UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

WORK-STRESS AND ITS MANAGEMENT AMONG SENIOR STAFF OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

BY

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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: ……………………

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Supervisor's Declaration

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

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of job stress among academic and general staff of universities across the globe is increasing as a result of remarkable organizational changes taking place in recent times. The University of Cape Coast, in its quest to strive for academic excellence has made performance expectations higher which the staff must contend with. It was alerted by the University management that, some staff hardly go on leave and so, casual leave had become rampant among them. This study was conducted to investigate whether job stress was prevalent among the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. It focused on factors responsible for stress, symptoms, gender difference and coping strategies of the stress phenomenon.

Stratified random sampling was used to select 242 respondents. However, a total of 208 senior staff (122 males and 86 females) responded to the questionnaire. Sixteen interviewees selected randomly (12 Heads of Departments, 2 doctors and 2 counselors of the University) also participated in the study. The instrument for data collection involved a questionnaire and an interview guide.

The study discovered that respondents experienced both physiological and psychological symptoms of stress. Findings from the study indicate that respondents reported high levels of stress on interpersonal and environmental stressors. It was also evident that workload, lack of recognition for good effort, and inadequate opportunities for career development were prominent stressors among the respondents. However, there was no significant gender difference in relation to stress among the respondents. Basically, respondents adopted problem-focused and emotion-focused coping skills in the management of stress. The study therefore recommended among others that stress management interventions should be increased and taking of annual leave enforced.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother who encouraged me to pursue higher education. I also dedicate it to my lovely family for their well wishes.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Today's society is increasingly hectic with pressing deadlines to meet goals to achieve a work life balance. It can often be a challenge and indeed stressful to fulfill all our responsibilities. We head off to work each morning, knowing that the world is changing hour by hour and wondering how this will play out in our daily lives. We all experience pressure at one point in time both at home and the workplace.

Pressure gives birth to stress which has become an integral part of organizational life. It strikes all levels of workers. In fact, nearly everyone feels its presence and few can fully escape it. To Posen (1995), it is the most common cause of ill- health in our society, probably underlying as many as 70% of all visits to family doctors.

Indeed, the world of work is changing rapidly. Figuratively speaking, the globe is shrinking in almost every conceivable way. In response, workers undergo a lot of stress as they try to maneuver the difficult terrain of today's complex business environment. Worldwide work- related stress is growing, exacerbated by the sense that hard work is the only way to sustain jobs.

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Corporations tend to see stress as an individually based problem that is rooted in an employee's lifestyle, psychological make up and personality whereas unions also view stress as the result of excessive demands, poor supervision or even conflicting demands. Of course the best definition probably includes both sets of factors (Goetsch, 1999).

Stress is normal and can be good for a person (therapeutic). Ivancevich (2001) asserts that stress is good when it helps a person complete a report on time or generates a good, quick problem-solving procedure. Many people find a mild degree of pressure stimulating and they often report that it seems to make them more alert, attentive and clear thinking, so that they can function better (Rollinson, 2005).

George and Jones (1996) also admit that stress energizes the worker to try to reach the goal. They explain that the stress that most students experience as exams approach is positive because it propels the students to study. In Griffin's (2005) view, stress is not all bad because in the absence of it, we may experience lethargy and stagnation. Thus, without challenges and pressures, work would lack sparkle. While the argument can be made that some stress is healthy in motivating us and adding the needed pressure to get things done, there is no arguing the fact that excessive and prolonged stress generally becomes quite negative.

Kinard (1988) maintains that while stress can have positive effects, too much of it may result in a psychological or physiological imbalance within the individual. Similarly, Parker (1998) also points out that although some degree of workplace stress motivates and energizes work productivity and many believe that

a moderate amount of stress produces high levels of personal productivity, too much stress can also produce lower productivity, lead to burn-out or collapse of a person and an inability to work. Thus, occupational stress can either be functional (eustress) or dysfunctional (distress).

From a psychological perspective, prolonged stress can impair concentration, memory, sleep, appetite, mood, motivation and the ability to relate to others (Rue & Byards, 2000; Hunsaker, 2005). Also, increased absenteeism, mistakes on the job and job turnover are stress manifestations which affect individuals.

Since the effects of occupational stress are quite extensive, Rue and Byards (2000) as well as Noe and Wright (1996) assert that many large organizations and a growing number of smaller ones are attempting to help employees with stress, burnout and other personal problems including depression, anxiety, domestic trauma, financial problems and other psychiatric /medical problems. They explain that this help is generally offered in the form of Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), counseling services and wellness programmes, all geared toward enhancing employee well-being. The programmes include periodic medical exams, education on improved dietary practices, weight control, exercise and fitness, hypertension detection and control as well as immunizations and cardiopulmonary resuscitation training. Harris (2000) believes that such programmes can help cut employer health costs, lower absenteeism and job turnover in organizations. Additionally, he claims that such programmes have

been found to be cost- effective alternative to other treatment sources that employees might use.

Indeed, much of today's stress-related illness worldwide is the result of excessive demands placed on employees due to a number of challenges confronting both public and private sector organizations. In many respects, higher education is no different from other large organizations. They are society's premier knowledge-generating organizations. According to Sawyerr (2002), there is evidence to suggest that the sector is undergoing unprecedented changes and is confronted with multiple challenges both old and new. The challenges are daunting – access, funding, expansion, quality assurance, curriculum relevance, political intervention and poor working conditions. While academic systems function in a national environment, these challenges play themselves out on a global scale, making the sector become an exceedingly complex enterprise in recent times. This complexity requires a high degree of competence and proven scholarship from the university academic staff in particular and the entire staff in general.

Academic life is more difficult than most anticipate because the responsibilities are time-consuming, diverse and sometimes conflicting. Don, Luana and Shelley (2006) are of the view that university staff do complex work in an increasingly demanding environment. To Akinboye, Akinboye and Adeyemo (2002), the tasks which are labour-intensive and the institutional goals of high quality research and teaching may lead to job pressure. No wonder, Kinman

(2000) claims that little is known about the impact that the challenges might have had on the workforce.

It is clear that the stress phenomenon is now recognized as an issue that has grown in prominence and there is growing evidence that African universities and indeed universities everywhere no longer provide the low stress working environments they once did. It is not surprising that in 1992, the United Nations described job stress as the "twentieth century disease" (Akinboye, Akinboye & Adeyemo, 2002). It was reported that, over 70% of employees world-wide described their jobs as stressful. In corroboration of this scenario, Winfield (2000) indicated that the prevalence of occupational stress among academic and general staff of universities from across the globe is alarmingly widespread and increasing.

Similarly, Tytherliegh, Webb, Cooper and Rickets (2005) reveal that reports of stress at work in higher education institutions have also increased. For instance, national studies of university faculty in Britain (Bradley & Eachus, 1995) and Australia have documented high rates of job stress, which posed health risk to individuals and recruitment as well as retention problems for the universities. As concluded by Lowe (2005), several statistics Canada surveys confirm that knowledge-workers – the mainstay of a university – are the most stressed out members of the 21st Century workforce.

A major source of stress among university staff is the dramatic increase in student enrolment. Rapid increase in enrolment over the last few years has been a striking feature of higher education in Africa. As pointed out by Awopegba

(2001), there has been an astronomical increase in student enrolment without a corresponding increase in personnel. Amewudah (2005) claims that the democratization at the lower levels of the educational structure in the developing countries have resulted in huge expansion in enrolments which has now caught up with higher education.

In Ghana, the increases became pronounced following the Tertiary Education Reform in the early 1990s. For instance, in the University of Cape Coast, statistical evidence suggests that enrolments have risen sharply in recent years. A glance at students' statistics indicate that in 1999 /2000, the University recorded a student enrolment of 8,246. Three years later, in 2002/2003 enrolment increased to 11,637 students. However, in 2005/2006 enrolment went up by 17,090 (U.C.C Basic Statistics, 2007). This trend of rapid expansion in student numbers has created pressures on the academic staff and other categories of staff particularly, the senior staff of the University. Similarly, in response to technological advancements of modern society and the increased demand for high quality service, Sax, Astin, Korn and Gilmartin (1999) reported that such demands have yielded increased stress.

It is rather sad to note that the stress phenomenon has sometimes had 'elitist' overtones. This is because stress has traditionally been associated with executive and managerial occupations (Brummett, Pyle & Framholtz, 1968; Fincham & Rhodes, 1999). However, in point of fact, it has never been a "middle-class disease". People who constantly struggle to master a turbulent environment or a demanding task face an increased risk of depression, fatigue, recurring

headaches, tensed muscles, eyestrain, irritability, poor concentration and nervousness (Ferrell & Cherne, 2008). One such people is the senior staff of the University who need to adapt to work pressures as a result of the increasing number of students and frequent organizational changes.

A preliminary visit (by the researcher) to the academic section of the University for instance, painted a scenario of how the senior staff sometimes undergo pressure. The scenes of huge piles of application forms that needed to be sorted out, drafting of admission letters, volume of work to be typed, dealing with incoming/ outgoing correspondence, preparing list of applicants admitted to each faculty and notifying the faculties concerned, handling registration process, offering assistance to both students and lecturers among others are indeed stressful conditions the senior staff need to contend with. Sometimes, the pressure may require them to work beyond the normal working hours to meet pressing deadlines.

It is therefore not surprising that a circular issued from the Division of Human Resource (Circular: 120/SF6A/V.4/52) of the University of Cape Coast alerted that the University Management had observed that some staff hardly go on leave and so, some insist on taking casual leave in spite of their outstanding leave which sometimes runs into hundreds of days. This observation implies that some staff do not take their annual leave which is supposed to serve as a period of relaxation after which they resume work with a fresh perspective. Working for a long period of time without taking a break, exposes one to the harmful effects of stress.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that institutions of higher learning have undergone massive changes in recent years, probably raising the potential for increased stress. Since there has been a considerable acceleration in the pace of university life as well as changes in the nature of many higher education institutions of which the University of Cape Coast is no exception, it may not be surprising to find that work-related stress is a commonplace and perhaps most people experience it. It is therefore imperative to investigate whether the dramatic increase in student enrolment (for instance, 11,637 was recorded in 2002/2003 and by 2005/2006 enrolment went up to 17,090, U.C.C Basic Statistics, 2007), workloads of faculty (eg. introduction of new academic programmes), frequent organizational changes (eg. expansion and restructuring), increased expectations for measurable outputs, responsiveness to societal and student needs as well as performance accountability have indeed resulted in staff experiencing stress and the measures they adopt in coping with stress.

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of the study was to investigate whether there was stress among the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. The study further sought to lay bare factors or circumstances that created the stress and the coping strategies the senior staff adopted in managing stress.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1.   What are the symptoms of stress experienced by the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast?

2.   What are the causes of work-related stress encountered by the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast?

3.   How is gender related to stress among the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast?

4.   How do senior staff of the University of Cape Coast cope with stress?

Significance of the Study

A study of this nature will create awareness among the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast on the need to manage workplace stress so that their well-being and work output do not suffer the harmful effects of stress.

Findings from the study could also serve as eye-opener for Heads of Departments of the University since copies of the findings and recommendations would be made available to them through the Deans of the faculties. Specifically, the Deans may receive copies each, and would in turn make more copies for circulation among the Heads. Hopefully, this may give them an overview of potential stressors in their environments and how best to help avoid them.

Again, the findings may have implications for designing stress interventions such as wellness programmes or Employee Assistance programmes (EAPs) for staff by the Training and Development Section (T & D) of the

University of Cape Coast or collaborative effort between the Welfare Section and the Senior Staff Association.

The outcome of the study may also help the Documentation and Information Section of the University to invite tit-bits on stress management from experts (such as doctors and counselors) to be published in their weekly campus update called "This Week" for circulation among staff by way of education.

Above all, the current study will contribute to the body of research on occupational stress. It will provide valuable information for future use.

Delimitation

The entire workforce of the university is too large to be covered within a limited time frame, therefore the study focused on the senior staff category. It excludes both senior members and junior staff of the University.

This study is limited to work-related stressors. It does not cover stressors outside the work environment. In other words, non-work or home-interface stressors have not been dealt with in this study. This is so because the focus of the study is pitched on work-stress. Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1992) reveal that, it is a major challenge to deal with this kind of stressors. They explain that managers would not have the responsibility or be in a position to deal with employee's home life (personal affairs), even if problems there sometimes spill over into the workplace.

Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one provided a background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose, research questions, significance, delimitation of the scope of the study and definition of terms. Chapter two took a look at review of related literature.

The literature review was organized under the following headings: classical foundations, the concept of stress, theories of stress, sources, role-related pressures, symptoms, individual differences in stress, measurement of workplace stress, effects of stress in organizations, stress management techniques, some empirical studies and some challenges facing higher education institutions.

Chapter three described the methodology for the study. It covered research design, population, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis. Chapter four analyzed and discussed the findings of the study. Chapter five was devoted to summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions made for further studies.

Definition of Term

To put the writer and the reader on the same wavelength and to avoid quibbling, the following definition applies:

Senior staff –They are the middle level human resource group. They comprise all administrative assistants to chief administrative assistants, research assistants to chief research assistants, accounting assistants to chief accounting assistants, auditing assistants to chief auditing assistants, technicians to chief technicians, library assistants to chief library assistants and nursing officers to chief nursing officers.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter examines the classical foundations of the concept of stress. It highlights the theories of stress, causes and symptoms associated with stress. Individual differences in stress, gender and stress, measurement of workplace stress and effects of stress in organizations have also been discussed. Some stress management techniques, empirical evidence on stress in higher education as well as some challenges facing higher education have been explored. This chapter has been organized under the following headings:

(1)   Classical foundations

(2)   The concept of stress

(3)   Theories of stress

(4)   Sources of occupational stress

(5)   Role-related pressures

(6)   Symptoms of stress

(7)   Individual differences in stress

(8)   Gender and Stress

(9)   Measurement of workplace stress

(10)   Effects of stress in organizations

(11)   Stress management techniques

(12)   Empirical studies on job stress in higher education

(13)   Challenges facing higher education and stress.

Classical Foundations

Stress as a concept has been studied for almost one hundred years. Retrospectively, studies on stress could be traced within the field of medicine. It has been taken from physics where mechanical stress has been a long standing concept. In its physical context, it describes a strain, leading to distortion of an object. If the strain is excessive, the object breaks eventually.

Psychological stress draws on the physical analogy but the strain on human beings is seen as coming from life's pressures, boredom, over-work and threat (Price, 2004). According to Ross and Altmaier (1994), stress has been studied by many researchers over the years. For instance, in the 1860s, Claude Bernard proposed that, in spite of external changes, an individual's internal system should remain constant. Later, Cannon (1935) developed Bernard's concept into the idea of homeostasis which has relevance for stress when we think about ourselves as a system that balances specific resources with the demands imposed upon us.

Further studies were done by Wolf and Wolff (1943) on changes in stomach activity that accompanied various emotions. They distinguished between unconditional stresses which cause direct damage and conditional stresses whose effect is indirect and only cause harm because of some prior event. The conclusion was that, since stress is a dynamic state within an organism in

response to a demand for adaptation, and since life itself entails constant adaptation, living creatures are continually in a state of more or less stress.

Modern medicine's scientific study of psychosomatic diseases like asthma and ulcers which were later developed was the outcome of their research (Ross & Altmaier, 1994). For many years now, psychologists have taken keen interest in the study of stress. It is the recent recognition of this which has placed stress on the agenda as an issue with implications for business strategy and human resource policy.

The Concept of Stress

Stress is a complex issue. It is as old as humankind. Since there is a limit to the amount of pressure that the human body and mind can sustain, one may agree to some extent that this may be a rationale behind the Sabbath day (seventh day) God instituted for human beings to have a rest from the tedious work done throughout the week. Some psychologists believe that stress is perhaps the most common problem of everyday life. It is a subjective experience which is not necessarily easy to identify in another person and it is apparent that similar situations will produce entirely different reactions in different individuals (Price, 2004). This is illustrated by George and Jones (1996) that although it may be terrifying for some students to make a presentation in front of a class, others enjoy being in the spotlight and having a chance to display their knowledge and wit.

The concept of stress is very difficult to pin down in specific terms. Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1995) assert that there are experts who think of stress as the pressures in the world that produce emotional discomfort. Others feel

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that emotional discomfort refers to the stress that is caused by pressures or conditions called stressors. Yet others view it in terms of physiological or body reactions: blood pressure, heart rate or hormone levels. In spite of this, various definitions have been given by different authors.

Kinard (1988) sees stress as a person's physical, chemical or emotional response to tension or pressure in his or her environment. It occurs whenever environmental forces throw bodily or emotional functions out of balance.

Cole (2004) defines stress as the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in individuals as a result of their being unable to cope with the demands being made on them.

To Daft and Marcic (2004), stress is an individual's physiological and emotional response to stimuli that place physical or psychological demands on the individual and create uncertainty and lack of personal control when important outcomes are at stake. These stimuli, called stressors, produce some combination of frustration and anxiety. Robbins and De Cenzo (1998) observe that it can show itself in both positive and negative ways. They point out that stress is a force or influence one feels when one faces opportunities, constraints or demands that one perceives to be both uncertain and important. To them, constraints and demands can lead to potential stress.

In a similar perspective, Schermerhorn (1996) is also of the view that stress is a state of tension experienced by individuals facing extraordinary demands, constraints or opportunities.

Rue and Byards (2000) refer to stress as the mental and /or physical condition that results from a perceived threat of danger (physical or emotional) and the pressure to remove it. Bennet (1994) looks at stress as a wide collection of physical and psychological symptoms that result from difficulties experienced while attempting to adapt to an environment. He also agrees that stress has both good and bad features.

Getting down to basic definitions and concepts of stress, McShane and Von Glinow (2000) present stress as an adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person's well-being. They add that stress has both psychological and physiological dimensions.

Wagner and Hollenbeck (2002) describe stress as an unpleasant emotional state that results when someone is uncertain of his or her capacity to resolve a perceived challenge to an important value.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) maintain that stress is an "adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristic and /or psychological processes that is a consequence of any external action, situation, or event that places special physical and or psychological demands upon a person" (p.692).

From the definitions presented so far, it may be conveniently concluded that stress comes as a result of pressures or excessive demands faced by individuals which produce physical and psychological reactions of which the individual requires an adaptive response.

So far, the concept of stress has been considered in a general way but since the study is concerned with matters within organizations, it is necessary to

also sharpen the focus on workplace stress. Beer and Newman in Rollinson (2005) identify workplace stress as conditions arising from the interactions of people and their jobs which are characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. To Akinboye, Akinboye and Adeyemo (2002), occupational stress describes physical, mental and emotional wear and tear brought about by incongruence between the requirement of the job and the capabilities, resources and needs of the employee to cope with job demands.

From a similar perspective, Goetsch (1999) also says that workplace stress is primarily a matter of person-workload fit. It involves the emotional state resulting from a perceived difference between the level of occupational demand and a person's ability to cope with the demand. Usually, an environment that a worker finds to be stressful may generate feelings of tension, fatigue and anxiety.

Theories of Stress

The most widely regarded framework for conducting research on job stress has been person- environment (PE) fit theory (Edwards & Cooper, 1990; Spielberger & Vagg, 1999). The PE fit theory as formalized by several researchers (French & Caplan, 1972; Caplan &Harrison, 1982 and Harrison, 1978) assert that the interaction between an individual and his or her environment determines whether or not a situation is stressful for that person. If the fit between an individual and environment is incompatible, stress results. However, different distinctions relative to fit have been given. In the first place, it is usually between the individual and the environment. Secondly, it can be between objective

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representation and subjective representation where it is believed that stress can occur if there is a mismatch between the reality of the work environment (objective) and an individual's perceptions of the work environment (subjective). Thirdly, it can be between demands and abilities. That is, lack of fit between the demands placed on individuals and their abilities to meet those demands can result in stress.

Originally, Selye (1956), a pioneer in stress research was the first to document the stress experience fifty years ago (McShane & Von Glinow, 2000). Selye set out to determine whether exposure to unpleasant or noxious environmental conditions resulted in stimulus-specific responses or in a generalized response to all stimuli. Eventually, he developed a model of the body's stress reaction which he believed that, a person's response to stress followed a universal pattern irrespective of the external or internal demand on the body. This universal pattern is what he referred to as the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) which provides a physiological explanation of the way in which a state of stress arises and how this provides an automatic defense system to help people cope with environmental demands.

According to Rollinson (2005), the GAS describes a three-stage defense reaction to a stressor that:

1. is general because the reaction occurs to all stressors and affects several different parts of an organisms;

2. is adaptive because it involves stimulation of defence mechanisms which help the body adjust to or deal with the stressor;

3. is a syndrome because all three stages occur together or in a very close succession.

Selye developed the model into three stages, namely the alarm stage, the resistance stage and the exhaustion stage.

The alarm stage is triggered by a threatening event or situation and is a short -term reaction. McShane and Von Glinow (2000) state that this stage is the perception of a threatening or challenging situation which causes the brain to send a biochemical message to various parts of the body.

In Rollison's (2005) view, the person becomes aware of being subject to the effects of a stressor, which can be any environmental stimulus that has a disruptive effect on the individual. He explains that there is an initial reaction to this by which the body tries to meet the challenge and this sets up a non-specific response via the body's endocrine system.

Ross and Altmaier (1994) also point out that the body prepares itself for quick response which triggers a host of physical changes such as increased heart rate, blood pressure and a release of glucose to provide energy for action but does not initiate activity. So at this stage, the body is in a temporary retreat.

If the condition persists, the second stage (resistance) sets it. This is the chronic, moderate state of activation. To Ross and Altmaier (1994), there is continuing effort on the part of the individual to adapt or habituate to the stressor during this stage. McShane and Von Glinow (2000) state that the individual's ability to cope with environment demand rises above the normal state during the resistance stage since the body has activated to various biochemical,

psychological and behavioural mechanisms. Rollinson (2005) explains that, the adrenal glands secret their own hormones into the bloodstream and this triggers action in several organs. However, since the body has a definite capacity to adapt, resistance cannot continue indefinitely and so its adaptive energy becomes depleted. When the system is overloaded, it cannot cope with everything and this explains why stress is so often accompanied by physical illness. If there is prolonged exposure to the stressor the third stage of the process is entered.

The third stage is the exhaustion. Here the body's easily available resources are spent and in order to replenish its short-term store, the body shuts itself off from the stressful stimuli and the immune system is left susceptible to illness, fatigue and injury. Additionally, there are usually attendant physical effects such as mood changes, emotional problems and feelings of helplessness and these can be accompanied by significant behavioural changes including the clenching of hands, fidgeting and weak legs. Incidentally, since the long-term store also has finite reserves, any attempt to draw on it to replenish the short- term store tends to be a debt that can never be repaid and so a stressor can cause irreversible harm. Ross and Altmaier (1994) termed this stage as the collapse stage since the body cannot continue coping with stress indefinitely. Thus, the energy for continued adjustment becomes depleted and the individual becomes exhausted.

The three stages Selye developed describe the stress experience and give us a good picture at how damaging stress is on the body and how serious avoiding constructive coping mechanisms can be. Also, it must be noted that stress is

essentially an adaptive process, at least in the psychological sense. Unpleasant as it may be, the final stage should be viewed as the body protecting itself from even greater harm by shutting itself off from further exposure to the stressors.

Despite this, his theory has been criticized by researchers such as Arnold and Clifford Lazarus. To them, the levels of stress were influenced by the way in which people view their situation; hence stress was subjective (Melucci, 2004). Perhaps, both hold their truths, because people do deal with stress in different ways and this seems to have impact on the way the body is affected.

Similarly, Ross and Altmaier (1994) are also of the view that Selye's model was criticized on two main grounds. The first criticism was that, it was difficult to accept Selye's argument that every response to stress by every individual follows the GAS pattern. To them, studies have brought to light that the body's response to stress can change, depending on the stressor. The second criticism was that Selye's model which proposed the same response for each stressor, whether external or internal in nature should not be so because some stressors, especially those that are complex may create different responses from other responses. Therefore, the model may be inadequate to explain people's reactions to complex job conditions caused by many factors both external to workers and internal in the job environment.

Despite these criticisms, it must be acknowledged that Selye's model contributed to the advancement of the study of stress (concept) and the different stages stress progresses. He distinguished between harmful (distress) and beneficial stress (eustress). Again, Selye's discovery of the biochemical and

physiological pathways of stress response has been of immense significance. According to Daft (2003), his concern to find the psychological mediators of the response to stress has, for example, created the field of psychoneuro immunology, an interdisciplinary area of research which explores the varied and complex way the immune system reacts to stressors. His major contribution lay in his work in mapping out the physiological form of the stress response (Selye, 1956).

Apart from Selye's model, perhaps in recent years, one notable model in stress theory is the transactional model developed by Richard Lazarus. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed a model (cognitive appraisal) that emphasizes the transactional nature of stress. The model says that environments can influence people and that people can influence environments, hence stress is a two way process (Ross & Altmaier, 1994). By this, the environment produces stressors and the individual finds ways to deal with these.

The model is in two parts, namely primary and secondary appraisal. During the primary appraisal stage, a person will be seeking answers as to the meaning of a situation with regard to their well-being. A secondary appraisal is the individual's attempt to define what coping options are available for dealing with the harm, threat or challenge. Somehow, stress can occur without appraisal. For instance, it is difficult for people to make appraisals whilst in shock (eg. car accident) as their cognitive functioning is impaired.

If demands are greater than the resources to meet it, stress occurs. The stress models developed by the various theorists provide us with many valuable tools for understanding the nature of stress.

Sources of Occupational Stress

Job stress is a pervasive problem in our society. The workplace is riddled with many potential stressors which emanate from different directions. George and Jones (1996) point out that the sources of stress may range from too much or little work, time pressures and deadlines, working conditions, excessive travels, long hours to frequent organizational changes.

Erasmus (2006) admits that stress in the workplace comes from different sources. They come from irritating fellow employees, noise pollution, irritating habits (eg. obsessive throat clearing, loud telephone conversation, gossiping, chewing gum or sniffing), impossible workloads and an impossible boss.

To Cole (2004), the main sources of occupational stress are located in a number of groupings. These are organizational factors such as management style (where individuals find it difficult to adapt to a superior's management style because it is too autocratic or too participative); communication and organization structure; external environment such as development of new technology, economic situation and political changes; job characteristics such as job demands, physical conditions and role conflict; work relationships such as superiors, colleagues, customers and suppliers; domestic situation such as home life and outside social life as well as personal factors such as personality type and ability to adapt to change.

Robbins and De Cenzo (1998) are of the view that factors that create stress can be grouped into two major categories namely organizational and personal factors. To them, an employee's job and the organization's structure are

widespread causes of stress. Excessive workloads and role conflict are key factors they consider as potential stressors in the organization. Financial difficulties, death of a family member, divorce, serious illness as well as employee's personalities are some of the personal factors that can also create stress.

Looking at workplace stressors, McShane and Von Glinow (2000) list four main types which are physical environment, role-related, interpersonal and organizational stressors. They explain that the physical environmental sources include loud noise, poor lighting or harsh lighting and safety hazards. Similarly, Goetsch (1999) Hunsaker (2005) and Ferrell and Cherne (2008) add that a dusty or dirty atmosphere, crowding and temperature extremes as well as explosives, fire, toxic materials and ionizing radiation can also induce stress because they are unpleasant physical conditions. The role-related stressors refer to conditions where employees have difficulty understanding, reconciling or performing the various roles in their lives. Examples of role-related stressors are role ambiguity, role conflict, workload and task characteristics.

The interpersonal stressors consist of poor supervision, office politics and conflicts with co-workers and clients. Circumstances where individuals fail to achieve a reasonable working relationship with their immediate superior or inability to get on well with fellow team members or from other sections as well as customers can all be a source of considerable unhappiness. The organizational stressors also present themselves in many forms, ranging from downsizing, restructuring to privatization.

Rollinson (2005) seems to share a similar view with McShane and Von Glinow. He also describes the stressors in four groupings. These are environmental, organizational, immediate social and individual stressors. He presents the environmental stressors as forces that can become worrying or potentially disturbing to individuals which are located in the environment of an organization. Economic, political, and technological factors are some of the forces.

Economically, rising unemployment figures, rising interest rates and news of decreased national competitiveness are all potential to a person's security, news of which evokes feelings of uncertainty. Equally, while some of the changes associated with a new government are likely to appear as economic factors, uncertainty can also be brought about simply because there has been a change in political ideology. In the technological sense, keeping pace with new technological developments can be a problem for almost everyone and since technological change establishes a requirement for individuals to adapt, it results in stressful situations.

With the organizational stressors, organizational structure, politics and culture can be three similar but different things to consider. In structures that are too rigid, people can feel that there are few opportunities for growth and personal development, whereas very loose, ill- defined structures can give rise to feelings of role ambiguity and anxiety. That is, either of these extremes can be stressful to some people. Considering organizational politics, it is found that some people go one step further and maneuver behind the scenes for their own ends, the effects

can bring an element of frustration and sometimes resentment. Of equal importance is the fact that if a highly pressurized work environment is part of the organizational culture, there can be heavy work demands on employees and this can create stressful conditions.

Immediate social conditions can also create stress and three in particular can be important. These are relations with one's immediate superior, the nature of a workgroup and interpersonal with group members. It is all too easy for the behaviour of an inconsiderate or thoughtless supervisor to create stressful conditions for an employee. A study by Fox et al. in Rollinson (2005) shows that a number of behaviours can be particularly stress-provoking. These include inconsistent instructions, lack of adequate direction, too strong an emphasis on productivity, focusing only on isolated incidents of sub-standard performance, ignoring good performance and lack of concern for employees' well-being.

Spielberger and Vagg (1999) perceive such difficulties with supervisors as lack of organizational support. According to Buck (1972), it appears this has contributed significantly inversely to feelings of job pressure. Also, a person's workgroup can be an important source of social support to resist the effects of stressors. Thus, good personal relationships among group members can be a central factor in individual well-being.

The last category which is the individual stressors refers to certain features of an individual's role that can be stressful. Five in particular can be highly significant in this case. They are job design, role overload, physical conditions, role ambiguity and role conflict.

As compared with some other writers, Daft and Marcic (2004) also maintain that work-stressors could be identified by placing them in four categories. However, they refer to the causes as demands. To them, the demands are associated with job tasks, physical conditions, roles and interpersonal pressures. One interesting thing they hinted about the physical stressors which relate to the setting in which an individual works is that, a poorly designed office and cramped workspace can make it difficult for people to have privacy or even social interaction and this can create feelings of stress.

From another perspective, Goetsch (1999) also emphasizes that a job perceived as being too complex may cause feelings of inadequacy and result in emotional stress at the workplace. Relatedly, monotonous work also makes the worker become bored and possibly experiences some stress. Sometimes, machine-based, repetitive work also gives a person low task control whereas a job with high degree of autonomy has the opposite effect and acts as a buffer to the effects of other stressors. He alerts that working with a computer screen for prolonged periods can result in repetitive strain injury from adopting the same posture for long periods and become a significant source of stress.

Another interesting feature Goetsch (1999) observe about the causes of work stress has to do with shift work which disrupts bodily rhythms. Shift work requires some employees to work when the majority of people are resting. It has traditionally been required by the medical community, the transportation industry, utilities, security and increasingly by retail sales. It is commonly known that basic physiological functions are scheduled by the biological clock called the Circadian

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rhythm and as can be observed, after a life of being on the day shift, the body perceives a change in work shift as being stressful. From a safety viewpoint, shift workers are subjected to more workplace stress in terms of weariness, irritability, depression and lack of interest in work.

Perhaps Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1995) should not be left out of this discussion as they also share a similar thought with the other authors looked at. They found that the causes of work stress are in four main dimensions. These are role expectations, unfinished tasks and intrusions, growth and development and uncertainty and ambiguity.

However, Ross and Altmaier (1994) reveal that apart from the sources considered so far, human resource management practices can be potential stressors in the workplace. These include lack of training, performance feedback, rewards, job transitions, lack of promotional opportunities and mid-career development such as occupational locking-in (a situation when people feel boxed-in because they have no ability to move from their present job or when the only job for which they are qualified is the one they already hold).

To Bennet (1994) and Kinard (1988) the causes of stress are seemingly endless. They concluded that stress often results from overwork. In fact, long working hours or intensified working conditions can be highly stressful. The overload may be quantitative (having too much work to do) or qualitative (finding work too difficult or a situation in which the requirements of the job are beyond the skills of its incumbent).

Indeed, the issue of overwork has raised many concerns. For instance, Dr. Samed Tanko, a medical practitioner at the National Cardiothoracic Centre at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital said he had observed that some workers carried jobs to the house after their normal working hours. Undoubtedly, in some organizations, it often becomes the norm for people to take work home which makes it much harder for them to juggle the different roles of employee, spouse and parent to the satisfaction of all concerned. This he said was not a healthy practice and advised workers to avoid stress- related diseases by ensuring that they do not overwork (Mohammed, 2006).

Research into work overload has been given substantial empirical attention. In an early study, French, Tupper and Mueller (1965) looked at work overload in a large university. They found that one symptom of stress which was low-self esteem was related to work overload.

Kinman (2000) also gives attention to the issue of overwork in his work 'working in higher education; the relationship between perceptions of change, working conditions and psychological health'. His research suggests that spill-over from work to home have a considerable impact on workers and their families. The majority of his respondents in a survey (67%) indicated that their work was steadily encroaching into their private lives. This perception is underlined by the finding that working at home during evenings and weekends was commonplace. The practice appears to have its costs; little or no time is available for hobbies and interests and family life also tend to suffer.

In a related manner, McShane and Von Glinow (2000) assert that research also indicates that fathers who experience stress at work engage in dysfunctional parenting behaviours. George and Jones (1996) also reveal that work overload is particularly prevalent among middle and top managers. In Japan for instance, it is a significant problem which has been identified as the cause of "karoshi", a concept which refers to death by overwork as a result of sudden heart attacks.

Researchers have also observed that some people seem to be more vulnerable than others to the ill-effects of stress (Daft, 2003). Smith, Beck, Cooper, Cox, Ottaway and Talbot (1982) assert that some people are psychologically predisposed to stress and personality traits can bring about such differences. That is, employees' personalities have an effect on how susceptible they are to stress. The most commonly used description of the personality types is called the Type A and Type B dichotomy (Robbins & De Cenzo, 1998).

Type A and B Personality Traits

Friedman and Rosenman (cited in Cole, 2004) in their study into coronary patients, identified what they termed as the Type A personality. They focused on emotions and personality as the link to heart disease. The two cardiologists noticed that patients with premature coronary heart disease exhibited common behaviours that were collectively labeled a Type A behaviour pattern. That is, they were people who were identified as at great risk of heart disease. They referred to their behaviour as "hurry sickness" (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). Prior to this, it has been assumed that the main risk factors in heart disease were diet, high blood pressure and a generic predisposition. Eventually, the researchers

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uncovered another factor which consists of a set of behavioural traits that dominates the lives of those most at risk (Rollinson, 2005). However, recent research has suggested that Type A behaviour is not as strongly related to coronary heart disease as first thought (Ross & Altmaier, 1994).

Schermerhorn (1996) reveals that the Type A personalities display stressful behaviour patterns that include tendencies towards always moving, walking and eating rapidly, acting impatient, hurrying others, disliking waiting, trying to do several things at once, feeling guilty when relaxing and trying to schedule more in less time. Thus, they are characterized by excessive competitiveness, a constant search for achievement and behaviour that tended to be aggressive. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) also cite some of the following characteristics as Type A behaviours: hurried speech, explosive accentuation of key words, development of nervous tics or characteristics gestures and irritation with slow-to-act-people.

On their part, Robbins and De Cenzo (1998) also note that the Type A people desire for achievement and have difficulty accepting and enjoying leisure time. To McShane and Von Glinow (2000), they also lose their temper and interrupt others during conversations. However, they tend to work faster and are effective in jobs requiring time pressure. Bennet (1994) also agrees that they achieve target on time and are always trying to improve upon their performance. The Type B personalities are just the opposite. People in the B category are more relaxed and easy going and they accept change more easily. That is why Cole (2004) refers to them as calmer and more relaxed.

Daft (2003) and Griffin (2005) concluded that Type A people tend to experience more stress-related illness than Type B people. The Type B could rather be sluggish and incapable of dealing with urgent, top-priority areas. They are less concerned about time limitations and take a relaxed approach to life (McShane & Von Glinow, 2000). Despite this, they are also more effective in jobs requiring patience, cooperation and thoughtful judgment. Griffin (2005) also reveals that they are less likely to experience conflict with other people.

According to McShane and Von Glinow (2000), studies have shown that middle managers tend to exhibit Type A behaviours while top-level executives also tend to portray Type B traits. One possible explanation they give is that the Type B people receive more promotions because of their superior human relations skills as compared to the Type A who tend to have poorer interpersonal skills.

Role-Related Stressors

This set of variables can be a potential source of workplace stress. They include role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload and task characteristics. With the role conflict, it refers to a situation where people experience competing demands such as having job duties that are incompatible with their personal values or receiving contradictory messages from different people (McShane & Von Glinow, 2000). According to Greenberg (2005), personal values and beliefs can bring incompatibility where for instance, a supervisor may be required to discipline or dismiss a member of staff and finds himself unable to do so because he believes it to be wrong.

To Ivancevich (2001), role conflict exists whenever compliance with one set of pressures makes compliance with another set difficult, objectionable or impossible. He further states that researchers have found that it is associated with job dissatisfaction and anxiety which undermines a peaceful work state and leads to physiological and psychological changes.

A middle manager for example, may experience role conflict when her supervisor expects her to increase levels of production and her subordinates complained that they are overworked and expect her to ease up on her demands (Newell, 1995). Similarly, an employee who is feeling pressure from her boss to work longer hours or to travel more, while also being asked by her family for more time at home, will almost certainly experience stress (Griffin, 2005).

Role ambiguity is another variable of role related pressures. It refers to the uncertainty that occurs when workers are not sure about what is expected of them and how they should perform their jobs. That is, uncertainty about job duties, performance expectations and level of authority can create pressure for the individual. Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1992) explain that situations in which an individual lacks information needed to perform job can really be frustrating. The failure of a manager to provide employees with the information they need to carry out task creates a gap of uncertainty which inevitably produces stress. Therefore, individuals who are overstressed by uncertainty may not make every effort to gather information, ask questions of their boss and peers or fill in the gaps as much as possible before and during the execution of a job and so guesswork can then compound the uncertainty with bad decisions.

Newell (1995) indicate that role ambiguity can be an especially potent source of stress for newcomers to an organization because they are often unclear about what they are supposed to do and how they should do it. Griffin (2005) adds that a new employee experiencing role ambiguity because of poor orientation and training practices by the organization will suffer stress.

Role overload also represent another role-related pressure. Excessive workloads can create pressure on the individual. Kinard (1988) maintains that overload is the single greatest source of occupational stress. This is so, because managers often assign too much work in an effort to increase motivation and productivity but in the long run, however, overload leads to dysfunctional stress. Although less common, underload can also create stress when people are given tasks that do not make sufficient use of their skills or knowledge. In such cases, work becomes boring and unchallenging as well.

Pressures associated with role related stressors can also come from task characteristics. Griffin (2005) and Greenberg (2005) explain that, some occupations are inherently more stressful than others. Jobs such as surgeon, pilot and firefighter expose the people to high levels of stress than for instance a librarian or college professor. They further add that research has shown that several features of jobs determine the levels of stress they generate. This is because people experience greater stress the more their jobs require making decisions, constantly monitoring devices or materials, repeatedly exchanging information with others, working in unpleasant physical conditions and performing unstructured rather than structured tasks. The greater the extent to

which a job possesses these characteristics, the higher the level of stress that job produces among individuals holding it.

McShane and Von Glinow (2000) reveal that lack of control over work activities and technostress are also in this category. Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1992) express that unexpected changes which occur and require some rethinking about a task, unfinished assignments and several tasks being demanded called 'top priority' can be a source of distress to individuals as well. From all indications, one can conclude that the expectations associated with fulfilling a role in the workplace can potentially produce stressful situations.

Symptoms of Stress

The manifestations of stress are legion. Work-related stress can manifest itself in both physical and emotional health problems and can alter the individual's behaviour at work. The symptoms are the outcome of an individual's failure to cope within a given environment. This is described by the physical and psychological symptoms associated with the exhaustion stage of Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome.

Goetsch (1999) explains that the human response to stress may be linked to that of a rubber band being stretched. The rubber band stretches as the stress continues to be applied until a limit is reached when the rubber band eventually breaks. Similarly, for humans, various physical and psychological changes are observed with the repetitive stimuli of stress. Until the limit is reached, the harmful effects can be reserved. The effects on human however become

pathological with an increase in duration of the stress beyond the individual's limit.

To Ivancevich (2001) and Ferrell and Cherne (2008), stress has been associated with a vast array of diseases which directly affects the endocrine system, the cardiovascular system, the muscular system and the emotions. Cole (2004) analyses the symptoms in three categories namely, physiological, psychological and behavioural.

Robbins and De Cenzo (1998) seem to agree with Cole. They also discuss the symptoms under three main headings. Rather, they hold the view that most of the early interest in stress focused heavily on physiological concerns. According to them, historically, the majority of research on stress has explored its link with physical illness but work on psychological and cognitive outcomes are a more recent development. Increased heart and breathing rates, blood pressure, headaches and heart attacks are some of the physiological symptoms of stress. They add that these symptoms usually require the skills of medical practitioners; hence managers are of less concern. It is the psychological and behavioural symptoms that are of great value to managers.

On the other hand, Cole (2004) also explains that the physiological symptoms could be short-term reactions (e.g. tensed muscle and extra adrenalin secretion) and long- term effects (such as coronary heart disease, indigestion, gastric ulcers, back pain or even cancer). In his view, the psychological signs tend to manifest in anxiety states and depression such as feeling anxious, worried, upset, bitter and boredom. As it is, both the physiological and psychological

symptoms eventually lead to generalized changes in behaviour such as sleeplessness, loss of appetite, increased cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption. In the long run, there may be increased absences, committing more errors than normal, aggression towards colleagues and procrastination.

From a different view, Heneman, Schwab, Fossum and Dyer (1987) limit the symptoms to physical and psychological indicators of stress. They remain silent on the behavioural symptoms. Perhaps they were more concerned with the psychological and physiological manifestations since it is believed (Cole, 2004) that it is the two that lead to generalized changes in behaviour.

Cooper and Quick (1999) reveal that the symptoms of stress can manifest itself in three stages. In the first stage symptoms, the individual tends to show behavioural symptoms. An individual may be under pressure, which could be described as stimulating and invigorating; however, when this pressure exceeds a level at which the individual is able to cope, it can be defined as stress. Some of the symptoms at this stage include constant tiredness, irritability with people, suppressed anger, difficulty concentrating, hopelessness, loss of sense of humor, feeling the target of other people's animosity and lack of interest pursuing activities outside of work.

The individual enters the second stage when the original source of stress persists. At this stage, stress can result in a failing immune system, which can lead to symptoms such as frequent bouts of flu or colds and even other non- life threatening microbiological manifestations. Physiological responses to stress at this level includes tendency to sweat for no apparent reason, nervous twitches,

headaches, cramps and muscle spasms, breathlessness, fainting, insomnia, nausea and lack of appetite.

Regarding the third stage symptoms, the longer the stress the more serious the symptoms will be. It is believed that there is increasing evidence that stress may be a risk factor for heart disease, some immune system failures and some forms of cancer. Only after thorough diagnosis of other potential conditions should an exploration of the stress aetiology of a physical manifestation be pursued and perhaps other possible sources of the physical symptoms such as lifestyle factors (e.g. Type A behaviour).

Talking about the symptoms of stress, Cooper and Quick (1999) further add that some employers are also skeptical as to whether absenteeism is necessarily stress manifestation. Again, it is more than possible that people seek solace in alcohol and drugs as a result of stress but because of the secretive nature of both practices, it is difficult to find hard evidence that they are related to stress.

Interestingly, quite apart from the three major dimensions of the symptoms of stress discussed so far, there is yet a fourth way by which stress can manifest itself. This is the cognitive symptoms which refer to thought processes and the main problems inherent in this condition are impaired memory, lowered concentration, attention, distorted perceptions and in extreme cases thought disorders. When stress occurs, hormones that affect brain functioning are released and in mild cases this increases brain activity and sharpens thinking, alertness and concentration. The problem is that when this stress-inducing arousal reaches a certain level, more primitive reactions occur (Beehr cited in Rollinson, 2005).

Indeed, people respond to stress in different ways. That is why Bennet (1994) is of the view that stress is not a measurable reality because its existence is apparent only through its consequences – how it affects individuals. To him, whether stress stimulates or debilitates depends largely on the background to the event and then the duration of the experience. He adds that many of the physical manifestations of stress are psychosomatic in origin (i.e. those emanating from emotional tension). Among the most common ones are backache, indigestion, insomnia and cramp. To Tanner (1976), the most remarkable of the direct physical consequences of stress is death.

With regards to the physiological symptoms, George and Jones (1996) argue that the relationship between stress and physiological symptoms is complicated. This is so because two individuals experiencing the same high levels of stress may have different physiological reactions. Moreover, some people seem to experience more physiological effects than others do. Besides, people also differ in the extent to which they complain about physical symptoms such as headaches and stomachaches.

In discussing the issue of stress symptoms, Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1992) ask the question, how well do we tell when someone is feeling a high level of stress? Certainly it is not easy because some of the symptoms discussed so far are fairly overt and readily recognized while some signs have very subtle overt aspects. For instance, feeling anxious may or may not be very visible to others; upset stomach, headache, exhaustion and many other physical symptoms are likely to be known only to the person experiencing them. Even

feeling distracted and unable to stay focused on a task may remain hidden from others for a long time. To them, the following few guidelines will however help know when someone is showing signs of stress:

1. If the behaviour of the person is out of character. That is, it represents a departure from what is normal for that person and it persists, then the level of stress is likely to be unhealthy.

2. If many signs are occurring at the same time then probably the level of stress is unduly high.

3. If the signs persist for a prolonged period of time.

They however caution that no single magic formula exists for making these judgments due to the fact that they are so personal in nature.

Clearly, one can note that the approaches to the symptoms of stress discussed so far can be categorized along three dimensions. These are psychological, physiological and behavioural. While these can sometimes appear in isolation, it is common for them all to appear together. Also, the symptoms that an individual may exhibit may depend largely on the magnitude of the stress experienced by the individual.

From an evolutionary viewpoint, Goetsch (1999) states that the adverse effects of stress on health may be considered a maladaptation of humans to stress. This tells us that either we learn to do away with all stress (unlikely); avoid all stressful situations (equally unlikely); learn to adapt to being sick because of stress (undesirable) or perhaps learn to adapt to workplace stress (the optimal choice).

Individual Differences in Stress

Stress levels differ among individuals. Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1992) maintain that individuals vary enormously in their tolerance for externally caused stress. Two people may be exposed to the same stressors yet they experience different stress levels or stress symptoms. This is so because the same situation can be perceived as excruciatingly overbearing or as wonderfully challenging by individuals in different self-concepts. McShane and Von Glinow (2000) observe that three reasons may account for this.

In the first place, it has to do with perception. Each of us perceives the same situation differently. For instance, people with high self-efficacy are less likely to experience stress consequences in that situation since the stressor is less threatening. In the same vein, Spielberger and Sarason (1975) are of the view that some people have personalities which make them more optimistic whereas others are more pessimistic. Personality hardiness and self-reliance are key individual differences that can dampen the adverse effects of stressful events on individuals. People with pessimistic disposition probably tend to interpret situations in a negative way; hence, they tend to develop more stress symptoms.

Secondly, some people tend to have more stress symptoms than others in the same situation because they have lower thresholds of resistance to a stressor. Comparatively, younger employees experience fewer and less severe stress symptoms than older employees because they have larger store of energy to cope with high stress levels. Equally, people who exercise regularly and have healthy lifestyles also experience less stress outcomes.

Thirdly, the reason could also be attributed to the fact that people use different coping strategies. What some employees do is to rather ignore the stressor with the hope that it will go away, but this is usually an ineffective approach which would explain why they experience higher stress levels. As it is, Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1992) conclude that perhaps there is no way to create universally appropriate levels of stress but then it is possible to identify signals that indicate that individuals are experiencing so much stress.

Gender and Stress

It is not known for sure if stress affects men and women differently. Generally, as the two genders often operate in different social contexts, both tend to develop emotional dispositions and personality traits. Accordingly, their responses and coping mechanisms to stress situations vary.

Soares (2008) indicate that women are particularly susceptible to developing depression and anxiety disorders in response to stress compared to men. She explained that studies of both animal and humans have shown that sex hormones somehow modulate the stress response, causing females under stress to secrete more of the trigger chemicals than do men under the same conditions. Therefore, women's capacity for tolerating stress may be greater than that of men.

In Eller's (2000) view, females are more likely to deal with stress by 'tending and befriending'- that is nurturing those around them and reaching out to others. In contrast, men are more likely to sequester themselves or initiate confrontation, behaviour in line with the 'fight or flight' response that has long

been associated with stress. In view of this, the 'tend and befriend' system protects the females from some of the damaging effects of stress.

From a similar perspective, Nelson and Burke (2002) assert that scientific evidence from behavioural and biological studies of Shelley Taylor (a prominent psychologist) has made a strong argument for differences in the way men and women respond to stressful, threatening situation. To them, the behavioural responses show that the 'fight' (defeating or overcoming a threat) and 'flight' (fleeing a threat) response is advantageous for the survival of the male individual whereas the 'tend and befriend' response is also advantageous for the survival of the female individual. Also, the biological differences in the stress responses between male and female are that, in the females, there is greater activation of vegal mechanisms, greater release of oxytocin and endorphins within the brain that promote attachment behaviour to females whereas high nervous system activation (optimizing physical performance), activation of pain inhibition systems (to prevent distraction of fight and flight performance from injury related pain) and high cortisol responses are characteristic biological components of the male stress response. Nelson and Burke concluded that such differences play a role in the well known fact that men are more likely to die of chronic diseases of the cardiovascular system while women are more likely to suffer from a wide range of functional disorders eg. fibromyalgia.

Herscher (2006) states that women feel more stressed out than men do. According to him, in a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA), the stress gap was confirmed that 51 per cent of women

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(compared to 43 pre cent of men) reported that stress had impact on their lives. According to the survey, women tend to see stress show up as physical symptoms and so they are more likely to report stress-related health problems such as depression, anxiety and hypertension. The gender difference is that, although women have a greater number of stress-related disorders than men, men rather die more frequently of stress-related illnesses.

Other studies have yielded similar results. Matud (2004) examined gender differences in stress and coping in a sample of 2,816 people (1,566 women & 1,250 men) between 18 and 65 years old with different sociodemographic characteristics. The results indicated that the women scored significantly higher than the men in chronic stress and minor daily stressors. The study found gender differences in 14 of the 31 items listed, with women listing family and health-related events more frequently than the men, whereas the men listed relationship, finance and work-related events. Again, the women scored significantly higher than the men on somatic symptoms and psychological distress. Matud's study therefore suggested that women suffer more stress than men and their coping style is more emotion-focused than that of men.

Research by Roger (2008) indicates that male and female do not have the same triggers for workplace stress. To him, new research shows that women are more likely to be stressed by workplace relationships while men are more affected by change and workload. His findings, based upon a study of just over 900 respondents, seem to support psychologists theories based on studying behaviour

and hormone release in the genders, which suggest that stressed men are likely to become aggressive while women resort to gossip and bitching.

In a study to explore gender differences in stress, Gachter, Savage and Torgler (2007) used multivariate regression analysis to find that females were significantly more likely to report suffering from physical stress indicators than their male counterparts while no gender difference were observable in regards to psychological stress.

Again, results from a new landmark study showed that differences in the way men and women are managed (fueled by the differences in what they value most at work) put both genders at risk for cardiovascular problems, depression and a higher susceptibility to infectious diseases (Valentine, 2008). The study indicated that gender-based differences in workplace values can create a company culture of underlying stress and conflict that affect the physical and emotional health of both men and women. Valentine's study concluded that females were at a higher health risk from workplace stress than males.

In another development, Gyllensten and Palmer (2005) did a review to explore gender differences in stress. The aim of their review was to evaluate research relating to the role of gender in the level of workplace stress. Much of the research indicated that women reported higher levels of stress compared to men. However, general studies reported no difference between the genders. The conclusion drawn from their review was that the evidence regarding the role of gender in workplace stress and stressors was inconsistent.

Essentially, in a study on stress in the University of Malaysia, Aida, Azlina and Balqis (2007) noted that the adoption, rapid diffusion and evolution of information, communication and technology (ICT) have introduced a number of new demands into workplace that lead to job stress. Their study measured the level of stress among academic and non-academic staff of the University of Malaysia and identified the difference of gender in term of stress. The findings indicated a moderate level of stress among the respondents. However, there was no significant difference of stress in term of gender among the respondents.

Measurement of Workplace Stress

Measuring workplace stress can be tedious and involving. Goetsch (1999) says psychological response cannot be directly measured in physical terms but then, one method commonly employed uses a measurement of mental workload which is measured in one of three ways.

The first has to do with subjective ratings where workers are asked to rate their perceived level of workload. The workers would also need to rate their mood in relation to the work situation. This is viewed as a direct reflection of workplace stress and the data gathered by this method is subjective and state-independent. It therefore has a built-in-state bias.

The second is behavioural time-sharing techniques which require the simultaneous performance of two tasks of which one is considered most important and the other secondary. The decrease in performance efficiency of the secondary task is considered an index of workload for behavioural time-sharing. When behavioural-time sharing increases, workplace stress is thought to increase.

The third measurement has to do with psycho-physiological techniques. It requires simultaneous measurement of heart rate and brain waves. These are then interpreted as indexes of mental workload and workplace stress.

The second and third techniques are related to theoretical models which make data easier to interpret. However, they also require sophisticated equipment and data collection methods. Candidly, the first technique uses questionnaires that ask about the physical working conditions, the individual's health and mental well-being as well as perceived overall satisfaction with the job. Data may be compared to standardized scales developed by various researchers. Regardless of the measurement method, since workplace stress is dependent on personal awareness, there are no direct means of measuring workplace stress known today.

Effects of Stress in Organizations

The costs of stress to an organization are found in premature deaths of employee, higher rates of accidents, performance inefficiencies, increased turnover and increased disability payment among others (Ivancevich, 2001; Smith, Beck, Cooper, Cox, Ottaway & Talbot, 1982).

Griffin (2005) says although it is individuals who experience stress, it has direct consequences for businesses. To him, stress may translate into poor quality work and lower productivity. Withdrawal behaviours such as sick leave or excuse duty may also occur.

A particular unsettling manifestation of stress on the job that has become all too prevalent in recent years is known as desk rage - a situation where office workers behave violently toward others when stressed out by long hours and

difficult working conditions. It takes many forms such as yelling at people or verbal abuse. This situation can be compared to angered drivers who are known to express their negative reactions to others in dangerous ways (Greenberg, 2005).

Megginson, Byrd, Scott and Megginson (1997) also identified absenteeism at workplaces as a direct consequence of the stress phenomenon. To Cooper and Cartwright (1994), it has been estimated that at least half of all absences from work are, in some manner, stress related. Besides, Pettinger (2000) also alerts that people tend to pursue their own objectives at the expense of, rather than in harmony with, those of the organization.

Ivancevich (2001) asserts that in view of the devastating effects of stress, organizations are now beginning to realize that they should be involved in helping employees cope with stress. One argument for this reason is that because the business is at least partially responsible for stress, it should help relieve it. Also, stress-related insurance claims by employees can cost the organization considerable sums of money hence there is the need to be concerned. Moreover, workers experiencing lower levels of detrimental stress will be able to function more effectively.

Stress Management Techniques

Stress is seemingly endemic to modern organizational life. Nevertheless, numerous approaches and ideas have been developed for coping with stress. Bennet (1994) gives us six of the approaches. These are delegation of part of the workload (on condition that the subordinate is capable of handling the work); deciding in advance not to become involved in certain stressful activities (eg.

avoiding contact with particular individuals); predetermining a maximum personal workload and refusing to undertake additional duties beyond the maximum; deliberate relaxation; physical exercise and greater efficiency in the use of management time.

Although these techniques are quite laudable, the first three techniques may relate more to managers since they are in management positions and may have control over work output than those down the hierarchy. In other words, all of the individual techniques given by Bennet have some utility in appropriate circumstances. Obviously, how can an employee who is not in a high rank, predetermines a maximum personal workload and refuses to undertake additional duties beyond the maximum? Certainly, to some extent this technique may be difficult for application by employees in the lower ranks.

Basically, Tanner (1976) reveals that behavioural scientists are of the view that laughter serves to relieve stress. To some extent, this is something of mystery, for its evolutionary purpose is a puzzle and it is a normal reaction to many different and unrelated kinds of situations. Of course people laugh not only from pleasure or affection but also the discomfiture of someone else as a means of releasing excess energy. In all cases, we may need to agree with Tanner that laughter performs the basic function of resolving emotional tension.

Daft and Marcic (2004) assert that a variety of techniques are there to help individuals cope with stress. To them, the most basic strategies include exercising regularly, getting plenty of rest and eating a healthful diet. People who exercise regularly feel less tension because their physical condition make them less

susceptible to many common illnesses. They reveal that most people cope with stress more effectively if they lead balanced lives and are part of a network of people who give them support and encouragement. For instance, family, relationships, co-workers, friendships and memberships in non-work groups such as community or religious organizations are helpful for stress management.

To Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), belonging to non-work group can be rich source of social support. According to them, social support is the amount of perceived helpfulness derived from social relationships. They may come in four different ways. These are instrumental support, informational support, social companionship and esteem support.

The instrumental support provides financial aid, material resources or needed services. With the informational support, they provide help as to how to cope with problems in life. The social companionship also refers to spending time with others in leisure or recreational activities whereas the esteem support provides information that a person is accepted and respected despite any problems. They further indicate that, research shows that people with low social support tend to have poorer cardiovascular and immune system functioning and tend to die earlier than those with strong social support networks.

Perhaps Van Schoor and Van der Merwe (1995) may be right to say that if one bottles up feelings, he/she is freezing. For an individual who thinks about a problem on his own only ends up having one point of view hence the need for consultation. While the link between receiving social support and the reduction of stress is complicated, there is fairly strong empirical evidence that it has

beneficial effects and these are greater when support comes from inside the organization rather than from outside. People often experience great relief simply by talking about their problems, a confessional effect that so far has not been subjected to scientific study and which must be brought under experimental control if we are to understand further (Spielberger & Sarason, 1975).

Ivancevich (2001) also marks out two ways to cope with stress. To him, stress is inevitable, therefore it must be addressed. The first important way is to eliminate the stressor by changing policies, the structure, the work requirements or whatever is necessary. The second way is to deal with stress individually or organizationally. The individual level include exercise, diet, biofeedback and meditation whereas the organizational programmes refer to experts in organizations who can use their knowledge about stress to design and implement organization-sponsored workshops and seminars for coping with stress. These should include relaxation techniques, self-motivation procedures, examination of life goals, identification of harmful personality traits and a behaviour modification technique.

In a similar view, Cole (2004) also admits that the strategies for coping with stress can best be analyzed under two broad headings. These are personal strategies and organizational strategies. What is especially important in becoming more stress-free at the individual level is to examine one's own attitudes towards personal strengths and weakness and this is more a matter of assertiveness and personal planning. The assertiveness is concerned with expressing personal wants, feelings and opinions in honest and appropriate ways. At the organizational level,

employers need to investigate the sources of stress and take appropriate action. Some of the actions he recommends involve:

1. Changing individual's job responsibilities.

2. Providing greater opportunity for personal autonomy in job.

3. Setting agreed job targets for employees.

4. Providing appropriate training (e.g. in time management)

5. Providing counseling facilities

6. Providing fitness centers / programmes

7. Adequate canteen and rest-room facilities

From Goetsch's (1999) view, organizational approaches to coping with work stress include providing frequent feedback to employees so that they know what is expected of them at any given time, avoiding a monotonous, standardized motion patterns and constant repetition of short-cycle operations. Also, jobs with low utilization of a worker's knowledge and initiative, lack of human contact and authoritarian-type supervision should be avoided. Again, physical stress can also be reduced by improving the work environment and establishing a sound and safety programme.

Griffin (2005) identifies time management as one of the control measures for stress management. He says the idea behind time management is that many daily pressures can be reduced or eliminated if individuals do a better job of managing time. One approach is to make a list every morning of the things to be done during the day. Items on the list should be grouped into three namely, critical activities to be performed, important activities to be performed and

optional or trivial things that can be delegated or postponed. Activities are then followed in their order of importance. As Malone (1998) puts it, trying to fit 12 hours of work in a 9 hour day does not work, it leaves one frustrated.

To account for the various ways in which morbid stress can be managed, drugs play a mainly palliative role at present. Caffeine for example, is a stimulant for the stress response. People consuming more than 600mg per day are at risk of becoming addicted. Similarly, anxiolytics and antidepressants prescribed on a short-term basis are most likely to benefit individuals experiencing unusually severe stress or psychological issues of depression. Some difficulties associated with the long-term use of these drugs are that they can be addictive with complex withdrawal patterns and of course the drugs may take the edge off a person's mental and physical acuity making it hazardous for them to perform certain tasks (Cooper & Quick, 1999).

Very often, people ask whether or not it may be simpler to take a tranquilliser to alleviate the anxiety or tension. Van Schoor and Van der Merwe (1995) explain that, feeling tense can be compared to the waves of the sea. One is not tensed at all times just as the intensity of the waves differs at different times. The tenseness builds up to a peak and then calms down a bit similar to high tide when the sea is much more active and in that same manner, tranquillizers also cut out peak emotional experiences so that one does not experience them so overwhelming. The 'wave' of emotion can thus not develop fully under the influence of a tranquilliser and in this way the individual is protected for as long as he/she takes it. The question then is, can one carry on taking the medication

forever? Would it not be better to learn how to surf, so that one can ride the waves of emotion when they come?

In another development, stress management has been given attention by Cooper and Quick (1999). They recommend both preventive and treatment strategies. The preventive management of stress uses concepts from preventive medicine. There is growing evidence that individuals have natural protective mechanisms and defences which enable them to maintain their health even when exposed to risk. In other words, individuals have both natural and learned protective factors which enable them to remain healthy during periods of high demand and stress. The goal of preventive management is to build on the natural protective factors (personality hardiness) as individuals are thought the methods and skills for prevention against stress-related psychological and medical disorders. Evidence shows that individuals who develop and practice two or more preventive management techniques are able to cope significantly better than individuals who only practice one.

There are primary and secondary prevention methods which are long- term approaches to changing how an individual experiences, manages and responds to a wide range of traumatic stress events. Four methods which are deemed appropriate for primary preventive stress management include learned optimism, time management, modifying Type A behaviour pattern and building supportive social relationships. The learned optimism is a psychological skill that seeks to help an individual modify his perceptions about events, primarily bad events and adversity and instead think positively. Optimistic thinkers usually focus on the

benefits of good events and minimize the stressful aspects of bad events. Time management and proper planning are primary prevention skill that allows healthy achievement and avoid overload.

In modifying Type A behaviour pattern, it is recommended that people learn new behaviours that will enable them to develop self-control and be less hot-headed. People with Type A behaviour should be encouraged to spend time with Type B people to help them slow down and take stock of situations before reacting. Building supportive social relationships can offer individuals with a range of resources and emotional caring.

The secondary preventive stress management approach uses physical fitness, relaxation training and emotional outlets as some of its techniques. As can be noted, these techniques are valuable and complementary. Each emphasizes a different aspect of the behavioural and psychological skills necessary for successful stress management. Individuals therefore need to select and practice regularly two or more of the skills that are most appropriate for them.

Apart from the preventive management, another major phase of stress management has to do with the treatment strategies by trained health professionals and self-care therapy. Although a wide range of health professionals consider themselves to be stress experts, there is no single medical or psychological specialist with particular expertise in stress. For this reason, professional partnerships that address stress-related disorders are often the most effective approach to treatment. Several medical and psychological interventions exist for stress management. Among them are psychotherapy, physiotherapy,

behaviour therapy, pharmacotherapy and surgery (for serious and advanced stages of disease such as cardiovascular disease and cancer).

From a similar perspective, Hunsaker's (2005) discussion of the coping skills also reveal that two main strategies which are problem- focused and emotion-focused strategies are valuable in alleviating stress. The problem-focused techniques deal directly with the stressors by either removing or changing them. They include seeking help, time management, high self- esteem, personality hardiness and health maintenance (exercise, diet and rest). On the other hand, the emotion-focused techniques are the ways we modify our negative reactions so that we feel more optimistic and self-confident. Recreation and relaxation are some examples.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) also present the idea that although there are many different stress reduction techniques available, the four most frequently used approaches are muscle relaxation (slow deep breathing and systematic muscle tension reduction), biofeedback (machine used to train people to detect bodily signs of stress), meditation (redirecting one's thoughts away from oneself) and cognitive restructuring (irrational thoughts are identified and replaced with logical).

All told, some researchers however advise organizations not to implement these stress reduction programmes despite their good results. They contend that these techniques merely relive symptoms of stress rather than eliminate stressors themselves. It should be noted that the methods only seek to deal with the

symptoms of stress rather than addressing the stressors that give rise to the malady hence they tend to sweep the real problem under the carpet.

Mcshane and Von Glinow (2000) also agree that "the only way companies can effectively manage stress is by removing the stressors that cause unnecessary tension and job burnout" (p.148). In their view, other stress management strategies may keep employees "stress fit", but they do not solve the fundamental causes of stress. Newell (1995) also acknowledges that most stress reduction initiatives do not aim to remove the sources of stress. Rather, they aim at helping the individual cope with stress that either may arise (secondary) or has already developed (tertiary).

For Goetsch (1999), not all sources of stress on the job can be eliminated and since employment screening is unlikely to identify all those who are sensitive to stress, people should learn to adapt to stress. Of course Greenberg (2005) shares a similar thought with Goetsch that, to eliminate stress entirely from our lives is impossible.

In view of this, a more proactive and enduring solution Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) therefore recommend is the holistic wellness approach – a broad interdisciplinary approach that goes beyond stress reduction which advocates personal responsibility for healthy living. They indicate that there are different dimensions of a holistic wellness approach. This approach takes into consideration: nutritional awareness, environmental sensitivity, self-responsibility, physical fitness and relaxation.

Perhaps Smith, Beck, Cooper, Cox, Ottaway and Talbot (1982) may be right to suggest that the success of any effort to minimize stress and maximize job satisfaction will depend on accurate diagnosis, for different stresses will require different action.

Empirical Studies on Stress in Higher Education

Numerous studies have examined job stress in the higher education sector in various countries. In fact, according to Brewer and McMahan (2004) past research on work-stress among faculty has identified different sources and variables affecting stress levels. It has been observed that certain patterns have emerged concerning sources of stress identified by college faculty. For instance, researchers have consistently reported time pressures (Astin, 1993; Barns, Agago & Coombs, 1998; Olsen, 1993; Thompson & Dey, 1998; Gmelch,Wilke & Lovrich,1986), research and publication demands (Astin, 1993; Blix, Cruise, Mitchell & Blix, 1994; Smith &Witt,1993) as significant sources of job stress.

Additionally, studies by Sax, Astin, Korn and Gilmartin (1999) indicate that the frequent technological advances of modern society along with the ongoing change that those advances spur have yielded increased stress. In one notable study, researchers such as Gmelch, Wilke & Lovrich (1986) provided ample evidence in their work "Dimensions of stress among university faculty: factor analytic results from national studies". Using factor analysis, their work examined dimensions of stress among 1,920 professors from 80 tertiary institutions. Five dimensions of perceived stress were identified. These were reward and recognition, time constraints, departmental influence, professional

identity and student interaction. However, the most important dimension was reward and recognition.

In 2001, the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) provided funds to the University of Plymouth for a three- year nationwide study of occupational stress in 14 UK higher education institutions (HEIs). The aim of the study was to provide stress benchmarks for higher education, to enable comparisons with other professions and intra-sector comparisons with cognate HEIs (old versus new universities). The findings showed that the most significant source of stress for all higher education staff (irrespective of category of employee) was job insecurity. Staff also reported significantly higher levels of stress relating to work relationship (aggressive management style), control, unmanageable workloads as well as resources and communication. Significant differences were also identified between staff working at old versus new universities and by category of employee (Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper & Ricketts, 2005).

Again, in a study on stress in Newzealand universities, Boyd and Wylie (1994) noted that half of the academics in their sample indicated that their work was stressful "often or almost always". Additionally, 80% of the respondents believed that their workload had increased and become stressful in recent years.

Research by Hogan, Carlson and Dua (2002) also addressed the issue of job stress in higher education. In the University of Hawaii, a large, ethically diverse and representative sample of university workers (831participants) in administrative, instructional and blue/clerical support categories were

administered a battery of questionnaires designed to assess job and non-work stress, biopsychosocial reactions to stress, emotionality, medical symptoms and utilization as well as perceived social support among other variables. The principal results indicated that job and non-work stress correlated positively with behavioural, cognitive and physiological reactions to stress as well as with negative emotionality. Job and non-work stress correlated meaningfully with medical symptoms. Younger staff reported higher levels of job and non-work stress, irrespective of job category.

Abifarin (1997) in his work, "motivating staff in Nigerian university libraries" investigated the level of motivation among librarians and para-professional staff in Nigerian university libraries using questionnaire method to elicit data. The major variables considered in the survey were training opportunities, frequency of development, work environment, promotion prospects, sabbatical leave and communication and management style. The study revealed a general dissatisfaction with all the variables except one, which was frequency of development of staff. The study therefore suggested some practical ways of motivating staff. Chief among these is the management style of the university librarians going out to see for themselves what is going on in the various sections of the libraries. By this, university librarians would be able to observe their staff at work, talk to them in their various offices on a regular basis and be able to carry out on-the-spot assessment, listen and praise staff as the case may be.

In another development, Brewer (2005) also carried out a study to explore job stress among a random sample of 219 Hispanic professionals in the University of Tennessee. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, a factorial analysis of variance and coefficients of determination. The results showed that the Hispanic professionals participating in the study experienced higher levels of job stress than do the normative group. Again, female participants reported significantly higher levels of job stress than male participants did. Evidently, lack of organizational support also contributed more to the variability of job stress among participants than job pressure did.

Essentially, job stress has also enjoyed unprecedented attention from researchers such as Leung, Siu and Spector (2000).They conducted a study into faculty stressors, job satisfaction and psychological distress among university teachers in Hong Kong. The aim was to identify the sources of stress and their effects on psychological distress and job satisfaction. It was also to examine the moderating effect of locus of control on stressor-strain relationships. In all, 106 university teachers (86 males, 20 females) from four institutions participated in the study. A factor analysis of the faculty stressors revealed six variables which were recognition, perceived organizational practices, factors intrinsic to teaching, financial inadequacy, home/work interface and new challenge. A series of stepwise multiple regressions demonstrated that recognition, perceived organizational practices and financial inadequacy were best predictors of job satisfaction whereas perceived organizational practices and home/work interface were the best predictors of psychological distress. Furthermore, a series of

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hierarchical moderated regressions demonstrated a moderating effect of locus of control on some of the stressor-strain relationships.

Similarly, in a more recent study by Liu, Spector and Shi (2007), qualitative approaches were used to study job stress in some higher education institutions such as Beijing Normal University (China), Illinois State University and the University of South Florida (both U.S.A). The findings revealed that the American employees in these two universities reported significantly more incidents of direct interpersonal conflict, lack of job control, lack of team coordination, frustration and stomach problems than the Chinese. On the other hand, the Chinese employees in the said institution also reported significantly more incidents of job evaluations, work mistakes, employment conditions, lack of training, anxiety, sleep problems and feeling hot than the Americans. The conclusion was that these were culture specific job stressors.

Challenges Facing Higher Education and Stress

All over the world, it appears higher educational institutions face contemporary challenges as a result of economic growth, financial constraints, advancement in science and technology, internationalization and globalization among others. Access, inadequate funding, quality assurance, curriculum relevance and poor conditions of service have been teething issues facing the sector.

Access has been one of the primary challenges which higher education institutions are grappling with. Massification of higher education which refers to sudden increase in student enrolment in university education has brought in its

wake some challenges. The massification came as a result of expansion of basic and second cycle education. In view of this, the number of people who qualified for university education also increased, resulting in accommodation and sanitation problems, pressures over lecture space, library facilities as well as personnel. As can be noted, Article 38 of Ghana's Constitution requires government to ensure that access to Free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE) is provided. It also entreats government to provide same to tertiary education depending on availability of resources (Constitution of Ghana, 1992), but it seems perhaps concentration is more at the lower levels and although the establishment of new public and private universities has widened access to tertiary education, demand still outstrips supply by far.

Admittedly, higher education is relatively expensive and nowadays admissions are tied up with high cut-off points. The cut-off points for a number of programmes are becoming increasingly high. Even with the high cut-off points, some departments exceed their quota. In the University of Cape Coast for instance, the Bachelor of Commerce programme had to cut off at aggregate eight despite the fact that some students had aggregate nine and ten in the year 2006/2007. The department even exceeded the quota by 62 (U.C.C Gazette, 2005).

As more students are admitted, the issue of where to lay their heads becomes a major concern. Indeed, accommodation is a big challenge facing the universities. In a bid to widen access to higher education, in 1997, the government of Ghana came out with a policy which delinked university admissions from

accommodation. In view of this, it is no longer obligatory for the universities to provide accommodation to all students that they admit. Although the residential policy of in-out-out-in was devised to help address the problem of accommodation, it has not wholly addressed it. Until recently, varying disparities such as gender, physiological, socio-economic and regional disparities have all been ticklish issues relating to access in higher education.

Another major fundamental problem now facing education ministries almost everywhere on the continent is simply the issue of inadequate funding. Rapid decline in public expenditure on education relative to rapid increase in enrolments at higher education level is indeed a critical challenge. Morna (cited in Onushkin, 1977) submits that cash strapped African countries have the worries of financing higher education. This stems from the fact that most African economies are still characterized by an agrarian economy, the exportation of raw material, low wages, low savings, low capital accumulation, population explosion and declines in agricultural productivity.

Even though funding is crucial for the progress and expansion of Sub-Saharan institutions of higher learning, the vicious cycle of poverty and debts as well as the overall economic crisis African states face, it is almost impossible to suggest that much more fund be allocated to the sector. Generally speaking, the government is the most important source of finance to higher education but in industrialized countries, industry come a close second and third, whereas in the less-developed countries the university budget and 'other' sources are placed some way behind. Thus, sources of finance for higher education in the latter

countries are far fewer and while industrialized countries are able to spread the burden of cost, the less-developed countries find this difficult to do. In North America for example, professional societies are a much more important source of finance than anywhere else in the world (Onushkin, 1977).

In Ghana, the establishment of free compulsory primary education for all children of school-going age makes it mandatory on government to intensify its funding at the basic level. So, in view of the rapid development at the tertiary level, the state cannot hope to be the sole financier of higher education hence other sources such as the internally generated fund otherwise known as revenue yielding projects have become other alternatives to complement government subvention. Some of the income generating activities include commercial bookshop, printing press, consultancy services, investment in equities, long-term deposits, renting facilities and other supplementary fees such as distance education and sandwich programmes.

The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) believes that institutions could generate ten percent of their requirements (Benneh, 2001). Although there are some dangers associated with the unbridled pursuit of revenue yielding projects, such business ventures have the potential of contributing to sustainable development of university education in one way or the other.

Perhaps even more starkly, is the issue of quality assurance and accountability in higher education. Although circumstances vary among countries, several broad trends have contributed to growing governmental interest in establishing policy mechanisms to ensure quality. Despite differences in the size

and stage of development of higher education, many governments have decided that traditional academic controls are inadequate for today's challenges and that more explicit assurances about quality are needed (El-Khawas, 1998).

A study conducted by Materu (2007) confirmed that structured national-level quality assurance processes in African higher education are very recent phenomenon and that only about a third of them have established structured national quality assurance mechanism while most countries face cost and human constraints. His study also revealed that activities differ in their scope and rigor ranging from simple licensing of institutions by the minister responsible for higher education, to comprehensive system-wide programme accreditation and ranking of institutions.

To assure quality and accountability in higher education, many countries have developed accreditation systems, while others have established evaluation committees or centres that carry out cycles of external review. In many countries, independent bodies have been established, often a single national agency such as the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in Ghana which was established in 1993 to among other things, be responsible for the accreditation of both public and private tertiary institutions with regard to the contents and standards of their programmes and to determine the equivalences of diplomas, certificates and other qualifications offered by institutions in Ghana or elsewhere (Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001). Sometimes too, as in the Netherlands, Mexico or Romania, separate agencies are responsible for the different types of institutions or regions.

The variation in approach reflects political and cultural preferences within each country (World Bank, 1996).

Hoffert (1997) assert that there is a concern about the issue of whether the entire academic institution should be reviewed or whether instead, individual academic programmes or disciplines should be the focus of quality review. He indicated that Denmark, the Netherlands and Portugal for instance, have focused on reviews of academic programmes while in Germany and France, some universities have also adopted institutional audits or other institution-wide reviews.

As suggested by Materu (2007), countries with large tertiary system need institutional rather than programme accreditation as a cost-effective option. However, where tertiary systems are small and underdeveloped, a less formal self-assessment for each institution may be necessary until the capacity could be strengthened to support a more formal nation quality assurance agency in the long run.

Quality assurance systems will find continuing challenges in the decade ahead, not only on their procedural decisions but also on the fundamental educational issues they must address. Complex questions about how to measure educational quality for instance are now gaining new urgency.

Aside the issue of quality assurance in higher education, one of the most difficult challenges confronting universities all over the world particularly Africa is the recruitment of academic staff of the right caliber in sufficient numbers and more importantly, how to retain them. Since salaries and conditions of service

have always been a contentious issue in higher education career, institutions find it increasingly difficult to recruit academic and technical staff.

Generally speaking, the academic staff is central to the contemporary university. This is so because universities, by their unique nature, are expected to be a repository of the most specialized and skilled intellectuals who serve as storehouses of knowledge for nurturing the human resource needs of a nation, yet they are offered unattractive remuneration packages. Sawyerr (2002) seems to agree with this as he contends that incentive packages available to university staff is no longer attractive. He explained that with the economic declines of the 1970s and 1980s and the severe inflation, university workers suffered what he called the "pauperization of the salaried classes". In addition, perquisites such as study leave and university housing became harder to get for the majority of staff.

Usually, the academic staff are lured away by some government agencies and private sector organizations where salaries are often better and the working environment more comfortable. In many cases, salaries and benefits in universities are lower than comparative positions in and outside of the civil service. For instance, a comparative salary analysis in Ghana in 1993 revealed that salary levels in sectors such as energy, finance, revenue collection and the media were all higher than those of the universities (Teferra & Altbach, 2004).

According to a World Bank Report (1996), many university staff have forsaken their academic calling due to the unattractive salary and fringe benefits. The Report notes that some 23,000 qualified academic staff are emigrating from Africa each year in search of better working conditions. William (2004) observed

that the situation makes it difficult for universities in developing countries to retain staff with special skills and academic experience. It is even more difficult recruiting and retaining overseas staff with the requisite skill, experience and qualifications.

It has therefore become a big challenge to entice young and talented scholars to replace the ageing professors. For instance, at the University of Ghana in 2000, 32.5 percent of the teaching staff were over 50 years and another 10 percent were retired staff who were on post retirement contract (Tettey, 2005). Undoubtedly, unsatisfactory working conditions of academics will only continue to push them towards the attractive lifestyles that they can enjoy in other establishments outside of higher education.

Interestingly, a study conducted by Blair and Jordan (1994) seems to confirm the scenario. They conducted case studies of seven universities in various parts of Africa on academic staff statistics, salaries and conditions of service. Their findings revealed that staff are dissatisfied with remunerations which are very low and non competitive with deteriorating university facilities and with what are perceived as poor relationships between the universities and their governments. The study also brought to light that staff are engaged in a wide range of secondary income earning activities to supplement their salaries and are often absent on extended periods of leave.

In any case, their study is consistent with claims (Tettey, 2005) that, with the substantial erosions in income and living conditions, staff in higher education have tended to concentrate on the struggle to keep body and soul together. That is,

the quest for alternative income through "moonlighting" such as various salary 'top-up' avenues (eg. lecturing during sandwich and distance education programmes), contract research and consultancies have become desperate of late.

Indeed, as can be noted, higher education institutions are facing challenges both old and new. No wonder, Olukoshi and Zeleza (2002) maintain that struggles of various kinds and intensities are being waged within the African universities. In a bid to tackle some of these challenges, pressures emanate from different angles which staff of higher education institutions need to contend with.

Summary

Virtually any facet of organizational life is a potential source of employee stress. Many organizations are experiencing radical transformations as a result of the need to realign their strategies and structures in response to the rapidly changing and highly demanding work environment. There are no objective criteria that can be used to define whether a situation will be stressful and since individuals vary considerably in the way that they experience stressors, their capabilities to cope also vary considerably.

This chapter has described the classical foundations of stress, the concept of stress, theories, sources and symptoms of stress, individual differences in stress, gender and stress, measurement of workplace stress, effects of stress in organizations and of course, management strategies for coping with stress. It also focused on some empirical studies on stress in higher education and some challenges facing higher education. Clearly, there is growing evidence that work-stress exist in institutions of higher learning.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the method and procedures the researcher adopted for the completion of the work. The chapter was presented under the following sub-headings: research design, population, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, administration of questionnaire, data collection procedure and data analysis.

Research Design

The higher education sector has witnessed considerable organizational changes in recent times which staff need to cope with. This work sought to investigate how the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast manage pressure at work as a result of the institution's quest to strive for academic excellence. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate for use since it deals with facts, opinions, attitudes or perceptions and the objective of the study was to provide a systematic description that is as factual and accurate as possible. Osuala (2005) recommends that the survey design is used when there is a need for systematic way of telling what a situation is.

Thus, it is on the strength of this that the researcher adopted the survey design. In descriptive survey, variables and procedures are described as accurately and completely as possible. They offer the most effective means of social

description and can provide extraordinarily detailed and precise information about large heterogeneous populations.

Population

The population for the study was made up of all senior staff of the University of Cape Coast which numbered up to 650 (Staff Statistics as at August 2007, Salaries Unit, U.C.C.).This was made up of 432 males and 218 females. They comprised administrative assistants to chief administrative assistants, research assistants to chief research assistants, technicians to chief technicians, nursing officers to chief nursing officers, accounting assistants to chief accounting assistants, auditing assistants to chief auditing assistants and library assistants to chief library assistants. These people were deemed relevant to the study because they were the group of people the University management observed that casual leave had become rampant among them.

They were grouped into four main ranks or levels. Rank one refers to Chief Administrative Assistants (CAA), rank two refers to Principal Administrative Assistants (PAA), rank three deals with Senior Administrative Assistants (SAA) and rank four refers to Administrative Assistants (AA).

Each of these ranks has its analogous group at the technical/ professional level. For instance, a Chief Administrative Assistant is equivalent to Chief Technician, Chief Research Assistant, Chief Accounting Assistant, Chief Library Assistant or Chief Nursing Officer. In the same way, a Principal Administrative Assistant is also equivalent to Principal Technician, Principal Research Assistant,

Principal Accounting Assistant, Principal Library Assistant or Principal Nursing Officer.

Table 1 shows the distribution of senior staff population by rank and faculty/school/section.

Table 1

Distribution of Senior Staff Population by Rank and Faculty/School/Section

Faculty/School/Section	Rank				
	CAA	PAA	SAA	AA	Total
Arts	3	5	38	5	51
Education	2	5	60	16	83
Science	3	8	88	30	129
Social Science	3	7	19	5	34
Agriculture	1	3	23	10	37
Business	-	1	4	1	6
Central Administration	14	32	97	147	290
Library	2	5	9	4	20
Total	28	66	338	218	650

Source: (Salaries Unit, U.C.C, August 2007.)

Apart from the senior staff, the population also comprised all knowledgeable people in the institution who could give relevant information about the study. For a study of this nature, the University doctors who diagnose stress-related problems (seven doctors) and Heads of teaching and non-teaching departments (52) were considered. The reason was that, they were the cream of

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people who work with the staff being studied and so could provide vital information about them. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1997) support this idea as they recommend that managers can help gather valid and reliable data which are relevant to the research questions and objectives. Such information enabled the researcher to cross check what the staff reported and the information their Heads provided concerning them.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Punch (1998) is of the view that, no study, whether quantitative, qualitative or both can include everything: "you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything" (p.105). In view of this, the researcher selected a sample of 242 respondents for the study. This was carefully chosen according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) Table for determining sample size for research activities. It states that a sample size of 242 is valid for a population of 650.

In the senior staff category, their characteristics indicated that majority occupied the senior administrative assistant (SAA) rank. Also, the chunk of senior staff were young employees and so, one could say that the University had a dynamic working force to reckon with. Again, majority of the senior staff had been working with the University for not more than 10 years as at the time of the study.

Stratified random sampling was adopted for the study. It was necessary to be certain that the units included in the sample were selected in proportion to their occurrence in the population. Sarantakos (1993) and McBurney (2001) recommend that, if the population one intends to survey has identifiable

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subgroups, a stratified random sample can be used to improve accuracy. The method chosen for the study was appropriate, taking into consideration the composition of the senior staff (administrators, technicians, accountants, auditors, researchers and nurses) and the need to represent all groups of the population in the sample. After the stratification procedure, simple random (lottery) was used to select the respondents within the stratas.

Sampling Procedure

The four main ranks within the senior staff were arranged according to faculty/school/ section. Each of the four ranks has a corresponding analogous grade at the technical/ professional level. Rank one which is CAA consisted of Chief Administrative Assistants, Chief Technicians, Chief Research Assistants, Chief Accounting Assistants, Chief nursing Officers and Chief Library Assistants. Rank two which is PAA consisted of Principal Administrative Assistants, Principal Technicians, Principal Research Assistants, Principal Accounting Assistants, Principal Nursing Officers and Principal Library Assistants.

Rank three which is SAA also consisted of Senior Administrative Assistants, Senior Technicians, Senior Research Assistants, Senior Accounting Assistants, Senior Nursing Officers and Senior Library Assistants. Rank four which is AA also comprised Technicians, Research Assistants, Accounting Assistants, Nursing Officers and Library Assistants. In other words, the senior staff in both academic and non-academic departments were grouped according to the four ranks identified.

Table 2 shows the distribution of sample by rank and faculty/school/section.

Table 2

Distribution of Sample by Rank and Faculty/School/Section

Faculty/School/Section	Rank				
	CAA	PAA	SAA	AA	Total
Arts	1	2	14	2	19
Education	1	2	22	6	31
Science	1	3	33	11	48
Social Science	1	2	8	2	13
Agriculture	-	1	9	4	14
Business	-	1	1	-	2
Central Administration	5	12	36	55	108
Library	1	2	3	1	7
Total	10	25	126	81	242

The sample size for each stratum was determined according to the proportion in which they occurred in the population. By this, the population of each stratum was multiplied by 242 and divided by the total population, which was 650. For instance, in the CAA stratum, 28 was multiplied by 242 and divided by 650 to give 10.

The lottery method was used to select the number of subjects from the stratas, making sure that all the faculties were represented. To illustrate, in each

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stratum eg. CAA, all the faculties (eg. Arts, Education, Science, Social Science, Agriculture etc) were assigned numbers written on pieces of paper, folded, mixed in a container and the required number (which was 10) picked. The rest followed the same pattern.

For the Heads of Departments, the aim was to include in the study at least one Head of Department from each School/Section. Therefore, a total of 13 Heads were chosen from both teaching and non-teaching departments. Names of the departments under each faculty or section were written on pieces of paper, folded and mixed separately in containers after which the required numbers were picked. The Heads in the departments picked were then contacted. For instance, the departments of English and African Studies were picked out of the ten departments under the Arts Faculty and so, the Heads of those departments were contacted for the study.

Finally, three out of seven doctors from the University Hospital were also included. A list of the doctors was obtained from the hospital administration, written on pieces of paper, folded, mixed and picked. Two of the doctors granted audience when they were contacted. Osuala (2005) recommends that if the units under study are homogenous, a small sample is sufficient but care must be taken to see that the sample drawn from the list is not biased.

Table 3 shows the sample distribution of Heads of Departments and number of departments under each faculty/school/section.

Table 3

Distribution of Heads of Departments /Sections Faculty/School

Faculty/Section	No. of Departments	Heads Chosen
Arts	10	2
Education	9	2
Science	8	2
Social Science	3	1
Agriculture	5	1
Business	1	1
Central Administration	15	3
Library	1	1
Total	52	13

Research Instrument

Two instruments (questionnaire and interview guide) were used to collect the data. A set of written questionnaire on stress management was self-designed after a thorough review of extant literature. The questionnaire was used for the senior staff who were literate. Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill (1997) point out that survey research is "based most often on a questionnaire, these data are standardized, allowing easy comparison" (p.76). Despite this, they caution that much time will be spent in designing and piloting the questionnaire. To them, the questionnaire, however, is not the only data collection device which belongs to the survey category.

As indicated by Kumekpor (2002), the use of the questionnaire allows the respondents to have privacy to respond to the questionnaire. Admittedly, he cautioned that the limitations of using a questionnaire are that it is difficult to check errors and omissions, and cannot be used for populations of low educational level.

The questionnaire on stress management (Appendix A) was made up of four distinct sections –A, B, C and D. It included both open-ended and closed-ended items. The bio-data of the respondents in section A provided insights about the profile of the respondents and more importantly, gender which was relevant to the work. Sections B and C which dealt with the symptoms and sources of stress respectively, required respondents to rank each item on a 5 point Likert rating format responses. The 5 point Likert scale offered opportunity for neutrality or those who were undecided because according to Dawes (2008), a 4 point scale is considered a forced choice since the middle option is not available or provided. Fifteen items were designed for section B and twenty-five items for section C. Questions in section D on management strategies also required respondents to provide their own responses (open-ended) or tick where appropriate. There were eighteen items under that section.

The researcher also conducted a semi- structured interview to the two selected doctors. There were ten items for them to respond to. This elicited information on the nature of stress-related problems reported by senior staff. Also, the 13 chosen Heads of Departments responded to a similar structured interview. Ten items were designed for them in order to elicit information on changes in

behaviour (symptoms) among the senior staff, the causes triggering the behaviours and techniques they adopted in alleviating them. The interview was appropriate for this category of respondents because according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1997), it has been found that managers are more likely to agree to be interviewed, rather than complete a questionnaire especially where the interview topic is seen to be interesting and relevant to their work. They are likely to provide sensitive and confidential information through the use of personal interview than using questionnaire. They further indicate that the interview provides opportunity for managers to reflect on events without needing to write them down.

Pilot-testing of Instrument

The instrument for the study was pilot-tested at the University of Education, Winneba. This was because it shares similar characteristics with the University of Cape Coast. A total of 45 questionnaires were administered with the help of the Assistant Registrar at the Division of Human Resource, Central Administration.

Senior staff from the Faculty of Science Education, Social Studies Education, Music Department, Library and Central Administration (Registry, Development office, Finance, Internal Audit, Planning Unit, Division of Human Resource and Security Section) responded to the questionnaire. In all, 40 questionnaires were duly completed and returned.

The results of the pilot-test enabled the researcher to reframe and delete some portions of the instrument. Generally speaking, the feedback from the

questionnaire suggested that the instrument was alright. By this, items in Sections B and C had a reliability Coefficient of .85 and .89 respectively.

However, in Section D, it was found that the first question on management strategies as to whether staff absent themselves when under stress was quite similar to the next question; hence the first question was deleted. A sub-question under question 5 on whether they attend evening entertainment with friends was also deleted.

The reliability was estimated on scaled items using SPSS 10.0 version. The Cronbach alpha was deemed the most appropriate since the largest proportion of the instrument were multiple scored. Ary and Razavich (1990) support this as they pointed out that Cronbach's alpha is used when the measures have multiple scored items.

In all, an overall Cronbach alpha reliability Coefficient of .75 was obtained which was considered reliable because according to Darren and Mallery (2001), ideally, the Cronbach alpha Coefficient of a scale should be above .7 to be considered acceptable.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire and the interview. Punch (1998) cautions that as far as possible, the researcher should stay in control of the data collection rather than leave it to others or to chance. A letter of introduction from I.E.P.A was obtained and given to Faculty Officers to inform staff members of the exercise. On the day of the exercise, some administrators in some of the departments asked the researcher to see the senior staff directly and

introduce herself to them and plead with them to assist her. The researcher therefore informed the respondents about the purpose of the research, about confidentiality and anonymity of the information they provided.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires by hand in the various faculties. A date was given for the collection of the completed questionnaires. However, through negotiation, most of the administrators made efforts to retrieve answered questionnaire for the researcher.

The administration of the questionnaire and the interviews conducted were not done separately. Some were made concurrently where possible so that it could save time and reduce the number of visits to the institution. In the case of the interview, the researcher conducted a face- to-face interview (individually) on an agreed date fixed by the Heads. The discussion was recorded principally by note-taking.

Nevertheless, the interview had to stretch beyond the period that the researcher anticipated because some Heads were busy. All Heads of Departments contacted for the interview granted audience to the researcher except one as well as in the case of the doctors. The data collection lasted for six weeks. Of the 242 questionnaire administered, 208 (86%) were retrieved.

Data Analysis

The completed questionnaires were edited for consistency and clarity, coded and entered into the computer using SPSS 10.0 version. Simple descriptive statistics, particularly tables, were generated for the analysis. By this, frequencies and percentage distributions were the analytical tools used in answering the

research questions. However, research question three demanded the use of inferential statistics, hence a t-test was conducted to find out significant difference, if any, between the male and female senior staff. With the open-ended questions, where respondents supplied their own information, the responses were edited and compared for similarities after which they were coded.

Similarly, in the case of the interview, a compilation of a master list of the responses to each item was done. The responses were scrutinized for those that were similar or nearly the same after which they were arranged into themes for discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the data analyzed and discusses them. Frequency tables have been drawn where necessary for pictorial presentation of the data. The presentation is based on the research questions posed in guiding the study (in chapter one). It begins with the biographical data of the respondents.

Biographical Data

The biographical data that was relevant in this study was the gender distribution of the respondents although an overview of the background of the respondents included age, qualification, rank, department/ section and work experience. The gender distribution is presented in tabular form followed by a short discussion of the information provided.

Table 4 shows the distribution of the respondents by gender.

Table 4

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	No.	%
Male	122	58.7
Female	86	41.3
Total	208	100

The gender distribution in Table 4 shows that there were one hundred and twenty two (122) males and eighty- six (86) females, which represent 58.7% and 41.3% respectively. The indication is that the male staff outnumbered the female and so, it can be said that within the senior staff, the males dominated.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1

Symptoms of Stress Experienced by the Senior Staff of the University of Cape Coast.

The purpose of research question one was to find out how stress manifests itself among the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. The symptoms were grouped under three broad headings as reviewed in the literature. They were:

1. Behavioural symptoms

2. Physiological symptoms

3. Psychological symptoms

The nature of the questionnaire demanded the use of a rating scale. Therefore, to make the presentation easier and clearer, the data obtained was classified into four areas. Ratings of "never," "rarely" and "sometimes" remained the same whereas "usually" and "always" were collapsed to become always.

Behavioural Symptoms of Stress

Table 5 presents common behavioural symptoms experienced by the respondents when faced with stressful conditions. It could be realized that a much greater number of respondents expressed the view that with the exception of loss of appetite, they hardly showed the behavioural symptoms when under stress.

Table 5

Behavioural Symptoms of Stress

Item	Variable	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Always		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Breathing rapidly	83	39.9	65	31.3	43	20.7	17	8.2	208	100
2	Lost of appetite	31	14.9	76	36.5	89	42.8	12	5.8	208	100
3	Being very aggressive	60	28.8	85	40.9	51	24.5	12	5.8	208	100
4	Being restless	60	28.8	81	38.9	52	25.0	14	6.8	208	100
5	Taking alcohol	136	65.4	36	17.3	27	13.0	9	4.3	208	100

As indicated by the results, 39.9% of the respondents indicated that they never experienced the symptom of breathing rapidly while 31.3% also indicated that they rarely experienced it. On the other hand, the study recorded 20.7% for respondents who said that they sometimes breathed rapidly when they were under stress. Only 8.2% of the respondents said they always experienced the symptom when under stress.

Similarly, on the issue of loss of appetite as a symptom, 14.9% said they never experienced it while 36.5% indicated that they rarely felt it. Meanwhile, the majority 42.8% indicated that they sometimes experienced loss of appetite. For those who always felt the symptom were only 5.8%. To Cole (2004), loss of appetite is a symptom that people under stress exhibit.

Asked whether they showed any sign of aggressiveness when under stress, 28.8% of the respondents said they never did while 40.9% indicating the majority indicated that they rarely showed it. However, 24.5% of the respondents said they sometimes exhibited such behaviour when under stress. A few of them 5.8% revealed that they always expressed such behaviour.

Views expressed about being restless when under stress showed that 28.8% never experienced it, 38.9% rarely experienced it, 25.0% sometimes became restless and 6.8% always manifested such behaviour. The finding supports what Cole (2004) asserted that, a typical symptom of stress is restlessness.

The last variable under behavioural symptoms which was on alcohol consumption revealed that a very high proportion of the respondents (65.4%) said they never took alcohol when under stress while 17.3% indicated that they rarely took alcohol. Nevertheless, 13.0% of the respondents stated that they sometimes enjoyed alcohol when under stress while 4.3% indicated that they always did. This point is in tandem with what Cooper and Quick (1999) found that, it is more than possible that people seek solace in alcohol and drugs as a result of stress but because of the secretive nature of both practices, it is difficult to find hard evidence that they are related to stress.

Heads of Departments interviewed also confirmed that, sometimes some of the senior staff exhibited the behavioural symptoms when under stress but then, it is difficult to examine them compared with that of the physical and psychological symptoms of stress.

Physiological Symptoms of Stress

The study established that a greater percentage of the senior staff indicated that they sometimes or rarely experienced the symptoms physically. The variables that were considered under the physiological symptoms were:

(i)   Feeling back pains and headaches

(ii)   Feeling tired at short intervals

(iii)   Feeling physically weak

(iv)   Feeling dizziness and eyestrain

(v)   Feeling tensed up

The results obtained on the physiological symptoms are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Physiological Symptoms of Stress

Item	Variable	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Always		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Feeling backpains and headaches	23	11.1	55	26.4	88	42.3	42	19.2	208	100
2	Feeling tired at short intervals	37	17.8	71	34.1	75	36.1	25	12.0	208	100
3	Feeling physically weak	58	27.9	75	36.1	60	28.8	15	7.3	208	100
4	Dizziness and eyestrain	73	35.1	61	29.3	57	27.4	17	8.2	208	100
5	Feeling tensed up	27	13.1	71	34.5	81	39.3	27	13.1	208	100

A minority of the respondents (11.1%) stated that they never experienced the first variable which is back pains and headaches while 26.4% indicated that they hardly felt the aches. However, majority 42.3% of them said they sometimes showed such characteristics while 19.2% were of the opinion that they always experienced such symptoms. As pointed out in their studies, Bennet (1994), Cooper and Quick (1999), Cole (2004) and Hunsaker (2005) reveal that recurring headaches and back pains are physiological symptoms of stress.

As to whether they felt tired at short intervals when under stress, 17.8% of the respondents agreed that they never felt tiredness, 34.1% also claimed that they rarely experienced it and 36.1% expressed the view that they sometimes felt it. Meanwhile, 12.0% of respondents indicated that they always felt tired at short intervals whenever they were under stress. This finding is in tune with Cooper and Quick's (1999) idea that when an individual is under pressure and the pressure exceeds a level at which the individual is able to cope, there is constant tiredness and there is the tendency to sweat for no apparent reason.

Body weakness was the next item examined under the physiological symptoms. It became clear that 27.9% of the respondents stated that they never experienced weakness but 36.1% said they rarely did. While 28.8% of respondents pointed out that sometimes they felt physical weakness under stressful conditions, only 7.3% indicated that they always felt it.

In the case of dizziness and eyestrain as the next variable, the results obtained from the data indicated that majority of the respondents 35.1% never showed such symptoms whereas 29.3% pointed out that they rarely experienced

such symptoms. Candidly, 27.4% of them indicated that they sometimes felt dizziness and eyestrain while 8.2% stated that they always felt the symptoms.

The study also revealed that 13.1% respondents held the opinion that they never felt tensed up whenever they were under stress but 34.5% reacted that they rarely experienced tension. On the other hand, 39.3% (majority) of the respondents observed that they sometimes felt tensed up whenever they were confronted with stress situations. There were 13.1% of the respondents who said that they always experienced tension as a result of stress. This supports Cole's (2004) view that stress brings about tensed muscle and extra adrenalin secretion which is usually a short-term reaction. According to the Heads of Departments interviewed, more often than not, staff complained about headaches, back pains and general aches but then, whereas some expressed it, others kept it.

Psychological Symptoms of Stress

This segment simply sought to bring to the fore some of the psychological manifestations of stress. The focal points considered under the psychological symptoms were poor concentration, feeling depressed, feeling frustrated, feeling anxious and feeling bored.

Data obtained from the questionnaire and information gathered through the interviews indicated that the respondents sometimes or rarely showed psychological symptoms. One thing that emerged from the responses given by the Heads of Departments interviewed was the issue of boredom among some of the senior staff.

Table 7 gives details of the responses obtained from respondents.

Table 7

Psychological Symptoms of Stress

Item Variable	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Always		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Poor concentration	42	20.2	98	47.1	52	25.0	16	7.7	208	100
2. Feeling depressed	63	30.3	77	37.0	54	26.0	14	6.8	208	100
3. Feeling frustrated	36	17.3	81	38.9	70	33.7	21	10.1	208	100
4. Feeling anxious	32	15.4	70	33.7	76	36.5	30	14.5	208	100
5. Feeling bored	13	6.3	74	35.6	82	39.4	39	18.7	208	100

On the issue of poor concentration, it was discovered that 20.2% of the respondents stated that they never lacked concentration when under stress but then, a sizable proportion (47.1%) also indicated that they rarely showed forgetfulness under stressful conditions. Also, 25.0 % of the respondents expressed the view that they sometimes exhibited such characteristic whereas 7.7% confirmed that they always did. The Heads of Departments also asserted that although there is lack of concentration, it is not very common, which they classified as mild.

Depression was one aspect of the variables looked at under the psychological symptoms. From the results obtained, 30.3% of respondents pointed out that they never experienced depression during distress while 37.0% indicated that they rarely experienced it. Again, 26.0% of them stated that they sometimes felt depressed under stress but only 6.8% of them said they always experienced depression when confronted with stress.

On the symptom of feelings of frustration, 17.3% respondents indicated that they never experienced feelings of frustration, while 38.9% said they rarely did so. Another 33.7% respondents pointed out that they sometimes showed the symptom while a few of them (10.1%) stated that they always went through frustration when faced with stress-related problems.

On the issue of anxiety, the responses were quite similar to that of frustration. The results indicated that 15.4% of respondents never experienced anxiety. Meanwhile, 33.7% noted that they hardly felt the symptom, while 36.5% said they sometimes experienced anxiety during stressful conditions. Only 14.5% stated that they always experienced anxiety.

Boredom was the last item considered under the psychological symptoms. The results present the idea that only 6.3% of respondents never felt bored. However, 35.6% reported rarely, 39.4% reported sometimes whereas 18.7% always felt bored in cases where they were challenged with distress.

Heads of Departments also revealed that they observed such psychological symptoms particularly, boredom among the staff but on the whole, the symptoms were mild. The doctors interviewed also gave the impression that, when stress level is normal, the symptoms associated with stress become mild unless stress is at the acute stage. On the whole, the most plausible interpretation of the symptoms studied is that, some of the symptoms are fairly overt and readily recognized while some signs have very subtle overt aspects (Cohen, Fink, Gadon & Willits, 1992).

Causes of Work-Related Stress Encountered by the Senior Staff of the University of Cape Coast

In order to establish the forces that trigger the symptoms of work stress, this section was included to examine the factors that are responsible for job stress. As reviewed in the literature, the causes of work stress were grouped into five major themes. These were:

1. Physical environmental stressors

2. Job task stressors

3. Interpersonal stressors

4. Role-related stressors

5. Personality traits (personal stressors)

Again, the nature of the questions demanded the use of a rating scale. Ratings of "stress free", "mild stress", "moderate stress", "much stress" and "extreme stress" were used in the questionnaire. However, to make the analysis simple and clear, the first three ratings remained unchanged while "much stress" and "extreme stress" have been pulled under much stress.

Physical Environmental Stressors

The following variables were examined under this theme.

1. Too much noise in the environment

2. A poorly designed office/ work space

3. Safety hazards exist at workplace

4. Work conditions are not appealing

5. Poor ventilation and lighting

Table 8 gives details of the responses obtained for physical environmental stressors.

Table 8

Physical Environmental Stressors

Item	Variable	Stress free		Mild		Moderate		Much		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Too much noise in environment	56	26.9	58	27.9	38	18.3	56	26.9	208	100
2.	A poorly designed office/work space	29	13.9	52	25.0	58	27.9	69	33.2	208	100
3.	Safety hazards exist at workplace	62	29.8	52	25.0	44	21.2	50	24.0	208	100
4.	Work conditions are not appealing	13	6.3	31	14.9	66	31.7	98	47.1	208	100
6.	Poor ventilation										
7.	and lighting	42	20.2	45	21.6	47	22.6	74	35.6	208	100

It was clear in Table 8 that, with the exception of those who indicated that too much noise in the environment produced moderate stress for them, the rest were almost equally divided. As can be seen, 26.9% of respondents claimed that too much noise in the environment was stress-free to them while 27.9% experienced mild stress. On the other hand, 18.3% of them termed theirs as moderate while 26.9% also perceived theirs as much stress.

A poorly designed office/workspace was the next variable considered. The results showed that majority of the respondents were of the view that a poorly designed workspace caused stress to them. However, 13.9% indicated that such situation did not cause stress to them at all, but 25.0% of them also claimed that such situation caused mild stress to them. Meanwhile, 27.9% of them stated that the variable was moderate while the majority 33.2% stated that the variable caused much stress among them.

This finding supports the works of Griffin (2005), Greenberg (2005), Hunsaker (2005) and Daft and Marcic (2004) that a poorly designed office and cramped workspace can make it difficult for people to have privacy or even social interaction.

Asked whether safety hazards also caused stress at the workplace, responses were almost evenly distributed among the respondents. It was found that 29.8% claimed that they were free from stress when it comes to safety hazards. For those who saw it as mild stress, they were 25.0% while 21.2% also said it caused moderate stress to them. Safety hazards caused much stress among 24.0% of respondents.

On the issue of work conditions not appealing, the data produced very interesting results. A sizeable proportion (47.1%) of the respondents perceived it to be one of the major causes of work stress among them. Only 6.3% indicated that poor work conditions caused no stress while 14.9% identified theirs as mild. Meanwhile, 31.7% said they experienced moderate stress under the circumstance while the majority 47.1% perceived theirs as much stress.

In an interview with some Heads of Departments, it became apparent that conditions of work which were not very much appealing could be a source of considerable unhappiness to majority of the senior staff. In the review of literature, this variable has been identified as potential stressor by most of the authors. For instance, Gmelch, Wilke and Lovrich (1986), George and Jones (1996), Ross and Altmaier (1994), Robbins and De Cenzo (1998) and Rollinson (2005) identified that poor work conditions become potentially disturbing to individuals. The study also confirms recent findings of Liu, Spector and Shi (2007) that staff in Beijing Normal University (China) reported high stress on employment conditions.

The last item under the physical environmental stressors was poor ventilation and lighting. Majority gave the impression that they experienced much stress under such conditions. The data obtained showed that 20.2% of the respondents said they did not experience any stress, 21.6% experienced it mild, 22.6% also perceived theirs as moderate while 35.6% agreed that they experienced much stress under unpleasant physical conditions such as poor ventilation and lighting. McShane and Von Glinow (2000) as well as Goetsch (1999) emphasized that poor lighting and ventilation can induce stress at the workplace.

On the environmental stressors, Heads of Departments interviewed gave the impression that stressors from this category are rather mild apart from the work conditions that are not very much appealing.

Job Task Stressors

It appeared lack of recognition for good effort induced much stress among the respondents. This section looks at the following variables:

1. Unable to complete task during an average day

2. Lack of variety at work

3. Lack of recognition for good effort

4. Lack of effective communication and consultation to carry out tasks

5. Lack of focus on new technology eg. computers

Table 9 shows the results obtained from the respondents.

Table 9

Job Task Stressors

Item Variable	Stress free		Mild		Moderate		Much		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Unable to complete task	44	21.2	61	29.3	56	26.9	47	22.6	208	100
2. Lack of variety at work	35	16.8	59	28.4	59	28.4	55	26.4	208	100
3. Lack of recognition for good effort	37	17.8	49	23.6	54	26.0	68	32.7	208	100
4. Lack of effective communication	29	13.9	65	31.3	60	28.8	54	26.0	208	100
5. Lack of focus on new technology	43	20.7	64	30.8	43	20.7	58	27.9	208	100

In the case of Table 9, the study revealed that 21.2% of the respondents reported that they felt no stress when they were not able to complete their tasks before the close of work but 29.3% admitted mild stress for their inability to complete tasks. Close to this, 26.9% also admitted that stress was moderate for them while 22.6% also reported much stress. This finding supports Cole (2004) and Daft and Marcic (2004) that unfinished tasks and intrusions are a source of stress at the workplace.

For lack of variety at work, majority agreed that there was mild to moderate stress among them. Only 16.8% perceived lack of variety as stress-free. The results recorded 28.4% and another 28.4% for mild stress and moderate stress respectively. There were 26.4% who said lack of variety caused much stress among them. Perhaps this is what Goetsch (1999) says that monotonous work makes the worker become bored and possibly experiences some stress.

Responses to lack of recognition for good effort painted a different picture. Although majority of the respondents said the absence of recognition for good effort caused stress among them, few of them also termed it as stress-free. Those who held the opinion that they did not experience stress under such circumstance were 17.8%. Conversely, 23.6% admitted mild stress among them while 26.0% also admitted that stress was moderate. The remaining 32.7% pointed out that they experienced much stress. The finding agrees with the studies of Gmelch, Wilke and Lovrich (1986), Abifarin (1997) as well as Leung, Siu and Spector (2000).Their studies revealed that one of the stressors which posed a challenge to university staff was recognition. To Rollinson (2005), focusing only

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on isolated incidents of sub-standard performance and ignoring good performance are behaviours that can be particularly stress provoking.

In assessing whether lack of effective communication and consultation to carry out one's job causes stress among the respondents, the results obtained clearly showed that stress was mild. As can be seen in Table 9, 13.9% of respondents indicated that they experienced no stress at all, whereas 31.3% reported mild stress. For the rest, 28.8% and 26.0% reported moderate and much stress respectively.

The last variable under job task stressors also considered lack of technology (eg. computers) as mild stress among the respondents. Perhaps one might be tempted to ascribe this to the fact that many people are trying to catch up with technology and employers are also trying to update the technological know-how of their employees. From the results therefore, 20.7% identified lack of technology as stress-free and 30.8% as mild stress. Another 20.7% also claimed that stress was moderate among them while 27.9% assessed theirs as high stress. Information from the interviews conducted confirmed the findings as interviewees stated that stressors from job task are moderate. They rather disagreed with the assertion that lack of recognition for good effort caused much stress among the respondents.

On the whole, it appears the job task stressors were generally moderate with the exception of lack of recognition for good effort. Thus, stressors from the tasks required of respondents were not so challenging.

Interpersonal Stressors

It was revealed that stressors of this nature existed at the workplace and they posed much stress among the respondents. The stressors identified under this section were:

1. Inability to get on well with colleagues at work

2. Dealing with difficult boss

3. Not knowing how your boss evaluates your work

4. Dealing with uncooperative subordinates

5. Dealing with irritating students

Table 10 highlights the findings of the study.

Table 10

Interpersonal Stressors

Item Variable	Stress free		Mild		Moderate		Much		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Inability to get on well with colleagues	70	33.7	60	28.8	43	20.7	35	16.9	208	100
2. Dealing with difficult boss	47	22.6	46	22.1	53	25.5	62	29.8	208	100
3. Not knowing how your boss evaluates your work	33	15.9	55	26.4	58	27.9	62	29.8	208	100
4. Dealing with subordinates	52	25.0	47	22.6	51	24.5	58	27.9	208	100
5. Dealing with irritating students	45	21.6	40	19.2	52	25.0	71	34.1	208	100

An analysis of Table 10 shows that with the exception of the first variable (inability to get on well with colleagues at work), stress was much higher among the respondents in terms of the other four variables. Concerning the first variable, about 33.7% of respondents indicated that they were free from stress while 28.8% said they experienced mild stress. Again, 20.7% of respondents were of the opinion that stress was moderate when they were unable to get on well with their colleagues at work. Only 16.9% experienced much stress.

A close examination of the results reveal that majority of the respondents experienced moderate to high levels of stress when they dealt with difficult bosses. Results obtained showed that 22.6% of respondents were stress-free when dealing with difficult boss while 22.1% of respondents classified it as mild. Another 25.5% classified it as moderate while 29.8% said they experienced much stress under such conditions.

This finding is consistent with claims that management style where individuals find it difficult to adapt to a superior's management style whether it is too autocratic or too participative can certainly create stress at the workplace (Buck, 1972; Spielberger & Vagg, 1999; Cole, 2004; Erasmus, 2006; Rollinson, 2005 & Griffin, 2005).

The next variable sought to know whether lack of feedback (not knowing how your boss evaluates your work) from bosses produced some amount of stress. Results were quite similar to that of dealing with difficult bosses. Only 15.9% of the respondents indicated that they were stress-free. Others, 26.4% claimed there was mild stress, 27.9% opted for moderate and 29.8% rated it as high stress. As

McShane and Von Glinow (2000) put it, uncertainty about performance expectations and lack of adequate direction can create pressure for the individual.

Another aspect of the interpersonal stressors had to do with dealing with uncooperative subordinates. About 25.0% indicated that they experienced no stress at all whilst 22.6% indicated mild stress. Another 24.5% and 27.9% indicated moderate to much stress when dealing with uncooperative subordinates.

Dealing with irritating students was another source of stress to respondents. The study revealed that while 34.1% and 25.0% experienced high and moderate stress respectively, only 19.2% and 21.6% experienced mild and stress-free condition. Heads of Departments interviewed also hinted that, as far as interpersonal relationships are concerned, staff relate well with one another although occasionally, students who are irritating and uncooperative subordinates can cause anger among some of the respondents. The findings support McShane and Von Glinow (2000). They say occupational stress is also located in work relationship such as subordinates, co-workers and customers.

Role-related Stressors

This group of stressors revealed that 'too much workload' and 'lack of career opportunities' posed much challenge to the respondents. The following were the main items investigated.

1. Uncertainty about your exact job responsibility

2. Ideas differ from those of your immediate supervisor

3. Job tasks conflict with other co-workers' tasks

4. Lack of opportunities for career development

5. Too much workload

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Table 11 provides information obtained from the study conducted.

Table 11

Role- related Stressors

Item Variable	Stress free		Mild		Moderate		Much		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Uncertainty about job responsibility	59	28.4	61	29.3	47	22.6	41	19.7	208	100
2. Ideas differ from your supervisor	46	22.1	75	36.1	54	26.0	33	15.8	208	100
3. Job tasks conflict with other co-workers' tasks	57	27.4	44	21.2	55	26.4	52	25.0	208	100
4. Lack of career opportunities	26	12.5	45	21.6	62	29.8	75	36.1	208	100
5. Too much workload	30	14.4	42	20.2	59	28.4	77	37.0	208	100

A close observation of the results obtained gives the idea that uncertainty about one's job responsibility produced mild stress to the respondents. By this indication, about 29.3% admitted mild stress among them while 28.4% declared theirs as stress-free. Another 22.6% of the respondents believed that stress was moderate for them while 19.7% also expressed theirs as high.

Responses obtained on "ideas differ from those of your immediate supervisor" indicated that respondents experienced mild (36.1%) to moderate (26.0%) stress conditions. However, 22.1% of respondents said they were stress-free. Only 15.8% of respondents perceived their stress level to be high.

Commenting on the issue of job tasks conflict with other co-workers' tasks as another variable under role-related stressors, many of the respondents (27.4%) said they were stress-free. Those who felt mild to moderate stress were 21.2% and 26.4% respectively. The remaining 25.0% said they experienced much stress.

The assertion that lack of opportunities for career development causes stress for some people was investigated. The study brought to light that there was much stress among the respondents. By this, a sizeable proportion of the respondents, 36.1%, stated that they experienced much stress while 29.8% also claimed that they experienced moderate stress. Only 12.5% indicated that they were stress-free while 21.6% also indicated that they felt mild stress. The finding agrees with Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits (1995) as well as Rollinson (2005) that in structures where people feel there are few opportunities for growth and personal development, it can give rise to feelings of anxiety. Ross and Altmaier (1994) also emphasized that, human resource management practices such as lack of training, promotional opportunities and mid career development can make people experience some amount of stress.

The last variable under this section was on the issue of too much workload. A very high proportion of the respondents (37.0%) indicated that they experienced much stress while another 28.4% perceived their level of stress as moderate. Only 14.4% claimed they were stress-free. The remaining 20.2% said stress was mild. It is not strange that they experienced high stress when there was

too much workload. To Lowe (2005), faculty workloads and performance expectations have increased in recent times Similarly, authors such as Kinard (1988), Bennet (1994), Goetsch (1999), Rollinson (2005), Erasmus (2006), Mohammed (2006), Cole (2004), Robbins and De Cenzo (1998) as well as George and Jones(1996) have identified workload as potential stressor in organizations.

Personality Traits (Personal Stressors)

Since it is believed that some people are psychologically predisposed to stress, this component of stressors was also investigated. It sought to verify whether personality traits made the respondents vulnerable to stress.

The study shows that respondents expressed mild traits from stressors of this nature. The variables considered under this section were:

1. Trying to do several things at once

2. Having difficulty accepting and enjoying relaxation

3. Lack of control over situations

4. Always hurrying others, dislike waiting

5. Trying to look busy, forgetting meal time.

Information in Table 12 gives a clear picture of the findings.

Table 12

Personality Traits (Personal Stressors)

Item	Variable	Stress free		Mild		Moderate		Much		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Trying to do several things at once	34	16.3	65	31.3	59	28.4	50	24.1	208	100
2.	Have difficulty enjoying relaxation	69	33.2	61	29.3	54	26.0	24	11.5	208	100
3.	Lack of control over situation	63	30.3	62	29.8	50	24.0	33	15.9	208	100
4.	Always hurrying others, dislike waiting	68	32.7	58	27.9	46	22.1	36	17.3	208	100
5.	Trying to look busy forgetting mealtime	50	24.0	58	27.9	51	24.5	49	23.5	208	100

On the issue of trying to do several things at the same time, respondents gave the impression that stress was mild among them. Only 16.3% of respondents said they were stress-free. However, 31.3% of respondents reported it as mild and 28.4% as moderate. Another 24.1% of respondents also expressed the view that stress was high among them.

Asked whether they had difficulty accepting and enjoying relaxation, only 11.5% of respondents reported much stress while the majority 33.2% experienced

stress-free conditions. Those who reported mild to moderate stress, recorded 29.3% and 26.0% respectively.

In assessing whether lack of control over situations caused some amount of stress among the respondents, the study recorded 30.3% for stress-free, 29.8% for mild stress, 24.0% for moderate and 15.9% for much stress.

The issue of always hurrying others/ dislike waiting was the next item investigated. Compared to that of lack of control over situations, respondents (32.7%) said they were stress-free. Only 17.3% of respondents noted that there was much stress among them. Another 27.9% classified their stress level as mild while 22.1% also perceived theirs as moderate.

Responses to the last variable (trying to look busy, forgetting meal time) revealed that there was mild stress although the responses obtained were almost evenly distributed among the respondents. As can be observed in Table 12, the study recorded 24.0% for stress-free, 27.9% for mild, 24.5% for moderate and 23.5% for those who experienced much stress.

According to Heads interviewed, they hardly noticed such characteristics among the senior staff and this confirmed the findings. It was therefore clear that, the personal stressors were not so pronounced among the respondents.

Research Question 3

Relationship between Gender and Stress among the Senior Staff of the

University of Cape Coast.

T-test analysis was made to ascertain whether significant difference exist between male and female senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. The difference was looked at from the perspective of symptoms of stress, sources of stress and a combination of both.

The null hypothesis was stated as, there is no significant difference in stress between male and female senior staff.

The results of the analyses are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Relationship between Gender and Stress among Senior Staff of U.C.C

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value
Symptoms of Stress	Male	122	35.34	7.462	
	Female	86	33.78	7.595	0.141
Sources of Stress	Male	122	68.65	16.397	
	Female	86	65.06	19.909	0.157
Stress	Male	122	103.99	20.342	
	Female	86	98.84	24.114	0.097

In relation to the symptoms of stress, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (Ho) and conclude that there is no significant difference in stress between male and female senior staff since the p-value of 0.141 is higher than the alpha value of

0.05. Again, with regard to the sources of stress, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference between male and female senior staff since the p-value of 0.157 is higher than the alpha value of 0.05.

The significance test conducted to find out if there is any difference between male and female in term of stress also indicate that the p-value of 0.097 is higher than the alpha value of 0.05 hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference in stress between the male and female senior staff. This finding agrees with recent research of Aida, Azlina and Balqis (2007) who found that significant differences did not exist in relation to gender and stress among staff of the University of Malaysia.

Research Question 4

How Senior Staff of the University of Cape Coast Cope with Stress

This section looked at stress management techniques the respondents used in coping with stress. The aim was to find out the mechanisms they usually adopted in alleviating the workplace stress they go through. A variety of stress techniques were given by the respondents who participated in the study. This section produced very interesting results as depicted in Table 14.

Table 14

Stress Management Techniques

Items	Variable	Yes		No		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Able to stay at work throughout the day when under stress.	148	71.2	60	28.8	208	100
2.	Relax and meditate when under stress.	173	83.2	35	16.8	208	100
3.	Take sick leave/time off work when under stress.	65	31.3	143	68.8	208	100
4.	Engage in physical exercise.	148	71.2	60	28.8	208	100
5.	Use drugs when under stress.	36	17.3	172	82.7	208	100
6.	Consume alcohol in managing stress.	21	10.1	187	89.9	208	100
7.	Belong to any non-work group in your community.	129	62.0	79	38.0	208	100
8.	Consult other co-workers for help when under stress.	101	48.6	107	51.4	208	100
9.	Consult other members of the society for help when under stress.	76	36.5	132	63.5	208	100
10.	Aware of any stress management programme/support designed by the institution for staff.	30	14.4	178	85.6	208	100
11.	The institution organizes workshops and seminars on stress management	30	14.4	178	85.6	208	100
12.	Participate in such programmes.	70	33.7	138	66.3	208	100

The first item in this section asked respondents whether they were able to stay at work throughout the working hours when under stress. A very high proportion of the respondents (71.2%) indicated that they were able to stay at work when under stress. However, 28.8% said they were not able to do so.

The next question, an open-ended type, required respondents to indicate the strategies they used in managing stress at work. This was done with the view to eliciting as many techniques as could be given in support of their responses to the first question.

The 71.2% of respondents who indicated that they were able to stay at work when under stress mentioned a variety of techniques they adopted. Majority said they usually took a stroll or went to see friends in other departments. Some of them also indicated that they just stopped work for a while and relaxed or got engaged in conversations. Others also stated that they did other things such as reading (newspapers, magazines and bibles), listening to music, browsing the internet or playing computer games when stressed out. Heads interviewed also acceded to this fact. A critical look at these techniques given by the respondents revealed that they were all tangible since stress is an individually experienced phenomenon and so it is the individual who knows whether a particular technique for combating stress works for him or her (Cole, 2004).

In the case of the 28.8% of respondents who said that they were not able to stay at work when under stress, their responses clearly showed that basically, they rest at home. However, a few of them hinted that they did little household work or visited friends to interact with them.

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Asked whether they relax and meditate when under stress, the response was positive. A much greater proportion of respondents (83.2%) answered in the affirmative with only16.8% indicating that they did not adopt these techniques.

To ascertain whether sick leave or request for time off work was rampant among the respondents (as a way of managing stress), the data obtained shows that they were minimal Although 68.8% of respondents said they did not take time off work as a coping strategy, 31.3% of respondents indicated that they sometimes requested for time off work. The situation was not different from what the Heads also said. They said that although time off work was not very common, occasionally staff asked for casual leave.

Physical exercise is deemed to be one of the common ways by which stress could be managed. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate whether they engaged in physical exercise. According to the responses obtained, 71.2% of respondents answered 'yes' while 28.8% of respondents answered 'no'. To Cooper and Quick (1999), physical exercise is a preventive approach to stress management.

Furthermore, the study also asked respondents to indicate whether they used drugs when under stress. Only 17.3% revealed that they resort to the use of drugs when under stress while the majority (82.7%) said they did not. Similarly, they were asked to indicate whether they use alcohol in managing stress. Only 10.1% stated that they used alcohol as a means of alleviating stress. However, the majority (89.9%) pointed out that they refrained from alcohol.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they belonged to any non-work group in their community (eg. society or religious group). By the data obtained, 62.0% of respondents indicated that they belonged to non-work group while 38.0% of respondents stated that they did not.

In finding out whether they consulted their co-workers for help when under stress, respondents were almost equally divided on the issue. While 48.6% said 'yes', 51.4% also said 'no'. Relatedly, they were also asked to indicate whether they consulted other members of the society for help when they experienced stress. Although most of the respondents (63.5%) pointed out that they did not consult such people, the remaining 36.5% said they consulted other people in the society for help. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) as well as Spielberger and Sarason (1975) said most people are able to cope with stress more effectively if they lead balance lives and are part of a network of people who give them support and encouragement.

For those who indicated that they consult other members of the society when under stress, they were asked to indicate the category of people they consulted. Four categories which were given were counselors (14.1%), priests (9.0%), relatives/friends (57.7%) and specialists such as medical doctors (19.2%). Perhaps the high preference for friends and relatives may be due to the fact that their relationship with this category of people was closer and easy to approach.

The next item asked respondents to mention any two suggestions the people they consulted offered them. Though respondents gave a wide range of suggestions, the most prominent ones included taking enough rest, exercising the

body, having positive thinking, reducing workload or taking some time off work, eating well and managing their time well. Also, a few of them stated that the people recommended pastimes or hobbies, medication and referrals.

Still on the management strategies, the researcher also sought to know whether there were any stress management programmes or support systems in place (by the institution) for staff members. In line with this, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were aware of any such programmes by the institution. Majority of the respondents (85.6%) appeared to be unaware of such programmes. Only 14.4% indicated their awareness. Surprisingly, almost all the Heads of Departments interviewed claimed they were aware of such programmes. However, they were quick to add that the support systems were woefully inadequate.

Perhaps their (respondents) ignorance of stress management programmes could be attributed to lack of publicity. This came to light from the various comments they provided at the end of the questionnaire. Those who indicated that they were aware were asked to mention any two programmes they knew. They mentioned counseling services and keep fit.

To probe further, the study also sought to know whether the institution organized workshops or seminars on stress management for staff. Again, 85.6% of respondents answered in the negative while 14.4% answered in the affirmative. According to the interviews conducted, Heads rather took a neutral stance as they revealed that although seminars are organized occasionally for senior staff, they had little or no knowledge about that of stress management.

For respondents (14.4%) who answered in the affirmative, they were asked to indicate whether they participated in such programmes. The responses showed that participation was not high among the respondents. While 33.7% stated that they participated, 66.3% of respondents indicated that they did not.

The effort by the institution to support staff with stress matters is what Van Schoor and Van der Merwe (1995), Goetsch (1999), Ivancevich (2001) and Cole (2004) found to be of great importance if stress is to be dealt with holistically.

From the study conducted, it became clear that the approaches respondents adopted in dealing with the stress phenomenon have to do with primary and secondary prevention methods and to some extent, treatment strategies by trained health professionals. In other words, both problem-focused and emotion- focused techniques were the management strategies they used in alleviating stress. Clearly, it seems respondents actually relied more on personal strategies in coping with stress and less on stress interventions by the institution.

Interviews with Heads of Departments (HODS) and Doctors

The interviews conducted mainly centered on the symptoms and causes of stress and management strategies. All Heads interviewed affirmed that they sometimes noticed changes in behaviour or attitude towards work among the senior staff. They revealed that sometimes the respondents may be sluggish and may not be in a good mood.

Symptoms of Stress

On the symptoms of stress, Heads were asked to identify whether they observed the following characteristics among the senior staff. These were tiredness, lack of concentration, reports about headaches and back pains, physical weakness, dizziness and eyestrain, boredom, frustration, anxiety, depression, tension and aggressiveness. The general impression they gave was that the symptoms manifested on a mild to moderate level among the respondents.

Relating to the symptom of tiredness, they indicated that it exists among the staff especially when academic activities are in session. However, a few of them asserted that whether the institution is in session or not, the staff experienced pressure. In terms of lack of concentration, it came to light that although some actually lacked concentration and often repeated mistakes or committed errors, the majority of them did not lack concentration at all. This confirmed the findings from the respondents. For instance, the Heads of the Security Section and Fire Service indicated that due to the sensitive nature of their jobs, staff were cautious of what they do.

With reports about headaches, back pains and bodily weakness, Heads hinted that sometimes, some of the senior staff complained about such symptoms. They explained that while some expressed general aches and pains, others rather tried to endure. They also added that those who sit for long hours normally complained of back pains, tensed muscles and leg pains. Meanwhile, the Heads of the Security Section and Fire Service claimed that general aches and pains were minimized among their staff because of the daily physical exercise they do in the

mornings when they report at work. On the issue of dizziness and eyestrain, almost all Heads agreed that they hardly observed such characteristics and this confirmed the responses obtained from the respondents.

In the case of boredom, majority agreed that there was boredom, though a few of them denied it. Some used expressions such as "somehow", "not really" and "to some extent". One interviewee was captured as saying, "Yes, there is boredom alright, but particularly among the idle". Asked whether there was frustration, anxiety and depression, Heads held the opinion that these characteristics sometimes manifested among the respondents but on a mild note.

Most of the Heads interviewed revealed that it was rather the young employees who were seen to be anxious whereas frustration was registered particularly among the older employees who cannot climb the academic ladder any more.

In the case of tension and aggressiveness, there was a contention among some of the Heads interviewed. Whereas some pointed out that there was tension, others did not agree. Nevertheless, they expressed the view that there was some kind of aggressiveness especially among the older female employees and this they said is a trait some naturally had.

Information obtained from the doctors interviewed also revealed that the symptoms associated with stress were sometimes reported by staff. They hinted that many of the staff who reported such cases, were not even aware that their problems were stress-related. Although the doctors gave the impression that there were several symptoms, the most common ones they mentioned were headaches

that have no organic basis, fluctuating palpitations, depression, back pains and general aches. Again, they alerted that personality traits also count because people with relaxed approach to work hardly suffer stress.

Causes of Work-Stress

The second segment of the interview dealt with the causes or factors responsible for the symptoms identified. It came to light that stressors from the work environment such as "too much noise in the environment", "safety hazards" and "poor ventilation" were moderate. However, almost all the Heads interviewed asserted that work conditions that were not very appealing were more or less a potential stressor to majority of the staff.

One interesting thing the Heads also revealed was the issue of annual leave. Some of the Heads of Departments raised the concern that they had observed that some staff do not take their leave entitlements and those who tend to accumulate their leave (e.g. three consecutive years) faced health problems such as acute stress than those who enjoyed their leave.

Stressors relating to job tasks also received a lot of contributions from interviewees. Whereas the majority believed that workload was high (some attributed it to the large numbers of students), the minority classified it as normal but then, they all asserted that there was effective communication and consultation for carrying out assigned tasks.

According to the Heads, although lack of focus on new technology and lack of variety at work have been identified as sources of stress, they were rare in their environment. To some of them, because routine work sometimes creates

boredom, they encouraged their staff to offer helping hand to their colleagues where necessary so that they could acquire other experiences aside their own. For example, one Head of Department had this to say, "Those who are active and can perform variety of tasks, find work very interesting".

Contrary to responses obtained from respondents that there was lack of recognition for good effort, nearly all the Heads disagreed with the assertion. An interviewee reacted with these words, "I think the problem is that, the senior staff expect too much from us".

Touching on interpersonal relationship, Heads admitted that there was good human relations among the senior staff. They said staff relate well with their colleagues, subordinates and students although occasionally, subordinates who were uncooperative and students who were irritating sometimes caused anger among the staff.

One other thing that came to light was that some of the staff do not open up. Heads confirmed that some staff do not share their problems with them for help where necessary and this was one of their sources of stress. They went on to explain that, not discussing a problem at all with someone can equally add weight to one's stress. Relatedly, although a few of the Heads agreed with the assertion that they are not easily approachable, they gave a reason for that. One was captured as saying, "When you give them too much face, they tend to abuse it". Another had this to say, "I have observed that when you are too free with them, some actually take things for granted". On the issue of feedback, Heads claimed they always evaluated their work and gave them feedback.

Asked whether they had identified role-related stressors such as uncertainty about job responsibilities or job responsibilities conflicting with other people's jobs among the staff, Heads hinted that these were stress-free factors in their environment with the exception of career opportunities. By this, they alerted that stress was more with the older employees who were not trainable either because of age or educational background. They also revealed that a few of the older staff were actually redundant, yet they wanted to be recommended for training or promotion which obviously created frustration for them.

On personal stressors, nearly all Heads interviewed agreed that they had observed that those staff with certain personality traits such as impatience, aggressiveness, and 'worrywart attitude' were vulnerable to stress-related problems. The doctors interviewed also confirmed that the factors so far discussed are all causes of work stress although one's perception also counts.

Management Strategies

The final segment of the interview was pitched on the management strategies. Heads agreed that their workers were able to stay at work when under stress although rarely, some gave excuses to go out. Concerning the strategies they adopted in alleviating workplace stress, Heads noted that conversation, reading magazines/ newspapers/bibles, browsing the internet, taking a stroll and listening to radios were some of the techniques staff used to refresh themselves. However, a few of the Heads confessed that they usually objected to these strategies. Again, a minority of the Heads also admitted that some staff actually

took causal leave to relax at home while others also engaged in their own private work.

In the case of the doctors interviewed, they hinted that they recommended medication for acute stage of stress. They explained that, pharmacotherapy for instance, may be appropriate as an adjunct for the treatment of the most common stress-related psychological and medical disorders. Again, there were also situations that patients with stress problems were usually counseled by taking into consideration (taking a history), their work background, loving home relationship, educational background and financial support.

Moreover, they also made it clear that depending on the level of stress, they sometimes recommended keep fit, good nutrition, rest and cinemas or any leisure activity that is of interest to the patient. Furthermore, one of them had this to say, "We may also refer them to other specialists like pastors and professional counselors or give them excuse duty where necessary or better still, recommend a change of job when the situation demand so". He explained that, the change of job could be internal transfer or quitting a job altogether particularly when safety hazards are concerned.

In concluding the interview, both doctors and Heads of Departments were asked to indicate whether they were aware of any stress management programmes by the institution for staff. To this, they all answered in the affirmative and mentioned keep fit and counseling services as support systems.

Other Findings

The University of Cape Coast Counseling Centre was found to be the main outfit charged with the responsibility of offering guidance and counseling services to both staff and students. It was therefore found to be one of the major sources of information as far as stress management was concerned. Two of the counselors who have had a long time experience at the centre, were thus given an exclusive interview (using the interview guide for the doctors).

Some of the issues raised in the interview which needed to be discussed alongside the main findings of the study have been integrated in the issues earlier discussed. This section would consider the other findings which had not been catered for which need to be discussed separately.

It was confirmed from the two counselors that the counseling center has a role to play in the well-being of both staff and students but their major problem had to do with low patronage from staff. This confirmed the findings from the respondents as they reported that they hardly consulted the counselors.

According to the counselors, a lot of students rather visited the center with stress-related problems very often. However, they explained that the low patronage of staff may be due to three main reasons.

In the first place, the counselors noted that perception has contributed to the low patronage. They hinted that the mindset of majority of the staff was that the counseling centre was meant for students only. According to one of the counselors, a client once remarked, "I cannot visit the counseling centre together with students that I teach" Obviously, such a mentality makes it difficult for staff

to consult. Secondly, the counselors attributed the low patronage to inadequate knowledge on the part of the staff about the issues or areas that the counseling centre offers. Some staff do not actually know about the various issues or topics that the centre deals with or can handle. Thirdly, the low patronage also stems from the fact that they are concerned about confidentiality. More often than not, they become worried when it comes to disclosing their problems. They have the fear that their problems may leak out and be known by others.

Quite apart from these, another point of view from the counselors also indicated that the location of the centre sometimes put some of them off. The counselors said majority of the staff reported that anytime they tried to visit the center, people asked them, "Do you have a problem?" In fact, this discouraged them from seeking consultation at the centre since they did not want to be seen by others. A counselor said that was rather unfortunate because we all have problems in one way or the other.

Perhaps, this is what Robbins and De Cenzo (1998) raised concern about. Their idea of telephone counseling services which is one of the British approaches to counseling may be applicable in such a circumstance. Usually, with this kind of service, employees can ring at any time of the day or night to seek help for work problems or personal problems. The advantage is that, employees would not need to visit (personally) the counselors and so, by implication, identities are hidden. However, the disadvantage is that, it is quite expensive (as the telephone charges are billed to the employer of the organization).

Asked whether there were other support systems for stress management apart from the counseling services, the counselors pointed out that quite apart from weekend keep fit and an annual medical check-up for senior members above 50 years, they were not sure of others. They asserted that the keep fit programme also faced some challenges. These include inconsistency (not regularly organized), timing and publicity. It is therefore not surprising that participation is very low. This confirmed what the respondents reported as they indicated that they hardly took part in the keep fit programme.

The counselors also made it clear that although they have time for counseling sessions, it is inadequate since most of the time, they were very busy teaching both undergraduate and graduate students and supervising their project work aside their professional counseling. From the researcher's own observation, although the counseling centre had facilities, they did not have enough staff to combine teaching and counseling services.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations made for consideration. The chapter ends with suggestions on areas for further research.

Summary

The world of work is changing rapidly and the higher education sector is no different as it continues to experience significant changes in different dimensions. Indeed, rapid technological, political, economic and socio-cultural transformations emanating from the wider world and the academe itself are gradually eroding the old system, structures and stabilities of higher education. According to Winfield (2000), the prevalence of occupational stress among academic and general staff of universities across the globe is alarmingly widespread and increasing.

It is for this reason that the study was conducted to investigate whether work-related stress was prevalent among the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. The urge to undertake this study also stemmed from a circular issued by the Division of Human Resource of the University of Cape Coast which alerted that, of late casual leave had become rampant among the staff.

This work sought to identify the factors responsible for stress, symptoms, gender difference in stress and the management strategies used in coping with stress. Clearly, there was a blend of conceptual and empirical framework of stress in the review of related literature. In the conceptual framework, the study reviewed the works of some psychologists who studied stress. In the empirical framework, studies on job stress in higher education was also reviewed in the literature. Several multi-disciplinary studies by some researchers provided ample evidence on workplace stressors among university workers in different countries. A comparison between the current study and previous findings from those empirical studies was made and conclusions drawn. Thus, it helped to find out how this current study and findings are related to studies already conducted.

The descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate for the study since it deals with facts, opinions, attitudes or perceptions. The population for the study consisted of all senior staff and other knowledgeable people (Heads of Departments, Doctors and Counselors) of the University of Cape Coast who could give relevant information about the study.

Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample size of 242 senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. However, a total of 208 senior staff responded to the questionnaire administered. The 208 respondents were made up of 122 males and 86 females. Also, there were 16 interviewees (selected randomly) who participated in the study, 12 of whom were Heads of Departments, two doctors from the University Hospital and two counselors from the University Counseling Centre.

For the instrument, a self-designed questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect the data. The questionnaire was in four parts namely, A, B, C and D. The bio-data of the respondents was organized under Section A and the symptoms of stress under Section B. The sources of work stress and stress management techniques were organized under Section C and D respectively.

Findings

(1) To verify how stress manifests itself among the senior staff, the study grouped the symptoms of stress into three categories namely, behavioural, physiological and psychological symptoms. The research conducted identified constant tiredness, tension, back pains, headaches (physiological symptoms), boredom and anxiety (psychological symptoms) as well as loss of appetite (behavioural symptom) as manifestations experienced by the respondents when under stress. Data gathered through the interviews also confirmed the symptoms reported by the senior staff.

(2) To ascertain the factors that trigger the symptoms, the study divided the factors (sources of job stress) into five groups of stressors, namely physical environmental stressors, job task stressors, interpersonal stressors, role-related stressors and personality traits (personal stressors). The study discovered that the senior staff experienced high stress on the physical environmental stressors.

Also, impression given by respondents in relation to the job task stressors showed that, the most prominent stressor in this category was lack of recognition for good effort. Again, the study revealed that, of all the

stressors in the five groups, the interpersonal stressors were deemed the most challenging ones. In relation to this, stressors such as dealing with difficult boss, not knowing how your boss evaluates your work (feedback), dealing with uncooperative subordinates and irritating students were rated high by the respondents.

Under the role-related stressors, the findings also indicated that lack of opportunities for career development and too much workload were two stress-provoking variables reported as high among the respondents. Information provided by the respondents for the last group of stressors showed that the personality traits (personal stressors) did not pose much stress. Data gathered through the interviews also confirmed some of the things (stressors) the senior staff reported about.

(3) In finding out how gender was related to stress among the respondents, the study brought to light that there was no significant difference in stress among the male and female respondents. This confirmed some earlier findings of stress in higher education.

(4) In relation to stress management techniques, the study discovered that the senior staff adopted personal coping strategies in managing stress. This had to do with primary or problem-focused (belonging to non-work group, having positive mind, seeking help and modifying personality traits) and secondary or emotion-focused (relaxation, meditation, physical fitness and recreation) stress management techniques and in few cases, treatment strategies recommended by trained health professionals such as doctors.

From the study conducted, it was clear that stress management interventions by the institution were inadequate. Data gathered through the interviews also confirmed this finding.

(5)   Other finding from the study indicated that the Counseling Centre of the University, which is supposed to serve as one of the outlets in stress management was not being patronized by some of the senior staff.

Conclusions

By comparing the results of the research with the relevant scholarly expositions on the subject matter as reviewed so far, the following conclusions could be made:

1. Firstly, since both physiological and psychological symptoms associated with stress were identified, it gives the impression that the senior staff experienced the stress phenomenon. The manifestations have implications for work output and health care cost for the institution.

2. Secondly, in relation to the stressors that were identified, it is clear that stress exists among the senior staff hence the study agrees with Winfield's (2000) assertion that the prevalence of occupational stress among academic and general staff of universities across the globe is increasing. It has also confirmed the work of Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper and Ricketts (2005). Since the goal of every organization is to maximize productivity, stressors of this nature warrant attention.

3. Thirdly, it was also evident that significant difference did not exist in relation to gender and stress. As it is, it appeared both the males and

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females go through stress at the workplace. This finding therefore confirms recent study of Aida, Azlina and Balqis (2007).

4. Fourthly, since the senior staff adopted some techniques in managing the stress that they experienced, the implication is that, they were coping with the stress phenomenon. Much as they tried to cope, there should be room for improvement. From the viewpoint of holistic approach, if stress is to be eliminated or at least minimized, efforts should come from both the employer and the employees.

5. Fifthly, since other finding from the study has brought to light that due to some reasons, the Counseling Centre of the University was not being patronized, the indication is that some of the senior staff held some misconceptions about the centre.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, a number of measures could be adopted to ensure that workplace stressors are kept at bay so that they do not pose threats to the well-being of staff. In view of this, the following recommendations are made for consideration:

1. The Counseling Centre needs to be proactive. Possibly, this could be done via the University's radio station or durbars organized at the faculty level to help disabuse the misconceptions that some staff held about the Centre.

2. There is the need for the institution to increase stress management interventions since the study discovered that such interventions were inadequate.

3. Existing stress management interventions should be publicized since majority (85.6%) of the senior staff were unaware of such interventions.

4. More importantly, the University Management should also enforce leave schedules. Staff should be encouraged to take their annual leave since this could be one way by which staff can refresh their bodies. Heads of Departments should also desist from keeping staff from enjoying their leave. It causes harm than good.

5. Finally, the Senior Staff Association should also foster good working relations among its members.

Areas for Further Studies

1. This study could be replicated in other universities. The study could be modified and the scope widened to cover junior staff and senior members.

2. Future research needs to focus on holistic approach to stress management. That is, research can also be conducted into the non-work stressors since they have the habit of spilling into the work environment.

3. Another area worth studying is a comparative study of stress management among public or private universities and polytechnics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG SENIOR STAFF OF U.C.C

This questionnaire is intended to elicit views from senior staff of U.C.C to help study work stress among them. It is purely for academic work. You are assured of confidentiality for information given. You are hereby respectfully encouraged to provide frank responses to the questionnaire.
Thank you.

SECTION A

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Please provide answers to the items in this section by ticking   {   }
1.   Gender {tick}   Male   {   }   Female {   }

2.   Age   {tick}   Between 20 -29 years {   }
                             Between 30 – 39 years {   }
                             Between 40-49 years   {   }
                             50 years and above   {   }

3.   What is your present qualification?
        a)   1st Degree   {   }
        b)   2nd Degree   {   }
        c)   Diploma (eg. HND)   {   }
        d)   Any other, please specify   {   }

        …………………………………………………………………………………

4.   Tick the category of rank you belong to by circling the alphabet.

    a) Chief Administrative Assistant/ Chief Technician/ Chief Research
       Assistant/ Chief Library Assistant.
    b) Principal Administrative Assistant/ Principal Technician/Principal
       Research Assistant/ Principal Library Assistant.
    c) Senior Administrative Assistant/ Senior Technician/Senior Research
       Assistant/ Senior Library Assistant.
    d) Administrative Assistant/ Technician/ Research Assistant/ Library
       Assistant.

5. Which faculty/ School or Section do you work?
    a)   Faculty of ……………………………….
    b)   Central Administration   {   }
    c)   Library
    d)   Others, please specify……………………………………….

6. Number of years of working with the University.
    a)   1yr – 9yrs   {   }
    b)   10yrs – 19yrs   {   }
    c)   20yrs – 29yrs   {   }
    d)   30+   {   }

SECTION B

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

STEP I: BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS

Carefully read the statements below. Each statement has the nos. 1-5 under different stress levels. Consider how often you encounter the following conditions and circle the number (on your right-hand side) that best describes your opinion using the following guidelines:

1……….Never
2……….Rarely
3……….Sometimes
4……….Usually
5……….Always

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
7. Breathing rapidly	1	2	3	4	5
8. Loss of appetite	1	2	3	4	5
9. Being very aggressive	1	2	3	4	5
10. Being restless (sleeplessness)	1	2	3	4	5
11. Taking alcohol	1	2	3	4	5

STEP II: PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
12. Feeling back pains and headaches	1	2	3	4	5
13. Feeling tired at short intervals	1	2	3	4	5
14. Feeling physically weak	1	2	3	4	5
15. Dizziness and eyestrain	1	2	3	4	5
16. Feeling tensed up	1	2	3	4	5

STEP III: PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
17.	Poor concentration	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Feeling depressed	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Feeling frustrated	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Feeling anxious	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Feeling bored	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C

SOURCES OF STRESS

Carefully read the statements below. Each statement has the nos. 1-5 under different stress levels. Kindly circle the number that applies to you by ranking each item in order of importance using the following guideline:

1…………stress free
2………….mild stress
3………….moderate stress
4………….much stress
5………….extreme stress

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

PART I: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS
For each statement, please circle the number (on your right-hand side) that best describes your opinion.

		Stress Free	mild stress	moderate stress	much stress	extreme stress
22.	Too much noise in the environment	1	2	3	4	5
23.	A poorly designed office/workspace	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Safety hazards exist at workplace	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Work conditions are not appealing.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Poor ventilation and lighting.	1	2	3	4	5

PART II: JOB TASK STRESSORS

		Stress Free	mild stress	moderate stress	much stress	extreme stress
27.	Unable to complete tasks during an average day	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Lack of variety at work	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Lack of recognition for good effort	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Lack of effective communication and consultation to carry out job	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Lacks focus on new technology eg. computers	1	2	3	4	5

PART 111: INTERPERSONAL STRESSORS

		Stress Free	mild stress	moderate stress	much stress	extreme stress
32.	Inability to get on well with colleagues at work	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Dealing with difficult boss	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Not knowing how your boss evaluates your work	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Dealing with uncooperative subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Dealing with irritating students	1	2	3	4	5

PART IV: ROLE-RELATED STRESSORS

37.	Uncertainty about your exact job responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Ideas differ from those of your immediate supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Job tasks conflict with other co-workers tasks	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Lack of opportunities for career development	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Too much workload	1	2	3	4	5

PERSONAL STRESSORS

PART V: PERSONALITY TRAITS

	Stress Free	mild stress	moderate stress	much stress	extreme stress
42. Trying to do several things at once	1	2	3	4	5
43. Have difficulty accepting and enjoying relaxation	1	2	3	4	5
44. Lack of control over situations	1	2	3	4	5
45. Always hurrying others, dislike waiting	1	2	3	4	5
46. Trying to look busy, forgetting meal time	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Please provide short answers to the following and tick where appropriate.

47. Are you able to stay at work throughout the working hours when under stress?
    a) Yes {   }   (b) No {   }
48. If yes, what exactly do you do to manage the stress at the workplace?
    ………………………………………………………………………………
49. If no, indicate what you do when you stay away from work?...

    Please tick the following:
50. Do you relax and meditate when under stress? (a) Yes {   }   (b) No {   }
51. Do you take sick leave/ time off work when under stress? (a) Yes {   }   (b) No {   }
52. Do you engage in physical exercise? (a) Yes {   }   (b) No {   }
53. Do you use drugs when under stress? (a) Yes {   }   (b) No {   }

54. Do you consume alcohol in managing with stress? (a) Yes {   }   (b) No {   }

55. Do you belong to any non- work group in your community e.g. society or religious group? (a) Yes {   }   (b) No {   }
56. Do you consult other co-workers for help when under stress? (a) Yes {   }   (b)No {   }

57. Do you consult other members of the society
    for help when under stress?   (a) Yes { }   (b) No { }
58. If yes, which category of people do you consult most?
    (a) Counselors   (b) Relative/friends
    (c) Priests   (d) Specialist (e.g. medical doctors)
59. Mention any 2 suggestions they offer:
    ……………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………
60. Are you aware of any stress management programme/support designed by the
    institution for staff?   (a) Aware { }   (b) Not aware { }
61. If yes, mention any 2 of the programmes/support you know.
    ……………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………
62. Does the institution organize workshops or seminars on stress and its
    management for staff?   (a) Yes { }   (b) No { }
63. If yes, do you participate in such programmes?   (a) Yes { } (b) No { }

64. Kindly give any other comments you would like to add:
    ……………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR U.C.C DOCTORS

Doctors were informed that the study concerned only the senior staff (the middle level manpower group) hence the focus of the discussion should relate to that category of staff. They were also made aware that only work-related stress were being studied, not the home interface (non-work).

1. Have you ever had the opportunity of handling a stress patient?
2. What are some of the symptoms they complained about for you to diagnose that they were under stress?
3. Apart from those symptoms, what other symptoms do individuals exhibit when they are under stress?
4. What would you say are the causes or factors responsible for the symptoms discussed?
5. Do the following conditions also contribute to work stress among individuals? Too much workload, uncertainty about one's job responsibilities, dealing with a difficult boss, lack of focus on new technology (eg. computer), poor interpersonal relations with workteam (both superior and subordinates), lack of variety at work and lack of opportunity for career development.
6. If you find out that your patient is experiencing stress, what are some of the things you recommend?
7. Apart from that, what other stress management techniques can individuals use in managing stress?
8. Are there any stress management programmes/support in place (by the institution) for staff?
9. If yes, what are they?
10. Given the opportunity, what do you think should be the way forward for stress management among university senior staff?

Thank you very much!

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

SYMPTOMS OF WORK STRESS

1. Do you sometimes notice changes in behaviour or attitude towards work among your senior staff?

2. Do you sometimes observe the following behaviours among your senior staff; tiredness, anxiety, lack of concentration, tension, frustration, boredom, aggressiveness, restlessness and reports about aches and pains?

CAUSES OF WORK STRESS

3. In your opinion, what are the causes or factors responsible for these changes in behaviour among your senior staff?

4. Do the following conditions cause work stress among your senior staff?
   a. Too much workload
   b. Inability to complete task during an average day
   c. Lack focus on new technology eg. computer
   d. Lack of feedback on their performance
   e. Uncertainty about job responsibilities
   f. Poor interpersonal relations with work team (superior and subordinate)

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

5. How often do the senior staff take time off work when under stress?

6. Are they able to stay at work throughout the working hours when under stress?

7. What are the strategies they use in coping with stress at the work place?

8. If you are asked to recommend some techniques for managing stress among your senior staff, what techniques would you recommend?

9. Are you aware of any stress management programme/ support in place (by the institution) for staff? If yes, what are they?

10. Given the opportunity, what do you think should be the way forward for stress management among senior staff of U.C.C.?

THANK YOU!