



*Full Length Research Paper*

# Causes and effects of work-related stress among the senior staff administrators of the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

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This study explored the causes and effects of stress among senior staff administrators at the University of Education, Winneba (Winneba Campus), Ghana. This was a mixed methods research underpinned by pragmatism. Specifically, sequential explanatory mixed methods model was employed for the study. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 116 males and 60 females for the quantitative phase of the study, while 10 of the administrators, comprising 7 males and 3 females were selected through maximal variation sampling technique for the qualitative phase. Descriptive statistics, specifically Means and Standard Deviations were used to analyse and present the quantitative results, while the qualitative data was employed to explain and/or elaborate on the quantitative results when necessary. The study revealed that excessive workload, time pressures, bureaucracy in processing of documents and difficulty in approaching bosses were among the causes of stress to the administrators. The study further revealed that the stress experienced by the administrators create some health-related problems for them. Therefore, it was recommended that the University authorities should design stress intervention programmes such as Employee Assistance Programmes and Stress Management Training for the senior administrative staff in their working outfit so that they could manage the stress they experience. Besides, counsellors, medical experts and psychologists could be engaged by the University authorities to educate and provide relevant support on stress and coping strategies to the administrators.

**Keywords:** Stress, Occupational stress, Administrators, University, Authorities

## INTRODUCTION

An organization's very survival rests heavily on its ability to attract and retain its human resource. It is generally believed that an optimum level of pressure on individuals at work will result in higher productivity (Dollard, Winefield, Winefield & de Jonge, 2000). The Yerkes-Dodson law suggests that a certain level of stimulation improves performance (Powell, 2000). For the past decade, the University of Education, Winneba (UEW),

has experienced an exponential increase in student intake. For instance, a look at students' statistics indicates that in 1999/2000, the University recorded a student enrolment of 3,340. Six years later, in 2005/2006, enrolment increased to 4,077 students. However, in 2011/2012 enrolment went up by 6,006 (UEW Basic Statistics, April, 2013), and in 2016/2017 academic year the number of students studying on full-time basis increased to over 35, 000 (UEW Basic Statistics, April, 2018). This issue of large student numbers appears to

have increased the workload of the senior staff administrators, affecting their stress level.

Moreover, the introduction of new academic programmes, frequent restructuring of the organization, and expansion of the University community mean that the senior staff administrators work tirelessly to accomplish the core function of the university. These changes make the university administrator more vulnerable and susceptible to stress than lecturers (Lee, 2003). Occupational stress has been recognised by the World Health Organization as a global epidemic (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009). It is also seen as an alarming issue, which is on the increase especially among university workers as the scope of their work continues to expand (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua & Stough, 2001). However, majority of studies on stress and coping strategies in the universities within and out of Ghana have focused on the academic staff with minimal research on the non-academic staff specifically the senior staff administrators. Igbal and Kokash (2011), for example, explored faculty perception of stress and coping strategies in a Saudi Private University. In Ghana, Kusi, Danso Mensah and Gyaki (2014) explored the causes and effects of work-related stress among the academic staff of the University of Education, Winneba (Winneba campus). Adjei (2009) investigated whether job stress was prevalent among the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. Adjei's study focused on factors responsible for stress, symptoms, gender difference and coping strategies of the stress phenomenon. It appears little is known about causes and effects of occupational stress on the senior staff administrators in Ghanaian universities. This present study attends to these issues using the University of Education, Winneba (Winneba campus), as the case.

This is significant in diverse ways. The findings will create awareness among the senior staff administrators of the University of Education, Winneba, to enable them know more about the causes of stress they experience and the need to manage occupational stress so that the detrimental consequences of stress could be avoided. Also, the findings will enlighten the management of the University and other higher educational institutions, especially in Ghana so that they could gain a clearer understanding of the causes of occupational stress experienced by senior staff administrators in their respective institutions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was underpinned by the transactional stress model, which is on stress process in the transactional model by Lazarus (1966) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984). This model is based on psychological stress and coping. Lazarus and Folkman define psychological stress as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or

exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (p. 19).

The transactional theory postulate that stress is neither in the person or the environment but is in the conjunction between the two. That is people influence their environment and the environment influence people making stress a two way process. The theory is made up of two major cognitive appraisals that help the individual categorize and evaluate an encounter with respect to his/her well being. They are the 'primary' and 'secondary' appraisals respectively.

According to Lazarus and Cohen-Charash (2001), the primary appraisal involves the determination of an event as stressful where the person acknowledges that there is something at stake. Throughout primary appraisal, the event or situation can be categorized as irrelevant, beneficial, or stressful. If the event is appraised as stressful, then the event is evaluated as harm or loss, a threat, or a challenge. Lazarus (1991) brings to light three types of primary appraisals. A harm or loss refers to an injury or damage that has already taken place; a threat refers to something that could produce harm or loss in the future and a challenge event refers to the potential for growth, mastery, or some form of gain or where the individual engages with the demand. Lazarus (2001) further added another appraisal that he described as benefit, where individuals search for the benefit in a demanding encounter and these groupings are based mostly on one's own prior knowledge and learning. In addition, each of these groupings generates dissimilar emotional responses. Harm/loss stressors can elicit anger, disgust, sadness, or disappointment. Threatening stressors can produce anxiety and challenging stressors can produce excitement. While the benefit stressors help an individual to regulate emotions in a demanding situation.

On the other hand, when threat is appraised by the individual, a secondary appraisal of coping options is triggered. Primary appraisal looks at the "impending harm", if any, and secondary appraisal evaluates "consequences of any coping action" (Lazarus, 1966, p.208). As Folkman describes, "in primary appraisal the person asks 'what do I have at stake in this encounter?' and in secondary appraisal the question is 'what can I do?', or what can be done about it (Lazarus, 1991). This is where the person evaluates the availability of coping resources. It is in the secondary appraisal that the focus turns to "what can be done about it". Basically, this is where evaluation is made and this involves a shift to the coping resources that the individual needs to employ.

Lazarus (1991) identified two coping resources and these are the emotion-focused, and the problem focused. Smith and Renk (2007) defines the emotion-focused coping strategies as strategies that are utilized to manage the negative feelings associated with stress, and the problem-focused coping strategies as strategies

that are utilized to manage or change the situation that is causing stress.

Thus, the transactional theory of stress incorporates components of stress stimuli and responses that operate upon one another in a cyclic fashion. The causes (stimuli) and the effect (response) of stress which is manifested in physiological, psychological, and behavioural terms move in a recurring order. The transactional theory of stress also recognises that a degree of individual variation will exist since stress is seen as a process of transaction between the person and the environment. In doing so it explains why conditions that one person experiences as stressful may not be regarded as stressful by another.

This study equally looks at the manifestation of stress among the senior staff that hinders their health and overall work in general. The transactional model serves as a foundation for this study because it helps to understand how individuals come to view a situation as stressful as well as the options taken into dealing with the stressful event.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The Senior Staff Administrators of the University of Education, Winneba (Winneba campus) are likely to experience stress because they carry out multiple and complex roles and responsibilities in the challenging environment. For example, because of the exponential increase in student enrolment (from 4, 077 students in 2005/2006 academic year to 35, 000 in the 2016/2017 academic year), the workload of the administrators has increased. The administrators also perform multiple roles and responsibilities associated with their core functions at the University, causing them stress. The stress they experience could manifest in physiological, psychological, and behavioural terms.

### **Concept of Stress**

Over the years, the stress concept has come out with different definitions explaining how stress takes place in a man and its effects thereof and the coping strategies that individuals adapt in dealing with stress. In an attempt to tackle the "stress" phenomena, three different models have been developed by researchers to explain the stress concept. These three models are reviewed briefly. The concept of stress is now however seen to be more laud in nature as involving some kind of transactions between the individual and the environment.

### **Stimulus-Based Model**

The stimulus-based model of stress is derived from physics in particular, the field of engineering (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2001). The stimulus-based approach regards stress as external forces (situational or

environmental) impinging on the organism (individual in a disruptive way).

Again, Blonna (2005) views stress within this model as an outside force that puts demands on people. For instance, stress is pressure that is having too much to do and little time to do it. It focuses on situational conditions or events. Factors here may include high time pressure; interpersonal conflict at work, pressure associated with work and family life. More or less, this model represents the stressors that affect individuals in their day to day functioning. In other words, it helps to identify stressors within the employee's working milieu that taxes their abilities to deliver their work in its normal state. Similarly, Baltus (1997) see stress as a stimulus event that presents unusual demands on the individual.

### **Response-Based Model**

The response-based emerges from the field of medicine and it touches on stress from the physiological perspective (Cooper et al, 2001; Rout & Rout, 2002). The response-based approach defines stress as an individual's psychological or physiological response to the environment or situational forces. It focuses on the way individuals react to stress in physiological, psychological and behavioural terms which may appear as a result of stress. These symptoms could however be attributed to other medical conditions. According to Wilson and Hall (2002) both educators and administrators are seen as inactive recipients of stimuli who necessarily experience stress when under pressure or when the demand placed on them is above them.

### **Interactional and transactional Model**

This model views stress as an individual phenomenon which is both interactive and situational (Wilson & Hall, 2002). In other words, this model is a psychologically based approach which brings to light individual differences in the experience of the stress process. It touches on the fact that different individuals when confronted with the same situation respond to stress differently.

The transactional approach views stress as embedded neither in the individual nor in the environment, but the interrelationship between the stressor, the individual's perceptions of the situation and his or her subjective responses (Cooper et al, 2001). This model criticizes the first and stimulus and response model as treating human beings as machine. They believe that people have the capacity to think, evaluate or judge and then react to a disturbing stimulus which will make them respond later. This evaluation process can either make stress worse or better. They agree that between the individual and the environment is a dynamic transactional relationship from which stressors arise and that the environment acts on the person who feels stressed and that the person has the

capacity to appraise that stressful situations and respond with a coping activity which in turn may change the environment and how it acts in consequence again on the person. This is not just one shot process but continues in infinitum.

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the causes of stress among the senior staff administrators of the University of Education, Winneba, (Winneba Campus), and the effects of stress on their work and lives. This was a mixed methods research underpinned by pragmatism. Precisely, the sequential explanatory mixed method design was employed for this research. This design occurs in two distinct interactive phases. It starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative (numeric) data, which has the priority for addressing the study's questions. This first phase is followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative (text) data. The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed so that it follows from the results of the first, quantitative phase. The researcher interprets how the qualitative results help to explain the initial quantitative results. Thus, the qualitative data is collected and analyzed second in the sequence and help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results obtained in the first phase (Creswell, & Plano-Clark, 2007).

The target population of the study was made up of all senior staff administrators of UEW, Winneba Campus. The UEW Basic Statistics Report in April 2016 indicated that the total number of Senior Staff administrators at Winneba campus of the University as at July, 2016 was three hundred and eighty one (381), comprising two hundred and thirty two males (232) and one hundred and forty nine (149) females.

A sample size of 181 was selected for the quantitative phase of the study. This selection was based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of sample determination which indicates that for a population size of 381, a sample size of 191 is appropriate. The sample comprised of 116 males and 60 females. To ensure that both the male and female administrators were proportionally represented, they were categorized into strata. Then simple random sampling technique, specifically the lottery method was used to select the 181 respondents.

For the qualitative phase, 10 of the administrators (3 females and 7 males), who had responded to the questionnaire were selected through maximum variation sampling technique for the study. The views of selected participants at different ranks within the University, who possessed different academic qualifications and length of service were explored.

A structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedules were the instruments used for data

collection in this study. The questionnaire was used to gather data in the first phase of the study. It had pre-determined responses and, according to Kusi (2012), most research participants feel more comfortable responding to such items than those that require them to express their views and feelings. Also, data collected through a questionnaire is easily analysed. The questionnaire which was self-developed one was structured based on a four (4) point Likert scale format (i.e. 'Strongly Agree' (1), 'Agree(2)', 'Disagree(3)' and 'Strongly Disagree(4)'). The questionnaire gathered data on the causes of stress among the administrators as well as the effects of stress on their performance and lives. The key issues that emerged from the questionnaire data formed the basis of the semi-structured interview guide. As noted earlier, the interview data were used to elaborate on the quantitative results.

In this study, reliability was treated as stability which measures the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trial. The questionnaire was pre-tested with 10 senior staff administrators at the Ajumako Campus of UEW on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, 2016. The campus was chosen for the pre-testing exercise because the respondents had similar characteristics like those in the UEW, Winneba campus who were used for the main study. The reliability was estimated on scaled items using SPSS version 20. In all, an overall Cronbach alpha reliability Coefficient of .978 was obtained which was considered reliable (Sekaran, 2000).

The quantitative data collected was sorted, organized and loaded on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The data was presented and analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency tables, Means and Standard Deviations. Also, the recorded interviews were transcribed after listening to each tape repeatedly. To attribute quotations to the interviewees, they were assigned some serial numbers. The female staff were assigned FSSA-1 to FSSA-3 where FSSA stands for Female Senior Staff Administrators, and the male staff MSSA-1 to MSSA-7, where MSSA stands for Male Senior Staff Administrators. The participants' direct responses of the interviewees were used to explain and support the quantitative findings, when necessary.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### Causes of Stress among the Senior Staff Administrators

One aspect of the questionnaire gathered data on the factors within their workplace that cause them stress and the relevant data is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Causes of Occupational Stress among the Senior Staff Administrators

Statements	Mean	S D
Too much workload	1.59	0.70
Bureaucratic procedure in the institution	1.64	0.79
Staff are not consulted about change at work	1.81	0.85
I have unrealistic time pressure	1.84	0.76
Long working hours	1.92	0.91
I have to work intensively	1.98	0.91
Dealing with difficult boss	2.02	0.94
I have difficulty enjoying and accepting relaxation	2.06	0.92
Working conditions are not appealing	2.07	0.95
Dealing with irritating students	3.01	1.01
Lack of job security	3.02	0.97
Shift work	3.08	1.05
Lack of focus on new technology (eg. computer)	3.51	0.92
Lack of respect for me as an employee	3.53	1.09
I have unclear job responsibility	3.66	1.07
I don't know how to go about getting my work done	3.74	0.83
I am unable to draw help from my colleagues	3.74	0.85
I lack control over my work	3.80	1.06
I am not confident in my ability to carry out my work	3.80	1.11
<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>2.72</b>	

Source: Field Data, 2017. Means were calculated from a scale of 1=Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree.

Table 1 shows that the most strongly agreed cause of stress among the senior staff administrators was 'too much workload' (Mean= 1.59, S.D= 0.70). The interview data also revealed that the organisation in which the senior staff administrators work compels them to work excessively, inducing stress on them.

I must say that workload is high as I have to meet all demands from students and staff. Documents get to my outfit, and I sometimes have only 24 hours within which to deliver. Equally, there will be other pending issues that I have to deal with like request from student and colleague workers. These make the work too much for me. [MSSA-6]

I must say the workload in this sector of the university is too much. This is where any information regarding an employee is stored. Therefore, any issue regarding any employee will be directed to you. I work from morning till evening sorting out documents and other things and whiles doing that other request will be arriving in which I equally have to attend to. It makes working in this department so stressful. [FSSA-2].

For the past years, I have noticed there is always more to do than what one expects. Each day comes with unending task that compels me to take it home and work on them to enable me meet the deadline. This occurrence has always been a factor that causes me stress. The workload is too much! [MSS-7].

Thus, the data suggested that role-overload leads to stress among the administrators. Conley and Woosley (2000) postulated that role overload is having too much to do in a given amount of time and that when employees are tasked with work that exceeds their skills, abilities and knowledge even a very minute work challenge can be so stressful and cause burnout. George and Jones (1996) and Bickford (2005) also revealed that work overload is particularly prevalent among middle and top managers, causing them stress. Workload is a potential stressor in organizations and the university setting in particular (Kinman, 2000; Warraich, Raheem, Nawaz & Imamuddin, 2014; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Adjei, 2009; Kusi et al. (2014).

Table 1 also shows that bureaucratic procedure in the institution (Mean = 1.64, S.D = 0.79) was another major source of stress to the senior administrators; Equally, the interview data also revealed that the bureaucratic procedure in the institution caused stress to the administrators, as the following comments suggest:

I personally think the university is becoming a big community and I trust that we should have a decentralized system that sees to other needs of staff. Anytime I have to wait for management to respond to my request that needs urgent attention, makes me go through stress. And usually, you hear other colleagues' complaining about the same issue.[MSSA-6]B

Bureaucracy is the order of the day. Everything you do must be approved by superiors which is not bad. But the waiting procedure that comes when a simple document must be signed by an authority gives me headache and makes me feel uncomfortable and stressed. It is too much. [MSSA-7]

MSSA-5 complained particularly about the bureaucratic procedures in processing of documents for staff:

The bureaucracy in the university is too much. Many at times, processing of our documents and promotions are not attended to as expected. You will have to wait for a long period before you are attended to. You are not even given the reason why there is a delay in processing your documents. It all becomes headache to me.

The findings that bureaucratic procedures in the university caused stress to most of the senior staff administrators support the views of Chang and Lu (2007), and Schultz (2003). These researchers noted that working in a large hierarchical, bureaucratic organisation where employees have little control over their jobs can be very stressful. Chang and Lu, (2007) and Schultz (2003) added that an organisation in which there is mechanistic and bureaucratic structures inhibits employee flexibility, risk taking and career development which causes frustrations on employees, making it difficult for them to function optimally in the organisation in which they work.

However, one of the interviewees, FSSA-2, had a contrary view regarding the bureaucracy system of the University:

I personally think the system in which the University operates is OK. I say this because if structures are not put in place, everyone will go about doing his or her own thing. If things are done the wrong way it will destroy the reputation of the University.

In the midst of the pressures in which the senior staff worked, it is expected that ideally in a working milieu such as the University of Education, Winneba, one will be consulted as regarding changes in the institution before those changes are made. However, it seems the situation is not so as staff are not consulted about change at work;

(Mean=1.81, S.D=0.85); When participants were asked if they were consulted about change at work before those changes were made MSSA-1, for example, commented:

Workers are not involved in any decision making. You will just be there and all of sudden you hear about a change within the system which you have to adhere to. It brings pressure on you as a worker when you have to meet the sudden demands of your superiors. Personally, this frequent practice poses pressure on me and makes me uncomfortable.

On the same issue, MSSA-7 commented that:  
.....Change within the system is a constant thing I know, but the manner in which is done affect me personally. You are not involved in any consultation as regarding what is about to happen and before you realize a decision has come to your outfit which you have to comply. It is very frustrating when this goes on almost all the time.

Inadequate consultation between employers and employees hinders the work process and places workers in a state of disequilibrium. Since, they do not know the appropriate time that a change may be made from management. Michie (2015) argues that a culture within the organisation that involves people in decision making, keeping them informed about what is happening in the organisation, and providing good amenities and recreation facilities to reduce stress. On the other hand, when consultation has been inadequate between managers and staff regarding relocation, change of leadership, arises a huge source of stress for employees.

Also, Table 1 shows that time pressure (Mean=1.84, S.D=0.76); long working hours; (Mean= 1.92, S.D.= 0.91) were among the major cause of stress in the institution. The interview data seemed to suggest that as a result of the workload that the senior staff had to deal with, they often had to work under 'time pressure' to meet deadlines. This implies that stress occurs when there is pressure on the individuals to accomplish tasks. Giving facts on how time pressure caused stress among the participants, some of them commented:

My job as a statistician is very stressful because my outfit is the centre where internal and external bodies like (GES, National Accreditation Board) derive information regarding the university from. Sometimes, requests for data do not come on time and you are expected to complete within the shortest possible time. To be able to meet these demands, I sometimes work after closure of work and at weekends and it becomes so stressful to me [MSSA-1].

Our work is time bound. Every work you are given demands that you submit on time. Request comes from superiors that must be attended to. This is not just that, but you are given a short period to submit

those requests so I sometimes have to extend my working hours in order to complete the work, making me stressed [FSSA-2].

Thus, both questionnaire and interview data suggested that time pressure was a source of stress to the administrators. Insel and Roth (2000) also found time related pressures, including rushing to meet deadlines and inability to complete required tasks in the allocated workday. Wilson and Hall (2002) also indicated that educators and administrators are seen as inactive recipients of stimuli who necessarily experiences stress when under pressure to work. One of the interviewees, MSSA-7, however, had a contrary view:

To me stress serves as a catalyst to make me do my best. I must say it's quite high. The demand on me as a media person is so high. Much is always expected from me both at work and then also from the community. Out of this, I feel so pressured all the time but in a way, it always helps or pushes me to do my best. The drive to work for my listeners to receive the information needed makes me so happy and compels me to move on irrespective of the hassle that comes with it.

I have to work intensively (Mean=1.98, S.D= 0.91); Dealing with a difficult boss; (Mean=2.02, S.D = 0.94) also emerged as key source of stress to the administrators. One would have expected that since that workload of the administrators was excessive, they would work with bosses who sometimes encourage and motivate them as they go about their work. However, an indication from the interview data depicted that sometimes the administrators fear to approach their bosses for support and this caused them stress:

My boss is the difficult type who makes work quite tough for me. Approaching her for an explanation regarding the work has not been easy. It is quite burdensome to me because, as my superior, I expect her to be nice to me and my colleagues so that this will facilitate the working process. But it becomes very difficult, making us stressed [FSSA-3].

My boss isn't the type you can freely open up and talk to. He expects you to do the work he's assigned to you. However, his approach in addressing me and the staff is so poor. I think his human relation is bad because I am not the only

one who complains about him. There is always tension when he's around [MSSA-3].

According to Lee (2000), bad supervisors, poor teamwork and ineffective supervision are the three most important factors leading to stress among employees. The author further state that employees with the worst supervisors were twice as likely to feel burned out and consider leaving their organizations. Sutherland and Cooper (2000) and Kinman and Jones (2001) are of the opinion that problems of unsteadiness in organisation may occur in situations where the relationship between a supervisor and subordinate strained. Opposition among contemporaries and differences in character clashes among members give rise to stress. Since humans are social beings, their interaction at the workplace is paramount to their well being and all their endeavours. One of the interviewees FSSA-2 had a contrary view about the boss, commenting that:

My madam is a good woman. Working with her makes work so easy. She has the heart for everyone. She will let you know and understand the task she's assigned you. When you are not clear and you go back to her she will take her time to explain it to you. When you don't come to work she will call and find out where you are and how you are faring.

Table 1 also shows that 'I have difficulty enjoying and accepting relaxation; (Mean=2.06, S.D=0.92); working conditions are not appealing; (Mean=2.07, S.D=0.95); dealing with irritating students; (Mean=3.01, S.D=1.01); lack of job security; (Mean=3.02, S.D=0.97); Shift work; (Mean=3.08, S.D=1.05); lack of focus on new technology (eg. computer) (Mean=3.51, S.D=0.92); Lack of respect for me as an employee; (Mean=3.53, S.D=1.09); I have unclear job responsibility (Mean=3.66, S.D=1.07); I don't know how to go about getting my work done (Mean=3.74, S.D=0.83); I am unable to draw help from my colleagues (Mean=3.74, S.D=0.85); I lack control over my work; (Mean=3.80, S.D=1.06) and I am not confident in my ability to carry out my work (Mean=3.80, S.D=1.11) were also considered as major sources stress among the administrators. The overall mean of respondents on the causes of occupational stress is (Mean= 2.72).

### **Effects of Stress on the Senior Staff Administrators' Work Performance and Lives**

Another aspect of the questionnaire gathered data on how stress manifests itself among the senior staff administrators in the University, which presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Effects of Occupational Stress on the Senior Staff Administrators

Statement	Mean	S.D
Headache and backache	1.74	0.79
Feeling physically weak	1.79	0.79
Stomach ache	1.87	0.88
Restlessness	1.96	0.91
Loss of appetite	2.14	0.96
Poor decision making	2.18	1.02
Loss of motivation and commitment for work	2.21	0.95
Reduction in work output and productivity	2.24	1.02
I plan to look for a job within the next 12 month	2.52	0.97
Being very aggressive	3.02	0.97
Absent myself from work	3.05	1.15
I have become less enthusiastic about my work	3.06	1.15
I go to work but I am unable to perform my duties	3.58	1.06
I have poor concentration	3.59	1.30
I feel depressed	3.67	0.95
Aggregate mean	2.37	

Source: Field Data, 2017.

Means were calculated from a scale of 1=Strongly Agree, 2 =Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 2 shows that most strongly agreed effect of stress on the senior staff administrators was 'headache and backache' (Mean=1.74, S.D= 0.79). The interview data also confirmed that the administrators experienced health problems including headache and backache as a result of stress.

When it comes to general health, because I sit for long hours, I sometimes experience headache, backache and waist pains. The pain is an excruciating one and it makes me feel very uncomfortable. I try to relax even within work time but since I have to continue working and also go to work the next day I am unable to control it and the pain becomes unbearable for me. [FSSA-1]

With regard to my general health, I am so much affected. I experience consistent headaches and backache. The seriousness of it is that the backache comes with some burning sensations which make me restless and uncomfortable during and after work. I hope it will get better soon [MSSA-2].

Selye (1976) opined that stress occurs as an individual's response to a physiological arousal elicited by troublesome events. Thus, if the individual does not adopt a coping strategy, the individual and the stressor continue for a long period of time which affects the individual's general health. Ackummey (2003) also, explains that prolonged exposure to stress can result in physical symptoms, including headaches.

The data in Table 2 also shows that 'Feeling physically weak' (Mean=1.79, S.D=0.79) was the next most rated cause of stress among the administrators. The interview data also suggested that the administrators were concerned about the health-related problem, including physical weakness. This was justified by MSSA-4 as:

Mostly, as a result of the pressure on me to complete my work, I experience physical weakness and even feel dehydrated after work. The reason being that I tend to do more than I am supposed to do. As I work I feel the weakness. I feel it all over and it is burdensome for me because a continuous glow of this might one day make me end up in a place I don't want to be [MSSA-4]

I sometimes experience fatigue or weakness. When it happens like that my sense of concentration is reduced. As you are interviewing me now, I hope you can see I look so stressed up. The weakness more or less is consistent and I don't like it at all because I need more energy to work [FSSA-3].

Well, who wouldn't experience the effect of stress since we are always loaded with piles of work and there is pressure on us to submit before time. For this reason, I mostly feel tired, exhausted and worn out. Sometimes, how I wish I will not come to work the next day [MSSA-6].

Buelens (2002) asserted that stress indeed negatively affects people's physical health and contributes health



problem such as physical weakness, constant tiredness, breathlessness and/or palpitations.

Also, stomach ache (Mean=1.87, S.D=0.88); restlessness (Mean=1.96, S.D=0.91); loss of appetite (Mean = 2.14, S.D = 0.96) were also considered by the respondents as key effects of stress on them. Table 2 also points out that 'poor decision making' (Mean = 2.18, S.D = 1.02) was another effect of stress on the administrators. The interview data also suggested that stress at work made the senior staff administrators unable to concentrate on their job, affecting their productivity.

When I feel stressed, I make unnecessary mistakes. I lose concentration as I work. I usually experience oversights especially when I am dealing with numbers. This is probably because I get nervous when I feel stressed [MSSA-5].

I mostly forget things when I am stressed up. I miss appointments, dates and meetings. I make unnecessary errors. The nature of my work is such that I cannot afford to make a lot of blunders. But, in my attempt to work, I experience oversight and other minor things that come in as I work which make me delay and lose concentration [MSSA-7].

Tucker-Ladd (1996) noted that the common behavioural effect ensuing from occupational stress includes poor reminiscence, hyperactivity, and compulsive thoughts.

Table 2 indicates that 'loss motivation and commitment' (Mean = 2.21, S.D = 0.95) was another key effect of stress among the administrators. The interviewees also noted weak motivation and commitment to work as effect of stress on them as the following comments suggest:

When I go to work even though I perform my duties I don't get enthused. This is because I know I will equally go through stress for the day so the satisfaction is not even there [MSSA-2].

When I am experiencing stress, I postpone tasks and assignments. Because of this, I am often behind schedule. Honestly, sometimes I leave work when the pressure is too much [MSSA-1].

Idris (2009) indicated that employees who are stressed out by organisational factors show low commitment and motivation to work.

Also, 'reduction in work output and productivity (Mean = 2.24, S.D = 1.02); I plan to look for a new job within the next twelve month', (Mean = 2.52, S.D=0.97); Being very aggressive (Mean = 3.02, S.D=0.97); absent myself from work (Mean = 3.05, S.D=1.15); I have become less enthusiastic about my work (Mean = 3.06, S.D=1.15); I go to work but I am unable to perform my duties (Mean = 3.58, S.D=1.06) I have poor concentration (Mean = 3.59, S.D=1.30) and I feel depressed (Mean=3.67,

S.D=0.95) were highly-rated as effects of stress on the administrators at the University. The overall mean of respondents on the effect of occupational stress is (Mean= 2.37).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that excessive workload compelled the senior staff administrators at the University to work beyond the normal working hours, making them stressed up. It is recommended that the management of the University recruit and train more administrative staff so that the senior administrative staff could delegate some of their responsibilities to them. Perhaps the experienced National Service Personnel, who possess the relevant administrative skills, could be recruited annually to offer relevant support to the senior staff administrators.

Also, the study revealed that bureaucracy within the institution slowed-down the administrators work-rate, yet they had to meet deadlines, causing them stress. It is therefore recommended that the management should restructure the administrative systems to reduce time waste in the processing of documents. Doing that could reduce the stress experienced by the senior staff administrators, enhancing their motivation and work productivity.

Last, but not the least, the study concluded that stress experienced by the administrators create some health-related problems for them, which could affect productivity in the long-run if not addressed. The University authorities should, therefore, design stress intervention programmes such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and Stress Management Trainings (SMT) for the senior administrative staff in their working outfit in order to help manage the stress they experience. Besides, other experts in stress management such as counsellors, medical experts and psychologists could be engaged by the university authorities to educate and provide relevant support on stress and coping strategies to the administrators.

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