

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES IN THE
DOWNSTREAM OIL AND GAS SECTOR IN ACCRA, GHANA

BY

ESTHER NAA KORKOI TAGOE

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MAY 2022



DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature Date:.....

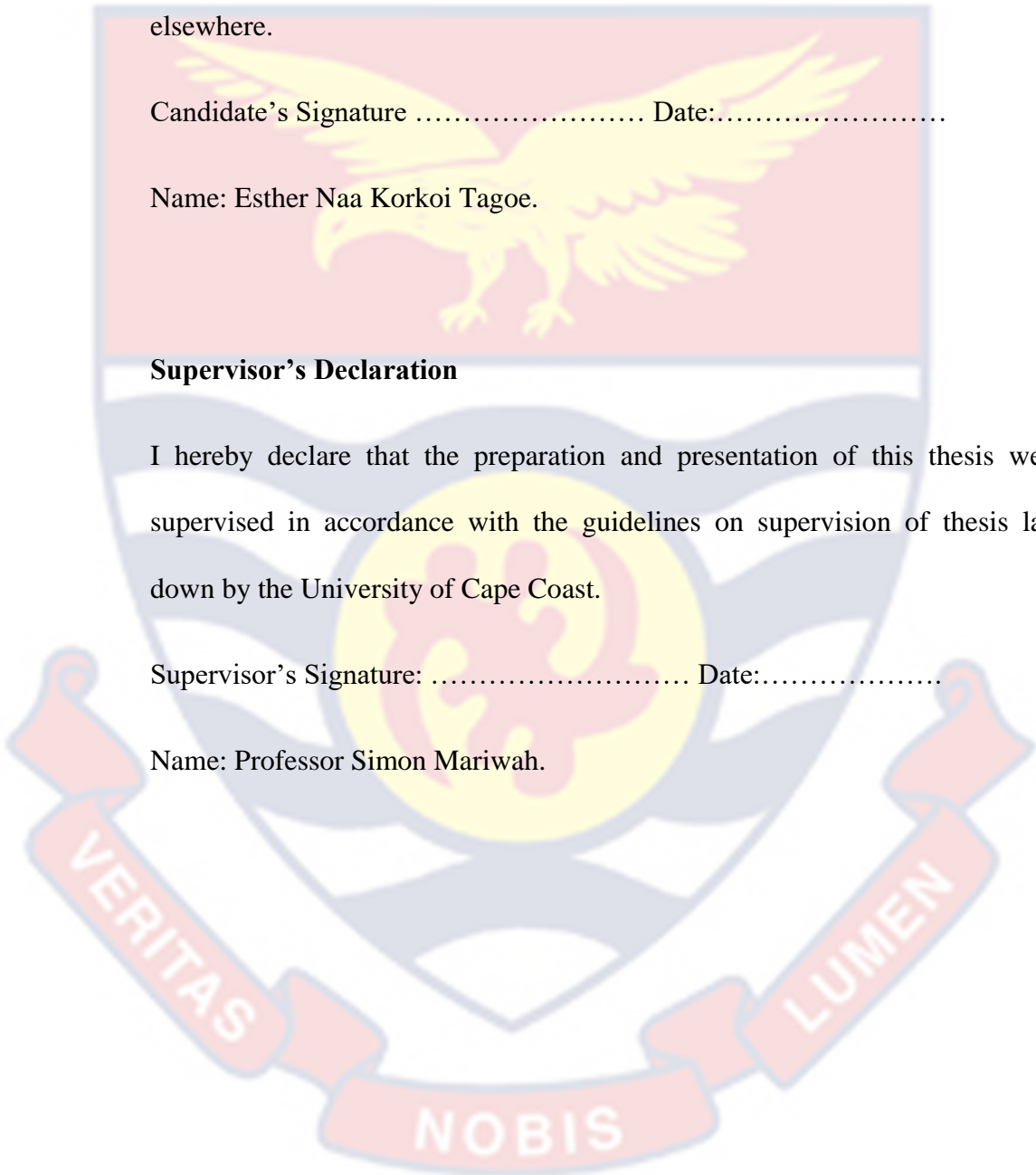
Name: Esther Naa Korkoi Tagoe.

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:.....

Name: Professor Simon Mariwah.



ABSTRACT

In Ghana, the oil and gas industry is expanding more quickly, and many businesses are making investments in the retail selling of oil. Once more, the industry has a job that is becoming more and more demanding, requiring long working hours, difficult duties in maintaining and adhering to proper safety measures, and a highly competitive market. Hence, in order to increase employee wellbeing and the effectiveness of job output, firms must now effectively incorporate stress management practices into their policies. The goal of the study was to assess stress and stress management strategies among staff members of oil marketing companies (OMCs) in Accra, Ghana. The descriptive survey technique was adopted for the study and the quantitative approach was employed. A total sample of 180 employees participated in the study. Questionnaire and observations were the instrument used for data collection. The researcher found that the nature of stress experienced by the employees in the OMCs included frequent fatigue, headaches and mood swings. Also, the study found out that job insecurity, long working hours among others were the major causes of stress at the workplace. The study also found out that the effects of stress on employees were both physiological and behavioural. That is, these factors brought about lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment and higher levels of intention to leave the organization. The study concluded that stress is prevalent among employees of the OMCs in Accra and that stress affect employees in diverse ways. It is therefore recommended that management of the OMCs should be alert of stress signs to reduce stress wherever possible. In addition, it is also the duties of employees to look after their own health and safety at work by adopting coping strategies to manage stress.

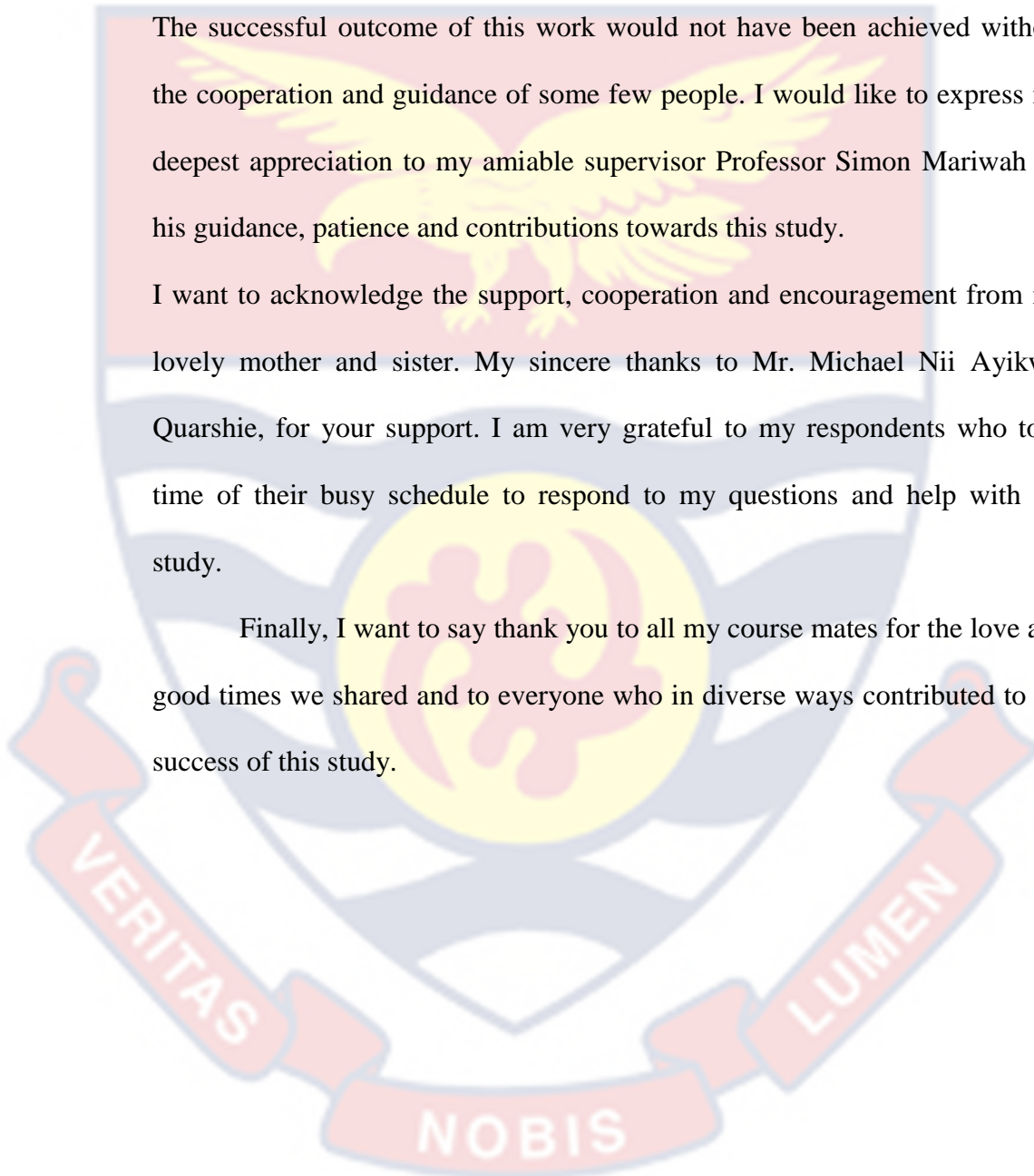
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DEDICATION

To my Lovely Family

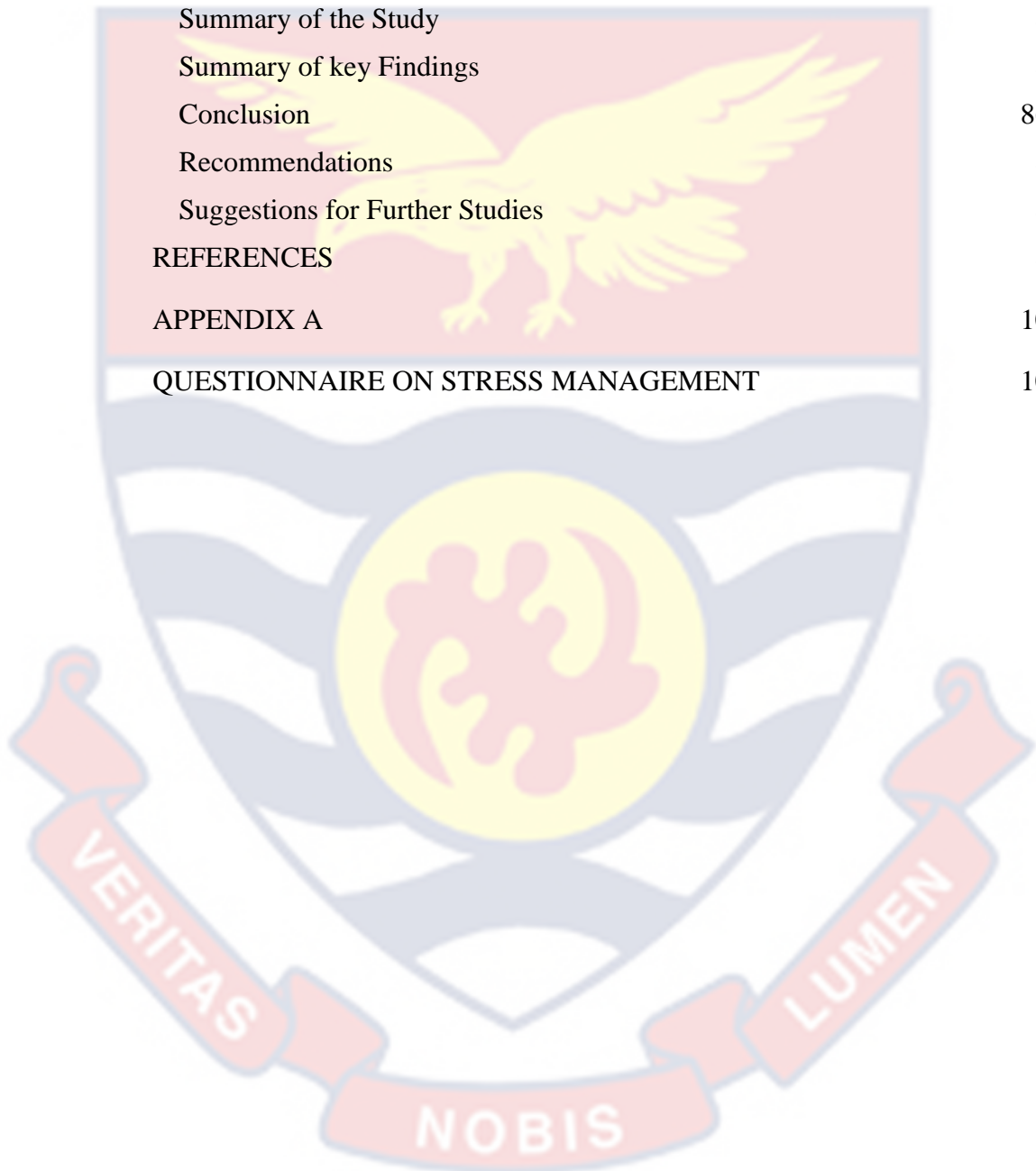


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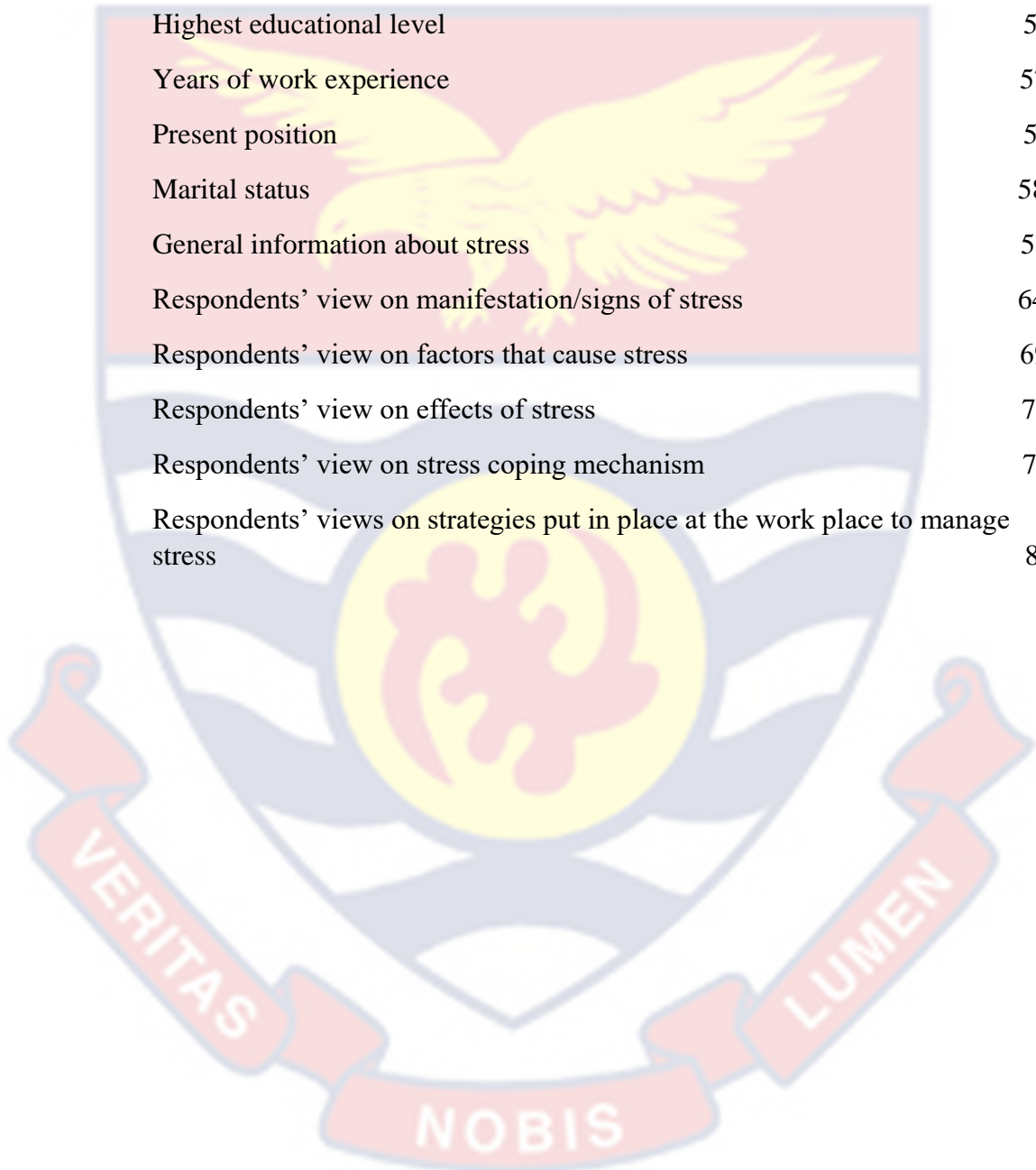
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Successful performance and productivity in the extraction of offshore and downstream oil and gas reserves are of vital importance to the economies of all countries with interests in this unique, but potentially, hazardous industry. However, the financial benefits can be seriously eroded by the costs of mismanaged stress. The downstream employees and the organizations involved suffer adverse impacts in many ways, including physical and/or psychological ill-health, absenteeism, cumulative stress trauma litigation, high labour-turnover, poor job performance and unsatisfactory employee relations (Sutherland & Cooper, 2011). The downstream environment is potentially stressful because the workforce lives and work in a restricted location for a significant period without a break (Afzainizam et. al, 2015)

A wide range of hazardous duties is carried out in a confined space and in an environment, which has the potential for the rapid escalation of hydro-carbon-related incidents. Life offshore and downstream has been described as dangerous, arduous and socially isolating. The environment is characterized by constant noise and activity, in sometimes crowded and unnatural living conditions (International Labour Organisation ILO, 2018). Indeed, added pressures exist because of the element of uncertainty which is inherent to the industry as each discovery area brings previously encountered problems, and the market is characterized by price instability of the oil and gas commodities. Such factors combine to make the task itself a challenge, but can also create optimal stress-producing situations which have implications for productivity and safety performance downstream (Clegg, 2001).

Various studies have depicted that stress is increasing at a rising rate in various industries and the oil and gas downstream is never excluded. For instance, Shchuka (2010), revealed that stress is responsible for more than fifty per cent (50%) of all illnesses. A study conducted by the labour force survey in the United Kingdom in 2018/2019 revealed that as many as 602,000 people complained of work-related stress, such as depression or anxiety and that makes them ill, thereby increasing the organizational cost (Pindar, 2019). It is therefore important to understand situations that lead to stress (both work stress and non-work stress), and how they lead to physiological, psychological and behavioural problems.

Background to the Study

The oil and gas sector plays a critical role in the global economy. The sector has supported national development in various forms. For instance, the sector has provided over 10.3 million jobs and more than \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy (Stevens, 2018). The increase in the growth of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been attributed to the strong performance of the oil and gas industry (Reporting Oil and Gas, 2019). Ghana's export has increased from two commodities (i.e., gold and cocoa) to three with the addition of crude oil. These account for seventy per cent (70%) of total exports (International Finance Corporation (IFC), 2016).

The downstream oil and gas sector, specifically the oil marketing companies (OMCs) contributions to the Ghanaian economy have been tremendous. The downstream sector alone contributes about 10% of Ghana's GDP which can be translated to some estimated turnover of about GH¢12 billion (Ofosu-Peasah&Ackah 2016). Despite its contribution to national

economic growth, the sector is associated with high levels of stress among employees. Increasingly, public and private sector organizations are acknowledging the unacceptable costs of stress by providing stress management programmes and/or workshops for employees in an attempt to combat the problem of stress. Studies have shown that stress exists in organisations and most workers have visited the hospital and have been diagnosed of being stressed by work demands (Akrani, 2011; Martin, 2014).

Many a time, workers reported fatigues, headaches, dizziness, and anxiety. Others too have absented themselves from work for some time and have increased medical costs for both the employees and employers (Afzainizam et. al, 2015). Other times, the effect of stress is evidenced as increased errors in sales records, lateness to work and increased sick leaves just to mention a few (Martin, 2014). Difficulties intrinsic to the downstream environment may compound the stress associated with the task requirements and the physical demands of a particular job. These special characteristics of downstream workings have important implications for safety in the environment.

Although stress has been encountered in ancient time, it has never been worse than it is now (Nordzro, 2017; Celik, 2018). It is also necessary to acknowledge that it is often a combination of stressors, rather than one source of stress operating alone, which results in negative consequences for the individual and the organization at large. Stress is one of the most significant factors in any sector and this disturbs workers a lot. Over the years, stress has been identified as a global plague and epidemic (Nordzro, 2017). This is one of the biggest global health issues and it is most often caused by internal and

external variables. It is understood that high levels of stress at work lead workers to have physical and psychological problems (Celik, 2018). This invariably affects an organization's productivity (Shchuka, 2010). In Bangladesh, a study conducted among bank employees demonstrated that stress is mostly due to excess work pressure and work-life balance (Akussah et al., 2012).

Various factors bring about stress at the workplace. These include long working hours, tight deadlines, boring work or the work being repetitive in nature (Mosadeghrad, 2013). Similarly, the American Institute of stress (2018), gave an indication that workplace stress is on the rise and the major causes are increasing pressure to perform duties, high workloads, toxic environment and job insecurity and workers not being appreciated, thus no reward is given for employees' participation and hard work. This creates stress that endangers future efforts. Though stress is inevitable, the stress that workers experienced at the workplace is one of the greatest causes of stress for many (Musyoka, 2019). In trying to manage stress, it is important to first identify the causes so that proper steps can be taken to control or manage it (America Institute of Stress, 2018).

Graham (2010), also noted that stress is rooted in different accumulating factors and these include, work-related factors. When workers are being exposed to high work pressure coupled with tight schedules, long working hours and long shifts stress begin to manifest. The Health and Balance Guide (2020) commented on the environmental factors of stress. They noted that the environment can bombard people with intense situations and the need for competing to adjust. For examples pollution, temperature (heat or

cold), noise, the presence of predators, chemical at the workplaces can lead to injuries or even death. They further noted that family-related factors occur as a result of the death of a loved one, divorce, increased financial obligations and chronic illness or injury and emotional problems. Other examples are depression, anxiety and anger. The physical manifestation may include immune system disorders, whereby the body system is unable to fight off illness and infections such as heart diseases, blood pressures, musculoskeletal problems like headaches, backaches and dizziness (Mosadeghrad, 2013).

According to Bhasin et al. (2017), profound physiological and endocrine diseases bring about fatigue, which disrupts sexual functions in both men and women. Musyoka (2019) noted that stress also produces various psychological experiences such as lack of motivation, depression and anxiety. It sometimes brings about traumas and job burnout in extreme cases. The behavioural nature of the stress includes changes in productivity, eating disorders, increased alcohol consumption and smoking, then sometimes sleep disorders and fidgeting.

Most often, when workers become stressed, there are some coping measures they put in place to manage their stress. Some people like listening to music and this relaxes the nerves and makes them feel better. Others might try to go on a walk during lunch breaks (Celik, 2018). According to Musyoka (2019), workers try to cope with stress at the workplace by talking to their supervisors about issues and getting support from friends and family. Workers sometimes track their stressors, thus keep a journal for a week or two to identify situations that creates stress and how they respond to these situations (American Psychological Association, 2018).

Some studies have shown that stress sometimes has negative effect on employee performance. It makes their zeal for work drops. Workers are not able to put in their best hence, output becomes very low. For example, the research findings among kindergarten teachers show that stress has some negative effects on performance and sometimes on health. Stress decreases job satisfaction and increases the intention to leave work (Celik, 2018). The study further suggested authorities of the school properly manage the stress levels of teachers and also put in some incentives measures to boost teachers' motivation. To further buttress this, empirical study was conducted among graduate students from Western Kentucky University in the United States. The study demonstrated that stress management helped boost student scores at a faster rate (Mandale, 2010).

Environment or workplaces with high levels of stress oftentimes obtained higher levels of dissatisfaction from employees, and this leads to occupational withdrawal (Celik, 2018). In addition, research findings from the pesticide sector in Pakistan revealed that stress at the workplace has a great impact on turnover intentions and that work overload, work ambiguity to mention a few, were some of the stressors that impacted intentions to quit (Zahra et al., 2018). Again, within the African continent, precisely Kenya, empirical research that was conducted among different organizations identified that stress management techniques have a positive influence on corporate performance (Musyoka, 2019).

Furthermore, in the Ghanaian settings, organizations are also faced with the issues of stress and it has become a major problem. For example, research conducted among staff in the tertiary institutions revealed that

stressed workers are mostly unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive, and less effective at work and their organizations are likely to be unsuccessful in a competitive market (Nnuro, 2012). A case study of UT Bank Ltd in Ghana indicated that unfavourable physical conditions bring about stress and this affects employees' performance and leads to low productivity which further affects the market share of the company at large (Nordzro, 2017). Then, in 2011 a study was conducted among employees of PZ Cussons and Airtel Ghana Ltd. The findings revealed that there was a positive correlation between organizational stress and cost, hence the research recommended that stress management must be included in the organizational policies to minimize cost and also help keep workers healthy (Adjei-Baah, 2011).

According to Nordzro (2017), the stress in the workplace can affect performance. Thus, individuals under too little stress may not make enough effort to perform at their best levels, while those under too much stress are often unable to concentrate and therefore, they cannot perform effectively and efficiently. The phenomenon "stress" has become a prominent research theme and a problem that affects occupational health and sometimes the efficacy of job production in most organisations. Workers must look after their health and safety at work and draw managers' attention to problems at an early stage. Stress exists in every organization, be it small or large and oftentimes, it comes in different forms and affects people in different ways in a different working environment. To buttress this further, the biological makeup of every individual is never the same and so individuals will respond differently to the same situations. Though stress may release outcome that is sometimes positive, it often time releases negative outcomes.

On the part of employers and management as a whole, they should be alert to the signs of stress amongst their staffs. The key indicator may be a change in an employee's behaviour and/or appearance in the workplace. Identifying the signs of stress at an early stage will increase the chances that actions can be taken to deal with the problems and the underlying causes, thus minimizing health risk and the effect it has on the work performance (Akussah et. al, 2012). Management can consider flexible working schedules, promote some form of social activities and try to organized workshops on stress management. Finally, they should research into stress management and integrate it into managerial policies to minimize or mitigate the negative effect on health, the rate on turnover intentions and increase work performance (Simpson, Stackhouse and White, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

The oil and gas sector is growing at a faster rate in Ghana, and a number of companies (multinational and private) are investing in the oil retail marketing business. The downstream sector is similar to other sectors for example health or education. It has increasing demanding careers with long working hours, long shifts, challenging roles in maintaining and adhering to proper safety measures, and a very competitive business (Graham, 2010). Clients need to be given value for their money, hence it is required that workers have their clients at heart and serve them very well. These make workers spend hours serving customers late into the evenings, some workplaces have workers staying throughout the night to attend to clients (Graham, 2010).

Meanwhile, research conducted by Afzainizam et. al, (2015) found that employees exhibited dissatisfaction with management not putting proper laydown strategies to combat stress in the sector and increase employees' appreciations. This was because the workers believe the attention of employers and management as a whole has been shifted from employees' welfare to only making a profit. Workers at some retail outlets tend to work more hours with the main idea of making some additional money aside from their monthly earnings.

Although researches have been done on the effects of stress on performance, there is inconsistency in findings to address the issue properly, mainly because of the diversity of people employed in the study. For instance, Ivancevich, Konopsake & Matteson (2006) and Fourie (2015) identified that stress has positive impacts, such as motivating an individual self and provide stimulation to achieve goals. Their study shows that stress has a positive correlation with performance. On the other hand, Fernando, Selvam & Bennet (2010), identified that stress has widely been an issue discussed in today's context of work and the stressors negatively affect the physical status of a person as well as the psychological well-being of human beings.

Furthermore, while most studies were done in other sectors such as education (Nnuro, 2012; Mandale, 2010), health (Mosadeghrad, 2013), banking (Nordzro, 2017) and the apparel industry (Sewwandi and Perera, 2017), to the best of my knowledge, little research has been done in the oil and gas industries (downstream) precisely among employees of the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in Ghana. Therefore, the study seeks to examine the stress

among the employees in the downstream oil and gas face and how employers try to manage the stress in the working environment.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess stress and stress management among employees in the oil marketing companies (OMCs) in Accra, Ghana.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify and document the nature of stress among employees in the OMCs in Accra.
2. Assess factors that cause stress among employees in the OMCs in Accra.
3. Examine the effects of stress on employees in the OMCs in Accra.
4. Explore the coping strategies adopted by the employees in the OMCs in Accra.
5. Explore the strategies put in place at the workplace to manage stress in the OMCs in Accra.

Research Questions

To adequately address the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the nature of stress in the OMCs in Accra?
2. What factors contribute to job stress in the OMCs in Accra?
3. What are the effects of stress on employees in the OMCs in Accra?
4. What coping strategies have been adopted by employees in the OMCs in Accra?
5. What strategies have management put in place to manage the stress in the OMCs in Accra?

Significance of the Study

The study aimed at examining the stress management among employees in the OMCs in the Accra Metropolitan Area. The findings of this study would be relevant to managers and policymakers, in terms of the causes and effects of stress among employees in the downstream oil and gas sector of Ghana. This will enable the managers of the OMCs to formulate proper strategies and policies needed to address the issues of stress. Lastly, the study would contribute to the existing literature on stress management among workers in the downstream oil and gas and other sectors.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in the Oil Marketing Companies specifically the fuel retail outlets, which was delimited to the Accra Metropolitan Area in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The researcher limited the study to one area in the Greater Accra region. It was restricted to the concepts of stress, factors that contribute to stress, the nature of stress and the coping strategies adopted by both the employees and management of the oil marketing companies. The study was delimited to managers, supervisors, fuel attendants and some lube men in the OMCs, precisely the retail outlets.

Organisation of the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. The first chapter contained the introduction to the research. Sections within this chapter included the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, delimitations, and limitations of the study as well as the organisation of the study. Chapter two focused on the literature on stress and stress management. The research methodology was

described in the third chapter. Sections included the study area, research design, population, target population, sample and sampling techniques, the type of data, data collection instrument, the method of data collection, method of data analysis, data analysis tools as well as ethical issues. Chapter four dealt with results and discussion of findings from the fieldwork. Finally, chapter five provided the summary, recommendations and conclusions of the study as well suggestions for further studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presented the literature review with respect to the study. The issues considered in the chapter are the theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature. The chapter also discussed the effects of stress, the factors that lead to stress, the coping strategies employees try to adopt in managing their stress levels and finally the measures put in place at the workplace to manage stress.

Theoretical Review

Many theories have been developed by different researchers for stress and stress management over the years, and these theories provide different frameworks for understanding the stress and its different features or dimensions. All the various theories have common characteristics and they explain stress as “an active and powerful cognitive process between the individual and his/her environment”. The theoretical review focuses on the person-environmental fit theory and job demand control support model and how it fits into stress and stress management.

Person-environmental fit theory

The person-environmental fit theory is explained as the individual and environmental characteristics match (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson 2005). Stress management mostly has been based on the Person–organization fit theory. This theory has been the most widely studied field of fitness for the human environment and is characterized as "compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: (a) at least one entity sets out what the other needs, (b) they share similar basic characteristics, or (c) both (Person, 2008).

According to Person (2008), Person-environmental fit is often referred to the similarity between the characteristics of an individual and the specific job the person carries out.

The basis for the person-job-fit was a complementary viewpoint because it included the traditional view of selection, which emphasizes the matching of workers and other characteristics to the demands of their job duties. The theory has been important because it focused on the organizations establishing and maintain a good fit between employees and their jobs. Conceptually and methodologically, the greater the fitness of an individual's organization, the greater the satisfaction of a person's job and organizational engagement, the less the intention of a person's turnover and work-related stress (Walter, 1986).

The person fit theory will always provide a better attention on the individual and this gives the individual certain focus within their social environment. But then the person fit major weakness centres on how individuals are placed in a single category. Thus, the theory overlooks the fact that people have unique combinations of qualities (Walter, 1986). The person fit theory characterised stress as the lack of communication between the abilities and values of the employees and their environment thus demand and supply. The correspondence is assumed to generate physiological, behavioural or emotional outcome from the employees which can lead to serious health issues (Edwards & Cooper, 1992).

Job demand control support model

The job-demand-control-support (JDCS) model is also one of the best models concerning workload and work-related stress (Karasek, 1979). It is

highly influential in occupational stress and health literature and has become the theoretical foundation of most empirical researches than any other work related to stress theory (Fila, 2018). Robert Karasek introduced the job demand-control-support (JDCS) model in 1979. He demonstrated and presented an assessment of stress and stress factors (stressors) in the work environment. JDSC model is aimed at balancing requirement and autonomy. It emphasises two important aspects; namely; height of strain (psychological demands) and job decision latitude (controls).

The height of strain, thus, psychological demands are requirements sets at work including work rate, durations for work, work shifts, availability, pressure and time (Karasek, 1979). Psychological demands present at the workplace emphasis that there must be a good fit between the employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold (McCormick, Meijen and Marcora, 2018). Job decision latitude, thus controls, on the other hand refer to the extent to which one can make decisions and exercise control over their work (Karasek, 1979). When employees can make decisions related to their work, they can devise coping strategies that can mitigate the effects of stress and manage stress effectively and efficiently.

The decision latitude control model asserts that individuals will experience adverse health consequence from their work when they make high demands on them while allowing them little control (Van Der Doef & Maes, 1999). The major weakness in Job demand control support is that, it does not work for every employee in the organisation, especially the females. But it works with almost every male in the organisation who works in very high stress environment. However, the theory suggests that women undergo

different experience in high stress job. The model again is only effective with employees with high workloads and long working hours (Van Der Doef & Maes, 1999). Examples of sectors with high levels strain are the education sector, oil and gas sector and health sector and many more.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Stress

Stress is defined as the psychological and physiological disorder that exists in a particular environment. It is a normal reaction the body has when changes occur. It can manifest to these changes as physically, mentally or emotionally and sometimes behavioural (Cleveland Clinic Medical Professional (CCMP), 2015). Studies conducted by Celik, (2018): Paille, (2011) and Yin-Fah et al, (2010) revealed that higher levels of stress have a significant positive correlation with turnover intentions. This implies that workers will always have the intentions to quit their jobs when the stress at the workplace becomes too much for them to handle. Moreover, empirical researches conducted by Hansen and Hilgenfeld (2013), revealed that there are two schools of thought on the causes of stress.

According to one school of thought, differences in individual characteristics, such as personality and coping style are the best at predicting what stresses one person and not another. The focus will then be on developing prevention strategies to cope with demanding working conditions. The other proposes that certain working conditions are inherently stress-inducing such as fear of losing the job, excessive workload demands, lack of control, work ambiguity, inflexible work hours and conflicting job expectations (Myers, Luecht and Sweeny, 2004; Foxcroft and Roodt, 2010).

People suffer stress mostly in silence thinking it is not of great importance until it has become worse and have an impact on their lives. There are strategies both parties, thus, the individual and the organisation, can adopt to deal with the stress and its effects abruptly. For this to stand and be very effective, employees must first learn to appraise or assess their situation to determine that they are stressed out thus, they should be able to differentiate between eustress and distress. Then also, employers must be aware of the impact of the stress on their employees' health and also on the job performance to resolve the stress issues by providing effective management interventions.

For decades now, the notions of "stress" has been used in physics to describe the elasticity of a metal material and its ability to withstand stress and the stressors. An example is the Hooke's Law of 1958 (Scott, 2019). Scott, further indicated that, during the beginning of the 20th century, the negative ideals of the word stress were prevalent principally due to the forces of industrialization and urbanization, as these form the collective consciousness of the western culture. Furthermore, according to Harris (2020), the word stress was used by Hippocrates in ancient Greece to describe a disease which constituted of element 'pathos' (suffering) and 'ponos' which means (excessive and unrelenting work).

She also made mention that, it was the first instance that stress was linked to a decline in health issues. Again, from Scott, in Chinese for example, the term stress consisted of the assemblage of two distinct characters thus, 'danger' and 'opportunity', which when put together gives the meaning 'crises'. The prolific Hungarian endocrinologist named Hans Selye proposed

and pronounced “The stress of life” in the year 1956. With this, he was able to teach the ideals of stress and stressors just to differentiate between stimulus and response in the foreground of contemporary psychological study (Scott, 2019).

Stress has always been a component of human existence and people are faced with a sequence of stress in their everyday life, but when this is being faced at work it becomes a threat and therefore becomes a very significant concern for the management of the organization and the employees as well. For instance, according to Oloyede and Akinbile (2010), stress is an inevitable part of life. Stress is the inability of an individual to cope with the threat (the real and the imaged) and this often resulted in a series of responses and adaptations (Kofoworola & Alayode, 2012). Stress is not a recent occurrence, it has been with humanity since ancient times. For instance, researches dated back in 1989 on Occupational Stress by Palmer indicated that the individual stress response is in three dimensions. These are the psychological, physiological and behavioural.

To buttress this, the Kompier, Cooper & Geurts (2000), also revealed that stress is an emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reaction to an aversive aspect of work and working environment. It further stated that the state of stress is characterized by the feeling of not able to cope with demands. Stress occurs when perceived pressure exceeds your ability to cope (Cooper and Palmer, 2000). Over the years, different researchers have come up with different definitions of stress. Modern definitions of stress share several essential ingredients. That is, they all, to a greater or lesser extent, identify that stress is an individual experience, it's caused by pressure or anxiety and

impacts upon the individual's ability to cope with a situation (Martin, 2014). Stress occurs when there is a mismatch between the demands of the job, the resources available and the capabilities of the individual worker to meet those demands (Rathi, 2018).

Similarly, Liyanage, Madhumini and Galhena, (2014), have identified and defined stress as a feeling or a condition a person experience when that person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual can mobilize. Also, Khan, Aqeel, and Riaz, (2014), identified that when a person suffers from mental and physical illness because of the unwanted settings, the situation is known as stress. It is also a feeling of pressure experienced by employees concerning work (Mangkunegara, 2005). To this, I strongly agree and propose that stress is psychological and emotional strain a person faces and this can go a long way to destroy his or her life and even cause death, hence the need for management of organisations to address the issue of stress management properly and take critical steps to mitigate the effect so that performance levels of employees become effective and efficient.

There are a variety of factors that cause tensions and pressures, such as increased levels of schooling, work and life balance, work environment, marital status, financial constraints, job instability, lack of control, and poor managing time, these are known as stressors (Zahra et al., 2018). The factors that cause stress at the workplace are known as psychological hazards (ILO, 2018). Cowan, Sanditov, and Weehuizen, (2011), stated that an individual's stress level can bring about stress in different ways. This can range from acute to chronic depending on the intensity of the stress. This can affect the physical and psychological well-being of the individual (ILO, 2018). Zahra et al.,

(2018) subsequently, argued that demands are stressors that sometimes lead to stress reactions. When these demands and conditions of work go beyond one's control and become threatening the individual health is at risk.

When stress occurs in one area, it affects other areas and can lead to apathy towards work and lowered career values. I, therefore propose that the phenomenon called occupational stress has consequences on the industrial revolution and this is increasingly affecting workers health. It has a lethal and/or sub-lethal impact on workers hence, the issue must be addressed properly in organizations to help employees and the management of industries have good health to perform effectively which in turn leads to high production capacity. Studies by Sapra and Saxen, (2013), proposed that stress is never a bad thing as it all depended on how people take it. They further stated that many people see the phenomenon "stress" as always having a negative impact, this is not so. They also mentioned in their studies that, people who experience too little stress may not have enough effort to perform their best. Subsequently, people with too much stress are not able to either concentrate or have stable minds to work effectively. Therefore, stress can either be a constructive (a friend) or damaging (a foe) (Nordzro, 2017).

Research on stress management indicates that most researchers pay close attention to the psychological and behavioural nature of stress (Avey, Luthans & Jensen 2009). This is because these aspects of the stress nature are closely connected to the mental part of our body. Bhui, Dinos, Miecznikowska. Jongh and Stansfeld, (2016), described work-related stress as a harmful reaction that people have to put excessive pressure and demands on them at work. They further stated in their research that as many 440,000

individuals in the United Kingdom lament about work-related stress such as depression or anxiety.

Again, they stated that almost 9.9 million working days were lost as a result of these stress issues. Generally, employers have always had the greatest cost to suffer in the event of stress and its management than employees (Adjeibaah, 2011). According to Timm, Graham & Caltabiano (2006) the estimated economic cost to the Australia economy as a result of work-related stress alone is significant with a loss of 14.3 billion Dollars. This data was collected from the civil service alone, with the private and non-governmental organisations not inclusive. The research proposed that stress in the government sector is on a higher side as compared to the private sector.

Stress Types and their Nature

There are five main categories of stress, namely, eustress, distress, acute stress, chronic stress and emotional stress.

Eustress

According to Scott (2019), the term eustress was coined by Hans Selye in the year 1956 and it originated from a Greek prefix "EU"- meaning "good" with stress which becomes eustress. Eustress is beneficial stress, either psychological, physical or biochemical. This term is used to define "good stress" which is in opposition with "bad stress". She further stated that eustress is a positive cognitive response to stress in nature and very healthy. It oftentimes gives an individual a sense of fulfilment. Eustress, according to Selye has emotional and physical benefit, it is characterized by the following: it lasts only for a short time, it is perceived as stress within our coping ability,

it increases ones' focus and performance and finally, it energizes and motivates.

Distress

Distress is the other type of stress, it is the opposite of eustress hence it is a "bad stress". It can occur as a result of boredom or burnouts. According to Scott, distress is characterized by the following: it last longer than eustress, it surpasses the individual's coping abilities, it generates unpleasant feelings, it always decreases performance/ production and finally distress bring about mental, physical and behavioral issues. According to Tocino-Smith (2020), the level of stress has distress at both ends, with eustress in the middle. Distress comes in various forms thus: acute stress, chronic stress, emotional and behavioral stress. None the less too little stress or too much stress produces distress (Tocino-Smith, 2020).

Acute stress

Acute stress is a type of stress which can throw an individual off-balance instantly. It comes quickly and unexpectedly and does not last long. For instance, in an organisation, acute stress will or might come as a result of a job interview, this will bring about a little tension on the individual. It can also bring slight headaches, and some excessive sweating. Similarly, another simple example would be the anxiety individual experiences from a situation such as making some presentations (Adjei-Baah, 2011).

Chronic stress

Chronic stress is a type of stress which tends to occur on regular basis. Chronic stress tends to drain an individual and can lead to burnout if not managed effectively. When this type of stress response is triggered, the body

is shifted from the relaxed mood and this can lead to several health problems such as cardiovascular diseases, anxiety, depression and gastrointestinal issues (Scott, 2019). Chronic stress comes as a result of some stressors we oftentimes term as intangible and ambiguous and are not readily identified as stressors. For example, working conditions such as long shift, excessive workload bring about chronic stress and this becomes detrimental to human health.

Emotional stress

Emotional stress is a type of stress that can hit harder than other types of stress. For instance, the stress that comes from a broken relationship or marriage tends to bring serious reaction and a sense of distress than the stress from busy work. This can affect the psychological aspect of an individual. The individual may experience some form of traumas and chronic depression which can be in the form of a burnout. Burnout is the direct consequence of prolonged chronic stress situations that leave people feeling a lack of control over their lives. According to Scott (2019), certain employment conditions may create a higher risk of burnout. These high levels of demands and sometimes uncertain expectations, lack of recognition of achievements and finally the risk of negative consequence when things go wrong. Once an individual reaches the stage of burnout, it becomes difficult to maintain motivation for work to be effectively done and even achieve goals.

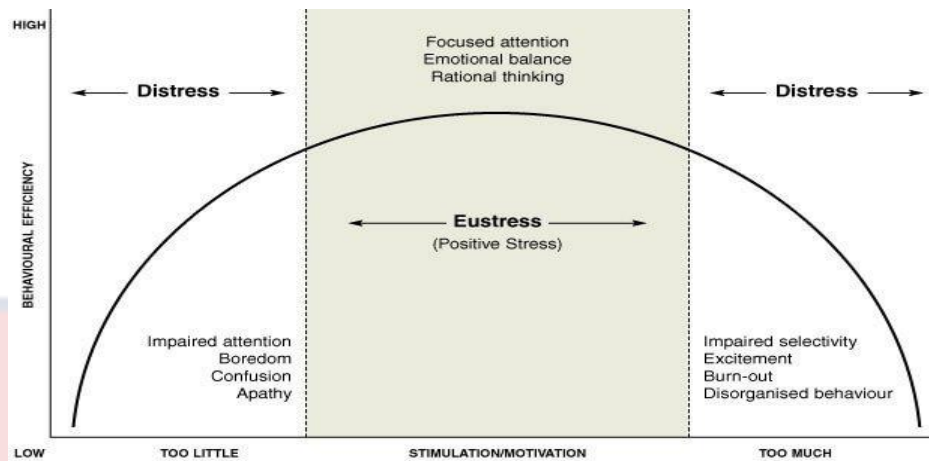


Figure 1: Levels of Stress

Source: Tocino-Smith (2020)

Factors that Lead to Stress

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), (2007), strain or stress is unavoidable due to the problems of the current working climate. Literature has indicated that stress is caused by many factors (Musyoka, 2019). Work-related stress is a growing issue around the world and it affects not only the health and well-being of the individuals but also the competitiveness of organisations (Better Health Channel (BHC), 2012). Furthermore, it has been identified that stress is the second most common compensated disease in Australia after musculoskeletal disorders. The following are possible factors that can lead to stress in the organization.

Work-related factors are the type of working conditions that can cause the stress level of workers to rise. Workers being exposed to is high work pressure coupled with tight schedules, long working hours and long shifts (Graham, 2010). Environmental factors can bombard us with intense situations and the need for competing to adjust. For example, pollution, temperature (heat or cold), noise, the presence of predators, chemical and workplace in which injuries or death can occur (Health and Balance Guide, 2020). Family-

related factors can arise as a result of the death of a loved one, divorce, increased in financial obligations and chronic illness or injury and emotional problems. Other examples are depression, anxiety and anger (Health and Balance Guide, 2020).

Similarly, Amankwah (2015) identified that some stress is due to factors that are inherent to the task, such as poor physical working conditions, work overload or time pressure. Furthermore, the International Labour Organisation (2018) categorises the causes of stress into two, content of work: work environment and work equipment, task design, workload/workplace, work schedule and the context of work: organisation culture and function, role in the organisation, career development, decision latitude/control, interpersonal relationship at work, home-work interface. According to the International Labour Organisation (2018), the factors that cause stress are known as psychosocial hazards. Over the years, the term has evolved from stressors to psychosocial causes to psychosocial hazards or psychosocial risks.

The terms "psychosocial hazards" and "psychosocial risks" are also used interchangeably in scientific literature, but a variety of experts agree on the concept of psychosocial hazards as certain aspects of the design and management of work and its social and organ-related aspects. It is further stated in the International Labour Organisation that, there is a fair consensus in the scientific community today on the existence of psychosocial hazards; however, it should be noted that new ways of work and an evolving working environment give rise to new hazards, and thus the concept of psychosocial hazards will continue to evolve.

To add up to the above causes, Nordzro (2017) identified that life changes are also significant cause of tension in the workplace. In today's world, several events do happen and people consider these as positive events. For instance, marriage, retirement, pregnancy to mention a few, can trigger the adrenal glands to bring about stress. These stressful circumstance and activities interfere with the ability to work efficiently and attain goals (Martin, 2014).

Consequences of Stress

The most important outcome of our mental work will be the realization of negative impact on work and oneself. People may pose this question: Is workplace stress always negative? Shchuka (2010), argued that under common working conditions a person can discover the correct way to react to troubles that come up. He therefore, proposed that stress is not a necessarily damaging factor but, it can be an exclusive motivational agent for future working development and improvement. He further stated that when stress is not present in an individual's life, the life is abnormal, but then also an absolute absence of stress is pathological. Too much or too little stimulation can be stressful; therefore, he proposed that a certain level of stress could even be essential at the workplace.

Effects of stress are often shown in the various signs and literature indicates that the effects of stress are grouped under two major categories; these include (1) the individual (2) the organisation (Adjei-Baah, 2011). According to Nordzro (2017), the stress signs and symptoms can be categorized into four groups; that is physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural. Stress may affect the mental scope of the individual at the

workplace in various forms. These include memory problems, anxiety, inability to concentrate, poor judgement, seeing only the pessimistic, constant worry and fearful anticipation (Jeanne, Melinda & Lawrence, 2010).

The physical signs and symptoms mostly are communicated through physical illness. This can either be caused by physical or non-physical problems, therefore this becomes very important to seek medical consultation. Examples of the physical disorders that may result from stress are headaches, excessive sweating, chest pains, weight gain or loss, weakness, tiredness and chronic fatigue and loss of sex drive (Nordzro, 2017). The emotional aspect of stress can affect ones' performance at work and makes individuals feel uncomfortable. Examples of these can be mood swings, frustration, agitation, feeling of being overwhelmed, sometimes the sense of loneliness and isolation, depression and anger and substance abuse (Horwitz, Ellen, Melinda & Roberts, 2010).

Finally, the behavioural symptoms of stress which are mostly anti-social and can be caused by the declined in the quality relationships with families, friends, and sometimes co-worker. Examples are procrastination or neglecting responsibilities, eating disorders and sleeping disorders (Musyoka, 2019). All these stress effects or consequences could further be grouped into three categories: (1) effect on health, (2) the effect on personal characteristics, and finally (3) effect on working efficiency (Shchuka, 2010).

Effect of Stress on the Body Immune System

Our immune system is the body's system of defense against diseases. It combats diseases by constantly engaged in search and destroy missions against invading microbes. Given the intricacies of the human body and the rate at

which scientific knowledge has advanced, we might consider ourselves highly dependent on trained medical practitioners to help with consultation when it comes to our illness. The body, in general, copes well with most diseases on its own, through the functioning of the immune system. Millions of white blood cells called leukocytes act as the body's immune system. Lymphocytes are the special type of leukocytes and these act-like commandos on the search and destroy mission (Greenwood & Levin, 2006).

According to Nnuro (2012), occasional stress (acute stress) does exist, but it does not really affect our health, instead of chronic and excessive stress gradually weakens the body's immune system. The relatively weak immune system increases our vulnerability to many illnesses, including common colds, flu and the risk of developing chronic diseases such as cancers. He further stated that psychological stressors can dampen the immune system's response, particularly when the stress is severe or prolonged. On the other hand, short stress such as final exam time can weaken the immune system, although the effects are limited than those associated with chronic or prolonged stress. The life stressors can take a toll on the immune system and make the body more vulnerable to sickness including marital strife, divorce and maybe job insecurity.

Stress and the Cardiovascular System

The cardiovascular system is the network of linkages between the heart and the blood vessels. It is our way of living. But unfortunately, some deaths happen in the form of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) or heart and artery disease in human life. The CVD is mostly the leading cause of death. For instances, in the United States, about one million people die from this disease

and approximately 4 out of 10 suffer from the CVD (Nabel, 2003). Coronary heart disease (CHD) is also a major type of cardiovascular disease-causing approximately 700,000 deaths per year, mostly from heart attacks. Most at times, the coronary heart disease occurs when the flow of blood to the heart is not adequate to meet the requirements of the heart functioning.

The underpinning CHD phase of this disease is known as arteriosclerosis. The main root cause of arteriosclerosis is a mechanism which involves the build-up of fatty deposits along the walls of the arteries which contributes to the development of clogging plaque in the artery. When an individual experiences excessive psychological stress it can sometimes bring about life-threatening events in which heart tissues die from lack of oxygenated blood (Nnuro, 2012). According to Nabel (2003), cardiovascular heart diseases can be prevented. He stated that monitoring of the risk factors can be done.

Examples of such factors are high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, excessive drinking of alcohol, eating a diet rich in fats and living an inactive lifestyle (Kofoworola & Alayode, 2012). But on the other hand, factors such as age and family background are not preventable. Literature has it that researchers' place emphasis on the effect of chronic rage on the heart (Krantz & McCeney, 2002). Now healthy people have less effect of rage on their heart, but persistent anger, the kind you see in people who seem angry all the time, turns to increase the risk of CHD. Rage is closely related to aggression, a personality characteristic marked by rapid anger and the tendency to blame other people and often have negative views of the world (Nnuro, 2012).

The nervousness and the rage cause stress hormones to be released by the adrenal glands. Often these hormones released by the adrenal glands increase the heart rate, the breathing rate and the blood pressure, thereby contributing to the supply of more oxygenated rich blood to the muscles and allow them to prepare for defensive action in the face of a threatening stressor. Now our body can consistently pump out these stress hormones in people who often or frequently experience negative emotion such as anger, depression or anxiety thereby eventually damaging the heart and blood vessels. The basis of belief indicates that episodes of acute anger can activate heart attacks and sudden cardiac arrest and deaths in some individuals with established heart disease (Smith, Glazer, Ruiz, & Gallo, 2004).

Effect of Stress on Organisation

Stress brings damage to the company as well as it does to the individual. Typically, when workers have severe issues or problem the company often suffer. However, the problems normally associated with the organisation when the employees are distressed are often absenteeism, low performance and low production (Adjei-Baah, 2011). He stated that unhealthy companies are not getting the best out of their employees and this can impact not only the success in an increasingly competitive and demanding market but ultimately their survival as well.

Low performance

The level of performance in the companies' decreases when the stress level of workers is on the higher side. Employees are not in the position to satisfy the standards and the demands of their employers; hence the consequence of that company is faced with the dilemma of not being able to

satisfy consumer demands. Marketing and advertising companies, for instance, focus their activities on creativity and innovation, although low productivity in such firms decreases business efficiency (Adjei-Baah, 2011).

Turnover

Frequent stress in an organisation inevitably contributes to turnover.

According to Adjei-Baah (2011), employees leave their jobs due to dissatisfaction in the hunt for new ones. He indicated that turnover has several ripple effects that are correlated with it. This includes the recruiting expenses incurred when new workers are recruited. These costs often take the form of publicity, selection and the expense of training and development.

Stress Management

Managing of stress has to do with the interventions designed to reduce the impact or effect of stressors in the workplace. The intervention programs can or most of the time have individual focus and aimed at increasing the individual's ability to cope with the factors that cause stress. Both the workers and management of the organization have the mandate to help fight the stress at the workplace. For instance, management must try and improve communication to reduce uncertainty, the workers on the other hand must not hesitate to approach management when stress crisis arise. From all scientific point of view and more meditation, stress management is a meditation program, a deep relaxation and the actions taken to change the created situation by reducing the effects of stress on the system or body (Shchuka, 2010).

Stress management includes the implementation of programs that increases the overall well-being of workers over the long term. When stress is

managed properly, it always has a positive effect on corporate performance. Several works of literature have examined the effectiveness of a stress-management program and found to help reduce symptoms associated with stress (Nnuro, 2012; Martin, 2014; Nordzro, 2017). In an attempt to increase or boost financial and organizational efficacy, companies now include the management aspect as one of their strategy's choices.

According to Musyoka (2019), this approach would depend on the size and resources of the company. The management of an organization can concentrate on the primary level of prevention that seeks to minimize or eliminate stress-causing demand. The secondary degree of prevention can be used to modify the individual and /or the organization, the tertiary approach can also be implemented to heal the individual of stress. Psychology research has been able to recognize two ways people deal with stress. In the first place, a person may decide to suffer or deny the experience of stress. On the other hand, one can decide to confront reality and provide solutions to it (Amankwah, 2015).

Back in the year 1995, Kagan and Watson implemented a psychoeducational stress management program on emergency medical service workers over a three-year period that included nine and sixteen months of follow-ups. It was an extensive investigation that demonstrated the positive effect of the program across a variety of domains that included measures of emotional health such as depression, anxiety, strain and the sense of accomplishment as well as the measure of behavioural outcome. Similarly, Murphy (1996), also investigated the efficacy of a stress management program. Following his 20-year review encompassing numerous programs he

proposed and concluded that stress management approaches that combine techniques were most effective.

Stress at the workplace is directly or indirectly responsible for many early and untimely deaths through heart attacks, stroke, and imbalance in the body system and high blood pressure among other illness (Nordzro, 2017). Both the tension that we face when we go to work and the stress that awaits us at work is on the rise, making bosses, managers and staffs feel the added strain (Amankwah, 2015). Similarly, stress management program must be studied in-depth beforehand, and only after that, it can be implemented. The company which intends to practice the program needs to empathize with the program participants to choose the appropriate techniques of stress management most suitable for the individuals (Shchuka, 2010).

Studies have shown that recreation and physical activities have the potential to alleviate stress (Nordzro, 2017). According to Aderinola (2011), the human body is built to move just like the automobiles, and if it doesn't move, it becomes rigid, rusty and eventually becomes damaged. Systematic work-based leisure activities also will generate promising improvements in health behaviour (Amankwah, 2015). Various studies have shown that people involved in physical activities experience less depression and anxiety. For instance, Nordzro, (2017) indicated leisure and participation in physical activities can reduce stress as such people have fewer symptoms.

Similarly, an experiment done by Smith (2002), revealed that taking long walks can be beneficial in reducing anxiety and blood pressure. According to Fletcher and Scott (2010), they indicated that when a person tries

voicing out his /her thoughts and sharing them with family members and friends, people can better understand the feelings of that person.

All people are different, but then all as one want to have more than they already have. Some are influenced by circumstance, crises, and sometimes unexpected changes in the workplace. For instance, if a person wants to learn how to change his / her boring life or wants to learn how to deal with fear and go through life successfully, and finally if a person wants to be strong everywhere and always even in the face of dismissal, then the person must be able to learn the stress management program (Shchuka, 2010).

Research by Aderinola (2011) suggested that without relaxation, the body is at a disadvantage and less capable of maintaining its good health and of fighting diseases, and if one becomes ill, the healing process is more complicated or simply does not take place at all. Besides, he described the rest and the relaxation contributions factors as; First of all, help the body to refresh itself, remove metabolic waste products, and restore the immune system. Secondly, they help to heal diseases and other attacks on the human body, including stress and emotional distress and finally, they improve longevity and lowers mortality rate.

Sometimes, the success of individuals in human endeavours will depend solely on what they consume. Therefore, individuals must eat regularly to prevent ill-health. The type of food and the time they are eaten or consumed are also important. If a person wants to be in good health, his / her meal should be regularly timed and distanced. There is a great deal of value to be attached to some of the food we consume (Kofoworola & Alayode, 2012). So, we can

confidently say that the knowledge of stress and its management is a 'science' and the practice of stress management is an 'art' (Agrawal, 2001).

Stress Coping Strategies for Employees

There are many coping strategies employees can deal with stress both in the home and at the workplace. For instance, instead of taking medications to eliminate the stress or mitigate its adverse effects, better ways can be used. These include mental preparation, physical exercise, writing, conversation, rest, relaxation and dieting (Bhui, Dinos, Miecznikowska, Jongh & Stansfeld, 2016). Similarly, Scott (2019), proposed that an individual can adopt long term habits to help manage general stress better from the stressors. These habits include the following: regular exercising to keep the body in shape and the organs to function properly, maintaining a healthy diet so that the body will be fuelled well and help with overall stress level, cultivating a solid support system such as individual approach, social support approach, and corporate approach. This relationship system helps the workers cope with the stress of life. She further stated that quick meditations are good for dealing with acute stress, but the regular practice for meditation will build the body to be able to stand against stress. Finally, she indicated that listening to music is a wonderful act of reducing and coping with stress, taking time off to have a vacation and indulging in hobbies to calm the stress.

Strategies for Managing Stress by Organisations

Managing of stress has to do with the interventions designed to reduce the impact or effect of stressors in the workplace. The intervention programs can or most of the time have individual focus and aimed at increasing the individual's ability to cope with the factors that cause stress. For instance,

management must try and improve communication at the workplace to reduce uncertainty. From all scientific point of view and more meditation, stress management is a meditation program, a deep relaxation and the actions taken to change the created situation by reducing the effects of stress on the system or body (Shchuka, 2010). Stress management includes the implementation of programs that increases the overall well-being of workers over the long term. When stress is managed properly, it always has a positive effect on corporate performance (Musyoka, 2019).

Empirical research conducted by Blaug, Kenyon and Lekhi (2007) indicated that if organisations are to recognised and try to reduce work-related stress, then it is very important they understand the exact work characteristics and situational factors that may contribute to a stressful working environment. For stress programmes to be effectively implemented, senior management within the organisation must show long term commitment to stress management programmes and its objectives. They further proposed that stress management can be grouped into three. These include primary, secondary and tertiary interventions. Similarly, Ivancevich, Konopsake and Matteson (2006), also identified a variety of strategies or approaches for preventing and managing stress. These he categorised into the individual, social support and corporate approach.

Primary Stress Management Interventions

The primary stress management techniques are the techniques designed to avoid work-related stress from arising, targeting the employee, the job or the interface between the worker and the workplace. The key goal is to avoid this from happening in the first place (Blaug Kenyon, & Lekhi, 2007). The

primary methods are divided into two types: reactive and constructive. The purpose of the reactive approach is to recognize and alter certain elements of either the workplace or the worker likely to be involved and the constructive approach focuses on the workplace or the working environment itself rather than on the individual worker and the aim is to make the working environment as stress-free as possible.

According to Beswick, Gore and Palferman (2006), an effective example of primary management techniques is the London Electricity, which uses the 'Work-Life Solutions' primary stress intervention technique, this is a program designed to help workers maintain a balanced work-life. It presents improved flexibility for workers whose lifestyle makes it difficult to work a typical number of hours a day for five days a week. The individual approach as stated by Ivancevich et. al (2006), falls under the primary stress management.

Secondary Stress Management interventions

The secondary interventions of stress management aim to mitigate the influence of stress and reduce the severity of its consequences, and instead concentrate on the individual worker. It is meant to treat the symptoms of a dysfunction or a problem faced by the individual worker. Usually, such methods include intervention by clinicians, counsellors and there is sometimes a disparity between the different services at this level of management as to how best to cope with work-related stress (Nordzro, 2017). Often health professional is the primary focal point of treatment for the workers suffering from the ill effects of stress. Unfortunately, most of the conventional physicians do not have any advanced experience or training in the field of

occupational health and may therefore recommend some therapies or courses of actions that can prove detrimental in the long term to the workers' rehabilitation and hinder their return to duty (Blaug, Kenyon & Lekhi, 2007).

This buttress earlier research done by Toohey (1995), who proposed that the medicalisation of stress can delay recovery and the return to work by shifting the power from the employer to the medical practitioners who are administering the medication. According to him, doctors have often prescribed medication as the form of stress management, which may improve the crisis in the short term, but then can have a negative effect if the medication is dependency forming. Occasionally, doctors may refer workers suffering from occupational stress to a specialist such as psychologist counsellors or psychiatrists (Nordzro, 2017).

Research by Martin (2014) indicated that stress management strategies of various organisations show that the strategy called counselling and life management (CALM) has been developed. This program provides staffs with the necessary health and lifestyle education as well as confidential support to assist them in resolving problems that occur in both inside and outside the workplace. This type of strategy when explored by the management of an organisation will enhance the performance of workers.

Tertiary Stress Management Interventions

The third strategy management can explore is tertiary stress management. This type of technique for managing stress entails recognizing and treating the ill effect of the stress once they show forth and rehabilitating the person who is stressed out to enable him/her return back to work in due time. Most of the times, tertiary strategies are used once the person has been

diagnosed as suffering from ill effects of stress. The aim is to restore the individual to help them return to work (Nordzro, 2017).

The most common approach is what we call the case management. This aims at providing a return-to-work plan for the person on treatment. Through the case management process or approach thus the strategy for the individual's treatment and rehabilitation is developed, coordinated and monitored by professionals like medical doctors together with the worker and the employer. The process aims to achieve a mutual decision as to the best combination of services and treatment for the individual and help him /her back to work (Blaug, Kenyon & Lekhi, 2007).

Empirical research was done by Martin as cited in Nordzro (2017), indicated that the London Electricity operates an employee support programme for rehabilitating workers who have been absent from work due to stress. The programme is run by an external network of professional counsellors managed by a clinical psychologist. The worker who is referred to counselling session is provided with about seven sessions with the clinical psychologist. If the psychologist can know that what the individual is experiencing is work-related, then, in this case, a series of the meeting is organized involving the employee thus individual who is sick, the employer/manager, the counsellor and a representative from occupational health and safety and finally the human resource personnel. Based on these meetings a plan of action is drawn to help the employee return back to work (Nordzro, 2017).

Empirical Review

Stress is human 's adaptive reaction to an outward situation which would lead to physical, mental and behavioural changes. According to Mxenge, Dywili and Bazana (2014), stress can be experienced from four basic sources, namely; the environment, social stressors, physiological and thoughts. In today 's world, the degree of stress increased owing to urbanization, globalization that results into cut-throat competition. Stress is inescapable part of modern life; work place is becoming a volatile stress factory for most employees and it is rightly called as the Age of anxiety. Though stress harms human beings in several ways, not all the stresses are destructive in nature. Appropriate amount of stress can actually trigger your passion for work, tap your latent abilities and even ignite inspirations (Smith, 2002).

Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desired and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important (Schuler, 1980). Krausman, Crowell, and Wilson (2002) reported finding physiological arousal measures that corresponded to both the perception of exertion and cognitive performance decrements. Anxiety is the most common stress condition by which memory researchers have examined memory performance (Smith, 2002). The negative effects of this stressor on working memory are well established (Glazer & Lui 2017; Mills,2013).

Hassan (2014) found that employees who worked under two differently perceived supervisors in the same workplace has significant health effects. Some studies have identified links between problematic characteristic of work and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease effect with bullying

and harsh supervision and lower the blood pressure working with a favourably perceived supervisor (Zahra et al., 2018). A comprehensive review of the literature conducted on behalf of the Health Safety Laboratory by Beswick, Gore, and Palferman (2006) demonstrates that numerous studies have found significant associations between experiences of bullying and psychological strain (e.g., depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts post- traumatic stress, low self-esteem); physical strain (e.g., chronic fatigue, sleep difficulties, and stomach problems) and sickness absence. Frequent emotional distress in the form of anger, anxiety, and depression can have damaging effects on the cardiovascular system.

Similarly, a study on the effect of stress on performance of employees in Commercial bank of Ceylon concluded that stress is having an impact on bank employee's performance at the same the influence of organizational related stress is higher than the job and individual related stress (Karunanithy & Ponnampalam 2013). Afzainizam et. al (2015) also reported that individuals high in anxiety tend to be slower and more deliberate in their processing of various aspects of mathematical functions. Time pressure has been found to degrade performance across a variety of cognitive domains. The range of performance domain that have been found to suffer under time pressure include: judgment and decision making (Noor & Maad, 2008), memory recall strategies, concession making and integrative agreements and subject 's self-rating of performance (Greenwood-Ericksen & Ganey, 2002).

Foxcroft and Roodt (2010) study showed that stress factors among middle level managers in schools affirmed that 62.3% of the teachers significantly accepted teacher-principal communication as a stress problem

while 73.7% rejected teacher-teacher communication as a stress problem. A further study by Celik (2018) also revealed that teachers feel helpless and frustrated when working in a school with low infrastructure and worst maintenance. The unrelieved problems of withdrawal are emotionally exhausting and lead to regular conflicts. This situation is linked to stress. High occupational stress was correlated with low social support at work and that took place because of detachment and repression of rival activities in the institutions (Horwitz et. al,2010).

Smith (2002) study on job-related stress and job satisfaction among Australian secondary school teachers found that staff tensions and conflicts are vital in stress formation among the teachers. Teacher's stress is correlated negatively with interpersonal relationship of co-staff members. Good and healthy interpersonal relationships reduce/eliminate job stress among teachers. Life stress and coping styles among teachers was discovered with 120 male and 120 female teachers as samples. Male teachers adopted emotion-centric strategies while female teachers adopted only issue-centric strategies to combat the stress (Smith et. al, 2004). Various physical stress management strategies adopted by women indicated that working women were practicing to record the happenings in personal diary, using customary furniture and high fibre diet as contrasted to non-working women. These groups did not differ significantly in the other coping strategies (Shchuka, 2010).

A study by Khan et. al (2014) on stress coping methods between male and female teachers was conducted with high and low job stress. No significant difference was found between the male and female teachers on different stress coping methods except humour. Most of the teachers put their

feet up (53%), water treatment like hot water bath (46%), prioritize the demands (46%) and avoiding hurting reminders to lessen and overcome their stress. None of the female teachers were consuming tobacco, alcohol and mood shifting drugs as a stress reliever. Female teachers were adopting psychological stress coping strategies more as compared to males and difference in mean scores was found to be significant statistically (Scott, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

In this segment, the conceptual framework of the study is presented and elaborated. The main theoretical constructs identified the stressors, the nature of stress, the effects stress have on employees and stress management strategies put in place by both employees and the organization. These are combined to draw the dimensions of the framework. The conceptual framework of the study is portrayed in Figure 2, which was adapted from the works of Musyoka (2019) and Glazer and Lui (2017).

When the various stressors that contribute to stress come into play during work, employees experience stress and this manifests in various signs or natures due to the biological nature of the individual. The various manifestation of stress has different effects on the employee. These include behavioural, physiological or emotional or psychological. Now, both the employee and management of the organization must adopt coping strategies to combat stress and make the working environment healthy and more productive.

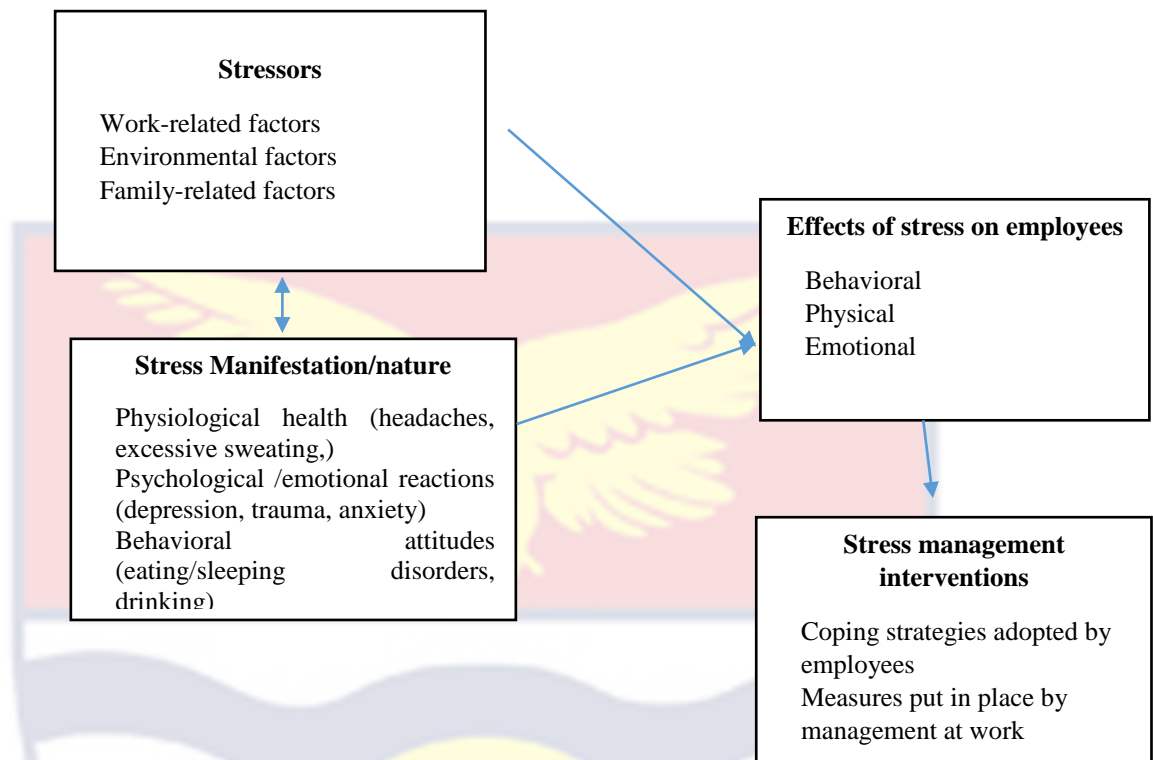


Figure 2: A model of stress and stress management that explains the potential sources of stress and the different effects it has on the individual.

Source: Tagoe, (2021)

Chapter summary

The Chapter presents a reviewed literature on the theories, the concept of stress, stress types and their nature, factors that contribute to stress, consequences of stress on the body immune system and effect of stress on organisation as well. Finally, the chapter touched on strategies for managing stress by both the organisations and employees.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research methodology defines the scope and structure of the whole study. It gives a detailed explanation of how the research is done scientifically. It brings out the way and manner of solving research systematically by using logically adopting steps (Creswell, 2009). This chapter presents the methods used for the study. The chapter provides the research design, research philosophy, research design, data sources, study area, population, sample size, sample procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, ethical consideration, field work challenges and chapter summary.

Research Philosophy

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007), if a research philosophy reflects the principles of positivism, then the researcher more often than not adopts the philosophical stance of the natural scientist. The research philosophy used for this study was positivism. It states that valid knowledge is derived strictly from the experience of natural phenomena, their properties, and relationships as well. Thus, data derived or extracted from sensory experience, as interpreted by logical reason, is exclusive of knowledge. Then also, with this type of philosophy, it is best to work with observable social reality and the end product of such research may be a legal generalization, thus similar to the results produced by physical and natural scientists (Neuman & Robson, 2014). The philosophy was chosen for the study because the research is solely done quantitatively on a large scale in order to get the overview of

how the employees of Oil Marketing Companies (retail outlets) manage their stress levels.

Research Design

The research design for the study was descriptive. This is because most of the time in the selection of a particular research design it is based on the purpose or objectives of the research as indicated by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007). This research seeks to explore the perceptions of stress and the strategies adopted by both employees and the management of the Oil Marketing Companies in the Accra Metropolitan Area, Ghana to deal with the stress that workers go through. The survey technique was used for the study, because this enabled the researcher to find out, learn, and then determined the respondents' perceptions on the current and trending practices and or issues for easier description of the phenomenon under study.

Thus, this lessens the difficulty encountered in situations during data collection and also helped in making very good recommendations to improve the stress management (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Furthermore, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), when obtaining answers from a large group of people, a set of carefully designed and administered questions lies at the heart of the research survey.

Study Area

The petroleum industry of Ghana is grouped into two, the upstream that consists of procurement and refining of the crude oil, and the downstream which includes activities like marketing and distributing of petroleum products by the OMC and the pre-mixing of petroleum products for other industrial uses. This study was centered on the downstream sector. Most OMCs

operating in Ghana are mainly multinationals; however, the last decade has seen a tremendous increase in the establishment of several small to medium scale OMCs. The study was limited to the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), specifically the retail outlets (filling stations) in the Accra Metropolitan Area in Greater Accra, Ghana. The reasons for the choice was, the oil and gas sector is a profit-making business, and the sector has employed or hired the services of people. The sector is fast growing in the country just like the other sectors like education, health, agriculture, apparel and others. Then again, less research has been done in the sector as compared to the other sectors, hence the need for researches to be carried out for people to know the exact nature of the oil and gas works. The selected OMCs included the multinationals, the state's own OMC, and some small to medium scale ones found within the Accra Metropolitan Area. Accra was chosen as a location because it comprises a vast majority of OMC's which included the multinational, state own, and the small to medium scale. Like most countries in the world, Ghana has also established the Association of Oil Marketing Companies (AOMC) that sees to the day-to-day activities of the oil and gas downstream sector (Business News, 2021).

The AOMC is an advocacy institution set up to help direct the affairs of work in the downstream and also to pursue intensive researches towards the oil and gas downstream sector. The major stakeholders involved in the OMC's are the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning, Bank of Ghana and National Petroleum Authority, the Energy Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Tema Oil Refinery, Bulk Oil Storage and Transportation Co. Ltd, Ghana Standards Authority, Ghana National Fire

Service and finally Ghana Revenue Authority. The OMCs have been in operation for many years but then, it operated as a loose entity until the Association of Oil Marketing Companies (AOMCs) came into being and was registered with the adoption of the constitution by members in the year 2003 (Business News, 2021).

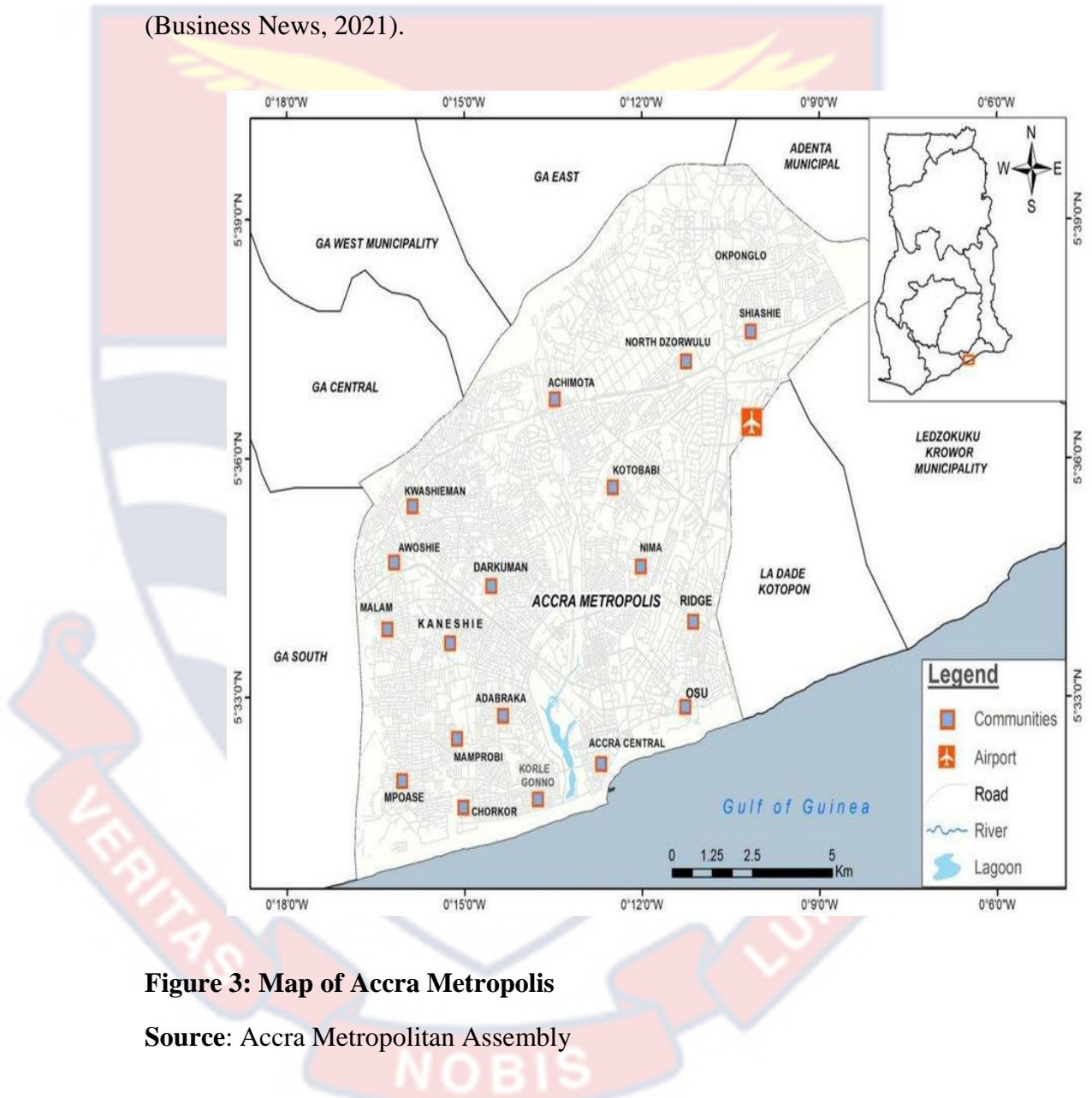


Figure 3: Map of Accra Metropolis

Source: Accra Metropolitan Assembly

Data Sources

The important element regarding the data source for the study was solely primary data. This was chosen based on the nature of the research thus to explore the management of stress among the employees in the downstream

sector of the oil and gas industry. The Primary data was a more reliable and obtainable data source that help defined the purpose of the study. The primary data also brought out the necessary findings and very vivid answers from the respondents. This type of data was obtained from administration of questionnaires and aided the researcher in making recommendations and suggestions.

Population

According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), the term, study population, can be taken to include all the members or items with the characteristics of interest to the research as defined by its aims and objectives. The target population for the study included managers and attendants of the various OMCs retail outlets found within the Accra metropolitan area in the Greater Accra, Ghana. Census was used as the research method for this study. Census is an organized process of gathering, recording, and analyzing information regarding all members of the population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Census as a research method is an official and complete count of the entire aggregation of items from which samples can be drawn, in which every unit of the entire population is included in the collection of the data.

Scientifically, census was chosen for the research because it provided intensive study or detailed information of the population. It also provided reliable data for the researcher to work with. Finally, census was chosen because the entities of the population had different characteristics and properties, thus the population was heterogeneous.

Research Instrument

The study adopted the closed ended questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. This was used because it offered the researcher an opportunity to sample the perception of the larger population. The questionnaire was designed based on the knowledge of the literature review and the objectives for the study. The questionnaires were administered personally and the contents was explained to the participants. As compared to other instruments, the questionnaire was appropriate for the study because, the items on the questionnaire were coded easily for statistical analysis. This helped participants to express their opinion without any form of fear of being judged. The used of questionnaires resulted in a vast volume of data collected and also cost-effective.

According to Martins (2014), in trying to design a questionnaire, one must be careful to design it as short as possible, the questions asked too must follow each other in a logical sequence. To this effect, the designed questionnaire was divided into groups or sections, this was done to ensure that, the objectives set for the study were achieved. This was also done to make sure that the questionnaire becomes very attractive and simple. In designing the questionnaire, the first section was intended to seek demographic information from respondents (i.e., sex, age, educational background, position, and years of experience and other information). The other sections were related to the factors that cause stress at the workplace, the nature of stress that existed, and the effect of stress on the employees was examined, the coping strategies adopted by employees when they are faced with stress and finally the strategies put in place at the workplace to manage employee stress.

Data Collection Procedure

A letter of introduction was collected from the Institute of Oil and Gas Resource Management, University of Cape Coast, to seek permission at the various OMCs head offices that fall within the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area, Ghana. At every OMC retail outlet (filling stations), respondents were met during the early hours of the day and / or at lunch time depending on the availability of workers. A brief introduction was done by the researcher to the respondents, this was to explain the purpose of the study to the respondents before the questionnaires were given out to them.

Also, there was an interaction between researcher and the respondents, this was done to aid them in answering the questions. The researcher stayed with the respondents when they are responding to the questionnaire to help clear doubt and uncertainties. This encouraged and motivated them to seek further clarifications on some of the items on the questionnaires when needed. The researcher also appealed to respondents to take their time in answering the questionnaires appropriately, this was ensured to minimize errors. Questionnaires were then collected back from respondent right after they had finished answering.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a research tool used for making replicable and concrete references from the data. Data analysis in research becomes very meaningful when it being organized very and also the summary done excellently (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). The research adopted the descriptive survey, thus made used of frequencies and percentages. These were used to analyze the data collected from the field. According to Saunders, Lewis &

Thornhill (2007), a researcher searches for structures and sometimes patterns regularities in a work and makes inferences based on the regularities. In similar manner, Ary and Jacobs (2018) demonstrated that researches most often used descriptive statistics to organize and summarize the data collected from the field. In analyzing the data collected, the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was used. Then Tables and statistical inferences were then deduced from the gathered data.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Validity to an extent is an indicator which measures the accuracy of a concept or framework (Creswell, 2009). Most often, the focus of validity is not directly on the instruments itself, but rather on the interpretation and meaning of the scores derived from the instrument (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002). Validity was ensured by using the right instrument for the work. Questionnaires were the appropriate instrument for the study because the data for the work was solely primary and practical. The indicator of some concept is sometimes valid to an extent when it measures an expected outcome. Thus, when the objectives of the study are met at the end of the research. According to Creswell (2009), reliability is often times related to internal consistency. Where internal consistency is sometimes described as or is meant to be data collected, data measured or data generated under expect conditions. It was therefore very necessary to ensure that the instrument used for the study was very reliable when used for different samples. Hence, reliability was ensured by pre- testing and reasonable judgement.

Ethical Consideration

Information was collected based on guidelines of the University. Ethical clearance was given before the researcher started to collect the data. Participants were introduced to objectives of the study after which they were informed about their rights to participate in the study. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the responses from the participants, their names were not written on the questionnaires. Participants also had the right to informed consent and the right to withhold any information they felt it was uncomfortable in giving out. Finally, the data collected was stored in a safe place.

Field work Challenges

1. Some of the Oil Marketing Companies gave restrictions to the number of retail outlets to collect data from.
2. Some of the Oil Marketing Companies did not want to take part in the surveys.
3. Other Oil Marketing Companies closed down their retail outlets because their locations did not help with sales.
4. Furthermore, during the data collection, other OMCs had closed down for renovation purposes.

Chapter Summary

The Chapter presents a detailed explanation of how the research was done scientifically. This included the population, study organization, research philosophy, research design, data source, the instrument for data collection and finally data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for the study. The chapter begins with the background characteristics of the respondents and followed by the analysis of the results based on the main research questions. Statistical tools such as frequencies, means, percentages and standard deviations were employed in the analysis.

Background Characteristics of Respondents

In order to put the research into a proper context, the background information of the respondents was collected. This included sex, age, highest educational level, and level of position in the organisation, marital status and working experience with the retail outlet. The information is presented in Table 1.

It is evident from Table 1 that majority, 120 (66.7%) of the respondents are males and the remaining 60 (33.3%) are females. This points to the fact that there are more males than females operating as attendants, supervisors and or managers in the retail outlets. The retail outlets are generally engaged in the servicing and fuelling of vehicles across the country. Preliminary discussions with some managers and supervisors on the field revealed that attendants needed to be alert always and ready to serve their clients. Because of this, seats are barely provided for them. Hence, attendants often stand when they go to work. This allows for the speculation that work at the retail outlets is perceived to be highly stressful hence the number of females working at the retail outlet is very low as compared to their male counterparts.

Table 1: Sex of the respondents

Sex of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	120	66.7
Female	60	33.3
Total	180	100

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)

The age of respondents is very essential in every research because it gives a general overview of the nature of the workforce. As shown in Table 2, the analysis reveals that most respondents fall within the age range of 20 - 29 years. This ranked high with a frequency of 110 (61.1%) of the total respondents, followed by the age range of 30 – 39 years with a frequency of 57 thus (31.7%). About 10 of the respondents (5.6%) affirmed that their age range falls within 40-49 years.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less_than_20_years	3	1.7
20_29_years	110	61.1
30-39-years	57	31.7
40_49_years	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)

Education is considered an essential variable in research because it helps ascertain the level of knowledge and how people perceive issues. Since the study focuses on exploring issues on stress management among employees in the downstream oil and gas sectors, it was significant to find out the level of education of the respondents. From Table 3, the findings reveal that all the respondents have attained some level of education with 119 (66.1%) of the respondents having Senior high school as their highest educational level. Approximately 27 (15%) of the respondents indicated that their highest educational level was first degree. Further down the table, the figures show that 19 (10.6%), 10(5.6%) and 5(2.8%) of the respondents also have the higher national diplomas, Junior high school and postgraduate as their highest educational levels respectively.

Table 3: Highest educational level

Highest educational level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
MSL/JHS	10	5.6
'O' or 'A' level/ SHS	119	66.1
Diploma	19	10.6
Graduate	27	15.0
Post Graduate	5	2.8
Total	180	100

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)

To comprehend the nature of operations and conditions of service at the retail outlets, it requires exploring the level of experience respondents have had on the job. In view of this, the findings show that 128 (71.1%) of the

respondents have worked with the retail outlets between 1-5 years. This was followed by 39 (21.7%) of the respondents who indicated that they have worked with the retail outlet between 6-10 years. Only about 7% of the respondents have worked for more than 10 years.

Table 4: Years of work experience

Years of work experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5	128	71.1
6-10	39	21.7
11-15	10	5.6
16-20	1	0.6
Above 20	2	1.1
Total	180	100

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)

The information on respondents on present position from Table 5 shows that 106 (58.9%) of the respondents are fuel attendants, 35 (19.4%) of the respondents are supervisors, while 29 (16.1%) and 10 (5.6%) are managers and lube men respectively.

Table 5: Present position

Present position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Manager	29	16.1
Supervisor	35	19.4
Attendant	106	58.9

Lube man	10	5.6
Total	180	100

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)

One of the most important social obligations in institutions is marriage and this can sometimes exert stress on people. As a result, the study asked about the marital status of the respondents. Table 6 reveals that about 133 (73.91%) of the respondents indicated that they were single while 44 (24.4%) were married with the remaining about 3 (1.7%) being divorced.

Table 6: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	44	24.4
Single	133	73.91
Divorced	3	1.7
Total	180	100

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)

General Information on Stress

In order to ascertain whether the respondents have any knowledge of stress and how well they know the phenomenon, a piece of general information on stress was gathered from the respondents.

From Table 7, it is evident that most of the respondents have a fair knowledge about stress. Almost all (98.9%) respondents have heard about the phenomenon of stress. The general information gathered revealed that stress

existed in the downstream oil and gas sector just like any other sector in the country.

Further, Table 7 shows the medium through which respondents heard about stress. Most 80 (44.4%) respondents had their information on stress through radio, followed by television 67 (37.2%).

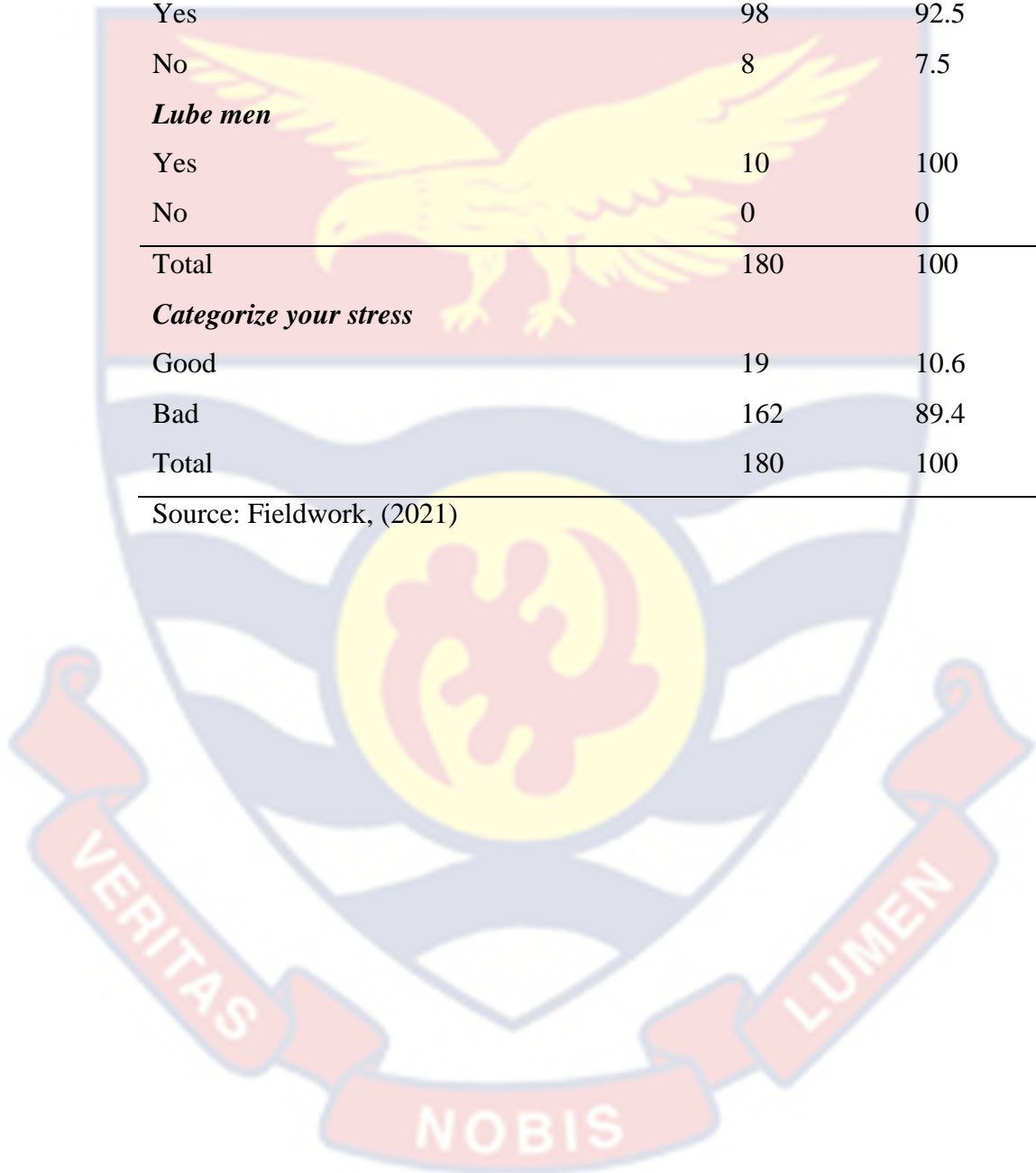
Moreover, it was found that most 170 (94.4%) of the respondents believed their work is stressful and most of them (89.4%) considered their stress as bad. Meanwhile studies by Sapra and Saxen (2013) found that though many people see the phenomenon “stress” as always having a negative impact, stress is never a bad thing as it all depended on how people take it.

Table 7: General Information about Stress

General Information	<i>frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Have you heard about stress</i>		
Yes	178	98.9
No	2	1.1
Total	180	100
<i>Through which medium did you hear it</i>		
Newspaper	7	3.9
Radio	80	44.4
Tv	67	37.2
Self	11	6.1
Internet	4	2.2
Friend	11	6.1
Total	180	100
<i>Does your job cause you to have stress</i>		
<i>Manager</i>		
Yes	29	100

No	0	0
<i>Supervisor</i>		
Yes	33	94.3
No	2	5.7
<i>Attendants</i>		
Yes	98	92.5
No	8	7.5
<i>Lube men</i>		
Yes	10	100
No	0	0
Total	180	100
<i>Categorize your stress</i>		
Good	19	10.6
Bad	162	89.4
Total	180	100

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)



The nature of stress among employees in the oil marketing companies

This section of the study focuses on stress manifestation or the nature of

stress that existed in the oil marketing companies (OMCs). Stress manifestation

comes in many ways. It is normally, the body's reaction to harmful situations whether they are considered real or perceived. Stress sometimes manifests itself in a physical, behavioural and physiological manner (Musyoka, 2019). To be able to establish the nature of stress in the downstream oil and gas sector, eight close-ended items were used to elicit information on this issue.

In a bid to examine the views of the respondents, frequencies and percentages were used to interpret their responses base on a five-point Likert scale, thus 'Strongly Agree'[SA], 'Agree'[A], 'Disagree'[D], 'Strongly Disagree' [SD], 'Non-Applicable' [NA]. The results are presented in sub sections below.

As evident from Table 8, 131 (72.7%) out of the 180 employees agreed to have frequent headaches as a result of their works. The findings indicated that headache is one of the most frequent physical natures of stress that existed in organizations. It is very common and often brings about discomfort and have some form of impact on the performance of the employees. This finding is consistent with that of Mosadeghrad (2013), who found that little tension on the individual brings about headaches and some form of excessive sweating.

These headaches are physiological manifestations of stress on the individual and they can also be said to be acute stress. The finding also supports the research Health and Balance Guide (2020) conducted. They

found that when an individual is exposed to higher levels of stress, it brings about frequent headaches and this leads to the person not being able to sleep properly.

Furthermore, Table 8 indicates that only (12.2%) out of the 180 respondents agreed they sweat when they are stressed while majority (71.1%) of the respondents disagreed on the same issue. This indicates that sweating as a physical manifestation of stress is mostly not experienced by employees in the OMCs (retail outlets). This is contrary to the findings of Mosadeghrad (2013), who is of the view that tension on the individual brings about some form of excessive sweating.

To further probe into the nature of stress manifestation, the study sought to find if employees have fatigues during work. Table 8 indicated that majority (77.8%) of the respondents agreed to the statement, while only (16.1%) of the respondents disagreed. Fatigues is the constant feeling of tiredness and weakness. This can be physical, mental or the combination of the two (Celik, 2018).

Moreover, Table 8 indicated that (71.1%) respondents disagreed with the issue of whether they feel depressed or anxious, while only (12.2%) respondents agreed to the issue of feeling depressed. This finding is inconsistent with the research conducted by Musyoka (2019). He is of the view that depression and anxiety are part of the psychological manifestation of stress and this decreases employees' performance in the organization.

From Table 8, it can be seen that (77.2%) the respondents disagreed that they lose appetite when they are stressed while (17.8%) of the respondents agreed to the issue. The finding is inconsistent with that Mosadeghrad (2013),

who indicated in his study that little tension on the individual brings about some form of appetite loss.

Again, from Table 8, majority of the respondents (82.7%) disagreed with the statement that they eat too much when stressed, while only (7.8%) agreed. The findings are inconsistent with the Musyoka (2019) study, who found that the behavioural nature of stress included eating disorders, alcohol consumption, sometimes sleeping disorders and finally fidgeting. Based on the survey conducted at the OMC's, it can be concluded that the nature of stress mostly experienced by workers at the Oil Marketing Companies are physiological and behavioural in nature.

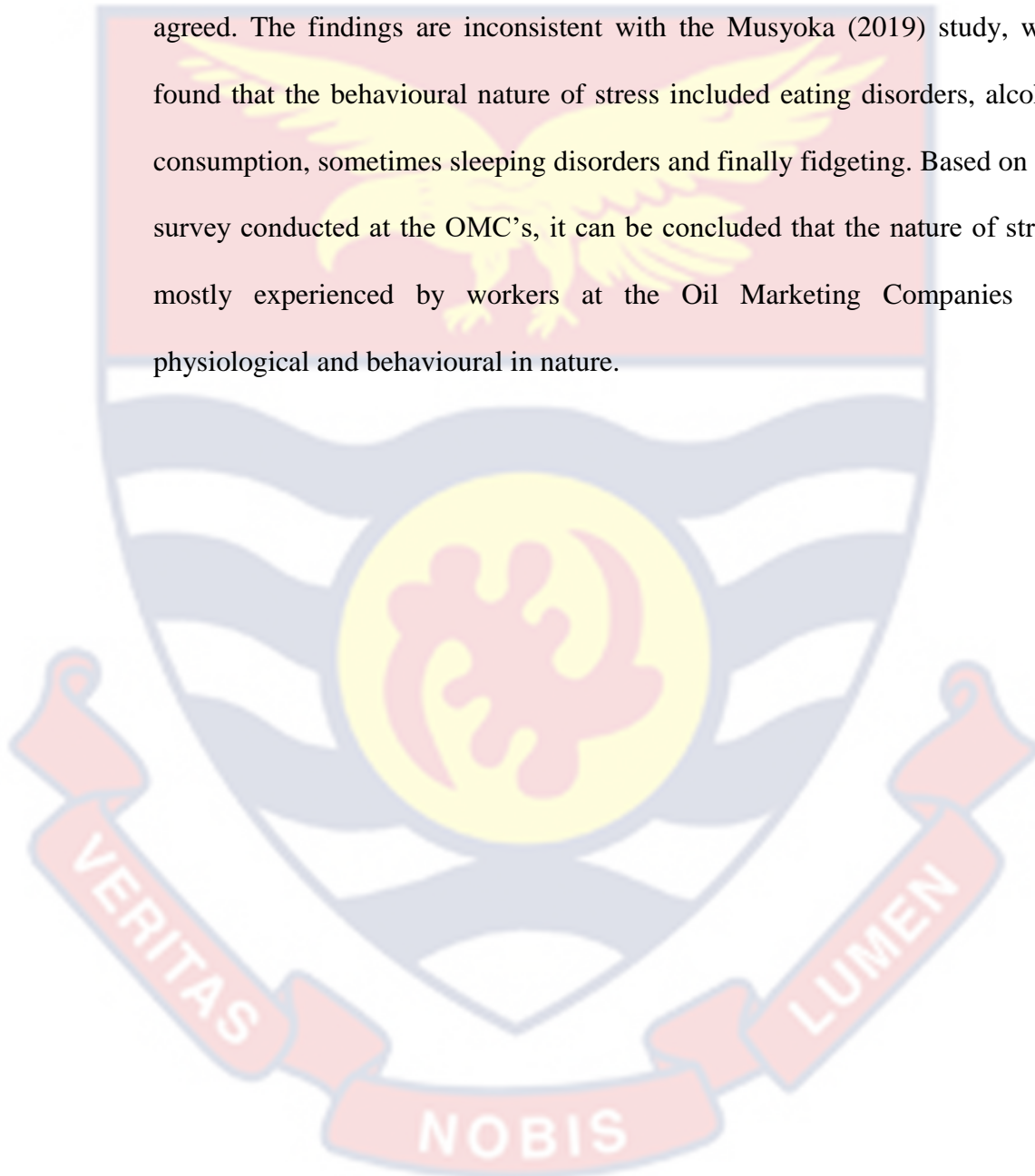


Table 8: Respondents' views on Manifestation / Signs of stress

Signs/ Manifestation of stress	Level of Agreement Frequency (%)					Total
	Non Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
I have frequent headaches	5(2.8)	6(3.3)	38(21.1)	87(48.3)	44(24.4)	180(100)
I feel anxious/depressed	11(6.1)	22(12.2)	118(65.6)	23(12.8)	6(3.3)	180(100)
I sweat profusely	30(16.7)	17(9.4)	111(61.7)	15(8.3)	7(3.9)	180(100)
I have frequent fatigues	11(6.1)	3(1.7)	26(14.4)	91(50.6)	49(27.2)	180(100)
I have sleepless night	14(7.8)	20(11.1)	118(65.6)	21(11.7)	7(3.9)	180(100)
I have mood swings	11(6.1)	21(11.7)	86(47.8)	55(30.6)	7(3.9)	180(100)
I eat too much	17(9.4)	33(18.3)	116(64.4)	9(5.0)	5(2.8)	180(100)
I lose appetite	16(8.9)	32(17.8)	107(59.4)	20(11.1)	5(2.8)	180(100)

Source:Fieldwork,(2021)

Factors that lead to stress in the Oil Marketing Companies

According to the results from the field surveys, employees were finding it a bit challenging dealing with the stressors that cause them stress due to the fact that they think the factors are not only work-related but only non-work-related stressors. This affirms the study conducted by from Blaug, Kenyonand & Lekhi (2007), who found that many events that happen at the workplace has the potential to contribute to stress. Some of which can be said to be directly not related to work.

To this effect, ten close-ended items were used to extract information on the factors that cause stress at the Oil Marketing Companies (retail outlets). The data collected from the field sought to examine the views of the respondents. Table 9 depicts the responses of respondents concerning the factors / stressors that cause stress at the OMC's (retail outlets).

From Table 9, (65.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that, they work for longer hours, and on long shifts, while (30.0%) disagreed to the same statement. They explained further that they normally work for twenty-four hours before changing shifts. These long hours indeed bring about stress at the workplace. Graham (2010) is of the view that long working hours always have a toll on an individual. It makes people more vulnerable to stress, anxiety and depression. The findings also support WHO (2021), who asserted that long working hours has the potential of causing stroke and heart diseases because the individual has to focus on a particular work for long. Hence, the individual exerts or puts forth more stress on the mind.

Again, the majority of the respondents (65.5%) agreed that job insecurity also brings about stress. Job insecurity is one of the many factors that put some form of stress on employees in the working place. This is because when people do not really know what the future holds for them, it sometimes becomes unnerving and this creates some form of fears into them. The findings are consistent with the views of Hansen and Hilgenfeld (2013), who found that certain working conditions are inherently stress-inducing such as fear of losing the job (job insecurity). The American Institute of Stress (2018), also gave an indication that workplace stress is on the rise and one major cause is job insecurity. They further found that this endangers future efforts of an individual. The Health and Balance Guide (2020) is of the view that being insecure about your job, or about your chance for advancement or about the risk of termination has the tendency to create unnecessary pressure on the individual's mind which can lead to serious health problems.

As illustrated from Table 9, most of the employees from the retail outlets agreed that their work is demanding and challenging. They indicated that it is a major factor that increases the stress levels at the workplace because workers hardly have time to sit, they are compelled to stand for longer hours. Preliminary surveys revealed that workers have no choice to complain about the working systems designed by the organisation. As evident from the Table, (47.8%) of the respondents agreed whiles (47.3%) also disagreed to the same statement. This finding confirms the research carried out by Graham (2010), who found that challenging and demanding jobs have physical effects on the workers because the demand exceeds the individual's coping ability and sometimes cut off his/her psychological equilibrium. Subsequently, Zahra et

al. (2018) found that work demands are stressors that sometimes lead to stress reactions. When these demands and conditions of work go beyond one's control, they become threatening to the individual's health. Hence, there is the need to properly address the issue concerning stress at the workplace.

Moreover, excessive noise was another factor the employees in the retail outlets agreed to be the cause of stress at the workplace. This can be observed from Table 9 where (46.6%) of the respondents agreed to the statement while (44.5%) of respondents disagreed to the same statement. The above finding indicated that excessive noise is a possible cause for stress at the retail outlets and it is in conformity with The Health and Balance Guide (2020). They found that noise is one of the environmental factors that contribute to stress at work. They further noted that the environment can bombard people with intense situations. This could be pollution, temperature (heat or cold) and noise. Employees from the retail outlets were of the view that, sometimes where the outlets are situated are not conducive for working and this increases the stress levels of workers.

Again, regarding the factors that cause stress at the downstream, majority of the respondents agreed that their work is mostly routine and monotonous. This is evident in Table 9, (73.3%) agreed to the statement. This finding is consistent with the research that was conducted by Zahra et al (2018), who asserted that an employee's behaviour and their stress level can be related to doing the same work over and over again. They further indicated that monotonous work without any form of motivation bring about boredom which causes distress, which decreases in organizational performance. The finding is also consisting with that of Tocino-Smith (2020), who is of the view

that monotonous and routine work is a unique job stressor that affects the employees' health and their level of satisfaction because it brings about apathy, impaired attention and finally boredom.

Again, Table 9 reveals that the majority of the respondents (80.0%) disagreed to the statement that poor safety measures act as a stressor. The finding is inconsistent with the research conducted by the World Health Organization (2021), which found that people may have stress due to the poor work organisation thus the way the job and work systems are designed. For instance, lack of control over work processes, poor management and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors (WHO, 2021).

Finally, the responses from the respondents concerning the issue of whether poor relation with co-workers brings about stress at the retail outlets, most of them disagreed (78.9%), only (7.8%) agreed. The above findings are inconsistent with Nordzro (2017), whose research found out that employees hardly suffer stress due to the friction or anger between co-workers. The study further indicated that friction was the major cause of stress among employees.

Table 8: Respondents' views on factors that cause stress

Factors that cause stress	Level of Agreement Frequency (%)					Total
	Non Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Poor safety measures	12(6.7)	13(7.2)	131(72.8)	14(7.8)	10(5.6)	180(100)
Excessive noise	16(8.9)	5(2.8)	75(41.7)	62(34.4)	22(12.2)	180(100)
Bad workplace conditions	13(7.2)	6(3.3)	117(65)	35(19.4)	9(5)	180(100)
Challenging and demanding job	9(5)	1(0.6)	84(46.7)	59(32.8)	27(15)	180(100)
Routine and monotonous work	10(5.6)	5(2.8)	33(18.3)	117(65)	15(8.3)	180(100)
Too much work load	9(5)	0	121(67.2)	34(18.9)	16(8.9)	180(100)
Long shifts / working hours	1(0.6)	2(1.1)	11(6.1)	48(26.7)	118(65.6)	180(100)
Job insecurity	8(4.4)	6(3.3)	48(26.7)	92(51.1)	26(14.4)	180(100)

Source: Fieldwork, (2021)

Effects of stress on employees in the Oil Marketing Companies

Basically, stress has effects on workers and the organisation as a whole. Effects of stress are often shown in the various signs and behaviours. Sometimes it can be physical, emotional, psychological and behavioural as well. In view of this, the third research objective sought to assess the effect stress has on the employees in the downstream oil and gas sector.

Regarding the issue of whether stress affects the concentration level of employees at the workplace, (42.3%) of the respondents agreed to the statement while (52.8%) disagreed to the same statement. Thus, to some extent although workers experienced stress but it does not really affect their attentiveness. Moreover, the workers do not experience burnout, they are able to carry out their duties. The finding is consistent with the assertion of American Psychological Association (2018), that stress causes workers to have low concentration on their jobs. This sometimes makes them less attentive at the workplace.

To further probe into the effects of stress on employees, the respondents were asked if their performance level is affected when they become stressed. Majority (62.8%) agreed to the fact that their performance level at work was low due to stress. This finding supports the study conducted by Celik, (2018), who asserted that stress has negative effect on workers' performance as well as their health. The study further indicated that higher levels of stress brought about higher levels of dissatisfaction from workers, hence their work output was low.

It can again be seen from Table 10 that majority of the respondents (55.6%) agreed to the statement that they withdraw from friends and family

whilst (40.6%) disagreed. This indicated that high levels of stress affect the relationship between individuals. This result supports the research conducted by Musyoka (2019), who found that stress has an impact on how individuals behave. The research indicated that behavioural symptoms of stress are mostly anti-social and this has the potential to cause the decline in the quality of relationships with families, friends, and sometimes co-workers. He further stated some examples as procrastination or neglecting responsibilities, eating disorders and sleeping disorders.

The findings also support the study conducted by Jeanne, Melinda and Lawrence (2010), who asserted that stress has a negative effect on the emotional health of workers. They further indicated that when the stress level of individuals increases, they turn to have memory problems and poor senses of judgement which causes them to isolate from people.

Furthermore, from Table 10, majority (70.0%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement of whether stress makes them become impatient with customers, only (22.6%) of the respondents agreed. This reveals that though there is a piece of evidence that stress existed in the retail outlets, it does not have a toll on the workers attitude towards their customers and also it does not stop them from going to work. The finding is inconsistent with Musyoka (2019), who found that the people who become easily angry and impatient are in a constant state of stress. Musyoka is of the view that their body reacts to the hormones called adrenaline, which triggers the body to respond to stressful situations.

Based on the findings, it can be established that, workers from the oil marketing companies (retail outlets) mostly have physical and behavioural effects when their stress levels increase.



Table 9: Respondents' views on effects of stress

Effects of stress	Level of Agreement Frequency (%)					Total
	Non Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
I loose concentration	9(5)	4(2.2)	91(50.6)	64(35.6)	12(6.7)	180(100)
I absent myself frequently from work	18(10)	21(11.7)	129(71.7)	11(6.1)	1(0.6)	180(100)
I am not able to meet deadlines	13(7.2)	10(5.6)	136(75.6)	18(10)	3(1.7)	180(100)
My performance at work is low	7(3.9)	17(9.4)	43(23.9)	104(57.8)	9(5.0)	180(100)
I withdraw from friends and family	7(3.9)	18(10)	55(30.6)	84(46.7)	16(8.9)	180(100)
Stress affect my emotional health	16(8.9)	11(6.1)	105(58.3)	40(22.2)	8(4.4)	180(100)
I become impatient with customers	15(8.3)	28(15.6)	98(54.4)	33(18.3)	6(3.3)	180(100)
I become absent-minded and easily forget	15(8.3)	23(12.8)	105(58.3)	25(13.9)	12(6.7)	180(100)

Source:Fieldwork,(2021)

Coping strategies adopted by employees in the Oil Marketing Companies

Generally, coping comes about or occurs in a context of life changes that perceived an activity to be stressful. Strategies for coping involve the adjustment to or tolerating of the negative events while you try to keep your positive self-image (Cleveland Clinic Medical Professional (CCMP), 2015). In a bid to examine the views of the respondents, frequencies and percentages were used to present their responses base on a four-point Likert scale, thus Never, Once in a while, Sometimes and Most of the time.

From Table 11, it can be seen that the majority (45.0%) of the respondents affirmed the fact that they intimately talk to their partners when they are stressed while (40%) of respondents indicated that they sometimes talk to their partners. This indicated that intimate relationship has a way of soothing the stress levels of people. The above field result is consistent with the research conducted by Musyoka (2019), who found out that most workers that talk to their spouses when stressed received some form of support. When their partners empathize and sympathize with them, it makes them feel loved.

Again, the results from Table 11 indicate that the majority (85%) of the respondents never talk to a counsellor when they are stressed. The finding is not consistent with the study conducted by the America Institute of Stress (2018). They were of the view that most workers talk with trusted therapists or doctors in order to learn how to manage their stress and become better people in the future.

Again, about two-thirds (66.1%) of the respondents asserted their agreement to listening to music and relaxing when they feel stressed, (28.3%) of the respondents affirmed sometimes and (5.0%) of the respondents affirmed

once in a long while with same statement. This finding above is consistent with Scott (2019), who found that listening to music is a wonderful act of reducing and coping with stress. He stated that listening to music is a form of meditation which heals the soul and calms the tension in our nerves down.

Further, Table 11 reveals that (56.1%) of respondents affirmed that they sometimes talk to someone about their situations when they feel stressed. (26.7%) affirmed once in a while, only (5%) asserted most of the time to the same issue. The finding is consistent with Dreher (2019), who found that verbalizing our negative thoughts and feelings to friends and families is a great source of relieving people of their stress levels. This helps them to feel better.

Also, majority (64.4%) of respondents affirmed they never resort balancing their diet when they become stressed. However, (9.4%) indicated once in a while and (20.0%) indicated sometimes. This finding is inconsistent with Scott (2019), who found that an individual can adopt long term habits such as changing their diets and regular exercising to keep the body in shape and also for the organs to function properly. The study further showed the significance of maintaining a healthy diet so that the body will be fuelled well and help with overall stress levels.

Further, Table 11 shows most of the respondents (44.4%) affirmed never to exercising their bodies to reduce their stress levels. However, some of them (22.8%) asserted that they do it once in a long while, (20.6%) indicated sometimes, with only (12.2%) indicating most of the time. This finding is contrary to that of Scott (2019), which revealed that an individual can adopt long term habits such as regular exercising to keep the body in shape and reduce stress

Table 10: Respondents' views on stress coping mechanism

Stress coping mechanism	Level of Agreement Frequency (%)				Total
	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Most of the time	
I talk to a counsellor	153(85)	19(10.6)	7(3.9)	1(0.6)	180(100)
I try to balance my diet	116(64.4)	17(9.4)	36(20)	11(6.1)	180(100)
I talk to my pastor/ priest	140(77.8)	23(12.8)	12(6.7)	5(2.8)	180(100)
I listen to music and relax	1(0.6)	9(5)	51(28.3)	119(66.1)	180(100)
I intimately talk to my partner	10(5.6)	17(9.4)	72(40)	81(45)	180(100)
I read my bible/ Quran	87(48.3)	45(25)	40(22.2)	8(4.4)	180(100)
I talk to someone about my situation	22(12.2)	48(26.7)	101(56.1)	9(5)	180(100)
I do exercise my body	80(44.4)	41(22.8)	37(20.6)	22(12.2)	180(100)
I take alcoholic beverage	119(66.1)	44(24.4)	13(7.2)	4(2.2)	180(100)
I pray	115(63.9)	10(5.6)	26(14.4)	29(16.1)	180(100)

Source:Fieldwork,(2021)

Strategies put in place by management to manage the stress in the Oil Marketing Companies

When it comes to keeping safe and maintaining a positive outcome in a very stressful environment, a healthy workplace environment is ideal (Heryati, 2019). Moreover, excessive stress can have a negative impact on the employees in an organisation thus affecting them either physical or emotional or co-worker relationships. Hence, good management must be aware of such situations so that they take initiatives to assist their team members by researching ways to manage workplace stress. To further probe in the stress management at the downstream, the study sought to explore the strategies put in place at the workplace to manage stress in the oil marketing companies. Frequencies and percentages were used to present their responses base on a four-point Likert scale, thus Never, Once in a while, Sometimes and Most of the time. The results are presented in Table 12.

According to the survey results, workers expressed that management found it difficult in putting better measures to mitigate the stress in the retail outlets. Workers are also not able to effectively communicate their issues to management because they feel management would not address them. They were of the view that management hardly attend to their needs.

From Table 12, majority of the respondent disagree with whether management organises stress management seminars for workers. For example (83.3%) of the respondents indicated never, (6.1%) indicated once in a while, (7.8%) asserted sometimes, only (2.8%) affirmed most of the time to the same issue.

The Table 12 shows that quite a number of respondents expressed their agreement to whether workers talk to supervisors and or managers as a measure put in place at the working environment to manage stress. Thus (63.9%) of the respondents affirmed once in a while, (21.1%) of the respondents indicated most of the time, with (6.7%) of the respondents affirming sometimes, whilst (8.3 %) indicated never. The finding supports Dreher (2019), who is of the view that talking to supervisors or people in authority has the potential of making the individual with stress find some solution to their problems. She further stated that indicated talking about your problems can help suppress the stress feelings and bring the individual back on his or her feet.

Regarding the statement of whether management provide counselling session for workers when they perceived them to be stressed, majority of the respondents (85%) indicated never, (3.9%) affirmed once in a while, (7.8%) affirmed sometimes, whilst (3.3%) indicated most of the time. This finding is inconsistent with Dreher (2019), who found that counselling sessions help people who have high levels of stress to release pent up feelings that may cause some form of embarrassment.

On the issue of whether management promotes social activity as a stress management tool for workers yielded a negative response for the respondents. Majority of the respondents (81.3%) stated never, (5%) affirmed once in a while, (12.8%) affirmed sometimes. The above finding does not support Nordzro's (2017) study, which found that recreation and physical activities have the potential to alleviate stress. Furthermore, based on the findings from Table 12, majority of the respondents (77.2%) revealed

management never advocate for workplace wellness with only (2.2%) affirmed most of the time to the statement. The finding is inconsistent with Dreher (2019), who is of the view that management incorporating wellness programmes at the workplace help to encourage employees to have positive health behaviours. This increases the efficiency of employees' work output.

From Table 12, (18.3%) of the respondents indicated most of the time to the statement that management offers pay off times, (30%) affirmed once in a long while, and (48.9%) of the respondents affirmed never to the same statement. Generally, workers are permitted to have some form of rest by taking their annual leave because they have the right to enjoy it without any interruption or deduction in their basic pay. They further stated that workers also have the right to take some days off their busy schedule to rest aside the main annual leave (Paille, 2011).

Finally, (10%) of the respondents indicated that for most of the time they have flexible working hours, (63.3%) said once in a while, whilst (24.4%) indicated never to the same issue.

Table 11: Respondents' views on strategies put in place at the work place to manage stress

Strategies put in place at the work place	Level of Agreement Frequency (%)				Total
	Never	Sometimes	Once in a while	Most of the time	
Management organizes stress management seminar for workers	150(83.3)	11(6.1)	14(7.8)	5(2.8)	180(100)
Workers talk to supervisors / managers about their challenges	15(8.3)	12(6.7)	115(63.9)	38(21.1)	180(100)
Management provides counselling programs	153(85)	14(7.8)	7(3.9)	6(3.3)	180(100)
Management promotes social activity to release stress	147(81.7)	23(12.8)	9(5)	1(0.6)	180(100)
Management put in place vacation packages for workers	157(87.2)	9(5)	11(6.1)	3(1.7)	180(100)
Management advocate for workplace wellness	139(77.2)	18(10)	19(10.6)	4(2.2)	180(100)
Management offer pay off time	88(48.9)	5(2.8)	54(30)	33(18.3)	180(100)
Workers have flexible working hours	44(24.4)	4(2.2)	114(63.3)	18(10)	180(100)

Source:Fieldwork,(2021)

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the summary, conclusion and recommendations for the study. The summary presents a succinct overview of the study which covers the research objectives, methods and findings of the study while the conclusions deal with the overall outcomes regarding the findings from the field based on the research objectives formulated. Then finally, the recommendations present specific remedies to be implemented by the retail outlets in the downstream oil and gas sector. This chapter also presents suggestions for future study.

Summary of the Study

The study assessed stress and stress management among employees in the downstream oil and gas sector in Accra, Ghana. In the beginning, chapter one introduces the study. It sought to assess the nature of how stress manifests among the employees in oil marketing companies. It further sought to assess the factors /stressors that lead to the stress, then examined the effects stress has on the employees at the oil marketing companies, specifically the retail outlets. Lastly, the study sought to explore the coping strategies adopted by employees and then the strategies put in place at the workplace to mitigate the stress at the oil marketing companies. Works from scholars were reviewed from existing literature. The study tried to establish how stress comes about and the various factors that bring about the stress. Again, it established the effects an individual is likely to experience when the stress level is high.

An intensive review was carried out on the theoretical underpinnings of stress and how to manage the stress in order not to cause burnout. The person-environmental fit theory and the job-demand-control-support (JDCS) model were also reviewed. The survey technique was adopted for the study because this enabled the researcher to find out, learn, and then determine the respondents' perceptions of the current and trending practices and or issues for a better description of the phenomenon under study.

The target population for the study included managers, supervisors, attendants and lube men of the various Oil Marketing Companies (retail outlets) found within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Census was used as the research method to determine the sample for this study. Scientifically, the census was chosen for the research because it provided detailed information on the population under study. Out of the total sample size of 213 participants located in the Accra Metropolitan Area, 180 of them were willing to participate in the research. The study adopted mainly the closed-ended questionnaire as an instrument for data collection.

Based on the knowledge of the literature review and the objectives for the study, the research instrument was designed with the assistance of the supervisor. The questionnaire which was made up of a four-point and five-point Likert Scale was used. It consisted of five sections and was then administered personally and after the content was explained to the participants. The statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was employed to analyse the data.

Summary of key Findings

Generally, the study found that stress existed in the oil marketing companies and that, the manifestations of stress experienced by the employees are physiological and behavioural. Although stress existed among employees in the retail outlets, employees have challenges in trying to manage it themselves because they have less knowledge concerning coping strategies. The study also indicated that though the employees are at different working levels and have different responsibilities in the same working conditions, their responses to the stress effects were different. Also, the majority of the employees in the oil marketing companies were mostly males. The study found that most employees fall within the age range of 20 - 29 years. This implies that workers were mostly young adults. Field surveys and observations carried out revealed that employees hardly stay at one retail outlet for long due to the poor organizational working systems put in place by management.

Concerning the first research objective which assessed the nature of stress among employees in oil marketing companies, the following key findings emerged:

The study found that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that they have frequent fatigue at the retail outlets. The study further found that respondents agreed they have frequent headaches when they are stressed. A good number of employees affirmed that they have mood swings when stressed.

The second research objective sought to assess the factors that contribute to stress in oil marketing companies. The following key findings emerged from the study:

Most employees admitted they work for long hours, and / or do long shifts.

The study further found that they normally work for twenty-four hours before changing shifts. These long hours indeed bring about stress in the workplace which workers are not able to voice to management.

Job insecurity was another factor most employees affirmed to cause stress at the workplace. Most of the workers have issues that they are not able to communicate to management because they are afraid to lose their jobs.

Most employees agreed that challenging and demanding jobs was another major factor that causes stress in the workplace.

Again, the majority of the employees agreed that excessive noise was a factor that brought about stress at the oil marketing companies.

Furthermore, several employees agreed that too much workload was another factor that caused stress at the workplace. Finally, most employees agreed to routine and monotonous work as a stressor that brought about stress in Oil Marketing Companies.

The third research objective sought to find out the effects of stress on the employees in the Oil Marketing Companies. The respondents admitted that every working environment has some degree of stress and that the effects of the stress are behavioural and physical. The following key findings emerged from the study:

The majority of the respondents agreed that they lose concentration when their stress level goes up. Furthermore, most respondents agreed that they sometimes withdraw from their family and friends, thus they normally want to be left alone for a while till they recover from their stress.

Sometimes stress management at the workplace can be effective and this can be handled by the employees themselves. To this, research objective four sought to explore the coping strategies adopted by the employees in managing stress at the oil marketing companies. The following key findings were discovered:

The study found that the majority of employees affirmed the fact that they talk to someone about their situations when they feel stressed.

Again, the majority of the employees asserted their agreement to listening to music and relaxing when they are stressed. They further indicated that sometimes they listen to motivational messages too and these help them feel better. The study again found that most respondents affirmed that they sometimes talk to someone about their situations when they feel stressed.

The final research objective sought to explore the strategies put in place by management to manage stress in the OMCs. The following summary were made:

The majority of the employees at the OMCs indicated that most of the time they have flexible working hours. Subsequently, quite many employees admitted that workers talk to supervisors and or managers as a measure put in place in the working environment to manage stress. Finally, the responses

from the employees indicated that workers have paid off times. Thus, management gives them some days off to rest.

Conclusion

Based on the key findings of the study, the following conclusion have been drawn:

The nature of stress among employees in the oil marketing companies included frequent fatigue, headaches and mood swings. This finding implies that the employees may exhibit some form of negative behaviour in the form of frequent accidents, poor performance, low productivity, low morale, increased in complaints and increased ill-health. This also implies that employees may absent themselves to visit the hospitals for check-ups on regular basis. These negative consequences have the tendency to affect their job performance in the long term.

Among the factors that bring about stress in the oil marketing company are job insecurity, longer working hours, challenging and demanding work and excessive noise. This finding means that employees who perceived job insecurity and longer working hours will experience high levels of stress and may tend to have lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment and higher levels of intention to leave the organization.

The employees of the oil marketing company tend to talk to someone about their stressful situation and listen to music as a form of managing the stress at work. This finding implies that the stress management technique employed by the workers will aid break the hold stress has on their lives and enable the employees have a happier, healthier and more productive life at work.

The various stress management techniques adopted by the employees in the oil marketing companies may bring about healthier employees. Healthier employees operating under manageable levels of stress will be happier and more positive, helping to maintain a strong, healthy workplace culture that is conducive to creativity and productivity.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn, the study makes the following recommendations:

The oil marketing companies as a matter of urgency should institute regular or routine medical check-ups for their employees to help curb the frequent fatigue, headaches and mood swings that workers suffer as a result of work-related stress.

The oil marketing companies should reduce the long working hours of employees and further provide some form of job security or assurance to employees so as to reduce anxiety which brings about the stress.

The oil marketing companies should institute some form of vacation, holidays, provide counselling service to help employees deal with stress at work.

The management of the oil marketing companies should try and advocate for workplace wellness and / or promote social activity such as organizing fun games to release stress and boost employees' health.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Stress is often an integral part of life hence; it is recommended that there must be ongoing research carried out to establish the relationship between job stress and turnover intention in the downstream sector within the

Accra Metropolis. Again, research should be carried out to examine the effect of stress management has on individual relationships.



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APPENDIX A**QUESTIONNAIRE ON STRESS MANAGEMENT**

This survey is to explore the stress management among employees in the downstream oil and gas sector within the Accra Metropolitan Area. The exercise is solely for academic work, as part of the requirement for the award of a Master of Philosophy in Oil and Gas Resource Management in the University of Cape Coast. Please be assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Any information you submit will be only used for academic purpose and not any other motive. I shall be grateful if you could spare some few minutes to answer the questions below.

Section 1: Personal Information on Respondents

Gender:

- a) Male
- b) Female

1. How old are you?

- a) less than 20 years
- b) 20 – 29
- c) 30 – 39
- d) 40 – 49
- e) 50 – 59
- f) 60 and above

2. Level of Education:

- a) MSL/JHS
- b) O' or 'A' Level / SSSCE
- c) Diploma
- d) Graduate
- e) Post Graduate
- f) Other Specify

3. What is your level of position?

- a) Manager

- b) Supervisor
 - c) Attendant
 - d) Other (specify).....
4. What is your marital status?
- a) Married
 - b) Single
 - c) Other (specify).....
5. Number of Children (If any)
6. How many years of work experience do you have?
- a) 1-5 years
 - b) 6-10 years
 - c) 11-15 years
 - d) 16-20 years
 - e) Above 20 years

Section 2: General information on stress

7. Have you ever heard about stress?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
8. Through which medium did you hear it from?
- a) News paper
 - b) Radio
 - c) Tv
 - d) Other specify.....
9. Does your job make you feel stressed?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
10. Categorized the stress you experience into a “good stress” or “bad stress”?
- a) Good
 - b) Bad
11. How often do you have time to rest?
- a) Most of the time
 - b) Always
 - c) Once in a while

d) Never

Section 3: Stress Manifestation/Signs

Signs of stress of stress	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
12. I have frequent headaches					
13. I feel anxious/depressed					
14. I sweat profusely					
15. I have frequent fatigues					
16. I have sleepless night					
17. I have mood swings					
18. I eat too much					
19. I lose appetite					

Please select, by ticking, your level of agreement with the following statements

Section 4: Stressors/Factors that cause stress

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Causes of stress	Strongly Agree	Agree	disagree	Strongly disagree	Not Applicable
20. Poor safety measures					
21. Excessive noise					
22. Bad workplace conditions					
23. Challenging and demanding job					

24. Routine and monotonous work					
25. Too much work load					
26. Long shifts / working hours					
27. Job insecurity					
28. Personal health problems					
29. Poor relation with co-workers					

Section 5: Effects of stress

Indicate your level of agreement to the following statements

Effects of stress	Strongly agree	agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
30. I lose concentration					
31. I absent myself frequently from work					
32. I am not able to meet deadlines					
33. My performance at work is low					
34. I withdraw from friends and family					
35. Stress affects my emotional health					
36. I become impatient with customers					
37. I become absent-minded and easily forget					

Section 6: Stress coping mechanism

Indicate your response to the following statements

	Most of the time	Sometimes	Once in a while	Never
38. I talk to a counsellor				
39. I try to balance my diet				
40. I talk to my pastor/ priest				
41. I listen to music and relax				
42. I intimately talk to my partner				
43. I read my bible/ Quran				
44. I talk to someone about my situation				
45. I do exercise my body				
46. I take alcoholic beverage				
47. I pray				

Strategies at work place	Most of the time	Sometimes	Once in a while	Never
48. Management organizes stress management seminar for workers				
49. Workers talk to supervisors / managers about their challenges				
50. Management provides counselling programs				
51. Management promotes social activity to release stress				
52. Management put in place vacation packages for workers				
53. Management advocate for workplace wellness				
54. Management offer pay off time				
55. Workers have flexible working hours				

Section 7: Strategies put in place at the work place to manage stress

Indicate your response to the following statements

