

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION - WINNEBA.

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI.



**EXAMINING MANAGEMENT OF WORK PLACE - RELATED
STRESS: A CASE STUDY OF THE DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA.**

REBECCA GHUNNEY

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**A Project Report in the Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Business
Education, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education,
Winneba in partial fulfilment of requirements for award of Master of Business
Administration (Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour) Degree.**

JULY, 2019

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, REBECCA GHUNNEY hereby declare that this project report, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of project report as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: MR. ANTHONY FREEMAN MENSAH

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved children Prof. Thomas Essilfie Kumi, Chirstabel Kumi, Eric Kumi Jnr, Constance Kumi and my husband Mr. Eric Kumi for their understanding and support during my studies. This dedication also goes to my family especially my dear sister, Miss Patience Ghunney who took care of my children, my dear mother Miss Hanna Baidoo, my mentor Mrs. Christie Okae-Anti who encourage me to further my education, it also goes to my colleagues Mr. Ohene Agyepong and Mr. Joseph Afuubila Ayamba for their numerous advice.

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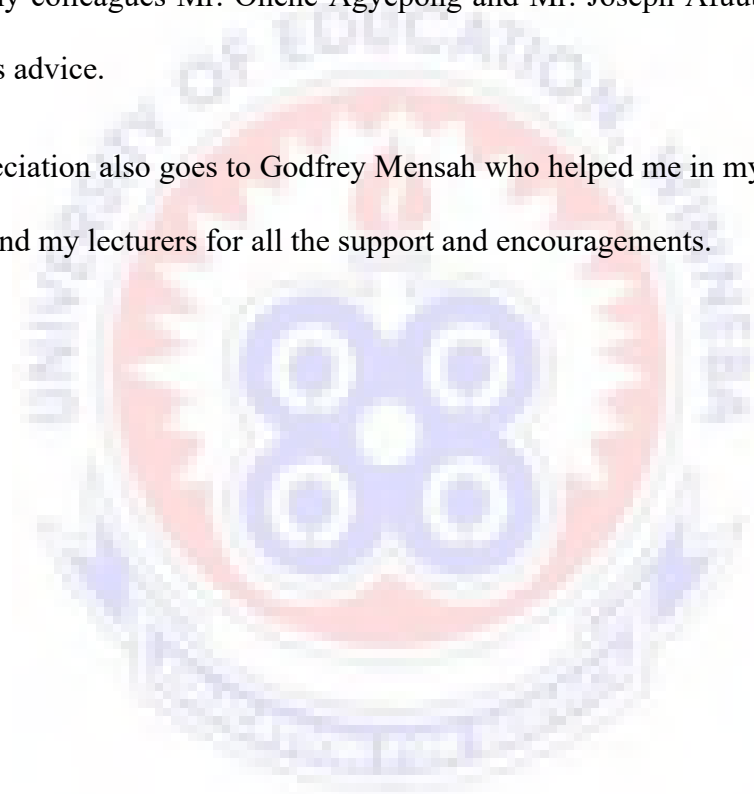


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the management of work place - related stress: the case of the Division of Human Resource Management Unit of UEW, Winneba. A sample of forty-five (45) participants was chosen for the study through simple random technique and purposive sampling techniques. Among others, it was found that: staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba experience stress as a result of doing so many things within a limited time. To some extent, they also indicated that role conflict causes stressful situations at the workplace. Regarding the symptoms of stress, the staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba reckoned that workers under stress are far more likely to make mistakes than workers in low stress jobs. They also opined that workers are much more likely to have to take time off work for stress-related sickness. They also agreed that workers under stress experience frequent urination and have sweating palms. Again, they indicated that workers under stress experience excessive tiredness and workers under stress often lose concentration. Among others, it was recommended that workers in the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba should ensure that they engage in physical activities such as regular exercises to their bodies. Also, in order not to have too much to do in a limited time, senior staff should delegate some of their responsibilities to their junior staff and the Human Resource Division in collaboration with the Management of the University should recruit more staff to relieve the staff of their heavy schedules.

--CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Stress is a reaction of the body and mind to events which are threatening or challenging in life. According to Kyriacou (2001), stress at the workplace refers to effects of task demands faced by individual while performing their professional roles and responsibilities, and it has been the major concern of human service and helping professionals, such as social workers, nurses, physicians and teachers. It is experienced by persons when situations, events or people make lots demands on the body and mind.

Blonna (2005) pointed out that stress is experienced in every sphere of life, and people all over the world experience job stress in one way or the other. In modern times the nature of the world of work comes with numerous challenges which place a lot of responsibilities on workers to perform to meet set goals. Men and women are stressed trying to balance the demands of husband or wife, mother or father. Others are struggling just to survive, doing the best they can in an economy that is struggling to develop. People are competing for jobs in markets flooded with unemployment, poverty, and despair. Some are caught between the demands of forced retirement and difficulty of meeting their financial needs. According to Blonna (2005), women are known to bear the major blunt of both home and work-related stress. This is because of the preponderant roles women play at home and at work.

Occupational stress is a major problem that results in substantial cost to individual employees and work organizations around the globe (Kyriacou, 2001). The changing nature of work has placed extraordinary demands on employees and increased concern about the effect this change is having on the well-being and health

of the employees and their organizations. According to Kyriacou (2001), occupational stress is a serious concern and a major hindrance to organizational success because it contributes to a number of outcomes which are critical to organizational success including absenteeism, labour turnover and poor job performance. A critical look at the human and economic cost of job stress strongly suggests that it should be in the interest of all-employees, employers and the community at large to take steps to build a healthier and less stressful working environment. Besides, the reduction of stress and strain is not only essential to promotion of the workers' health and well-being but also to ensure the health and well-being of those to whom services are rendered (Hales, & Zartman, 2001).

Work-related stress is also recognised as a huge occupational health problem, and human suffering. For example, Gerrig and Zimbardo (2002) explain that stress has become a major contributor, either directly or indirectly, to coronary heart disease, cancer, long ailments and accidental injuries. Certain demographic and career characteristics are considered to affect job-related stress and, consequently job performance. Those characteristics may be characterised as either personal or professional in nature. Some of those personal characteristics are age, gender, and marital status. Professional characteristics include teaching field, academic rank, designation and years of service in the organization.

Gmelch (1993) opines that an increase in stress is not necessarily bad. He believed that stress is necessary for existence but must remain at the appropriate level. Gmelch prescription is to increase the stress intake when an individual is over stimulated.

Duffy (1999) states that many people report that they feel great stress at least once a week or live with high stress every day. Stress seems to become the price paid for being affluent. It has therefore been acknowledged that there is stress in man's life. The introduction of formal Education has brought about workload on people. People combine traditional occupation, such as fishing, hunting and weaving with academic tasks. This always results in anxiety, stress and other psychological strain on people. The Human Resource Practitioners is one in which a provider and a recipient relationship exists. This work environment is also one in which change, relating to instructional innovations and technological advancement in Ghana Education is continual. The Human Resource Practitioners therefore face challenges from within and outside of their programmes and have many responsibilities for programme components such as professional development, staff supervision, resource management, monitoring and reporting. The Human Resource Practitioners have low salaries and lack benefits. All these conditions are likely to produce stress for them and their subordinates.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Occupational stress has become a prominent topic in science research. Recent review confirms positive relationship between job stress and physical and clinical symptomatology (Bayer and Braxton, 1989). Occupational stress is considered to be a factor that may affect organizational effectiveness through lowering employee performance, absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover (Gmelch, 1993). It also has a negative financial impact on workers (Harris & Brannick, 1999).

Administration of institutions such as University of Education, Winneba is a challenging task for principals of the institution physically and psychologically. Factors such as long hours at work, control and management of both human and

financial resources, pressure dealing with students and tutors, and office administrative duties are some principal sources of stress for the Human Resource Practitioners (Blonna, 2005; Kyricou, 2001). Each year, enrolment goes up and this implies increase in the demand on their care, attention, supervision and teaching. Some issues such as tutors not being regular in class and students' frequent complaints about the quality of their food all combine to put stress on their Human Resource Practitioners. Blonna (2005) and Kyricou (2001) opine that all the signs and symptoms experienced by University Human Resource Practitioners were stress-related problems.

Research shows that the last two decades have witnessed a proliferation of research studies on occupational stress among educational personnel, and that interest in this area has not abated. Unfortunately, however, little is known about occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of educational institutions in developing societies like Ghana because of the fact that most management studies on the subject of these studies have been carried out in the developed countries. Taylor (2003) and O' Donnell (2001) attribute stress to work overload which lead to health complains and social isolation respectively. The current research therefore, intends to contribute to a better understanding of occupational stress in administration by investigating the sources, symptoms, effects, and management of stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba. It is hoped that the results and findings will yield future intervention strategies that will help workers in stress management.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the perceived causes of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba.
- Find out the symptoms of stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba.
- Investigate the effects of stress on the job performance of Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba.
- To explore ways by which stress can be reduced or managed among Human Resource Practitioners.

1.4 Research questions

This study addresses the following questions.

- What are the perceived causes of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
- What are the symptoms of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
- What are the effects of occupational stress on the job performance of Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
- How do the University Human Resource Practitioners cope with these stressful situations?

1.5 Significance of the study

Occupational stress can be linked to the success or failure at one's job. The general impression about occupational stress is the feeling of failure due to work overload.

But if this is the case and so simple a problem, then merely by reducing the amount of

work, occupational stress could have been done away with. However, the problem is not that easy to solve. It is here that an investigation into the causes and effects of stress in different occupations in the study area becomes important.

It is hoped that the findings of this research will assist Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education to become fully aware of the signs and symptoms of stress. It will also help Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education to find out the level of their stress. The findings of the study will alert Human Resource Practitioners of the effects of stress on their health and also provide guidelines to the Human Resource Practitioners to manage stressful situations.

Additionally, this study is significant in that, it will offer insights into issues concerning occupational stress and its management among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education. The results and recommendations of this study would be beneficial to all stakeholders in that these results and recommendations will serve as a guide items in formulating policies concerning University of Education and thus help to mitigate the perceived causes, and manage the effects of stress among these Human Resource Practitioners. The study will provide guidelines to Human Resource Practitioner to overcome stress. It will also help counselors to understand the types of stress these Human Resource Practitioners are likely to go through and how the counselors can assist them with some skills and techniques to overcome the stress.

Finally, the findings and recommendations may be important to other researchers who will like to do further studies into occupational stress and its management among Human Resource Practitioners of other establishments.

The scope of the problem under consideration was also limited to issues such as the perceived causes of occupational stress, its effects on their job performance and the management strategies. The sample size was four campuses of the University Human Resource Practitioners.

1.6 Limitation

The most challenging limitation to this study was the researcher wished to cover the entire campuses for the study but due to time constraints and the proximity of where the campuses is situated, financial difficulties and the non - availability of resources such as transport may not permit her to do so.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

To limit the broadness of the topic the study is limited to four campuses, the study covered only three of them thus Winneba, Kumasi and Mampong-Ashanti campuses. The study was limited to only the Division of Human Resource Unit which exist in the sub-campus of the University campuses named above. The study was restricted occupational stress in administration by investigating the sources, symptoms, effects, and management of stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba

1.8 Organization of the study

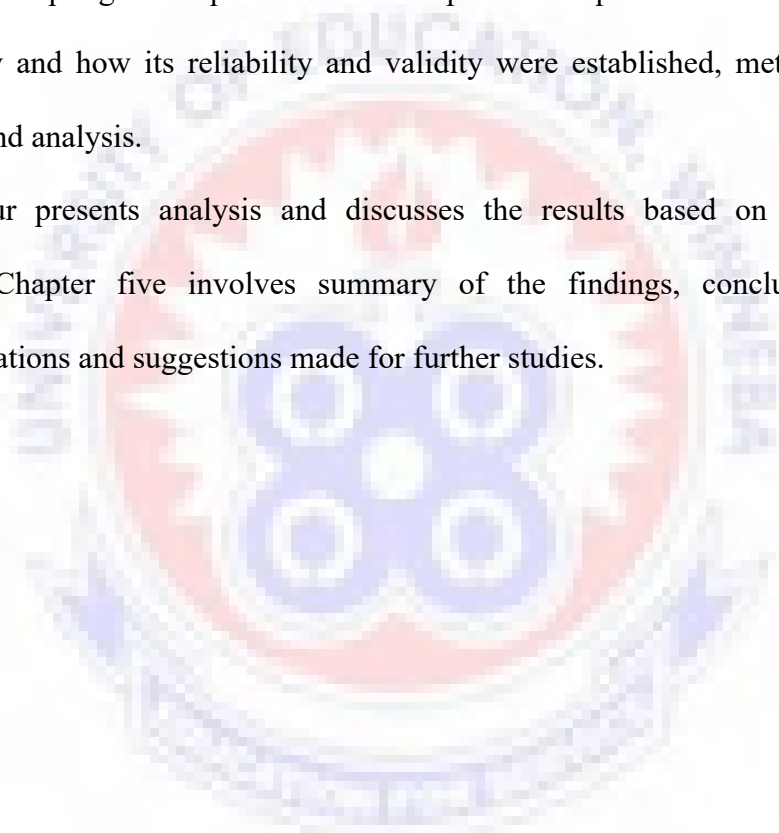
This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the study.

Chapter two reviews related literature on the topic of the study based on the following sub-themes: theoretical framework, the concept of stress, the concept of occupation, perceived causes of stress, signs and symptoms of occupational stress management or

coping with stress. The rest are job schedule or duties of the University Human Resource Practitioners, some effects of occupational stress on the job performance of University Human Resource Practitioners, type of stress, work stress and health, personality and stress.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology. This describes the research design adopted for the study, justification for choosing qualitative design, population, sample and sampling techniques used. The chapter also explained the instrument used in the study and how its reliability and validity were established, methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter four presents analysis and discusses the results based on the research questions. Chapter five involves summary of the findings, conclusion drawn, recommendations and suggestions made for further studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter contains the review of comprehensive literature regarding Defining Stressors, Factors of Stress, Internally generated stress, Externally generated stress, Environmental stress, Chemical and nutritional stresses, Lifestyle and job stress, Fatigue and overwork, Short term and Long term stress, Symptoms of stress, The effects of organisational stress on the business, Occupational Stress Management – A Global Perspective, The behavioural changes that indicate the effects of stress, How to manage occupational stress, Other preventative measures to reduce stress in organisations and Managing stress at an individual level

2.1 Theoretical Framework of the study

Stress occurs where there is a perceived imbalance between pressure and coping resources for a particular situation (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2015). While there have been many definitions that particularly specify the same purpose, authors have differing views. The main objective of the term recognises the interaction between people weighing up a situation, and then assessing the demands, and their perception of their ability to meet these demands on a particular occasion. According to Williams and Cooper (2012), stress needs to be addressed in a structured and effective manner as a part of an overall strategy for improving the well-being of a person. When the individual successfully completes a task, by the use of his/her resources, the stress associated with resolving this task is reduced and the individual's well-being is improved. On the other hand, if this task is not resolved, the individual's well-being will deteriorate. However, even if the conditions are appropriate for stress to surface, it

does not necessarily mean that it is caused, as it is the individual's capability to cope with the stress that actually causes stress to occur (Stranks, 2015).

Academics and media experts do not agree on a detailed definition of stress but they know that stress exists and is inescapable (Williams & Cooper, 2012). According to European Foundation (Cooper, 2012) 10% of the workforce of every business reports very low levels of job satisfaction. While it is stress that may look as the main cause, Cranwell-Ward and Abbey (2015) suggests that the level of pressure imposed on the person and his /her coping ability is the main cause.

Woodham (2015) describes good or positive stress as the amount of pressure required by the body in order to stimulate it into action. Thus managing stress is a delicate balancing act to keep pressure at the optimum level. When stress is at an optimum level, stress is positive; when too low or too high, stress is viewed as negative (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2015). Selye (2014) states that positive stress acts on the body before a presentation and motivates the individual to try his/her best to accomplish the task, whereas bad or negative stress is defined as the amount of pressure on the body, which demonstrates the individual from getting the job done (Stranks, 2015).

While this concept of stress (explained above) summarises a positive understanding, certain awareness should be reflected on recognising the causes and factors linked with stress. The following literature review gives a brief idea about factors and causes that are linked in creating stress in any individual.

2.1.1 Defining Stressors:

Many factors influence the human system and performance that result in stress. The causes of stress are known as stressors (Stranks, 2015). (Pedler& Boydell, 2015) have divided the stressors into different categories: -

The organisational structure and climate – an individual experiences stress when the expectations of the individual conflict the demands of the organisation. Role conflict and ambiguity are considered to be the major stressors for managers. The lack of predictability on the demands placed on the managers, ineffective communication with employees, long hours of work and high levels of responsibility etc. can be a significant cause of stress to managers.

Individual or self-imposed stressors – this is dependent on the personality and character of the individual. As suggested by Cooper & Payne (2008), there are two distinct types of personalities. Type A, which thrive on power, responsibility and have an aggressive drive, hence tend to be more stressed than Type B personalities; which are more relaxed in their approach to work and personal life.

- The family – the family is not always considered as an asylum from stress, as stress from the workplace can penetrate home and vice-versa (Marshall & Cooper, 2008). When there is a conflict between the organisation and the family demands, it can cause anxiety to the individual. Although Cooper and Payne (2008) suggest that family is a resource, which helps an individual to cope better with job stress.
- Environmental: factors arising from extreme temperature variations, ventilation, noise, vibration and presence of airborne contaminants such as dust, gases etc.
- Occupational stressors: caused due to too much or too little pressure. Conflicting job demands, excessive work hours and interchanging work and family demands.

- Social stressors: caused due to everyday problems coping up in life such as family issues, marital problems etc.

Conceptual framework of the study

2.1.2 Factors of Stress

Studies have identified many stressors, including role ambiguity, role conflict, heavy work-load, pressure, and physical discomforts. Work stress has been shown to result in job dissatisfaction, burnout (physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion), staff turnover, occupational illness and injuries, reduced mental health, depression, and even suicide (Dianz and Cabrera, 2007).

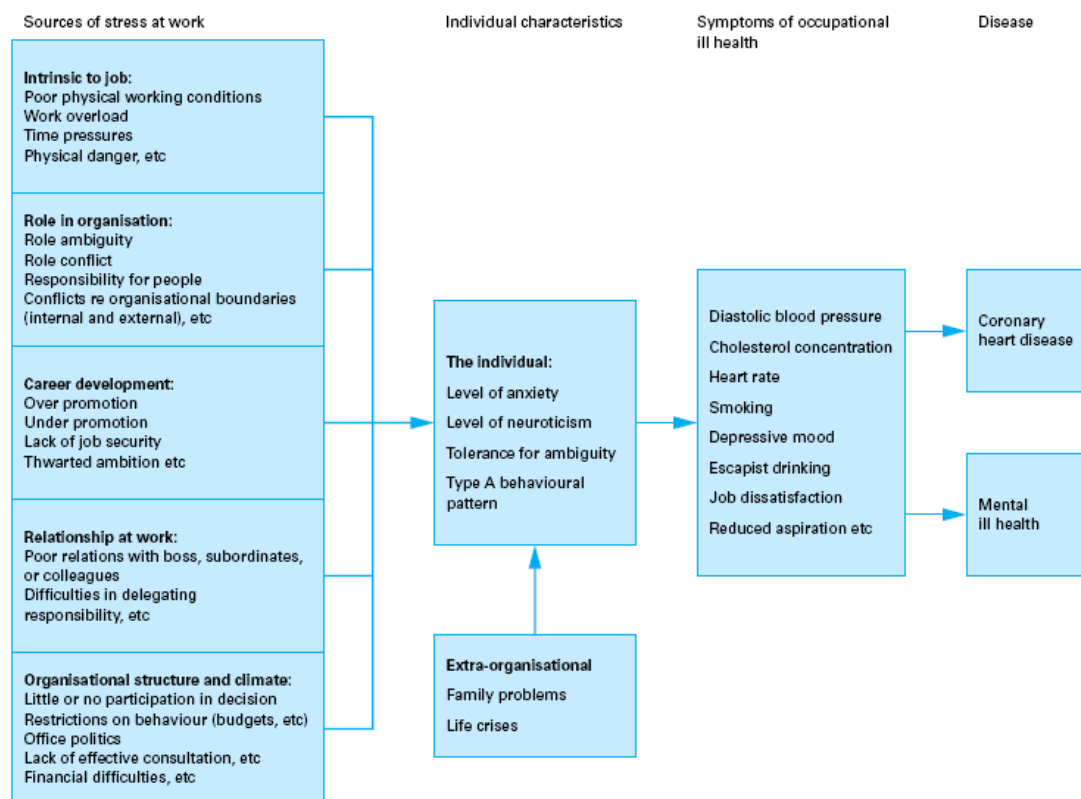


Figure 2.1: Model Stress At Work

Source: Michie, S .2012. *Work causes and management of stress at work*. Occup.

Environ. Med. 59;67-72.

Michie (2012) associated workplace factors with stress and health risks that can be categorised as those to do with the content of work and those to do with the social and organisational context of work (Figure 2.1). Those that are intrinsic to the job include long hours, work overload, time pressure, difficult or complex tasks, lack of breaks, lack of variety, and poor physical work conditions (for example, space, temperature, light). If organizations are to successfully reduce staff stress and improve staff morale, it is important to understand which factors influence staff stress and morale.

A number of studies have attempted to determine the characteristics of service users, staff members and organizations which are associated with high staff stress and poor staff morale in community-based services for people with intellectual disability.

The list of factors derived by Hatton *et al.*, (2009) can be grouped into several domains according to current organizational theories.

1. Within-staff factors. These include younger staff age, personal health, staff beliefs about and emotional reactions to user challenging behaviour, and the coping strategies used by staff to deal with workplace problems, particularly emotion-focused coping strategies such as wishful thinking.
2. Characteristics of service users. These focus on challenging behaviours shown by service users.
3. Factors intrinsic to the job. Factors here include work overload, a lack of job variety, low income and the emotional impact of working with people with intellectual disability.
4. Social support. These include feedback on job performance, and both practical and emotional support from colleagues, supervisors and managers.

5. Career development. Factors in this area include lack of job, lack of promotion prospects, and lack of further training and skill development.
6. Role in the organization. Factors in this area include role ambiguity and role conflict.
7. Organizational structure and climate. Factors in this area include hierarchical organizational structures, lack of participation in organizational decision-making, commitment to the organization, particularly in terms of alienation from the organization, and lack of person – organization ‘fit’.
8. Work home interface. Some work has suggested a link between high staff stress, and conflicting demands between work and home.

Dana (2011) addressed conflict in his research, one can very easily apply the term ‘stress’ every place he mentions the term, ‘conflict’. Conflict in the workplace creates stress in the workplace and stress in the workplace creates conflict. Eight cost factors to look at when dealing with stress/conflict:

- i. Use of health care for illnesses and injuries that are partially psychogenic. The calculation is based on the percentage of the psychogenic components of medical problems that occur when specified stress/ conflict takes place.
- ii. Lowered job motivation. The calculation is based on the loss of productivity due to the stress/ conflict event.
- iii. Lost work time. The calculation is based on sick days, personal leave and lost time due to disciplinary actions taken during stress/conflict.
- iv. Wasted time. This occurs primarily through the loss of an administrator’s time spent resolving stress/ conflict.

- v. Reduced decision quality. Administrators and work teams should ask, ‘What opportunities were lost by poor decisions that were affected by stress/conflict, and what might have been gained if a better decision had been made?’
- vi. Loss of skilled employees. Chronic unresolved stress/conflict can be a decisive factor in many of the voluntary employee departures.
- vii. Restructuring. The redesign of workflow may be altered in an attempt by administration to reduce the amount of interaction among employees.
- viii. Sabotage, theft and damage. The prevalence of employee stress/conflict and the amount of damage and theft of inventory and equipment are often related.

2.1.3 Internally generated stress

Internally generated stress is caused by an individual’s personality, as it can affect the individual’s experience on the job. A person’s behaviour at work, interaction with colleagues and his/her characteristic to respond to a situation depends on the ability and pattern of that person to react in other domains of life. Friedman and Rosenman (2014) suggest two types of broad categories of in which people’s personalities lie:

1. Type A – are characterised as having time urgency in doing things and have a competitive drive. They are impatient, and try to do everything themselves. They seek new targets and work hard to meet deadlines. These individuals seek recognition and show high levels of mental and physical alertness. This type of a personality is common among professionals (Girdano & Evarly, 2016). Previous research linked these personalities to having coronary heart diseases, and recent research has shown a strong relationship between type A personalities and hostile behaviour. Smith and Pope (2010 as cited in Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2015), suggest that hostility in an individual’s behaviour has a strong relationship with

heart diseases, as they are more physiologically reactive than non-hostile people. Secondly, these individuals take a far longer time to 'cool down' when aroused than non-hostile individuals.

2. Type B – They are the complete opposite to the type A personalities, exhibiting none of the habits or traits as those shown by them. They do not suffer from the need of time urgency, are more easy-going, work steady and generally take their time over their work. They are patient and take difficulties in their stride, without getting frustrated or upset. These individuals display less aggression, hostility and competitiveness and are generally more relaxed. They are known for their free-floating hostility and feel no need to impress others with, or prove their successes to others. They are able to work without agitation and find time for relaxation and fun (Watts & Cooper, 2012). Although, these two categories are extreme, most people fall into only one of these categories.

2.1.4 Externally generated stress:

Externally generated stress is caused by the environment or the job. The stress and individual experiences may come from the following:

Environmental stress

Chemical and nutritional stress

Lifestyle and job stress

Fatigue and overwork

("Stress Management Techniques", n.d)

2.1.5 Environmental stress

The physical surroundings affect the mood and overall mental state of any individual.

The environment in which the individual works may be a source of unpleasant and distracting stimuli states Cooper and Smith (1985 as cited in Payne & Cooper, 2011).

The following conditions of the environment can cause stress:

- Dirty and untidy condition of the work environment.
- Crowding and insufficient working space.
- Noise and pollution.
- Badly organised or run-down working conditions.

2.1.6 Chemical and nutritional stresses

Girdano & Evarly (2016) suggest that the food and drink that people consume contribute to the stress that they experience. The following can cause the stress that a person experiences:

Caffeine – excess of which increases the stress hormones in the body and makes it difficult for the individual to sleep, hence making him/her more irritable.

Alcohol, smoking and drug abuse – research by Selye (2014) in the United Kingdom suggests that these are the most common ways of dealing with stress. These allow an employee to temporarily escape from the problem by relaxing the muscles and reducing mental tension but are a major cause of stress itself (Fontana, 2014).

Burst of sugar from chocolates or sweets – making the individual energetic in the short term, however, the body's reaction to stabilise the sugar level is to release insulin, thereby causing a dip in the energy level shortly after the sugar high.

Unbalanced or unhealthy diet – in terms of dietary excess or deficiency, causing discomfort and illness, thereby generating stress. For example, too much salt in the body may raise the blood pressure on the individual, and cause chemical stress (Cooper, 2009).

2.1.7 Lifestyle and job stress

The individual due to his/her lifestyle or job may experience stress. This includes: -

- Too much or too little work
- Satisfaction with the job
- Performance on the job
- Time pressure and deadlines
- Lack of information, support and advice
- Lack of clear objectives
- Responsibility for people and budgets
- Career development stress
- Stress from the organisation or clients
- Personal and family stress

("Understanding Stress", n.d)

2.1.8 Fatigue and overwork

The body experiences stress it has built up over the long term; this occurs when the individual tries to achieve too much work in too little time. When the body repeatedly experiences this type of behaviour, it causes fatigue to the individual, ("Understanding Stress", n.d).

2.1.9 Short term and Long term stress:

Various authors suggest that the symptoms of stress can be divided into short-term stress and long-term stress. Short-term stress is the immediate reaction of the body towards the stressor; it is when a person gets under pressure due to the situation. Anxiety due to the adrenalin rush in the body during difficult meetings or sporting events is related to short-term stress. However, short term stress is essential for the individual to feel alert and respond to the particular situation, whereas long term stress is referred to as the build up of fatigue and high levels of adrenaline in the body of the individual over time (Marshall & Cooper, 2011).

2.1.10 Symptoms of stress:

Stress can have both short and long term responses. The symptoms of stress may be caused due to any organic illness of the body, but may also be regarded as the signs or symptoms of excessive stress. The bodies of different individuals do not react in a similar way when under stress; hence diverse symptoms of stress occur when the individual experiences job stress. Some of the symptoms of stress are problems on their own and can aggravate the job stress being experienced while other symptoms, if not managed, can have serious consequences on the performance and health of the individual. Various authors have categorised symptoms of occupational stress, Beehr and Newman (2008) categorised as follows:

Psychological symptoms – are the emotional and cognitive problems experienced by the individual under conditions of job stress. The emotional reaction to stress has been identified as fear, guilt, panic, denial, anger, feeling numb, aggression and irritability; while the cognitive reactions are confusion, disorientation, uncertainty, confusion, poor decision-making etc ("Symptoms of Stress", n.d).

Physical symptoms – these occur, when the body adapts to a physical threat by the release of adrenaline in the body. This excess adrenaline in the body allows it to fight the stressor and assists in survival. Selye (2014) suggests that the physical symptoms are more difficult to quantify, as there may be an overlap between these symptoms of occupational stress and other aspects of the individual's life. The physical symptoms have been characterised as fatigue, dizziness, skin diseases, weakness, chills, headaches, cardio-vascular disease etc. ("Signs & Symptoms of Critical Incident Stress", n.d). Certain physical symptoms, i.e. Cardiovascular disease and gastro-intestinal conditions are the most common of the physical symptoms, and are proven to be caused by stressful working conditions. These are more prominent and are often found in the Type A personality (Sutherland & Cooper, 2010).

Behavioural symptoms: there can be significant changes in the person's behaviour when exposed to stress over time. These have been characterised as increased consumption of alcohol and drug abuse, absenteeism, inability to rest, changes in speech pattern, being accident prone etc.

The build up of any of the above mentioned symptoms of stress can have serious mental and physical ill-effects on the individual, thereby causing the person's performance to suffer (Marshall & Cooper, 2011). The consequences of these psychological, physical and behavioural symptoms are job dissatisfaction and employee absenteeism as the affected employee dislikes going to work and has little encouragement to perform well on the job. Uncorrected job stress for long periods of time may have another very important consequence, such as 'burnout'. Burnout occurs when excessive job stress exceeds a threshold and an individual collapses due to his or her inability to cope with it (Marshall & Cooper, 2011; Froggatt, 2007). Many authors conceptualise burnout as prolonged stress. Buick and Thomas (2011) explain stress is an adaptation process that

is temporary and is accompanied by mental and physical symptoms, whereas burnout refers to breakdown by chronic malfunctioning. Burnout can lead the individual to suffer from fatigue, show lack of enthusiasm in the job or leave the job altogether. Burnout is the third phase of the Hans Selye's (2014) model of stress.

Empirical framework

2.2 The effects of organisational stress on the business:

It is very important from the management perspective to understand that job related stress has become a serious health issue and can be responsible for low productivity of the managers in their jobs; the costs of which are borne by the organisation (Sauter & Keith, 2009). "In the United States, data from multiple surveys suggests that, one-fourth to one-third of the workforce experience high levels of stress at work. Econometric analysis shows that health care expenditures increase nearly 50% for these workers, and nearly 200% for workers reporting both high levels of stress and depression" (Sauter & Keith, 2009, p.2). There are other costs related to occupational stress, i.e. absenteeism, alcoholism, drug abuse, costs of the errors made on the job and poor decision making because of impaired conditions at work. The insidious costs of relationships of managers with their family and colleagues that are affected due to the high levels of stress cannot be quantified (Ross & Almaier, 2014). A study conducted in UK in 1996 estimated annual staff turnover of 27% due to stress resulting in a loss of 430 million pounds to hospitality organisations (Buick, 2011).

2.3 Occupational Stress Management – A Global Perspective

The globalisation and liberalisation of the world economy has made jobs more competitive and demanding. The acceleration of workers moving to multi-national companies has brought about cross-cultural conflicts between members of the same

team. In addition, the faulty lifestyle of employees travelling to different countries, or excessive business visits away from the family, has exaggerated the problem. Hence, the increase in job stress that has taken place in the past two decades has been related to globalisation, organisational change and lifestyle of employees (Kawakami, 2009).

2.4 The behavioural changes that indicate the effects of stress

In order to recognise that an individual is under stress the management does not require much information about the illness itself, stressed individuals demonstrate certain characteristics in their behaviour, performance and habits that can be identified easily (Marshall & Cooper, 2011). The behavioural changes that can be identified in an individual experiencing job related stress can be categorised as follows:

- Avoidance of work
- Lower productivity by a consistently good performer
- Increase in the number of errors made in the job
- Increase in the time required by the employee in doing routine jobs
- Increased alcohol consumption and drug abuse
- Deteriorating relationship with co-workers, friends and family
- Aggression, irritability and loss of sense of humour
- Change in the health of the individual – overeating as an escape, leading to obesity or loss of appetite and sudden weight loss as a result (Ross &Almaier, 2014).

2.5 How to manage occupational stress

In order to maintain optimum levels of stress, the managers should monitor their stress levels on a frequent basis. This may be accomplished through observation, employee questionnaires, interviews, meetings and surveys. To prevent the phenomenon of workplace stress, a therapist or occupational psychologist may be beneficial for counselling and giving advice to managers on ways of reducing stress levels and enhancing productivity (Woodham, 2015).

There are various different techniques that can be used by managers in order to reduce the stress in the workplace. While choosing an effective stress management technique that would suit the individual, it is important to understand the source of the stress. Some of the different approaches have been identified as the following: -

1. Cognitive-behavioural approach – this focuses on the thoughts of the individual, and his/her reaction towards them. Although there are many different techniques within this approach, the fundamental guidelines are as follows: “Individuals do not respond directly to their environment; they respond to their own cognitive interpretation of the environment. Cognitions (thoughts), emotions (feelings) and behaviours (actions) are causally interrelated. The prediction and understanding of negative cognitions and behaviours are enhanced by paying attention to a person’s expectancies, beliefs and attributions. It is possible and desirable to combine and integrate cognitive approaches to correcting problems with performance-based and behavioural contingency management” (Kendal & Bemis, 2013; Mahoney, 2007).
2. The rational emotive behavioural approach – this technique focuses on useful physical processes that can be used by the individual to reduce stress. Taking

frequent exercise, meditation and yoga are effective methods to aid relaxation. All these techniques temporarily calm the body by distracting the individual's mind away from the stressor (Edelmann, 2012 & Palmer, 2013).

3. Techniques for reducing stress in the long term – This is concerned with adjusting one's working methods and lifestyle. Formal relaxation techniques have a part in this but equally important are time management skills, a positive attitude, a healthy diet with sufficient exercise, and a pleasant environment. Adjusting these in order to suit the individual will improve the quality of life of the person and increase his/her resistance to stress (Woodham, 2015).

(Sutherland & Cooper, 2010) suggest different programmes that can be used by the organisation to manage the levels of stress of its employees. The programmes are as follows: -

Education/Awareness building – can be used to make the employees aware of the potential stressors in their personal life and the workplace and also provide them with information about the cause and symptoms of these stressors and help them to cope with the stress (Farmer, Monahan, & Hekeler, 2014). This is a cost effective way of dealing with stress in the organisation as it can reach a large number of people at a time by the means of written material, lectures and presentations.

Assessment focused programmes – this aims to identify individual stress profiles, and is conducted in small groups. These are conducted by the means of interviews and group discussions, and can assist managers to compare with colleagues, their experiences on stress related subjects (Lazarus & Folkman, 2014).

Therapeutic counselling – also referred to as employee assessment programmes (EAP), these provide counselling to employees to cope with issues, like alcohol and drug

abuse, work and career problems and family issues (Payne & Cooper, 2011). Companies, like Kennecott Corporation and the Post House have introduced these stress counselling programs in the organisation and it has proven to reduce the absenteeism rate by 60% in one year and decreased the medical costs of the company by 55% (Sutherland & Cooper, 2010).

Eliminating stress from the work environment – if a person’s working environment is organised such that he/she cannot cope with it, then it can be a major source of stress. On the other hand, if the environment is well organised and pleasant, it can help to reduce stress and increase productivity (Fletcher, 2011). Improving the air quality, lighting, decoration and tidiness, level of noise, furniture and ergonomics and personal space, can reduce stress in the environment (Ross &Almaier, 2014).

2.6 Other preventative measures to reduce stress in organisations

The organisation can aid its employees in reducing the stress in the workplace by “discouraging individual’s from becoming workaholics, with no life outside the job” (Sutherland & Cooper, 2010). Certain preventative measures can be taken within the organisational system, which can help to reduce stress. These are recommended below:

Redesign jobs in order to eliminate the stress in the workplace by involving the employees in the decision making process of the company and encouraging more flexibility in the job.

Provide internal motivation, job enlargement opportunities and job rotation. Promote self-efficiency and self-monitoring of employees. “Develop management training in leadership, interpersonal skills, dealing with change and developing teamwork” (Sutherland & Cooper, 2010, p. 269). Encouraging professional growth of employees by the means of better training, supervision, advice, support and feedback. Provide

stress management courses and counselling to cope well with stress. Improve working conditions in terms of office ergonomics and stress-free resting places. Keeping employees informed of the company's decisions and support free communication among employees. Promoting a team culture within the organisation and having regular team meetings to encourage feedback from employees (Mathews & Knight, 2007).

2.8 Managing stress at an individual level

A person can maintain a stress diary in order to monitor the causes and understand the signs and symptoms of stress. This helps to evaluate a person's performance under stress. Once there is an understanding of the major causes of stress, an action plan can be prepared for reducing it and moving towards a positive goal (Palmer & Dryden, 2015; Ross & Almaier, 2014).

There are a number of 'self-help techniques' that an individual can use in order to cope with stress in everyday life, these have been identified as the following: -

1. Relaxation Training – the use of relaxation techniques, e.g. meditation and yoga, have been regarded as the “best possible ways of dealing with stress” (Woodham, 2015, p. 90; Powel & Enright, 2010, p. 92). This aids the body to reduce its blood pressure, maintain the breathing rate and reduce the heart rate in order for the body to recover from over-arousal, by bringing the body's system back to normal (Girdano & Evarly, 2016). Additionally, it aims to reduce the muscular tension, and aids the individual to recognise the stressors and relax for themselves, without the use of drugs.
2. Distraction – thinking about the stressor itself tends to make the situation worse (Powel & Enright, 2010, p.104). It begins the 'fear of fear' cycle, which may provoke further symptoms and deteriorate the individual's health further. The 'fear

of fear' cycle has been shown. Distracting attention away from the stressors and not worrying about them will make the 'fear of fear' cycle less likely to start and it may lead to the stress fading away on its own.

3. Health, nutrition and exercise – the chemicals consumed by the body may lead to the increase in stress experienced by the body. Large amounts of sugar, processed foods, caffeine and alcohol consumption can have ill-effects on the overall health of the individual (Cooper, 2008). A healthy well-balanced diet may increase an individual's resistance level and lower the reactivity of stressful situations. The accumulation of adrenaline and muscle tension is the body's response to stress; hence it needs to be released from the body (Field, McCabe & Schneiderman, 2008). Exercise on a regular basis helps the body to relax its muscles and reduces the levels of adrenaline in the body. Exercise improves the circulation of the blood, lowers blood pressure and helps in clearing the mind from anxiety. It also increases the immunisation of the body, which in turn aids to combat diseases.
4. Goal planning – setting goals gives the person a sense of purpose and a direction to move towards. Moving towards set goals and their accomplishment increases the self-esteem, happiness and performance of the individual (Fontana, 2014). Being able to plan for the future gives people internal control over the situation and makes them less vulnerable to stress related illnesses. Without goals, an individual may find life empty, without meaning and stressful.
5. Time management – once the planning of goals has been achieved, it needs to be timetabled in order to organise the time used to complete the activities more efficiently. Management of time has been identified as an effective way of coping with stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 2007, Ross &Almaier, 2014). It helps the

employees to use their time in the most efficient and productive way, while being in control of their activities and allows them to relax outside their workplace. Education and skills should be developed in order to give prioritisation to the most important jobs. Ross and Almaier (p.81) suggest the Pareto principle or the '80/20 rule', which states, "80% of the time at work is spent on duties that are related to 20% of important job outcomes."

2.9 Summary

To sum up the literature review discussed in this section, stress, causes of stress and the management of stress with each core theory including subtopics such as symptoms of stress, personality types, factors of stress, workplace factors causing stress, types of stressors, consequences and disadvantages of stress on employees and organizations, employees stress management and organizational approaches to stress management were discussed.

This chapter started off by presenting what stress is and the definitions given by different scholars on this topic. In order to identify a situation as stressful some of the symptoms of stress were discussed. The aim of our research is to understand the causes and management of stress from both the employee's and management's perspectives. We have discussed the different causes of stress because the likelihood of being affected or the likelihood of perceiving a situation as stressful depends to a large extent on the personality of the individual. Further the disadvantages and consequences of stress for employees and the organization have been described to get to the productive management of stress.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will be used by the researcher to obtain information in relation to the study. It looks at the choice of methods, techniques, procedures for gathering and analyzing data, research designs, population and instrument used in data collection. The essence of combining these tools was to produce research findings that are based on relevant and verifiable evidence to warrant valid conclusion.

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive survey approach was employed for this study. This kind of approach collects data in the narrative form. The descriptive survey approach was considered appropriate because, it is the best method to describe the opinions, personal characteristics, perceptions, preferences and attitudes of respondents. Cohen and Manion (1994), have it that, the method interprets what exists in its present form or condition; practice and process; trend and effects; and attitude and belief.

According to Gay (1987), a survey is a collection of data from a population so as to be able to determine the status of the population. The researcher used the descriptive survey approach to gather information from Human resource staff of the University of Education, Winneba campuses with the intends to contribute to a better understanding of occupational stress in administration by investigating the sources, symptoms, effects, and management of stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba.

The study was based on the effects of stress on the Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba.

Descriptive analysis was done by examining the effects of employee relations on organisational productivity. This will be obtained from responses from the structured questionnaires.

3.2 Population

According to Seidu (2006), study population or universe is the sum aggregate or totality of the phenomena which are of interest to the researcher. The population involves all the people, objects and institutions who are the subjects of the study. It refers to the entire objects or measurements that the researcher is investigating. The population of this study comprised all staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba. At the time of the study, there was fifty-six (56) staff in the division. These included four (4) Deputy Registrar, eight (8) Assistant registrars, four (4) Junior Assistant Registrars, twenty (20) Administrative assistants, twelve (12) supporting staff, four (4) cleaner and four (4) drivers.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample is simply a subset of the population. The concept of sample arises from the inability of the researcher to deal with all the individuals in a given population. The sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn and it must have good size to warrant statistical analysis. Consequently, a sample of forty-five (45) participants was chosen for the study.

3.3.2 Sample size

A sample size of 45 respondents was drawn for the study in order to provide accurate and reliable information. This comprised of 27 females and 18 male HR staffs. Thus (Winneba, Kumasi and Mampong respectively)

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher would use the main primary data collection method that is structured questionnaire in soliciting data from the respondents.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire that will be designed will have five main sections, which will be designed in line with the research questions. The first section will contain the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and including their age, gender and level of education. This primarily will enable the researcher to have background information of the respondents.

A questionnaire will be developed by the researcher to obtain relevant information on the topic. The questions will be divided into sections that will cover the research objectives and research questions. Section Two will examine the perceived causes of stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba. Section three will find out the symptoms of stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba. Section four will investigate the effects of stress on the job performance of Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba and section five will explore the way by which stress can be reduced or managed among these Human Resource Practitioners. The analysis of the study will be based on these issues.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher will personally administer the questionnaire which will require the respondent to choose based on the Likert scale from questions designed by the researcher for easy purposes. All the respondents will be informed of the objectives and design of the study. Emphasis will placed on the fact that the findings are

primarily for academic purposes. The researcher will explain certain key terms to the respondents so that they will be familiar with answering of the questionnaires. It will be assumed that all the respondents had some experience in completing questionnaires and generally will not be apprehensive. There will be uniform question presentation and no middle-man bias. The researcher's own opinions will not influence the respondent to answer questions in a certain manner. There will be no verbal or visual clues to influence the respondents.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics specifically the percentages. The data was arranged in frequency tables and simple comparison was made among male and female headteachers. Computer data analysis such as SPSS and other relevant software such as Microsoft excel was the main tools employed to analyse the data in order to help interpret results. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS version 18) will also be used to analyze the pre-coded questions. The results was then analyzed and converted into percentages. Percentage (%) values, which were not round figures, was approximated to the nearest whole numbers. Diagrammatic representations of the statistical summaries of the result was presented in the form of frequency tables. The other questions that were open-ended were analyzed by listing all the vital responses given by the respondents. They were considered based on their relevance to the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DUSCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter covers the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected from the field. The purpose of the study was to investigate the management of work place - related stress: the case of the Division of Human Resource Management Unit of UEW, Winneba. In view of the above, the study sought to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the perceived causes of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
2. What are the symptoms of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
3. What are the effects of occupational stress on the job performance of Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
4. How does the staff cope with stress?

The chapter is presented in two sessions. Whilst Section 'A' is concerned with the bio-data of respondents, Section 'B' is concerned with the analysis of data relating to the research questions.

Bio-Data of Respondents

Gender

Gender of Respondents

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage % |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Male | 18 | 40 |
| Female | 27 | 60 |
| Total | 45 | 100 |

The gender of the respondents was determined in Figure 2 as shown below:

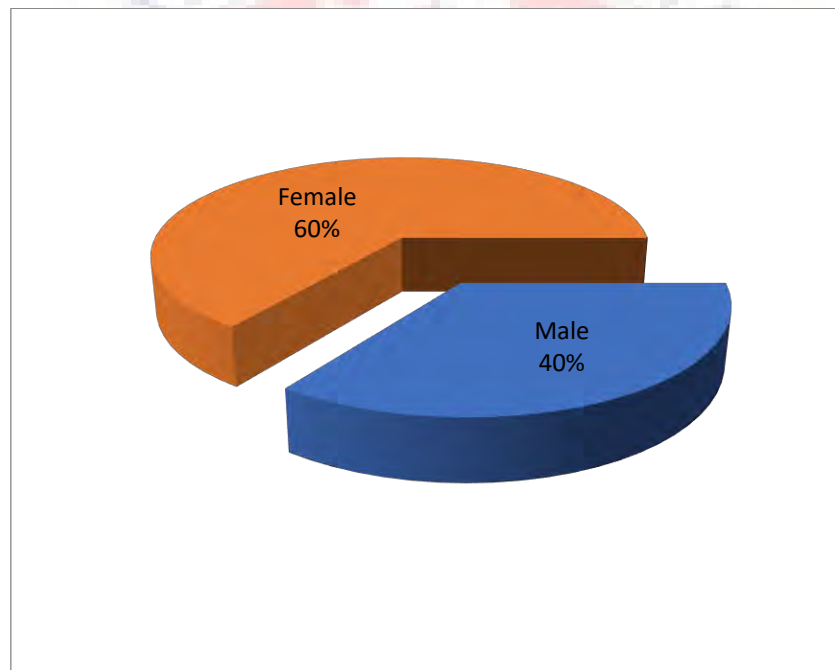


Figure 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

From figure 1, it could be seen clearly that there were more female 27 (60%) respondents than male 18 (40%) respondents. This was because there were more female staff at post at the Human Resource Division of the University than male staff.

Age of Respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| 20 – 29 | 12 | 26.7 |
| 30 – 39 | 10 | 22.2 |
| 40 – 49 | 15 | 33.3 |
| 50 – 59 | 8 | 17.7 |
| Total | 45 | 100.0 |

The ages of the respondents were sought for and the results displayed in Figure 3 below. The ages ranged from 20 years up to 59 years.

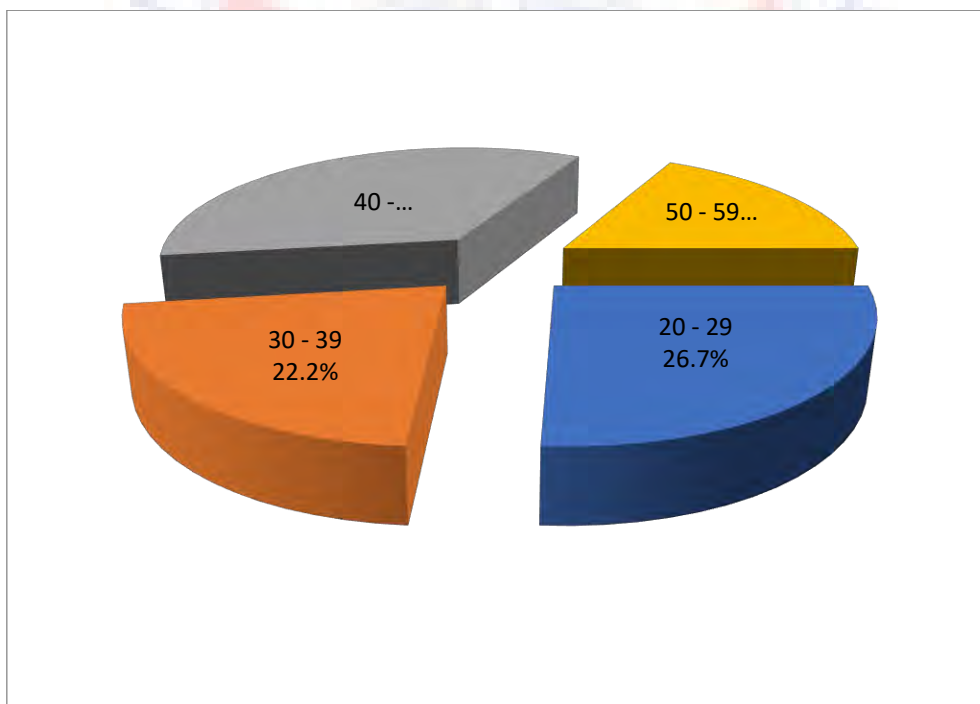


Figure 2: Age distribution of Respondents

Data in Figure 2 shows the ages of the respondents. It is clear that most of the respondents, 15 (33.3%) were between the ages of 40 -49 years, 12 (26.7%) were between the ages of 20 -29 years, 10 (22.2%) were between the ages of 30 – 39 year and

8 (17.7%) were between the ages of 50 -59 years. This shows that majority of the respondents were in their active years of service.

Educational Background

| Educational Background | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Master's | 10 | 20 |
| Bachelor's | 29 | 67 |
| HND/Diploma | 6 | 13 |
| Total | 45 | 100 |

The highest academic qualifications of the respondents were determined in Figure 4.

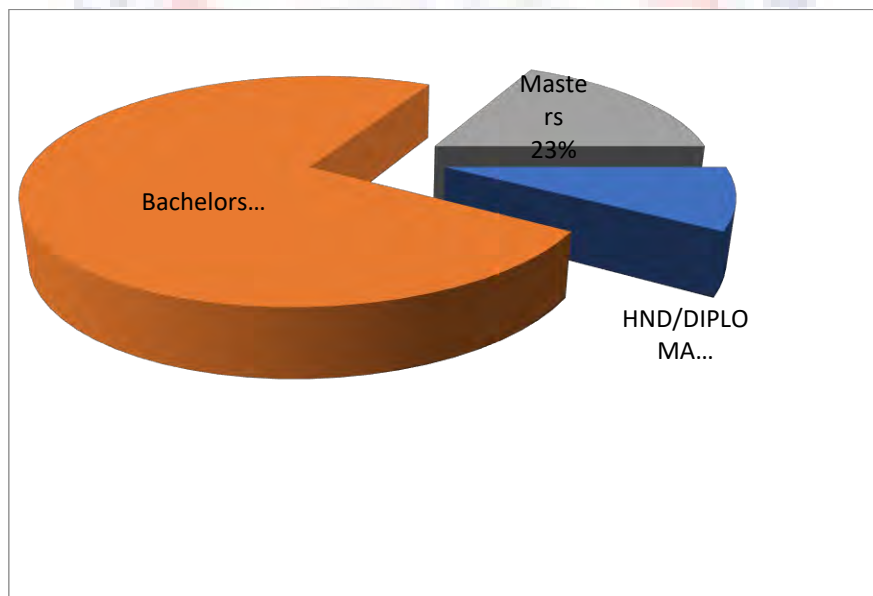


Figure 3: Distribution of Education of Respondents

From Figure 3, it was obvious that majority, 29 (64%) of the staff had bachelor's degree and only 10 (23%) had Master's degree and 6 (13%) had HND/Diploma certificates.

Type of Respondents

| Respondents | Frequency | Percentage % |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Senior Members | 10 | 23 |
| Senior Staff | 14 | 30 |
| Junior Staff | 21 | 47 |
| Total | 45 | 100 |

There were three categories of respondents from the Human Resource Division of the University of Education. These were made up of Junior Staff, Senior Staff and Senior Members as shown in Figure 4 below:

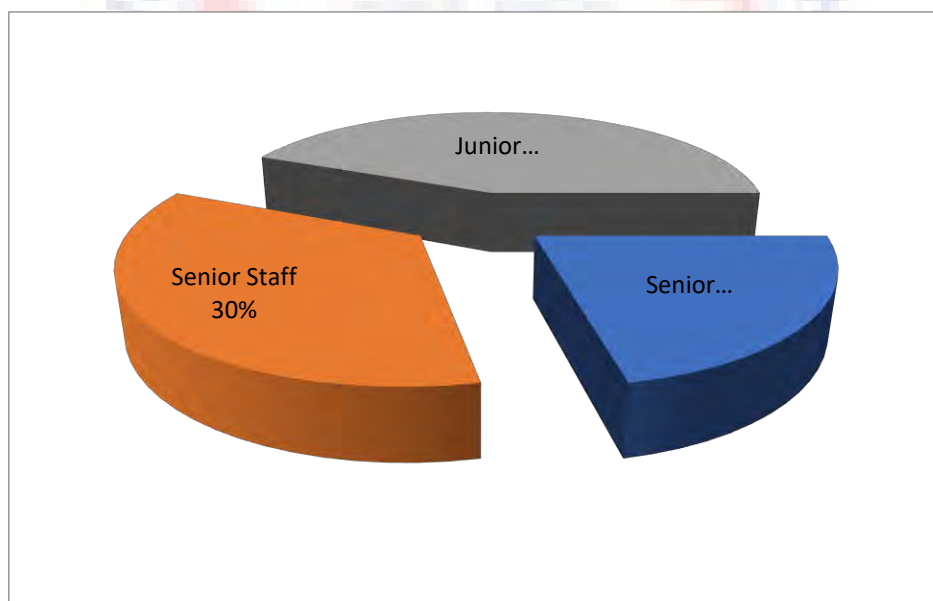


Fig. 4: Distribution of the Sample

Data in Figure 4 shows that majority, 21 (47%) were junior staff, 14 (30%) were senior staff and 10 (23%) were senior members. The junior staff comprised the supporting staffs, cleaners and drivers, the senior staff comprised the administrative assistants and the senior members comprised the deputy registrar and the assistant registrars.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1:

What are the perceived causes of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?

This research question sought to find data on what Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba consider as causes of occupational stress. Questionnaire items 6-11 and interview guide item 3 were used to answer research question 1.

Table 1: Responses on perceived causes of occupational stress

| Statements | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|------|----------------|
| Doing many things within limited time. | 3.42 | 1.2033 |
| Ongoing crises that require continual management (eg. deaths, illness, violence, abuse) | 2.21 | 1.002 |
| Role conflict within the institution causes stress | 3.01 | .0020 |
| Stress is caused by role ambiguity | 2.49 | 1.000 |
| poor physical working conditions | 1.09 | .4900 |

Mean Ranges: 1-2.4 = Disagree, 2.5 - 5.0 = Agreed

Data in Table 1 shows the responses on the perceived causes of occupational stress as far as the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba is concerned. The mean response score of 3.42 indicates that the respondents agreed that stress is caused by doing so many things within a limited time. Similarly, the mean response score of 3.01 indicates the agreement of the respondents that role conflict within the institution causes stress.

On the other hand, with the mean response of 1.09, the respondents disagreed that poor working conditions caused them occupational stress. Again, the mean response of 2.21 indicates the disagreement of the respondents that ongoing crises that require continual management (eg. deaths, illness, violence, abuse) causes occupational stress. Finally, the mean response of 2.49 indicates that the respondents disagreed that stress is caused by role ambiguity.

Analytically, it could be inferred from the findings in research question 1 that staff at the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba experience stress as a result of doing so many things within a limited time. This finding brings to mind Lefton (1997) who indicated lack of time as another common source of stress. Lefton related the issue of time to meeting deadlines. In this study, the respondents agreed that they are stressed when they have to do so many things within a short time frame. This is akin to meeting deadlines and commensurate McGrath's (1976) four-stage model of stress that emphasis environmental factors as causes of occupational stress. Again, the findings revealed role conflict as part of the causes of stress. Duffy (1999) discusses role conflict as a factor that causes occupational stress. Role conflict refers to a situation in which one role conflicts with another role at the workplace.

It is worthy to note that the respondents did not reckon poor working conditions; ongoing crises that require continual management (eg. deaths, illness, violence, abuse) causes occupational stress and role ambiguity as stressors. Despite these findings, previous studies have found that poor working conditions did cause stress on workers that is why National Safety Council (2004) listed poor working conditions as

part of workplace stressors. Similar, role ambiguity was not considered as a stressor so far as the Division of Human Resource of the University of Education, Winneba is concerned. The Deputy Registrar, Human Resource indicated in the statement below that:

....yes, role ambiguity may be someone's stressor but we try as much as possible to outline the roles and responsibilities of our workers so much that every staff is conversant with his or her portfolio.

Taylor (2003) explains that role ambiguity is also associated with stress. Role ambiguity occurs when a person receives conflicting information about work tasks or standards from different individuals. Interestingly, in this study, the role ambiguity was not perceived as a stressor.

4.3.2 Research question 2:

What are the symptoms of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?

Research question 2 sought to find data on the symptoms of occupational stress that staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba experience. Questionnaire items 12 -16 were used to answer research question 2.

Table 2: Responses on symptoms of stress

| Statements | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| Workers under stress are far more likely to make mistakes than workers in low stress jobs. | 4.29 | .460 |
| Workers are much more likely to have to take time off work for stress-related sickness | 4.14 | .651 |
| Workers under stress experience frequent urination and have sweating palms | 3.00 | 1.247 |
| Workers under stress experience excessive tiredness | 3.93 | .663 |
| Workers under stress often lose concentration | 3.54 | .962 |

Data in Table 2 shows the responses of the staff on the symptoms of stress. With the mean response scores of 4.29, 4.14, 3.00, 3.93 and 3.54, the respondents agreed to all the statements concerning the symptoms they had as a result of occupational stress.

Specifically, they agreed that, “workers under stress are far more likely to make mistakes than workers in low stress jobs”; “workers are much more likely to have to take time off work for stress-related sickness”; “workers under stress experience frequent urination and have sweating palms”; “workers under stress experience excessive tiredness and “workers under stress often lose concentration”.

Analytically, it could be inferred from the responses above that staff of the Human Resource Division experience the common symptoms of stress in accordance with Pruitt and Stein (1999), who examined occupational stress-related symptoms and noted that the experience of stress can affect the way individuals think, feel and

behave, and can also cause physiological changes. It is not surprising that the respondents agreed that workers under stress are more likely to make mistakes than workers who are not under stress. Further, the study responses indicated that workers are much more likely to have to take time off work for stress-related sickness. These findings are akin to Selye (1984), who opined that workers under stress are far more likely to have accidents than workers in low stress jobs, and are much more likely to have to take time off work for stress-related sickness. The study also found that workers under stress experience frequent urination and have sweating palms as indicated by Ferrell, Harold and Cherne (2008). It was also found that staff under stress experience excessive tiredness and frequent loss of concentration.

Research Question 3

What are the effects of occupational stress on the job performance of Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?

This research question sought to find data on the consequences of stress on the job performance of the staff in the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba. Questionnaire items 17 – 21 and interview guide item 4 were used to answer research question 3.

Table 3: Responses to effects of stress

| Statements | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| Stress results in ill health | 4.29 | .460 |
| Stress results in low productivity | 4.14 | .651 |
| Stress results in unremitting tension and anxiety | 4.18 | .670 |
| Stress causes anger and frustrations | 3.43 | .997 |
| Stress causes loss of gifted workers. | 4.14 | .651 |

Data in Table 3 shows the responses of the staff on the effect of stress. With the mean score of 4.29, the staff agreed that stress result in ill health. Also, the mean score of 4.18 indicated the agreement of the staff to the statement: “stress results in unremitting tension and anxiety”. Furthermore, the mean response of 4.14 shows that the respondents agreed to the statement that stress results in low productivity and stress causes loss of gifted workers. Lastly, the mean of 3.43 shows the agreement to the statement that stress causes anger and frustrations.

Analytically, it could be inferred from research question three that stress affects the work of the staff negatively. Specifically, the staff indicated that stress result in productivity. This finding lends credence to Naqvi, Khan, Kant and Khan (2013) whose study found that employees’ productivity is adversely fraught by job stress. According to Kokemuller (2014), low productivity in the workplace refers to a condition where one or more workers complete tasks, processes, production or sales inefficiently. The interviews revealed that when the staff works under stress they make a serious mistake that slows down production. The sample statement below shows what one of the interviewees said:

Stressful situations slow down work in the end. In a bid to complete so many task within a short time, the staff make serious mistakes that eventually draws everybody back.

It was also evident in the findings in research question three that staffs under stress are affected negatively in health. Work-related stress is recognized as a huge occupational health problem, and human suffering. For example, Gerrig and Zimbardo (2002) explain that stress has become a major contributor, either directly or indirectly, to coronary heart disease, cancer, long ailments and accidental injuries.

Lastly, it was realized that stress affects the emotions of the workers negatively. Specifically, the workers agreed that stress results in anger and frustrations. It also creates unmerited tension and anxiety. One of the interviewees confessed:

.....I don't like stress such situations makes me have some pressure. I easily get angry if anyone wants to slow me.

This view was corroborated by Ferrell, Harold and Cherne (2008) who talked of tension, irritability, inability to concentrate as part of the symptoms of stress. In furtherance of the above, it could be said that job stress is an unpleasant emotional situation that an individual experiences when the requirements of job are not counter balanced with his ability to cope with the situation.

Research question 4:

How does the staff cope with stress?

This research question sought to find data on the strategies used by the staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of education, Winneba on how they deal with stress. Questionnaire items 21-25 were used to answer research question 4.

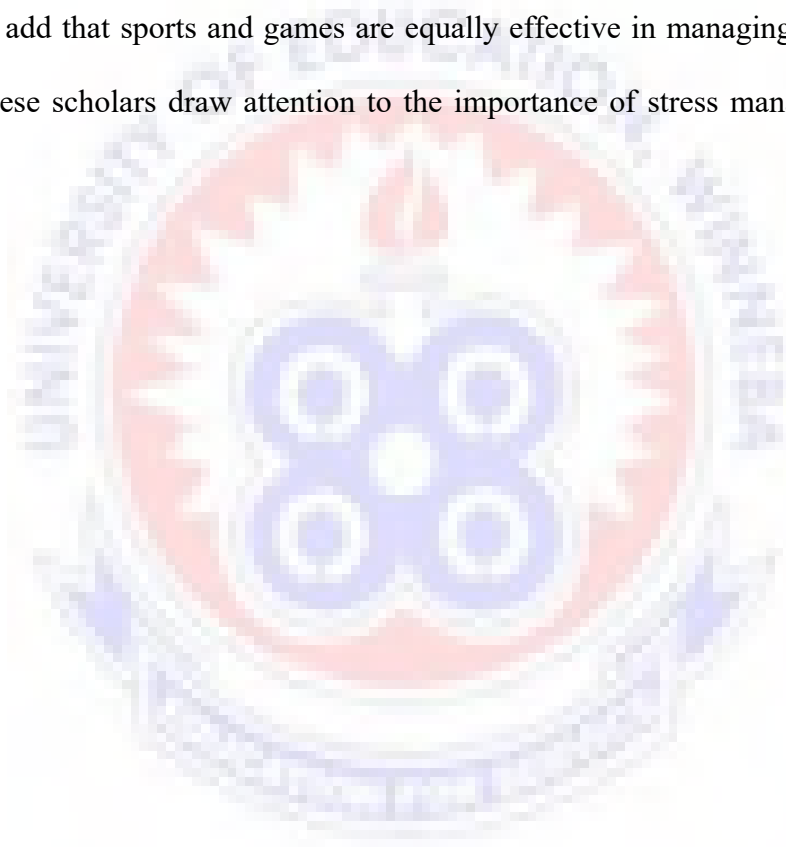
Table 4: Coping strategies of stress

| Statements | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| I exercise my body regularly | 2.39 | 1.315 |
| I plan my time ahead | 4.14 | .651 |
| I make time for recreational activities with my family | 2.57 | 1.103 |
| I delegate responsibilities | 3.43 | .997 |
| I take my leave and rest at home regularly | 3.00 | 1.247 |

Data in Table 4 shows the responses on the coping strategies of stress among the staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba. The mean response score of 4.14 shows that most of the staff plan their schedules ahead of time. The mean 3.43 also indicates their agreement to the statement that “I delegate responsibilities.” Similarly, they agreed to the statement that “I take my leave and rest at home regularly.” On the other hand, with the mean of 2.39, they disagreed that they do not exercise their bodies regularly.

It could be inferred from the above that the staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education have several strategies to relieve stress. Typically, they plan their schedules ahead of time. Baron, Byrne and Branscombe (2006) concur that planning ahead of stressful situations is an important consideration in stress management.

Further, it was revealed that the staffs delegate responsibilities, take leave and rest and take time to talk with their family for recreation. These strategies according to Wood, Wood and Boyd (2005) lead to physical and mental fitness. On the other hand, whilst Hoeger and Hoeger (2005) suggest how stress can be managed through physical activity. It was found that staff of the Human Resource Division do not exercise their bodies. Further, Hoeger and Hoeger (2005) suggest remedies for stress through the use of exercises. Payne, Hahn and Mauer (2005) reinforce the position of Hoeger and Hoeger but add that sports and games are equally effective in managing stress. The views of these scholars draw attention to the importance of stress management as a remedy.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations made from the study.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the management of work place - related stress: the case of the Division of Human Resource Management Unit of UEW, Winneba. In view of the above, the study sought to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the perceived causes of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
2. What are the symptoms of occupational stress among Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
3. What are the effects of occupational stress on the job performance of Human Resource Practitioners of University of Education, Winneba?
4. How does the staff cope with stress?

The population of this study comprised all staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba. At the time of the study, there was fifty-six (56) staff in the division. These included four (4) Deputy Registrar, eight (8) Assistant registrars, four (4) Junior Assistant Registrars, twenty (20) Administrative assistants, twelve (12) supporting staff, four (4) cleaner and four (4) drivers. A sample consequently, a sample of forty-five (45) participants was chosen for the study.

Two distinct sampling techniques were involved. These were simple random technique and purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire and interview schedule were the main instrument that were used in the data collection. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and the main statistical tools were simple percentages, frequencies and mean. On the other side, the data obtained through the interviews were read, transcribed, coded and the patterns determined were used to support the findings in the study.

The following findings were made from the study.

1. Staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba experience stress as a result of doing so many things within a limited time. To some extent, they also indicated that role conflict causes stressful situations at the workplace.
2. Regarding the symptoms of stress, the staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba reckoned that workers under stress are far more likely to make mistakes than workers in low stress jobs. They also opined that workers are much more likely to have to take time off work for stress-related sickness. They also agreed that workers under stress experience frequent urination and have sweating palms. Again, they indicated that workers under stress experience excessive tiredness and workers under stress often lose concentration.
3. Regarding the effects of stress, the workers agreed that stress results in unremitting tension and anxiety. Furthermore, the respondents agreed to the statement that stress results in low productivity and stress causes loss of gifted

workers. Lastly, the respondents agreed to the statement that stress causes anger and frustrations.

4. The staffs of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba have several strategies to relieve stress. Typically, they plan their schedules ahead of time. Further, it was revealed that the staffs delegate responsibilities, take leave and rest and take time to talk with their family for recreation.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it was established that almost all the staff of the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba experience stress. Interestingly, the causes of stress differ from person to person. However, it could be said that the commonest cause of stress among the staff was having to work so much within a limited time. Further, many of the staff were well informed of the symptoms and the effects of stress. As a result, even though limited, they had a few management strategies put in place to help them out of stress.

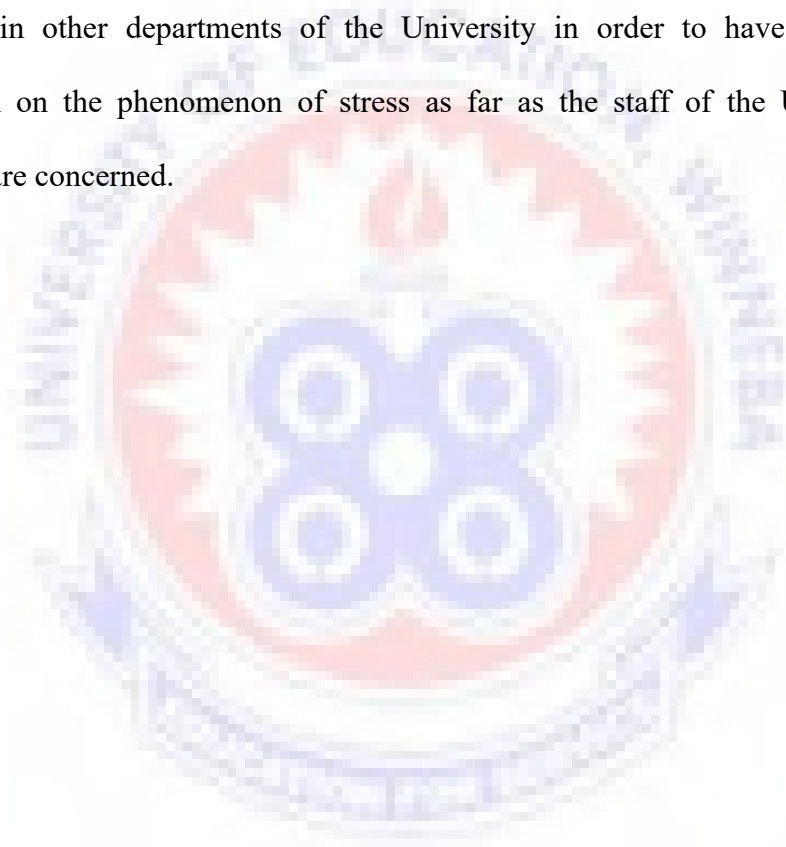
Recommendations

1. Workers in the Human Resource Division of the University of Education, Winneba should ensure that they engage in physical activities such as regular exercises to their bodies.
2. In order not to have too much to do in a limited time, senior staff should delegate some of their responsibilities to their junior staff.

3. The Human Resource Division in collaboration with the Management of the University should recruit more staff to relieve the staff of their heavy schedules
4. The Management of the University should ensure that all staff observe their leaves so that they may be relieved of stress.

Suggestions for Further Research

From the results of this study, it is strongly suggested that a follow-up study be conducted in other departments of the University in order to have an in-depth information on the phenomenon of stress as far as the staff of the University of Education are concerned.



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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STAFF

This questionnaire is designed to solicit responses on examining workplace-related stress at the Division of Human Resource Management Unit of the University of Education, Winneba. Your responses will be treated confidentially.

SECTION A: BIO-DATA

Please respond by ticking the appropriate box.

Gender:

Male Female

Age as the last birthday

20 – 29 30 – 39 40 – 49 50 – 59

60+

Educational background

Doctorate degree Master's degree

Bachelor's degree HND/Diploma

Others specify:.....

Position in the University

Dean/Director H.O.D. Senior Member (Academic)

Senior Member (Non-Academic) Senior Staff

Junior Staff

Number of years served in the University:

PART TWO: INFORMATION ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Please read each of the following statements and tick the response that best represents your Opinion.

A: Perceived Causes of Occupational Stress

| Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Doing many things within limited time. | | | | | |
| Ongoing crises that require continual management (eg. deaths, illness, violence, abuse) | | | | | |
| Role conflict within the institution causes stress | | | | | |
| Stress is caused by role ambiguity | | | | | |
| poor physical working conditions | | | | | |
| Task rigidity | | | | | |

B: Symptoms of occupational stress

| Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Workers under stress are far more likely to make mistakes than workers in low stress jobs. | | | | | |
| Workers are much more likely to have to take time off work for stress-related sickness | | | | | |
| Workers under stress experience frequent urination and have sweating palms | | | | | |
| Workers under stress experience excessive tiredness | | | | | |
| Workers under stress often lose concentration | | | | | |

C: Effects of Stress

| Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Stress results in ill health | | | | | |
| Stress results in low productivity | | | | | |
| Stress results in unremitting tension and anxiety | | | | | |
| Stress causes anger and frustrations | | | | | |
| Stress causes loss of gifted workers among administrators. | | | | | |

D: Coping strategies of stress

| Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I exercise my body regularly | | | | | |
| I plan my time ahead | | | | | |
| I make time for recreational activities with my family | | | | | |
| I delegate responsibilities | | | | | |
| I take my leave and rest at home regularly as an administrators. | | | | | |

