities are consistent with their values. This implies that majority of the respondents disagreed that their job responsibility was consistent with their values. This runs counter to the assertion of LaRocco, House, and French (1980), that the influence of work activity and work culture on the value system of the individual is another important domain where work influences family life behavior.

Table 14: Job responsibilities are consistent with values

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	38	15.2
Uncertain	11	4.4
Disagreed	201	80.4
Total	250	100

Source: Field data, 2008

On the question of recognizing early and preparing for events or situations likely to be stressful to senior members, Table 15 shows that, 233 (93.2%) of the senior members from the two universities disagreed. 8 (3.2%) of the senior members were uncertain while 9 (3.6%) of the senior members agreed to the assertion. This implies that majority of the respondents disagreed that they recognised early and prepare for events or situations likely to be stressful to them. This again runs counter to Corville and Bernadi (1999) assertion that stress is a

physiological and psychological reaction that results from an individual belief that they are unable to meet a demand. This means stress occurs situationally and demand can be seen as a threat or an opportunity to the person.

Table 15: Recognise early and prepare for stressful events or situations

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	9	3.6
Uncertain	8	3.2
Disagreed	233	93.2
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Table 16 shows that 223 (89.2%) of the senior members disagreed to the assertion that whenever they were unable to finish their projected work for the day, they do not feel scared. Responding to the same statement, 21 (8.4%) of the senior members from the two universities agreed that they do not feel scared whenever they are unable to finish their projected work for the day. However, 6 (2.4%) of the senior members from the same institutions were uncertain about the statement. This means majority of the respondents felt scared when they are not able to finish their projected work for the day. This confirms Fleet's (1988) position when he asserted that stress occurs when a person is subjected to unusual situations or demands that are difficult to handle, or to extreme expectations or pressures.

Table 16: Do not feel scared unable to finish projected work for the day

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	21	8.4
Uncertain	6	2.4
Disagreed	223	89.2
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

In another dimension, table 17 shows that 229 (91.6%) of the respondents from both universities agreed that there was an appropriate amount of time urgency in their daily routine. 13 (5.2%) of the senior members disagreed to the same statement. This finding confirms Iwasaki (2003) assertion that leisure is a significant aspect of most peoples' lives and that the impact of stress influences the way in which leisure is used.

Table 17: Appropriate amount of time urgency in daily routine

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	229	91.6
Uncertain	8	3.2
Disagreed	13	5.2
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

On the issue of receiving adequate feedback to judge work experience, table 18 shows that, 5 (2.0%) of the senior members from the two universities

were uncertain and 11 (4.4%) disagreed. Whereas 234 (93.6%) of the senior members agreed that they received adequate feedback to judge their work experience. This implies that senior members receive adequate feedback to judge their performance. According to Braham (1990), feedback is critical because a manager or supervisor must provide feedback and recognition to keep subordinates informed of their effectiveness.

Table 18: Receive adequate feedback to judge work experience

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	234	93.6
Uncertain	5	2.0
Disagreed	11	4.4
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Furthermore, table 19 shows that out of the two hundred and fifty respondents, 9 (3.6%) of them agreed that they include relaxation time as part of their daily routine. 234 (93.6%) of them also disagreed to the assertion. The table shows that majority of the senior members disagreed that they included relaxation time as part of their daily routine. This runs counter to Iwasaki (2003) that leisure is a significant aspect of most people's lives and that the impact of street influences the way in which leisure is used.

Table 19: Include relaxation time as part of daily routine

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	9	3.6
Uncertain	7	2.8
Disagreed	234	93.6
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Again, Table 20 shows that, 230 (92.0%) of the senior members from the two universities agreed that their partners always notice whenever they are not themselves. 10 (4.0%) of the senior members are uncertain while another 10 (4.0%) of the senior members disagreed to the assertion. Thus majority of the senior members agreed that their partners do take notice of their mood when they are stressed. This confirms the assertion of Lai (1995) that there is a close link between work and family roles in stress related issues. According to this author, for workers to release themselves from work related problems, they may take stressor frustration on spouse and other family members.

Table 20: Partners always notice when their spouses are not themselves

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	230	92.0
Uncertain	10	4.0
Disagreed	10	4.0
Total	250	100

Source: Field data, 2008

Table 21 shows that, 4 (1.6%) of the senior members agreed to the assertion that they do not feel irritated whenever their partners wanted to discuss household issues with them. However, 242 (96.8%) of the senior members from the two universities disagreed that they do not feel irritated whenever their partners wanted to discuss household issues with them. This means that majority of the senior members asserted that they feel irritated whenever their partners wanted to discuss household issues with them after work because according to Barnett (1994), problems at home with a partner or children can compound the relationship between job role quality and psychological distress.

Table 21: Feel irritated when husband/wife wants to discuss household issues after work

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	4	1.6
Uncertain	4	1.6
Disagreed	242	96.8
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Finally, on the issue of working in the university for more than 5 years help gain experience, Table 22 shows that, 7 (2.8%) of the senior members from the two universities agreed that working for more than 5years help gain experience. 4 (1.6%) of the senior members were uncertain. 239 (95.6%) of the senior members disagreed that it helps gain experience. This implies that majority

of the senior members disagreed that working experience in the universities do equip senior members to manage stress effectively.

Table 22: Working in the university for more than 5years help to gain experience

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	7	2.8
Uncertain	4	1.6
Disagreed	239	95.6
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008

Responses of senior members to how age contributes to management of stress

Table 23-26 illustrate the responses of item numbers 24-27 of the Likert Scale. These questions were raised to solicit the views of the senior members about the role age plays in the management of stress at their work places and home.

Usually listen to music when stressed at home

Table 23 shows responses to whether senior members try to listen to music when stressed up at home. Fifty respondents between the age group of 31-40 representing (74.62%) for UCC agreed that when they are stressed at home they try to listen to music. Fifteen respondents between the age group of 41-50

representing (22.40%) for UCC agreed to the assertion. Fifty-two respondents between the age group of 31-40 representing (47.27%) for KNUST agreed to the assertion that when they were stressed at home they listened to music. Forty-three respondents between the age group of 41-50 representing (39.09%) for KNUST agreed to the assertion that when they are stressed at home they listened to music. Responses from the two institutions showed that majority of the respondents agreed that they listened to music when stressed at home. This confirms the assertion of Jellison, (1975), cited in Hanser, (1985), that music can reduce stress responses and help induced relaxation under stress.

Table 23: Usually listen to music when stressed at home

Institution	Age (year)	Agreed		Uncertain		Disagreed		Total
		No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	
	21-30	-		-		-		-
	31-40	50	(74.62)	13	(72.22)	8	(80.0)	71
UCC	41-50	15	(22.40)	3	(16.67)	1	(10.0)	19
	51-60	2	(2.96)	2	(11.11)	1	(10.0)	5
	Total	67		18		10		95
	21-30	-		1	(3.13)	-		1
	31-40	52	(47.27)	17	(53.13)	4	(30.77)	73
KNUST	41-50	43	(39.09)	13	(40.61)	6	(46.15)	62
	51-60	15	(13.64)	1	(3.13)	3	(23.08)	19
Total		110		32		13		155

Source: Field data, 2008

Creation of an environment which minimize stress

Table 24 shows that fifty respondents between the age group of 31-40 representing (79.36%) for UCC agreed to the notion that they created an environment which minimizes their stress. On the other hand, nine respondents between the age group of 41-50 representing (47.37%) from UCC disagreed to the contention that they create an environment which minimizes their stress. Similarly, fifty-three respondents between the ages of 31-40 representing (45.30%) from KNUST disagreed to the assertion that they create an environment that minimizes their stress.

Table 24: Create an environment which minimize stress

Institution	Age (year)	Agreed F (%)	Uncertain F (%)	Disagreed F (%)	Total
UCC	21-30	1 (1.59)	-	-	1
	31-40	50 (79.36)	8 (61.54)	10 (52.63)	68
	41-50	9 (14.29)	3 (23.08)	9 (47.37)	21
	51-60	3 (4.76)	2 (15.38)	-	5
	Total	63	13	19	95
KNUST	21-30	-	1 (3.45)	2 (1.71)	3
	31-40	3 (33.33)	18 (62.07)	53 (45.30)	74
	41-50	6 (66.67)	8 (27.59)	58 (49.57)	72
	51-60	-	2 (6.89)	4 (3.42)	6
Total	9	29	117	155	

Source: Field data, 2008

Also, fifty-eight respondents between the age group of 41-50 representing (49.57%) from KNUST disagreed to the contention that they created an

environment which minimizes their stress. Thus, majority disagreed to the assertion that they created an environment which minimizes stress. This runs counter to Miller (2000) that the greatest thing an employee can do to reduce stress is to maintain a positive attitude in adverse situations and should not worry about things that are beyond their control.

Job responsibilities are consistent with values

Table 25 shows that fifty-one respondents between the age group of 31-40 representing (68.0%) for UCC disagreed to the assertion that they felt their job responsibilities are consistent with their values. Also, seventeen respondents between the age group of 41-50 representing (22.67%) for UCC disagreed to the assertion that their job responsibilities are consistent with their values. Similarly, fifty-six respondents between the age group of 31-40 representing (44.44%) for KNUST disagreed to the contention that they felt their job responsibilities are consistent with their values. Fifty-four respondents between the age group of 41-50 representing (42.86%) for KNUST also disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents are not satisfied with their job responsibilities. However, Miller (2000), contents that the greatest thing an employee can do to reduce on the job stress is to choose a position within an organisation or institution that matches their personality. He further asserts that a job should be personally satisfying to the individual.

Table 25: Feel job responsibilities are consistent with values

Institution	Age (year)	Agreed	Uncertain	Disagreed	Total
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
UCC	21-30	-	13 (72.22)	-	-
	31-40	1 (50)		51 (68.0)	52
	41-50	1 (50)	3 (16.67)	17 (22.67)	21
	51-60	-	2 (11.11)	7 (9.33)	9
	Total	2	18	75	95
KNUST	21-30	-	-	-	-
	31-40	6 (35.29)	-	56 (44.44)	62
	41-50	5 (29.42)	6 (50)	54 (42.86)	65
	51-60	6 (35.29)	6 (50)	16 (12.70)	28
Total	17	12	126	155	

Source: Field data, 2008

Recognised early and prepare for events or situations likely to be stressful

Finally, Table 26 shows that sixty respondents between the age group of 31-40 representing (75.0%) for UCC disagreed to the assertion that they recognised early and prepared for events or situations likely to be stressful for them. More so, sixteen respondents between the age group of 41-50 representing (20.0%) for UCC disagreed that they do not recognised early and prepared for events or situations likely to be stressful to them. For KNUST, sixty respondents between the age group of 31-40 representing (52.17%) disagreed to the assertion.

Again, thirty-seven sixteen respondents between the age group of 41-50 representing (32.17%) disagreed that they do not recognised early and prepare for events or situations likely to be stressful to them. This implies that majority of the respondents do not prepare against any imminent stressor. Thus, respondents from both institutions do not put in coping strategies to avert the on set of stressors. Therefore, stress management among senior members does not depend on age.

Table 26: Recognised early and prepare for events or situations likely to be stressful

Institution	Age (year)	Agreed		Uncertain		Disagreed		Total
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
UCC	21-30	-		-		1	(1.25)	1
	31-40	1	(50)	7	(53.85)	60	(75.0)	68
	41-50	1	(50)	4	(30.77)	16	(20.0)	21
	51-60	-		2	(15.38)	3	(3.75)	5
	Total	2		13		80		95
KNUST	21-30	-		-		13	(11.31)	13
	31-40	8	(57.14)	9	(34.61)	60	(52.17)	77
	41-50	6	(42.86)	16	(61.54)	37	(32.17)	59
	51-60			1	(3.85)	5	(4.35)	6
Total		14		26		115		155

Source: Field data, 2008

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study was conducted to find out the nature and extent of stress experienced by senior members of our universities; and the coping strategies that they adopt to manage stress. The study also sought to examine how stress affect senior members in their work and its influence on their performance, how they manage to identify stress and whether age and experience have influence on stress management.

The core hunch of the study was that senior members of our universities experience stress due to high increase in students' intake and lack of resources and equipment. The data gathered in the research lent much weight to this core hunch or belief. The study focused on three research questions. To be able to answer these questions; a 34 item questionnaire were designed and administered. The research data was analyzed using the SPSS and simple percentage descriptions.

Summary

The following section summarized the findings based on the themes on which the research questions were based.

Nature of stress

The study revealed that 79.2% of the senior members claimed they experienced some form of stress at work, while 20.8% were of the view that they are either not aware of stress at work or they do not experience it. Majority of the senior members agreed that they experience some form of stress at work as Seiber (1974) posits that multiple roles bring about strain on the individual. Mark (1997) also saw the effects of occupational stress at work place and contends that individuals need to control their energy at work place in order to avoid exhaustion.

Working experience and stress management

Again, it came out of the study that 10.5% of the senior members responded that working experiences in the university is a panacea to acquiring coping and management skills necessary to avert potential stressors. 74% disagreed while 15.5% are uncertain. This finding implies that working experience in the universities is not a panacea to acquiring coping and management skills as Miller (2000) posits that a job should be personally satisfying to the individual.

Age and stress management

On how age explains stress management among senior members, the study revealed that 6.3% of the senior members below age 30 responded in the affirmative 1.6% are undecided while 92.1% responded in the negative. The study

again, revealed that 23.1% of the senior members between the ages of 31-40 years agreed to the fact that age was a factor in stress management, 13.1% of the same age group was undecided, while 63.8% disagreed. It also came out of the study that 33.6% of the senior members between ages 41-50 years agreed that age was a factor in stress management, 15.1% were undecided, while 51.3% of the senior members disagreed to this fact. It was further revealed that 5.4% of the senior members between ages 51-60 agreed that age was a factor in stress management, 44.1% of the senior members are undecided, while 50.5% disagreed to the fact that age was a factor in stress management. This means that age was not a factor as to how senior members managed stress at their work place and home.

Conclusions

On the strength of the findings made by the researcher, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The assessment and management of stress among senior members in our universities in Ghana need to be considered in order to equip them with the requisite management/coping skills to avert the on set of stressors.
- Lack of health and safety measures at work place in the universities affects senior members' performance.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from the study and its implications, the following recommendations were made.

- In order to avoid the situation where most employees in our Universities are not adequately informed on career opportunities, their hazards and more especially how work related stress can affect their performance in future, it is recommended that counseling on work stress and stress coping strategies are organized for employees in our Universities.
- Additionally, it is recommended that the Universities should provide the needed materials and logistics to enable carry out career awareness programmes especially on stress and work related stress within the University set up.
- It is further recommended that management of Ghanaian tertiary institutions put in work place stress-relieving packages for its employees who might be undergoing stress which may be affecting their output instead of blaming such employees' performance on incompetence or Laziness.
- Again it is recommended that there must be periodic stress appraisal among university employees especially senior members.
- The management of our universities should as it were come out with a policy to give compensation packages to their employees who may

suffer physical or psychological injury owing to stress they might be undergoing on their jobs.

- It is also recommended that management of our universities should organize “talk through sessions” where employees can bring out the difficulties they face on the job, and further come out with suggestions as to how such difficulties could be resolved. This will break the “climate of fear” that seems to exist among management and their employees. This, the researcher believes will go a long way to ease the stress that normally comes on to the subordinates.
- Furthermore, the management of the various tertiary institutions especially the Universities should endeavour to give concessions to married workers especially those with children when the need arises. This will go a long way to help married workers in our Universities to have more time with their families and be able to have the peace of mind to work when they come to work.
- Also, unpleasant or dangerous physical environmental conditions exert strain on workers and eventually turn into stressors if they are not remedied. Therefore, University administrators should do well to make working environments of their employees very friendly and free from hazards. For example, some of these environmental, stressors like excessive noise, poor arrangement and design of workplace and lighting must be addressed to make the environment attractive and

conducive for work. Thus health and safety measures must be addressed in the university environment.

Implications for counselling

The findings from this study have implications for school counsellors, workers, university employers, the Ministries of Education, Science and Sports, Women and Children Affairs Ministry, Institutions, Parents and Policy makers.

- The universities should do needs assessment of employees and use the data obtained to develop comprehensive counseling packages on stress and its management/coping skills for all workers.
- The university counseling centre should organize counseling sessions on work related stress and its coping/management strategies for workers as a preventive measure for the workers to avoid pathological stressful situations.
- Universities can also employ Certified Biofeedback practitioners or their assistants to organize courses on listening to the signals from the body compositions of senior members to determine their level of stress or relaxation as a measure to minimizing level of stress among them to avoid the on set of physiological stressors, since biofeedback is often used with other relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization (imagery), autogenic, response and quieting reflex to reduce stress.

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APPENDIX A:
QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Background Information

Instruction: Please tick where applicable.

1. Sex

- a) Male b) Female

2. Age

- A) 21 – 30 years b) 31 -40 years
C) 41 – 50 years d) 51 to 60 years

3. Marital Status

- a) Married b) Single
b) Divorced d) Widowed

4. Number of children

- a) 0 – 3 b) 4 – 7
c) 8 – 10 d) Above 10

5. In which of the following institutions are you working?

- a) University of Cape Coast
b) Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

6. What is your highest academic qualification?

- a) Ph.D b) M.PHIL

c) M,SC/MA/M.ED [] d) M B A/MPA/MFA
[]

d) B.ED/BSC/BA []

7. Working experience in the University

a) Less than 5 years [] b) 5 – 10 years []

b) Above 10 years [] d) others
specify

8. Do you have any one under your supervision at work?

a) Yes [] b) No []

9. If yes, tick the option below the number you supervise?

a) Less than 5 [] b) 5 – 10 []

b) 11 – 15 [] d) 16 – 20 []

e) More than 20 []

10. Please state your status

a) Vice Chancellor [] b) Pro-Vice Chancellor []

c) Principal [] d) Registrar []

e) Deputy Registrar [] f) Pro Vost []

g) Dean [] h) Head of Department []

i) Asst. Registrar [] j) Lecturer []

k) Accountant [] i) Secretary []

11. Which of the following times do you normally report to work?

a) 6.00 a.m. [] b) 7.00 a.m. []

c) 8.00 a.m. [] d) 9.00 a.m. []

e) Any other specify

12. Do you find it easy getting to work?
- a) Yes [] b) No []
13. If No to question 12 which of the following makes it uneasy for you
- a) Lack of transport [] b) Traffic jams []
- c) Inability to wake up early []
14. When do you normally close from work?
- a) 3.00 p.m. [] b) 4.00 p.m. []
- c) 5.00 p.m. [] d) 6.00 p.m. []
- e) 7.00 p.m. [] f) After 7.00 p.m. []
15. When I am unable to get to work early I feel?
- a) Very worried [] b) Worried []
- c) Indifferent [] d) Not bothered []
- e) Not at all bothered []
16. If you ticked “Very worried” or in question 15, which of the following makes you worried.
- a) My boss will reprimand me []
- b) My colleagues at work will be angry with me []
- c) My working partner will also be worried []
- d) I will not be able to finish my work for the day []
- e) I May be sacked if my lateness continues []

SECTION B

Instruction: Please tick any of the five options in each item to show the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the statement.

KEY: A = Agree U = Uncertain D = Disagree

	A	U	D
17. I find my work schedule rather easy and interesting			
18. I sometimes find that my work schedule is beyond my capability			
19. Doing the same work everyday does not irritate me at all			
20. Find working with my colleagues rather interesting			
21. I make decisions with a minimum of stress and worry			
22. I am satisfied with the balance between my work time and leisure time			
23. I am satisfied with my ability to plan my work load			
24. When I am stressed at home I usually try to listen to music.			
25. I create an environment which minimize my stress.			
26. I feel my job responsibilities are consistent with my values.			
27. I recognize early and prepare for even or situations likely to be stressful for me.			
28. Whenever I am unable to finish the projected work for the day, I don't feel scared.			
29. There is an appropriate amount of time urgency in my daily routine.			
30. I receive adequate feedback to judge my work performance			

31. I usually include relaxation time as part of my daily routine.			
32. My partner always notices when I am not myself.			
33. I don't feel irritated when my husband/wife wants to discuss household issues with me after work			
34. Working in the University for more than 5 years help to gain experience			