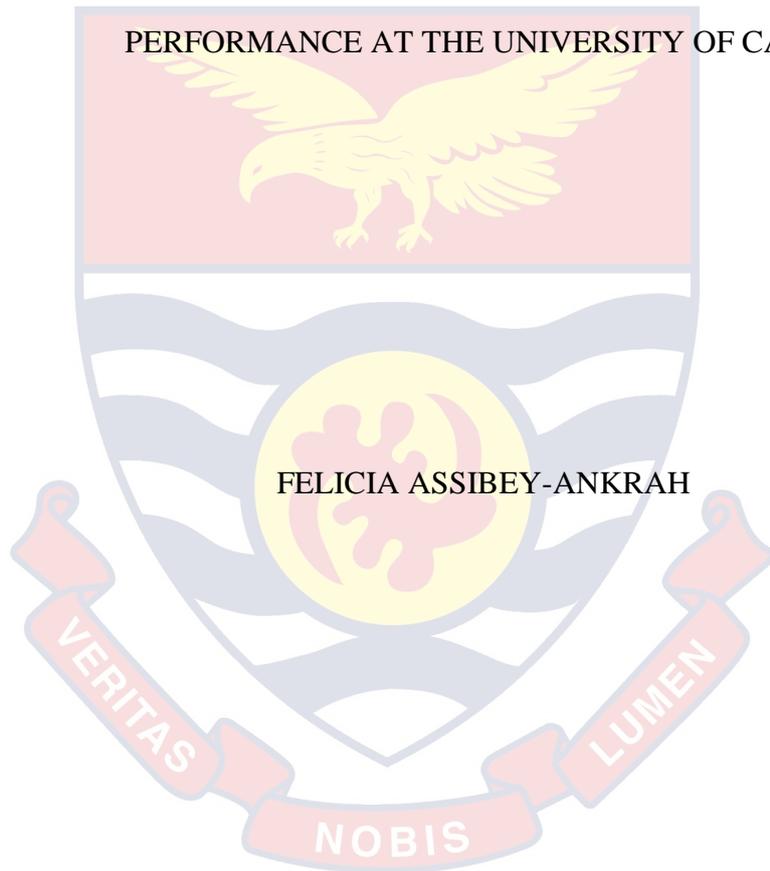


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEES'  
PERFORMANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

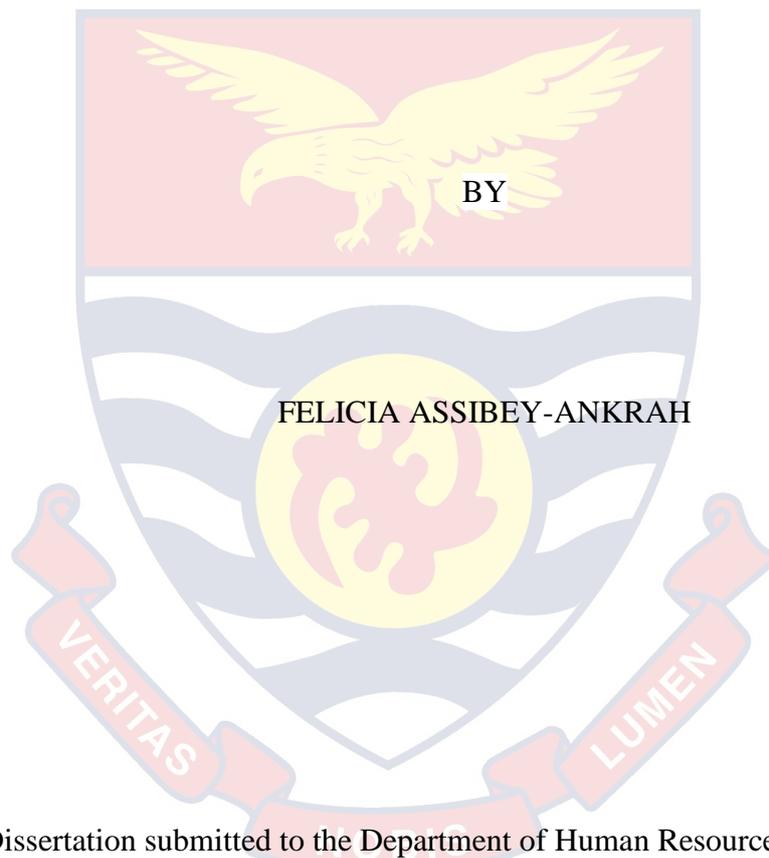


FELICIA ASSIBEY-ANKRAH

2021

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEES'  
PERFORMANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



Dissertation submitted to the Department of Human Resource Management of the School of Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Business Administration degree in Human Resource Management.

JULY 2021

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Felicia Assibey-Ankrah

### Supervisor's Declaration

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

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

Name: Mrs. Dorothy Amfo-Antiri

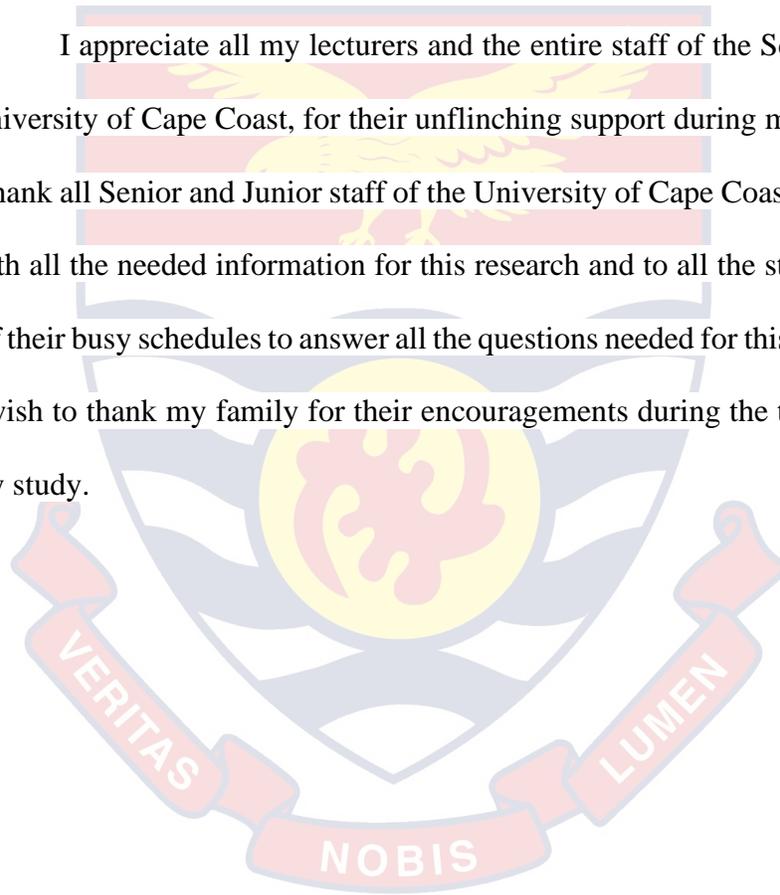
## ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the effect of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The specific objectives that guided the study were; to assess the various stress management practices; to assess employee performance; and to examine the effect of stress management practices on employee performance. The study employed a quantitative approach and adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study was 923 administrative staff and the sample size of 269. However, 257 questionnaires were valid and considered for the study representing a response rate of 95.5%. The main instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire with statistical tools including; mean, standard deviation (SD), frequencies, percentages and linear regression analysis. The study adopted a simple random technique. The study findings first indicated that psychological support, training and development, job redesign and employee welfare programmes were the various stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast. However, of the many practices of managing stress at the University of Cape Coast, employee welfare programmes should be given much attention since it has the greatest potential to influence the performance of the employees. The study also revealed that there is a significant and strong positive relationship between stress management practices and employee performance. The study recommended that management of the University should practice a combination of all the practices of stress management discovered in this study in combating stress.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

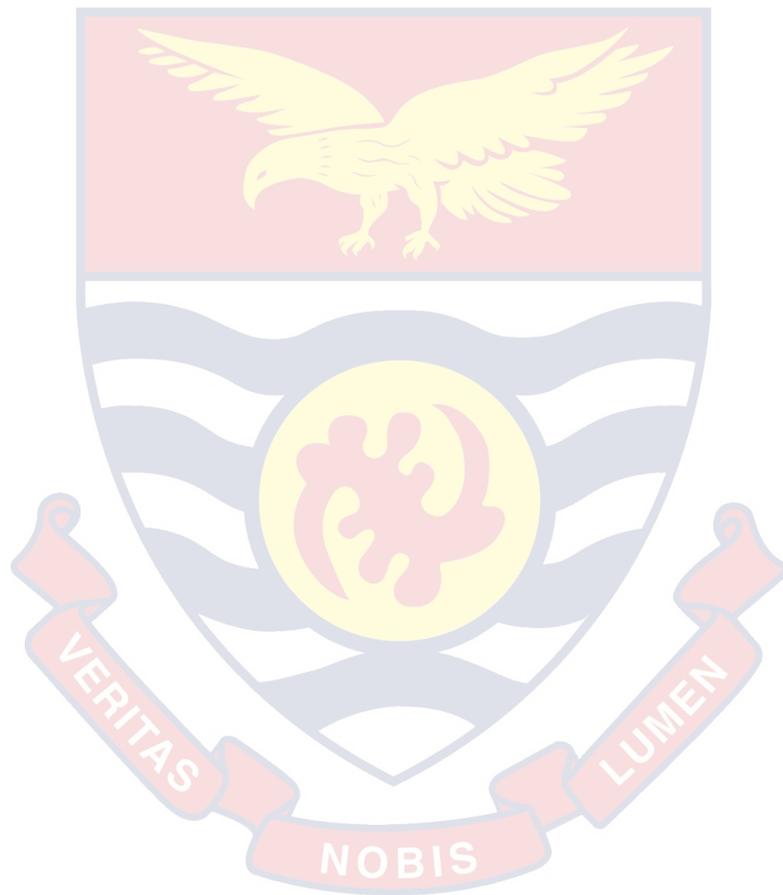
I am sincerely grateful to my supervisor, Mrs. Dorothy Amfo-Antiri of the Department of Human Resource Management, School of Business, UCC for taking some hours to see me through this dissertation. My profound gratitude also goes to Mr. Emmanuel Agyenim Boateng and Mr. Samuel Opoku, all at the School of Business for their kindness and care during the period of the research.

I appreciate all my lecturers and the entire staff of the School of Business, University of Cape Coast, for their unflinching support during my period of study. I thank all Senior and Junior staff of the University of Cape Coast for providing me with all the needed information for this research and to all the staff who took time off their busy schedules to answer all the questions needed for this research. Finally, I wish to thank my family for their encouragements during the trying moments of my study.



## DEDICATION

To my husband and my lovely children



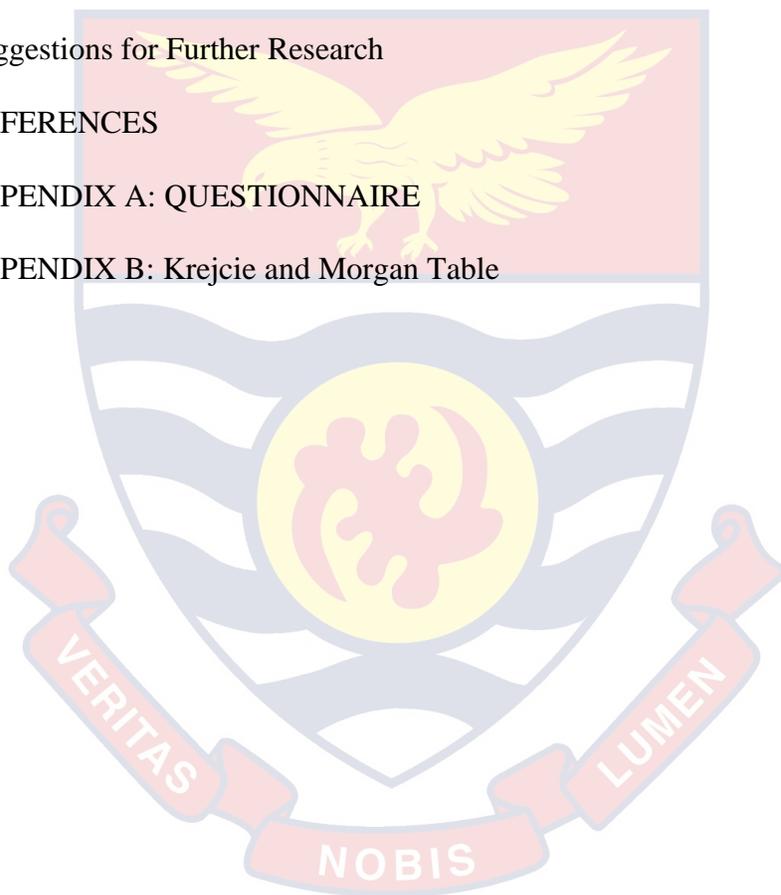
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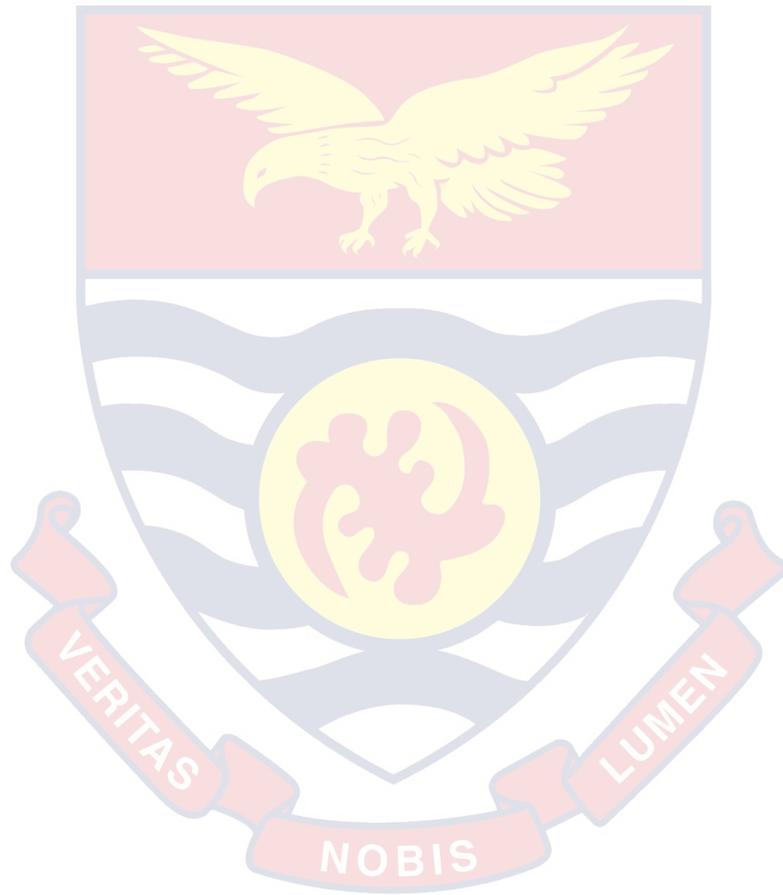


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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Organisational stress had been a contributing factor to increasing rate of employee turnover. Management in its quest to curb these had implemented stress management policies and practices to remedy such of its influence. This chapter presents the overview of the study which includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, hypotheses of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and organisation of the study.

#### **Background of the Study**

Stress is changing to a common phenomenon among the employers and employees. (Michie, 2002) Increasingly the stress level is changing rapidly among the employees due to a set of various reasons. Employees experience and feel stressed continuously and therefore the reactions of stress at the workplace are not a separate aspect. (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003) Stress at work is also increasing due to external factors such as technological advancement and changes in the economy of a country. Stress is also bound to occur in multinational companies where operation is global and employees have different cultural backgrounds. Besides stress that could be caused by family or personal problems, stress at work has become even a greater problem because of job restructure, globalization and more demand on the task at hand. This might lead to higher job insecurity which would make employees feel stressed and distressed.

Research has revealed that some causes of stress include; work overload, lack of autonomy, poor job design, emotional demands, lack of rewards, low social support, and role ambiguity can all lead to feelings of exhaustion and negative, callous attitudes toward work which are manifested in low performance (in the case of employers who have to bear the costs) and or health-related (on the employees) after the causes and effects of stress have been identified (Houtman, Bongers, Smulders & Kompier, 1994; White, 2012; Schwabe, & Wolf, 2010). Antoniou, Davidson and Cooper (2013), believed that when sources of stress increase in job environment, job satisfaction reduces. So, job satisfaction has an important role in improving the performance of employees (Ivancevich, & Matterson, 2017). Consequently, if there are discrepancies between individuals' desires and expectations and condition of their present jobs, negative thoughts and dissatisfaction arise at work.

Blumenthal (2003) argue that excess stress is harmful, destructive and detrimental to human well-being and performance. Stress can have an impact on an individual's well-being by causing dysfunction or disruption in multiple areas. This dysfunction extends into the organisational world and leads to decreased employee and organisational performance. According to Garrison and Bly (1997), corporations have become acutely aware of the problems caused by stress. The illnesses associated with stress are costly, and they can hamper a valuable worker. When stress is not handled well, absenteeism, turnover, and medical compensation increase and productivity decreases. They further stated that the workplace is special only because, so much of our time is spent at work. To achieve a peak of

performance, stress should be managed effectively, with the negative effects of stress minimized. This gives rise to the relationship between stress and employee performance within the organisation.

Employee performance has always been a significant concern for managers of organisations (Kelidbari, Dizgah, & Yusefi, 2011). Similarly, employee performance is key edifice of an organisation therefore, facets that place the grounds for great performance must be examined critically by the organisations for them to succeed (Abbas & Yaqoob, 2009). According to Dong, Yang, Li, Liao, Tian, & Guan, (2012), employee performance is the standard for advancements, redundancy, rewards, punishments, reviews and salary changes. It also satisfies the needs for employees to realize themselves. Ahmad and Khurram (2011), also argue that employee performance represents the extensive belief of the employees about their behavior and contributions towards the achievement of the organisation.

This study is influenced by the Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory because in a series of animal studies, Hans Selye observed that a variety of stimulus events (e.g., heat, cold, toxic agents) applied intensely and long enough are capable of producing common effects, meaning not specific to either stimulus event. According to Selye, these non-specifically caused changes constitute the stereotypical, i.e., specific, response pattern of systemic stress. Selye (1976) defines this stress as a state manifested by a syndrome which consists of all the non-specifically induced changes in a biologic system. This explanation posits to two processes as central mediators within the person environment transaction: cognitive

appraisal and coping. This would aid in achieving the purpose of the study of analysing the effect of stress management practices on employees' performance.

Many researchers argue that stress at workplace has an impact on performance in one way or the other. Dean (2002) view work related stress as a leading cause for low productivity in the educational setting of which the University of Cape Coast is no exception. Gaumail, (2003) believes stress affects the organisational outcomes such as decrease in performance, increase in absenteeism and dissatisfaction. In the same breadth, Desseller (2000) concurred that the consequences of organisational stress are far-reaching leading to reduction in the quality and quantity of job performance.

In fact, few works on the subject as it relates to high educational institution in the Cape Coast Municipal Assembly, especially University of Cape Coast has been sighted, and even fewer works have tried to explore the effects of stress management practices on employees' performance. Key issues on the effects of stress management practices that affect employees' performance have not been rigorously researched into. There is therefore the need for research to be carried out to explore whether these stress management practices have a positive or negative effect on employees of the University of Cape Coast and the extent to which it influences their performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Muraale (2017) stated that employees consider stress as one of the reasons why they quit their organisation. This means that stress has the potential to decrease employees' commitment within an organisation. Babirye (2018) in their study

declared that occupational stress indirectly leads to decreased levels of organisational commitment by the employees and therefore results to higher rates of labour turnover. Occupational stress researchers agree that stress is a serious problem in many organisations (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Mensah, & Owusu-Mensah, 2002). The cost of occupational stress is very high in many organisations. For instance, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reports that inefficiencies arising from occupational stress may cost up to 10 percent of a country's GNP (Adoo-Adeku, 1992). Haque & Aston (2016) records that employees respond to stress at work in a variety of ways; many employees turn up for work, but do not work to their full capacity; other employees decide that the stress is too much and quit voluntarily. The American Psychological Association (2007) posits that “fifty-two percent of employees report that they have considered or made a decision about their career such as looking for a new job, declining a promotion or leaving a job based on workplace stress”. The situation is not different from Ghana, as stress has been opined to be a problem amongst employees in Ghana (Martin, 2014; Akrani, 2013). This, in the long run, takes a toll on morale and functioning of the employees within the organisation.

According to Nnuro (2012) in his research at the Koforidua Polytechnic on occupational stress and its effects on job performance; the researcher pointed out certain key management strategies in combating the high increase of stress on the performance of administrative staff. This included goal setting, situation restructuring, relaxation, imagery and mental rehearsal. As a result, the researcher's study only focused on the psychological support that should be given to employees

within the polytechnic institution. The study focused on the internal remedy to stress which emphasised on the intrinsic effect of stress on the individual.

Iddi (2011) and Adzakpah and Laar (2017) studied on stress related issues that has caused a decline in the performance of employees within the University of Cape Coast. They considered hobbies, avoidance of unnecessary stress, effective time management, adjusting standards and attitudes, expressing feelings instead of bottling them up on the part of employees as the ways of mitigating the adverse effect of stress among the staff. These studies emphasised on the psychological support as the main instrument for curbing stress among employees at the University of Cape Coast.

Research studies (Joy 2020; Budu, Abalo, Bam, Budu & Peprah, 2019; Awino, Ogutu & Musyoka 2018; Kassymova, Kosherbayeva, Sangilbayev & Schachl, 2018; Glazer & Liu 2017; Karmakar, 2017) had provided stress management strategies to mitigate intrinsic stressors. However, stressors could be both intrinsic and extrinsic which may tend to influence the performance of the employee. It is this gap that has led to this study to find out the stress management strategies to mitigate both intrinsic and extrinsic stressors. It is against this background that this study seeks to establish the effects of stress management practices on employees' performance at the University of Cape Coast.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at analysing the effects of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast in Cape Coast, Ghana.

### **Research Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. assess the various stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast.
2. assess the levels of employee performance in the University of Cape Coast.
3. examine the influence of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast.

### **Research Questions**

The research will be guided by the following questions:

1. What are the various stress management practices in UCC?
2. What are the levels of employee performance in UCC?
3. What are the effects of stress management practices on employee performance in UCC?

### **Significance of the Study**

Stress management is important to healthy functioning of organisations as it seeks to increase productivity since one can clearly focus on tasks, have better memory, improved immune system and better blood pressure (Elmadag & Ellinger, 2017). However various research has been conducted on the practices and strategies in managing stress. Much attention is not given to the effect of stress management practices in Ghana. It is in the view of this that this study is considered important. The study seeks to create awareness among university staff on the need to provide the needed support to help staff deal with stress related issues and the effects of the implemented practices to ensure its needed objective is achieved.

The results of this study would be important to the Human Resource personnel in higher education sectors in making strategic decisions relating to formulation of stress management strategies that will ensure enhanced employees' performance. The management at the University of Cape Coast will also use results from the study to review policies to incorporate stress management measures and therefore improve on employees' retention and therefore avoid losing employees with potential who the university have trained to other institutions.

The study adds to the wealth of knowledge in this field of the effect of stress management practices on employee performance and make information available for further research in this field. Findings will be of immense importance to employers in the higher educational sector in policy formation aimed at improving the working conditions of their employees. The findings of this study provide an impetus to stimulate, among scholars and students, an interest in the study of stress among administrative workers in Ghana.

### **Delimitation**

The study focused on stress among institutional workers only in the University of Cape Coast, reference to other sectors was only to either buttress a fact or make a comparison. Its scope was restricted to the University of Cape Coast. The main respondents for the study were the senior administrative staff at the University of Cape Coast. The study covered the influence of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast. The study specifically focuses on examining the stress management practices among the staff of the university and the effect on their performance. In terms of content, there is

countless number of issues that could have been looked at in terms of stress management practices and employee performance. However, this study delimited itself to the various stress management practices and how they contribute to development and efficiency in the output of administrative staff in the University of Cape Coast in Ghana by way of instigating into the concept of stress, stress management and its practices, employee performance, and how to mitigate the increasing levels of stress.

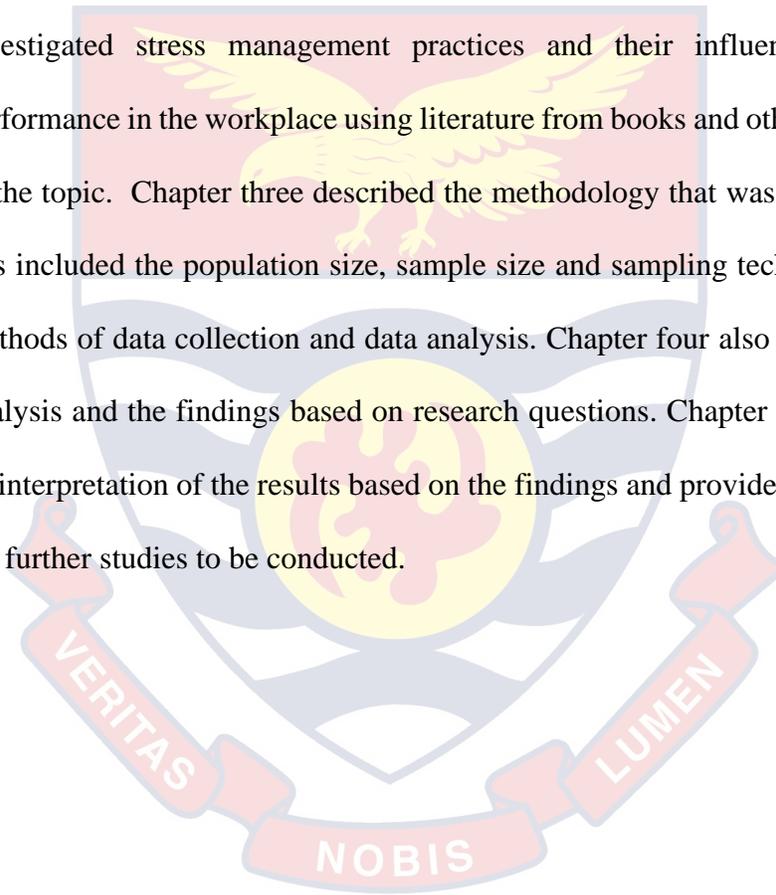
### **Limitations to the Study**

Besides the quantitative method used, using the qualitative method would have added to the weight of materials relating to stress management practices and employee performance. Although this would have proved extremely time consuming, an interview with the others in higher positions, like the senior employees, would also have been useful. This would have helped to understand the rationale behind the elements of stress management practices and employee performance.

Finally, this research encountered several problems especially gathering appropriate data for the analysis. Generally, apathy was a major problem since some of the respondents failed to answer the questionnaire. The respondents might not have disclosed their actual opinions on certain issues related to the university which could be confidential in nature. Therefore, the bias in their responses was possible. Also, this study researched the stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast with the views from sampled respondents, which is a small representation of all the employees in the educational sector.

## Organisation of the Study

The study was made up of five chapters. Chapter one looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions and significance of the study, limitations, scope of the study and organisation of the study. Chapter two reviewed the literature available on stress and job performance, particularly on the employees in the organisation. It investigated stress management practices and their influence on employee performance in the workplace using literature from books and other studies relating to the topic. Chapter three described the methodology that was used in the study: this included the population size, sample size and sampling techniques as well as methods of data collection and data analysis. Chapter four also presented the data analysis and the findings based on research questions. Chapter five also provided an interpretation of the results based on the findings and provide recommendations for further studies to be conducted.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter is devoted to relevant issues of the effect of stress management practices on employee performance: a case of staff at the University of Cape Coast. The first section set the theoretical framework for the research issues to be discussed. Under this section, various theories underpinning the study were discussed. The second section dealt with the various concepts of the study and empirical review. It surveyed actual studies previously done on the problem. Finally, based on the reviewed literature pertaining to the constructs and the relationships among the constructs, a conceptual framework was proposed.

#### Theoretical Review

Theoretical models are body of knowledge that seeks to observe, understand and explain concepts and in the context of this study there are basic theories which include; Psychological stress: Lazarus theory, Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory and Transactional Model of Stress. However, for the purposes of this study, the Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory will be used as the foundational theory. This framework was chosen because, it helped bring meaning and generalization to the concept of stress. It also helped create the vision to which the research problem is focused.

#### Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory

The popularity of the stress concept stems largely from the work of the endocrinologist Hans Selye. In a series of animal studies, he observed that a variety

of stimulus events (e.g., heat, cold, toxic agents) applied intensely and long enough are capable of producing common effects, meaning not specific to either stimulus event. (Besides these nonspecific changes in the body, each stimulus produces, of course, its specific effect, heat, for example, produces vasodilatation, and cold vasoconstriction.) According to Selye, these nonspecifically caused changes constitute the stereotypical, i.e., specific, response pattern of systemic stress. Selye (1976) defines this stress as a state manifested by a syndrome which consists of all the non-specifically induced changes in a biologic system.

This stereotypical response pattern, called the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), proceeds in three stages. (a) The alarm reaction comprises an initial shock phase and a subsequent counter shock phase. The shock phase exhibits autonomic excitability, an increased adrenaline discharge, and gastro-intestinal ulcerations. The counter shock phase marks the initial operation of defensive processes and is characterized by increased adrenocortical activity. (b) If noxious stimulation continues, the organism enters the stage of resistance. In this stage, the symptoms of the alarm reaction disappear, which seemingly indicates the organism's adaptation to the stressor. However, while resistance to the noxious stimulation increases, resistance to other kinds of stressors decreases at the same time. (c) If the aversive stimulation persists, resistance gives way to the stage of exhaustion.

The organism's capability of adapting to the stressor is exhausted, the symptoms of stage (a) reappear, but resistance is no longer possible. Irreversible tissue damages appear, and, if the stimulation persists, the organism dies. Although

Selye, fails to take into account coping mechanisms as important mediators of the stress–outcome relationship, his theory serves to explain the detriments of stress of interventions are not made in time to rescue the stressed individuals.

It is worthy to note that, a change in any determinant factor in an organisms' livelihood would result in either a positive or negative response depending on the type of change. This theory indirectly underpins the importance of stress management strategies to avoid employees reaching the irreversible stage when there is the existence of stress at the workplace. With adequate intervention measures that are applied in time, employees' commitment may be restored and therefore their performance.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Stress Management Practices**

There are two ways in which stress can be managed. According to (Robbins, 2004), there are the individual approach and the organisational approach. The individual approach can be achieved in two ways: exercising and opening to someone. With regards to exercising, an employee can manage by going on a walk, jogging, playing tennis, dancing, and swatting squash balls. Most runners and fitness experts posit that, when one is engaged in an exercise, it will very difficult for that individual to focus on job stress. Again, relaxation plays a vital role in curbing stress. In a state of great or deep relaxation, the employee is physically relaxed and detached from the stress-causing situation.

Relaxation exercises reduce the employee's heart rates, blood pressure and other indicators of stress. Another way to ease stress individually is opening to

someone. This involves confiding in a trusted person a personal crisis. The act of confiding is a big sigh of relief to the employee. This self-disclosure goes a long way to reduce stress and give a more positive outlook on life. Robbins (2004) explains that, the organisational approach to stress management may involve the organisation elaborating and implementing training programs for employees, improving on the personnel policies, ensuring free communication environment as well as providing technical support to workers. In the same vein, Lucey (1994) provides that stress can be managed within an organisation by increasing or decreasing personal responsibility, job rotation and transfer, allow more flexible hours, providing social or recreational amenities like social/fitness clubs, outings and the organisation can institute counselling services.

If these measures are carefully instituted and implemented, it is evident the stress level on employee will sufficiently be minimised or avoided. Little or no amount of stress will enable an employee to perform his or her job better. These measures include; Psychological support, training and development, job redesign and employee welfare programs.

### **Psychological support**

Cognitive behavioral interventions are designed to educate employees about the role of their thoughts and emotions in managing stressful events and to provide them with the skills to modify their thoughts to facilitate adaptive coping (Bond & Bunce, 2000). These interventions are intended to change individuals' appraisal of stressful situations and their responses to them. For example, employees are taught to become aware of negative thoughts or irrational beliefs and to substitute positive

or rational ideas (Bellarosa & Chen, 1997). Meditation, relaxation, and deep-breathing interventions are designed to enable employees to reduce adverse reactions to stresses by bringing about a physical and/or mental state that is the physiological opposite of stress (Benson, 1975). Typically, in meditation interventions, the employee is taught to focus on a single object or an idea and to keep all other thoughts from his or her mind, although some programs teach employees to observe everything that goes through their mind without getting involved with or attached to them.

Meditation interventions often also include relaxation therapy and deep breathing exercises. Relaxation therapy focuses on the conscious and controlled release of muscle tension. Deep breathing exercises focus on increasing the intake of oxygen and the release of carbon dioxide, although muscle and mental relaxation is often an additional goal of slowing and deepening the breath. Further, other interventions in psychological strategies are time management and goal setting. Time management and goal-setting interventions are designed to help people manage their time better, both on and off the job. Employees often operate under time pressure and are required to work on multiple tasks simultaneously. Working under such conditions can be particularly stressful. Time management interventions provide skills training in the areas of goal setting, scheduling and prioritizing tasks, self-monitoring, problem solving, delegating, negotiating, and conflict resolution (Bruning & Frew, 2007).

There is evidence that traditional, individual interventions such as counseling and psychotherapy applied in work-related contexts reduce levels of

psychological distress and might improve job perception (Van der Klink, Blonk, Schene, & Van Dijk, 2001). Unfortunately, there is little reference literature available that has evaluated how these different psychological interventions enhance particular coping with work stress using standardized checklists (Coyne & Racioppo, 2000). However, Bond and Bunce (2001) used two kinds of worksite stress management interventions to enhance the ability of media workers to cope with their work-related stress. As the authors wrote that, one was an emotion-focused Stress Management Intervention that increased the individual ability to cope with work-related strain, and another was a problem-focused intervention that trained workers to identify and alleviate the workplace stressors that give rise to strain.

Improvement in mental health and work-related variables was observed following both interventions. In the first condition changes in the outcome variables were mediated by the acceptance of undesirable thoughts and feelings, in the second condition, outcome change was mediated by attempts to modify stressors. According to Alford, Malouff and Osland (2005) journaling interventions are also another psychological strategy of managing stress. Journaling interventions require the employee to keep a journal, log, or diary of the stressful events in his or her life. The journal is used as a means of assisting the employee to monitor stress levels, to identify the recurring causes of stress, and to note his or her reactions.

Journals are also used to formulate action plans for managing stress (Bruning & Frew, 2007). Further, exercise programs to provide progressive muscle relaxation are also used as a psychological intervention in stress management. It

generally focus on providing a physical release from the tension that builds up in stressful situations, increasing endorphin production, or both, although some have the goal of focusing the employee's attention on physical activity (rather than on the stressors) or providing an outlet for anger or hostility (Bruning & Frew, 2007). The underlying rationale is that, since relaxation and muscle tension are incompatible, reducing muscle tension is coupled with the reduction of autonomic activity, and consequently anxiety and stress levels. Muscle relaxation is usually realised by alternating tensing and relaxing exercises.

Systematically moving through the major muscle groups of the body enables a person to become skilled at recognizing tension in a muscle group and relieving that tension. Stress is linked to many disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis, migraines, and anxiety disorders (Mahler, Frenzl, Cao, & Butcher, 2014). Because there are many physical and mental ailments related to stress, it might be desirable to use psychological interventions such as meditation in clinical settings to reduce stress. Two types of meditation are primarily studied in the existing literature: mindful meditation and transcendental meditation. Mindful meditation draws attention to the present moment, thereby increasing awareness, and views thoughts simply as thoughts, whereas in transcendental meditation, the subjects focus on a mantra in order to increase awareness and arrive at a deep physiological rest (Kabat-Zinn, 2003 & Coppola, 2007).

### **Training and development**

As one of the most important functions within HRM, training has for long been recognized and thus involved great research consideration by academic

authors (Gordon 1992, Beardwell, Holden & Claydon 2004). This has borne into a diversity of meanings of training. For example, Gordon (1992) defines training as the planned and systematic modification of behavior through learning events, activities and programs which result in the participants achieving the levels of knowledge, skills, competencies and abilities to carry out their work effectively.

It is worth noting that, as researchers continue with their pursuit into the training research area, they also continue their opinions into its significance. Some of these researchers claim that the recognition of the significance of training in current years has been heavily prejudiced by the intensification of rivalry and the comparative success of organisations where investment in employee growth is substantially emphasized (Beardwell, Holden, & Claydon, 2004). Related to the above, Beardwell et al. (2004) add that technological developments and organisational change have progressively led some employers to the awareness that success depend on the skills and abilities of their employees, thus a need for substantial and unceasing investment in training and development.

This training is at the cutting edge of stress reduction, offering a powerful blend of cognitive training and clinically-proven relaxation techniques to manage stress and enhance resiliency in the most challenging circumstances. Workplace stress has for a long time been considered as a major work environment problem in organisations (Han, Kim, Ongusaha, Hwang, Ballou, Mahale, & Lee, 2002). Many scholars point to the fact that modern work-life, with frequent organisational restructurings, technological changes, and stronger competition, places increasing challenges on employees that may cause stress (Avey et al., 2009). Furthermore,

the development of new values in management, such as empowerment and self-management, is a sign of increased decentralization and more freedom, but also more responsibilities on employees for the work environment as well as for managing their career life (Frayse & Geringer, 2000; Frese & Fay, 2001; Hoe, Raabe, Rozhdestvensky, & Tang, 2013; Hall, 2004).

Thus, stressful work environments together with increased demands for self-management on employees may promote a stronger need for individual self-management and coping tools. Workplace training is a method for learning and development that may respond to these needs. The purpose of workplace training is to help individuals to set job related goals, identify and implement adequate behavioural strategies to accomplish these goals, and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals (Grant, 2006). This may include the development of skills to respond adequately to stressful work environments, and to reduce work-related stress. There is some empirical evidence of how workplace training may affect work-related stress. For example, in a study of 15 managers who received training for one year, participants reported that the training had increased their stress management abilities, improved work-life balance, and reduced psychological stress (Wales, 2003).

However, other findings are mixed. Gyllensten and Palmer (2005) found that there were no significant differences in stress level between the training group and the control group after training, although the participants who received training reported lower levels of stress in a qualitative follow-up study. A similar finding was reported by Grant and colleagues (2009) in a study of executive training, where

one group had lower levels of stress after training while another had not. Self-reported effects are, however, reported in quite a number of studies (e.g. Wales, 2003).

One explanation for the inconsistent findings regarding stress may be that there are individual differences in learning experiences from training, and this is the assumption underlying the present study. However, it agreeable those individuals with strong learning experiences from the training process benefit more from stress reduction. Within the literature on stress, job demand is a stressor that has been shown to persistently affect psychological stress across theoretical perspectives (Häusser, Kattenstroth, van Dick, & Mojzisch, 2012). Job demand is conceptualized mostly as perceived work overload, which causes stress, e.g., through constant time pressure and deadlines (Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor, & Millet, 2005).

The learning outcomes from training may affect the subjective appraisal of job demand, and there is some empirical evidence that supports a similar relationship. For example, it has been found that executive training enhanced performance psychology variables, such as self-efficacy and self-determination and eventually improves employees' commitment (Moen & Skaalvik, 2009). Similar reported outcomes of cognitive processes are increased self-confidence (Leedham, 2005) and assertiveness. Furthermore, Wales (2003) reported that managers felt able to accomplish things after coaching that they could not do before, both as a result of increased self-confidence, acquisition of new skills and reduction of stressors in their jobs. Olajide (2000) highlights that no matter how automated an

organisation, high productivity depends on the ability of the employees to drive the organisational agenda. Stress is identified as an important factor that reduces staff commitment to organisational goals and therefore curtails the performance of an organisation. Staff training is therefore an indispensable strategy for motivating workers and reducing stress among the workers.

The organisation must have good training programme. This will give the employees opportunities for self-improvement and development to meet the challenges and requirements of new equipment and new techniques of performing a task with ease. Appropriate training can increase staff involvement in the organisation, improve communication between peers, and improve individual's ability to perform their tasks (Hammill, 2005). According to Wood (2001), training and personnel development has long been seen as a way not only to ensure highly skilled employees but also to increase self-esteem, commitment and motivation and helps to curtail levels of stress among the employees. Training should be focused on helping the employees perform their tasks with ease and therefore avoid eventualities of stress in the work place.

Wood (2001) notes that when employees are faced with hard tasks, their morale is killed and their performance is lowered as in most cases it results to stress. Staff development refers to activities that improve self-knowledge and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and employability, enhance quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations. The concept is not limited to self-development but includes formal and informal activities for developing others, in roles such as teacher, guide, counselor, manager,

coach, or mentor (Rees & Redfern, 2000). Finally, as staff development takes place in the context of institutions, it refers to the methods, programs, tools, techniques, and assessment systems that support human development at the individual level in organisations.

Dant (2004) stresses that, as one learns to manage one's job stress and improve one's work relationships, one will have more control over one's ability to think clearly and act appropriately. One will be able to break habits that add to one stress at work – and one will even be able to change negative ways of thinking about things that only add to one's stress. Many of us make job stress worse with patterns of thought or behavior that keep people from relieving pressure on other people (Van der Stede, 2000). If one can turn around these self-defeating habits, one will find employer-imposed stress easier to handle. Career growth is a continuous process and is associated with different measures that would help in ensuring career development of the employees.

Employees should constantly check their aims and activities and are in need of self-examination and self-motivation in order to attain job satisfaction. The organisation, on the other hand, plays a vital role in helping their employees with their goals and activities. Career development of the workforce can be beneficial for the organisation and allow them to adapt fluidly on the demands of the industry (Holmlund-Rytkönen & Strandvik, 2005).

### **Job redesign**

Wales (2003) reports that there is a dire need to redesign job to offer employees more autonomy and therefore enhance their commitment in their jobs.

Newman and Beehr (2003) divide interventions aimed at changing role characteristics in redefining roles, reducing role overload, increasing participation in decision making and reducing role conflict. This to a large extent involves job redesign to enhance more of employees' participation and therefore enhance their commitment. Task characteristics can be changed by designing jobs in the light of workers' abilities and preferences, using workers' preferences in selection and placement, providing training programmes so workers can enhance their skills and individualizing the treatment of workers. Interventions aimed at changing both role and task characteristics can be achieved by job (re)design.

According to Wales (2003), job redesign to reduce stress in a work environment involves changing stressful features of the work environment in an attempt to reduce the levels of stress experienced by employees, strengthening those factors that serve to buffer or alleviate the impact of stress on health (e.g. strengthening social support and increasing perceived control through participation in decision making) and promoting employee mental and physical health, with the intention of counteracting the negative effects of stress. Further, job redesign should ensure enhancement of responsibility, authority and accountability among the employees. This way, the employees learn to do a wider range of activities and they received more autonomy over routine decisions. A job may be motivating to one person but not to someone else, and depending on how jobs are designed, they may provide more or less opportunity for employees to satisfy their job-related needs.

Herzberg (1998) believed that businesses should motivate employees by adopting a democratic approach to management and by improving the nature and

content of the actual job through certain methods. Failure to restructure job may be in a way to enrich it may lead to employees stress and therefore reduce their commitment and productivity. Employee being given a greater variety of tasks to perform (not necessarily more challenging) which should make the work more interesting motivate him or her, this expresses how a job should be designed so that the employees performs work with enthusiasm and avoid stressful situations. The management should ensure job enrichment, which involves employee being given a wider range of more interesting and challenging tasks surrounding a complete unit of work to give a greater sense of achievement. Employees should be motivated by empowering them by means of delegating more power to employees to make their own decisions over areas of their working life.

Importantly Herzberg (1998) viewed pay as a hygiene factor, which is in direct contrast to Taylor who viewed pay and piece-rate in particular. Job enrichment through redesigning aims to motivate the interest and challenges of work by providing the employee with a job that has these characteristics (Armstrong 2006). Job enrichment provides the employee with variety, decision-making, responsibility and control in carrying out the work. The worker can identify a series of tasks or activities that will determine the end product. Job enrichment provides a feedback about the work and how the employee does the actual work. It is a vertical expansion of the job. This is the opposite of job enlargement which is the horizontal expansion of a job and which does not give greater authority, but just more duties.

Job enrichment could be through job re-design with intention to reverse the

effects of tasks that are repetitive requiring little autonomy. Some of these effects are boredom, lack of flexibility, and employees' dissatisfaction. The basis for job enrichment practices is the work done by Frederick Herzberg in the 1950's and 60's, which was further refined in 1975 by Hackman and Oldham using what they called the Job Characteristics Model. This model assumes that if five core job characteristics are present, three psychological states critical to motivation are produced, resulting in positive outcomes (Robbins, 2005).

### **Employees' welfare programs**

Employees' welfare programs can be traced to the beginning of the 20th century. Reformers, labor unions, journalists and others brought to national attention to poor working conditions for workers in factories and other industries (Kleiman, 2003). Since then, employees' welfare programs have continued to evolve, providing more benefits for American workers. The programmes are meant to improve the well-being and health of an organisation (Tsaur, & Tang, 2012). The programmes are designed to assist employees and their dependents in dealing with personal problems that diminish job functioning, pose a threat to their health, well-being, and/or possibly their jobs. Typically, the employer pays for the programme and there is no cost to the employee. Employees assistance programs are examples of employees' welfare programs.

An employee can go through a confidential referral service to get help with personal problems that may affect work performance. Examples of services include counseling for legal problems, substance abuse, family problems, grief and stress. Some employees also require assistance because they are exposed to stressful

situations in the workplace (Robbins, 2005). Evidence suggests that improvements in people management practices, especially work time and work location flexibility, and the development of supportive managers, contribute to increased work-life balance. Work-life balance programs have been demonstrated to have an impact on employees in terms of recruitment, retention/turnover, commitment and satisfaction, absenteeism, productivity and accident rates as this aid in lowering level of stress (Ronald, 2006).

Organisations that have implemented work-life balance programs recognize that employee welfare affects the “bottom line” of the business. Parameters are required to ensure that programs are having the desired effect on both employees and the organisation. Six parameters that can be used to evaluate work life balance programs are: extent of management buy-in and training, how programs are communicated to employees, corporate culture, management controls, human resources policies and employee’s control (Mitchell, 2008).

### **Employee Performance**

Employee performance has always been a significant concern for managers of organisations (Kelidbari, Dizgah, & Yusefi, 2011). Similarly, employee performance is key edifice of an organisation therefore, facets that place the grounds for great performance must be examined critically by the organisations for them to succeed (Abbas & Yaqoob, 2009). According to Dong, Yang, Li, Liao, Tian, & Guan, (2012), employee performance is the standard for advancements, redundancy, rewards, punishments, reviews and salary changes. It also satisfies the needs for employees to realize themselves. Ahmad and Khurram (2011), also argue

that employee performance represents the extensive belief of the employees about their behavior and contributions towards the achievement of the organisation. According to Ahmad and Shahzad (2011), apparent employee performance embodies the whole belief of the employee about their conduct and contributions to the achievement of the organisation and further stated that reward practices, performance evaluation and promotional practices as a determinant of employee performance.

Similarly, Anitha, (2013) define employee performance as a pointer of financial or other outcome of the employee that has a direct linking with the performance of the organisation as well as its accomplishment, further revealed that working atmosphere, leadership, team and co-worker relationship, training and career development, reward programme, guidelines and procedures and workstation wellbeing as well as employee engagement are major factors that determine employee performance. However, a study conducted by Alagaraja1 and Shuck (2015) intended to discover dominant viewpoints of organisational configuration and employee engagement in order to understand the reasons associated with enhancing individual performance argue that employee performance can be enhanced or improved through training and development.

Furthermore, Thomas and Feldman, (2010) espoused measures of employee performance as core task performance, which includes in-role performance, safety performance, and creativity, followed by citizenship performance, characterized into both targets-specific and general organisational citizenship behaviors and lastly, counterproductive performance that consists of

general counterproductive work behaviors, workplace aggression, substance use, tardiness, and absenteeism. Therefore, employee performance conveys about innovation performance and firm performance as a whole, in such a way that successful effort of fulfilled, inspired, and devoted human resources produce innovative ideas for new products or services and increase quality performance, operative performances, and client gratification directly (Sadikoglu & Cemal, 2010). Although there are some relentless arguments about the positive and negative effects about such changes, an effective scrutiny of employee performance therefore becomes a necessity (Krishna, 2010).

### **Stress management on Employee Performance**

Organisations depend on the performance of their employees to meet their intended goals. Job performance is defined by (Chang, Djurdjevic, Eatough, & Rosen, 2010) as behaviours engaged in by employees at work that are in keeping with the organisational goals. Poor performance by employees will significantly have detrimental effects to organisations, resulting in poor productivity and even causing organisations to go bankrupt. Organisations with stressful working conditions productivity were found to be negatively affected and that there was a negative impact on service delivery (Bhaga, 2010).

Mathis and Jackson (2011) as cited by (Menze, 2007) define productivity as a measure of the quality and quantity done considering the cost of the resources it took to do the work. The author further stated that the performance of an employee depends on three factors namely: ability to do the work, level of effort and support given to the employee. Occupational stress has tremendous effect on

organisation's effectiveness and affects productivity in many fronts. Menze, (2007) concluded that occupational stress may be responsible for many of the organisational outcomes such as decline in performance, job dissatisfaction, lack of motivation and commitment, as well as an increase in absenteeism and turnover. However, stress is not always deleterious, some employees excel in their performance when under little stress and thus they are more productivity under these conditions (Dessler, 2000) as cited by (Menze, 2006).

According to Selye (1956), not all stress is bad for the employees. Stress at workplace to some extent is good for the performance of the employees. The concept of "good stress" is supported by many researchers (Rana & Munir, 2011). As evident by a research by Weiss (1983), occupational stress not always has a negative effect for organisational performance as well as at individual level. According to him a certain amount of stress at the job is beneficial for the performance while sometimes too much job stress may harm the performance of employees unless it is gone beyond their level of forbearance.

Ashforth and Saks (1996) stated in their research the negative relation of two main job stressors i.e. role ambiguity and role conflict and organisational outcomes. It was investigated that role ambiguity and role conflict could have exceedingly effect that leads to the negative responses. There is a negative and significant relation between occupational stress and job satisfaction as well as organisational productivity (Carson, Butcher, & Coleman, 1988). Another study by (Imtiaz & Ahmad, 2009) exhibited that wherever there exists stress at job, there would be the lower performance of the employees. He proved it by correlation

analysis and found that there is a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and job performance. He has taken stressors like personal conflicts, relationship with supervisors and revealed that a unit increase in these stressors lead towards the lowering of the performance level.

Occupational stress is considered to have strong associations with many adverse organisational output and worker performance. Organisations with stressful working conditions have seen gradual decline in productivity and a negative impact in service delivery (Bhaga, 2010). Mathis and Jackson (2000) elucidate that the performance of an employee depends on three factors namely: ability to do the work, level of effort and support given to the employee. Workers who are in the service sector do perform poorly at work because they experience high levels of occupational stress (Ismail & Hong, 2011).

### **Empirical Review**

Arikewuyo (2004) conducted a study to investigate stress management strategies of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. A total of 3466 teachers, drawn from secondary schools in Ogun State of Nigeria, returned their questionnaire for the study. Data were analysed using simple percentage and chi-square. The findings indicated that teachers frequently used the active behavioural and inactive (escape) strategies in managing stress. This was an indication that the average Nigerian teacher preferred to organize him/herself in such a way that his/her pedagogic duties will not be hampered by domestic chores. It also implied that, whenever the teacher is stressed, he/she consoles him/herself with the fact that work is not everything and therefore feels less stressed. The active cognitive strategies are never used by the teachers. Their feeling was that nothing probably can be

challenged in stressful situations. The teachers also expressed mixed feelings about the adoption of inactive behavioural strategies. While the majority of the teachers never engage in physical exercises or, say, watch films in order to manage any stressful situation, they prefer to keep away from any situation that could cause stress, as well as endeavouring to separate themselves from people who cause stressful situations.

Austin, Shah and Muncer (2005) conducted a study on teacher stress and coping strategies used to reduce stress. This pilot study investigated teachers' symptoms of stress and their coping strategies. Measurements of 'stress levels' and 'coping strategies' used were acquired by constructing a questionnaire made up of four individual standardized questionnaires. The data were analysed by a series of correlational analyses that highlighted significant relationships between ways of coping and levels of distress. Differences between the stress-related areas were measured using the Friedman test and Wilcoxon signed rank test for hierarchy. The findings implied that 'escape avoidance', 'accepting responsibility' and 'uncontrolled aggression' were used as negative coping strategies and only one strategy, 'exercise', was indicated to be an effective way of coping. The teachers' strategies were examined for similarities and differences with those recommended by occupational therapists. This pilot study was limited to two schools and it is recommended that it be extended to better generalize the results.

Karanja (2014) investigated the effect of stress management strategies on employees' performance: case of family bank branches in Nairobi County. This study sought to establish the effect of stress management strategies on employees'

performance in Family Bank. Specifically, the study sought to establish the effect of psychological support, job redesign, training and development and employee welfare programs on employees' performance. The study also employed descriptive research design. The target population was the employees in the three levels of management; top level management, middle level management and low-level management in the bank. The study took a sample of 20% of the population using stratified random sampling. This study also collected primary data using self-administered questionnaires. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. The data was then be analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 20 and Excel. It was found that, the independent variables of stress management strategies when implemented with caution provides a higher levels of employee performance within the organisation.

Kihara (2018) investigated the effect of stress management strategies on employees' performance in the public service. The main aim of this study was to evaluate the influence of stress management strategies on employees' performance. Descriptive research design was adopted. The target population comprised of seven hundred thousand (700,000) respondents from the Public Service with a sample size of four hundred (400). Random sampling techniques was used in selecting a sample size from 21 ministries within the Public Service. Questionnaires method was used as data collection instrument which was self-administered. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20 and the output presented using tables and graphs. Multiple linear regression model to study the relationship between Stress Management Strategies

and employees' performance was used. From the findings of the analysis of the study, all variables studied indicated a significant effect on employees' performance of Public Service, explained by a 91.1% variation. The regression model also indicated that there was a positive relationship between employees' performance and the factor variables studies of psychological relaxation techniques, job redesigns, welfare benefits and counselling services. The study recommended that the Management of the organisation under study should create awareness to the employees to enable them be aware of utilization of stress management strategies available in the organisation that can result in improved performance.

Joy (2020) conducted a research on stress management and employee performance. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between stress management and employee performance. The objective of the study was to investigate the influence of stress, management, workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, effectiveness, efficiency and commitment on employee performance. The study analyzed the literature review, theoretical framework as, well as empirical studies by other authors from which the conceptual framework was built. The study was set to be informed by the role theory effect. This study thus concluded that stress management bears a positive and significant influence on employee performance. The study recommended that management should design task and jobs in ways that would make for effective, efficiency and commitment and bring about improvement in the performance of their workforce and that flexible job schedules should be incorporated into human resource management strategies,

policies and plan to enhance easy employee performance and commitment that will increase organisational survival.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is drawn from theoretical underpinnings of Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory Stress knowledge gaps identified from empirical literature. In the schematic diagram, the direct influence of stress management practices on employee performance forms the basis of the study. In line with theoretical and empirical literature, the study proposed stress management practices influences employee performance through psychological support, training and development and employees' welfare programs.

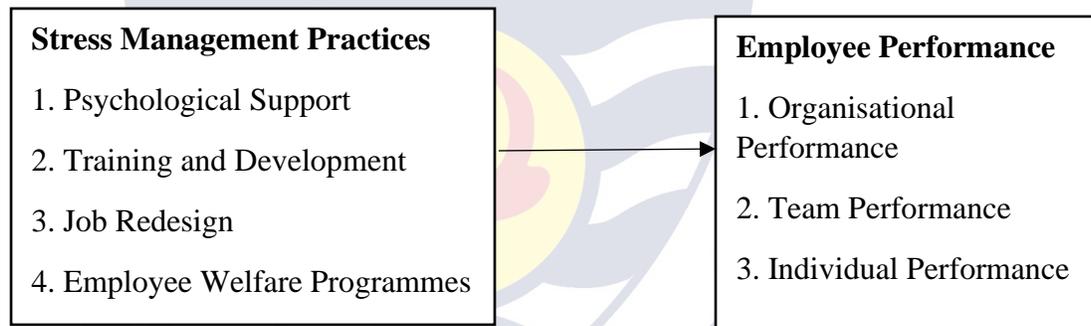


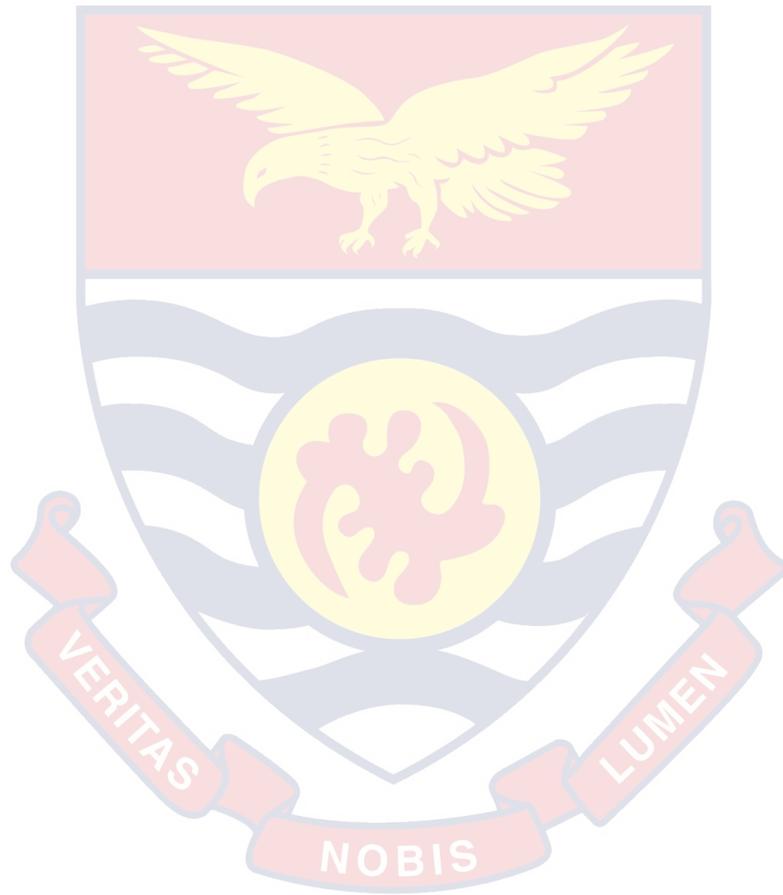
Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Author's Construct, 2020.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature based on the objectives and research questions. This literature was reviewed under the following sub-headings. The first section explored the theoretical model underpinning the study which is Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory. The second section also examined stress management practices proposed literature of which included; psychological support, employees'

welfare programmes and training and development. Finally, the last section focused on empirical literature of the relationship between stress management practices and employee performance, and development of a conceptual framework within the context and scope of the study also discussed.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the theoretical basis which guarded the study which was to assess the effect of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast in Cape Coast, Ghana. This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It covers the research approach, research design, study organisation, population, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, ethical considerations, and data processing and analysis. The chapter ends with a chapter summary.

#### Research Approach

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) postulated that, the epistemological underpinning of a quantitative motif holds that there exist definable and quantifiable social facts. The study therefore employed the quantitative research approach based on the nature of the study purpose under consideration, specific objectives, hypotheses and the nature of the primary data to be collected and analysed. Creswell (2014) asserted that quantitative approach deals with explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics).

This approach typically begins with data collection based on a hypothesis or theory and it is followed with application of descriptive or inferential statistics (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Quantitative methods are frequently described as deductive in nature, in the sense that inferences from tests of statistical hypotheses

lead to general inferences about characteristics of a population. Quantitative methods are also frequently characterized as assuming that there is a single “truth” that exists, independent of human perception (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). It was also found that the findings from quantitative research can be predictive, explanatory, and confirming (Williams, 2007 as cited in Bernard & Bernard, 2012).

### **Research Design**

According to Singh (2006), research design is essentially a statement of the objective of the inquiry and the strategies for collecting the evidence, analysing the evidences and reporting the findings. Research design is a plan or a guide which specifies how data relating to a given research should be collected, measured and analysed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). According to Kothari (2004), research designs deal with creation of decisions regarding the techniques which are utilized in gathering data, the type of strategies and instruments for sampling, and ways in which the constraints of time and cost can be dispensed. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), and Saunders and Lewis (2016) research design can be categorised into three broad categories based on the purpose of the study; namely, exploratory, descriptive and causal designs.

This study adopted the descriptive survey. Descriptive design is often employed by researchers in order to afford them the opportunity to describe and understand the characteristics of the study variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This design was important for use in the study because it offered the researcher opportunity to describe and examine stress management practices in the educational sector.

## Study Unit

The University of Cape Coast is one of the public collegiate research universities in Ghana located in the colonial city of Cape Coast. The university is located on a hill overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, making it one of the rare sea front universities in the world. The government of Ghana established the university in 1962, after recognizing the gap and need for highly skilled and qualified human resources to man the educational sector. The university at its establishment was equipped and mandated to train graduate teachers for teacher training colleges and technical institutions. Currently, the university has added other disciplines to its core mandate including the training of doctors and other allied health professions, as well as, administrators, physicists, agriculturalists, education planners.

The university is five kilometers west of Cape Coast, and operates on two campuses, the Northern campus and the Southern campus. The University is organized into five (5) Colleges headed by Provosts, namely: College of Health and Allied Sciences, College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences; College of Humanities and Legal Studies, College of Distance Education, and eighteen (18) Faculties/Schools headed by Deans. The University also has eleven (11) Directorates.

The staff populace in the University has been at an increasing rate since the services produced are continually of benefit to many stake holders. This had called for the establishment of other departments and schools to aid in rendering their services, however, the number is not enough. This had led to extra obligations on the part of administrative staff within the University to meet the set target by the

school within the usual time periods. This further had led to management in setting up policies and practices to curb the increasing rate of stress among employees within the University.

### **Population**

A population is well-defined individuals or objects in a group known to have similar traits that are identified by criteria determined by the researcher (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). The target population were senior administrative staff working in the University of Cape Coast regardless of their religion, language and other socio-demographic background. Both male and female with permanent employment at the university were included. According to the Directorate of Human Resource of the University of Cape Coast, the staff constitutes Senior staff, Senior members and the Junior staff, out of which nine hundred and twenty-three (923) are administrative staff.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The sample size is the number of observations that constitute it. The sample size is an essential feature of any empirical study in which the aim is to make inferences about a population from a sample. In this study, the researcher used the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table which pegs the sample at 269 administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. Basically, two types of sampling methods exist, which are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The sampling technique used in this study was the simple random sampling. This is in line with the argument by Oakshott (1998) that every member of the target population has an equal chance of being selected. The choice of this

technique was to avoid the occurrence of any bias in the chosen sample of the population.

### Response Rate

In this study, the population size was nine hundred and twenty-three (923) senior administrative staff and due to the large number of the population, two hundred and sixty-nine (269) was used for the sample size by the help of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table. This means that a total of 269 questionnaires were issued from which 257 were filled and returned which represents a response rate of 95.5%. This means the usable questionnaires for the analysis of the study were two hundred and fifty-seven (257) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

Questionnaire	Count	Percentage (%)
Returned	257	95.5
Non-Returned	12	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2020)

The 95.5% return rate was considered to be satisfactory based on Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who opined that a response rate of 50% is enough for analysis and reporting; a rate of (60%) is good and a response rate of (70%) and over is excellent. The high response rate was attributed to the fact that the researcher had contacts in the study area that facilitated in the data collection process. Besides, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires and also made a lot of efforts

to make many follow-ups calls to clarify queries with the intention to boost the high response rate.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The research instrument that was used for data collection was a questionnaire. This is very useful in social science research (O'Brien & Toms, 2010). A questionnaire is a formalized set of questions for obtaining information from respondents (Malhotra, Birks & Wills, 2013). Close-ended questions was used to elicit responses needed to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives set for this study. The closed-ended questions required the respondent to choose from among a given set of responses and require the respondent to examine each possible response independent of the other choice. It also employed a Likert scale, which is more useful when behaviour, attitude or other phenomena of interest needs to be evaluated in a continuum (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau (2011) posits that there are distinct advantages in using questionnaires rather than interview methodology. One of such advantage is that questionnaires are less expensive and easier to administer than personal interview. Groves et al (2011) indicate that mailed surveys, for example, are extremely efficient at providing information in a relatively brief period time at low cost to the researcher.

### **Pre-Test**

Validity and reliability indicate how best the instrument used in the study best measures the parameters it is meant to measure, and it is the measure of accuracy in terms of results attained in the study (Cook & Campbell, 1979). In this

study, a pre-test of the research questionnaire was done at the university community in the University of Education, Winneba. This institution was selected for the pretesting because it has similar structure employees like the one university community in the University of Cape Coast. This process was aimed at testing the accuracy and strength of the questionnaire in eliciting data needed for the study. In other words, this was to help in assessing the clarity of our questions to the respondents and to elicit their understanding regarding answering questions. Questionnaires were administered and after receiving them back, it was realized that the questionnaires did not need any significant changes.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Validity in research simply means the extent to which instruments (questionnaires or structured interview schedules) measure what they intend to measure. In other words, validity means to what extent that the selected tool measures the intended research objectives (Bowling, 2009).

In the context of this study, several strategies were undertaken to validate and refine the content of the questionnaire. To address the face validity, the researcher read the questionnaires and the appropriate corrections were made before it was given to the employees at the University of Cape Coast. Peer review was also of immense importance.

Content validity was further enhanced by asking experienced experts in the field to go through the questionnaire before it was administered to the respondents. All efforts and views of experts were taken to consideration as to whether to add or drop certain items from the questionnaire. Many items of domains and sub-domains

were manipulated and reconstructed with minor language and adjustments to enhance clarity, and to be assured that the instrument is entirely applicable. With regards to reliability, it can be seen as the extent to which the application of a scale produces consistent results if repeated measures are taken (Vadlin, Åslund, & Nilsson, 2015). It is achieved when keeping results at a consistent level despite changing of time and place (Bowling, 2009). Internal consistency: internal consistency comprises testing the homogeneity that assesses the extent to which personal items are inter-correlated, and the extent to which they correlate with overall scale findings and this can be performed by using Cronbach's alpha test (Beck, Coffey, Foy, Keane, & Blanchard, 2009). In terms of observation, reliability of observations refers to the same inferences or activities of intra-observation (one observation at different time) and inter-observation reliability (more than one observer) (Beck, Coffey, Foy, Keane, & Blanchard, 2009).

The Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used in this study to determine the reliability of items in the questionnaire. The value of Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0 to 1. It is worthy to note that, the closer the value of  $\alpha$  to 1, the better its reliability.

This study, therefore, met the minimum threshold for all the variables that were considered as shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Cronbach Alpha values for the variables**

Variable	Alpha value
Employee Performance	.710
Psychological support	.783
Welfare Programs	.701
Job Redesign	.704
Training and development	.824

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher requested consent from the Directorate of Human Resource, University of Cape Coast. Further, an introductory letter from the Department of Human Resource Management, University of Cape Coast, was obtained. Thereafter, permission was sought from the Colleges considered in the study. Respondents were given the full assurance that the study was for academic purposes and that their responses would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents and the same was completed by the respondents and returned to the researcher at the spot and were subsequently checked for any missing information.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Data processing and analysis operations carried out included data editing, cleaning and classification. Data editing cleaning is the examination of the collected data to detect omissions and errors and to correct them whenever possible. Data classification is the arranging of the collected data in classes or groups with

common characteristics. Similar data was then tabulated before being further analysis was conducted. The tabulated data were then analysed using quantitative techniques. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of the collected data which included parameters such as measures of central tendencies and the measure of dispersion. Inferential data analysis techniques such as regression analysis were also used to analyse the collected data.

The responses from the questionnaires were then edited, coded using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0 for processing. This statistical software is recommended for use in studies in social sciences (De Vaus & de Vaus, 2013). In analysing the data, categories were identified and put into themes for presentation and discussion. Both inferential statistics and descriptive statistics were computed. In terms of all the objectives, the results were analysed using mean and standard deviation to assess the various stress management practices in UCC, and the levels of employee performance in the university. However, Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) and regression was used to determine the relationship between stress management practices and employee performance and the extent of its influence on employee performance. This measured the strength and direction of the relationship between stress management practices and employee performance.

The results were presented using tables. The quantitative data collected was organized in accordance with the research questions. The responses received from the respondents were initially tabulated according to five Likert-Scale (options) contained in the questionnaire.

### **Ethical Considerations**

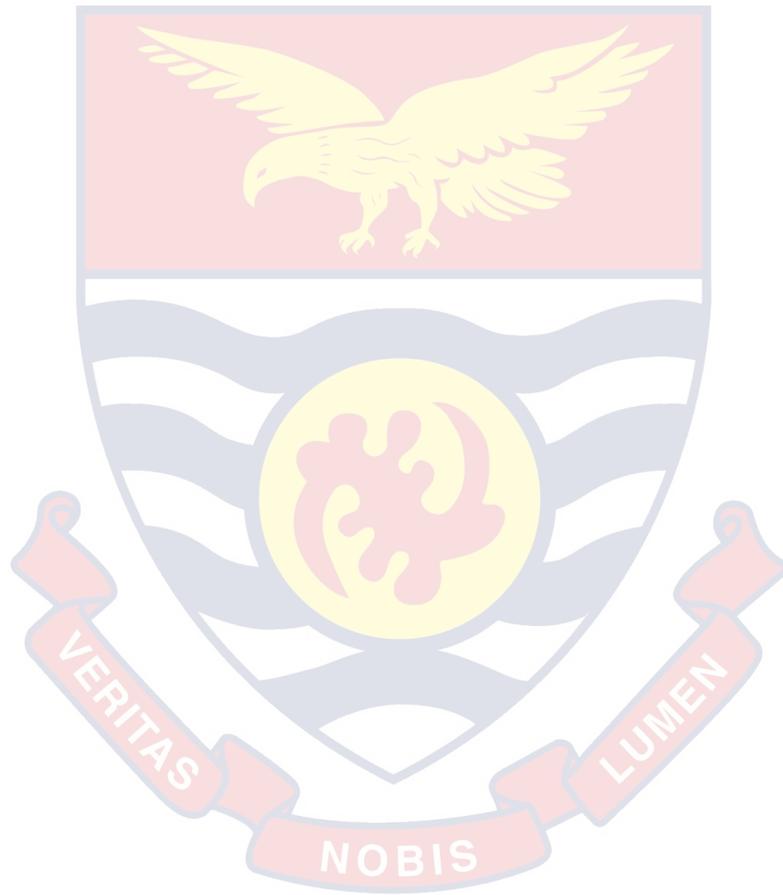
A study by Patten and Newhart (2017) as cited in Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) revealed major ethical issues that need to be considered in every research. According to them, these major ethical issues include voluntary participation, right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of information. As such, all efforts were geared towards ensuring that all these ethical issues were attended to. For instance, with voluntary participations, every respondent was allowed to participate in the data collection exercise on his or her own free will. Also, the possible issues of right to privacy was realised by allowing respondents to answer the questionnaires on their own and unclear questions were appropriately attended to through their own convenient medium.

Further, the issue of anonymity was attended to by restricting respondents from providing their detailed information about themselves on the questionnaire in relation to names, contact numbers and personal addresses. Respondents were also assured that none of their identities would be leaked to the public domain nor used for purposes other than this study. Finally, the study ensured confidentiality of information by assuring respondents that all information provided would be kept confidential. They were also assured that, none of the information neither provided would be used against them nor found in the public domain. In summary, the study ensured that all major ethical issues were appropriately addressed.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter was to describe the methods used in achieving the aim of this study. It has revealed the study design and the researcher's reason for choosing a

particular design. The population, as well as the sample size for the study and the sampling techniques used had been discussed. For analysis sake, the chapter touched on the methods for collecting the data and the instruments employed in collecting the data. The chapter has shown enough information about analysing the data and complying with ethical stance. The next chapter which is Chapter four gives a presentation of the results of the collected and analysed data.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter analyses data on the assessment of the effects of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast in Cape Coast, Ghana. The data for these analyses were obtained through the administration of questionnaires. Based on the main research goal, this chapter reflects on the core research objectives as outlined in chapter One. The first section discusses the demographic background of respondents while the second section discusses the results of the research objectives.

#### Demographic Background Information on the Study Respondents

For the purposes of understanding the socio-demographic features of the respondents, the first section of the questionnaires was designed in such a way that the respondents could provide answers relating to their backgrounds. After analysing their answers, the information that was obtained had been summarized and shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: The Results of the Demographic Features of the Respondents**

Variable		Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Sex</b>	Male	149	58.0
	Female	108	42.0
		<b>257</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>	20-30	27	10.4
	31-40	123	48.0
	41-50	90	35.0
	51 and above	17	6.6
		<b>257</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Education level</b>	Diploma	43	16.7
	1 <sup>st</sup> Degree	114	44.2
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Degree	87	33.8
	Professional	13	5.2
		<b>257</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	204	79.6
	Single	53	20.4
		<b>257</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Experience</b>	1-5 years	33	13.0
	6-10 years	124	48.3
	11-15 years	31	11.9
	16 years and above	69	26.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>257</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey (2020)

Table 3 clearly illustrates that there were more male participants than their females' counterparts in this survey. More than half of the respondents (58.0%) were males while the remaining respondents, despite the fact that the females were 42.0%. This implies that a lot of males are employed as administrative staff which is not surprising considering the gender inequality in terms of employment in the country. On the age distribution of the respondents, it was found out that the majority of the respondents (123) are between the age of 31 and 40 years representing about (48.0%). This higher percentage of young administrative staff gives a positive impression that there are more young staff in the university. This could mean that the university is of interest to the young adults and for that matter attracting more young people with potentials and ideas.

Again, the table shows that 27 respondents representing (10.4%) were between 20 to 30 years which implies that in the service, a number of the respondents are in their youthful age and that the institution can be thought of a lot of potentials in terms of development in the future. In addition, 90 of the respondents representing (35.0%) were between the ages 41 to 50 years followed by 17 respondents above 51 representing (6.6%) in the university. This implies that relatively a small percentage number of administrative staff are approaching the retirement age.

With the educational levels of the employees, it was also realized that 43 respondents representing (16.7%) had diploma education. Also, with regards to first-degree, 114 of them representing (44.2%) were found to be in this category representing the highest percentage of the employees in the university. More so, a

large percentage number of the staff had second degree. With this category of staff, a total of 87 representing 33.8% were the second-degree holders. Finally, 13 employees (5.2%) had professional education. From the table it is realized that most workers in the institution consider education as important to the growth of the country.

It can also be seen from the table that majority of respondents, that is, 204 representing (79.6%) of the sampled population were married, whilst 53 respondents representing (20.4%) of the population were single. This implies that majority of administrative staff fall are married and are further seen by society as responsible individuals. In terms of the how long each administrative staff has worked in the organisation, it was found that most of them had fell within 6 to 10 years. Within these years, 124 (48.3%) has worked within them, while 33 (13.0%) has worked within the years of 1-5. This is followed by those who have worked for more than 16 years with a total number of 69 (26.8%). Lastly those who have worked between 11 and 15 years make up 31 (11.9%).

### **Findings of the Study**

This section presents results and analysis based on the three key questions of this study. The descriptive survey statistics was used in analysing the data. As it has been indicated in the methods, the design of this research is descriptive and adopts a quantitative method. The results and analysis are presented chronologically based on the stated objectives of this study.

**Research Objective one: To assess the various stress management practices at the university.**

The first objective of the study sought to assess the various stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. To achieve this, the data for each of the study variables were analysed into median scores on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 to 2.9 indicating low level of agreement and 3 to 5 indicating high level of agreement (as adopted Atkinson, 2004; Hammen, 2005; Ackon, 2018). The stress management construct is made up of four elements namely; Psychological support, Job redesign, Training and development, and employee welfare programs, of which each element was examined exclusively.

**Psychological Support as an element of Stress Management Practices**

In assessing the psychological support as a component of stress management practices in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, five indicators were measured on a five-point likert scale (Table 4). Score '5' showed the strongest agreement while score '1' showed the strongest disagreement. These scores are generalised based on respondents' level of agreement with each of the statements provided under "Psychological Support" on the questionnaire.

**Table 4: Psychological Support**

	N	Median
Meditation interventions	257	2.96
Relaxation interventions	257	3.83
Time management interventions	257	3.49
Goal-setting interventions	257	3.28
Counseling and psychotherapy	257	3.30

Scale (Median): Low = 1.00 – 2.90; High = 3.00 – 5.00

Source: Field survey (2020)

From Table 4, the median of “Meditation interventions”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 2.96, signifying moderate level of agreement from respondents. Likewise, the median of “Relaxation interventions”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.83, signifying high level of agreement from respondents. Equally, the median of “Time management interventions”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.49, demonstrating high level of agreement from respondents. Correspondingly, the median of “Goal-setting interventions”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.28 indicating high level of agreement from respondents (Table 4). Similarly, the median of “Counseling and psychotherapy”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.30, suggesting high level of agreement from respondents.

The results show the existence of good psychological support among employees, which is key to minimising the impact of stress at the University of Cape Coast. This is evident as the median for each of the five indicators were more than 3.00. This finding is in conformity with the statement made by Peterson,

Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa & Zhang (2011); Avey, Nimnicht & Pigeon (2010) that, psychological support provided by management towards employees is crucial in minimising the impact of stress and hence increasing the level of performance of employees in an organisation.

### **Training and development as an element of Stress Management Practices**

In assessing the Training and Development as a component of stress management practices in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, five indicators were measured on a five-point likert scale (Table 5). Score ‘5’ showed the strongest agreement while score ‘1’ showed the strongest disagreement. These scores are generalised based on respondents’ level of agreement with each of the statements provided under “Training and Development” on the questionnaire.

**Table 5: Training and Development**

	N	Median
Training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure	257	3.32
Training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees’ commitment	257	3.38
Training help individuals set job- related goals, identify and implement adequate behavioural strategies to accomplish the goals, and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals	257	3.12
Training and development offer employees’ skills to respond adequately to stressful work environments	257	3.55
Training increases employees stress management abilities, improves work-life balance, and reduces psychological stress	257	3.27

Scale (Median): Low = 1.00 – 2.90; High = 3.00 – 5.00

Source: Field survey (2020)

From the Table 5, the median of “Training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.32, suggesting high level of agreement from respondents. Similarly, the median of “Training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees’ commitment”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.38, indicating high level of agreement from respondents. Also, the median of “Training help individuals set job- related goals, identify and implement adequate behavioural strategies to accomplish the goals, and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.12, demonstrating high level of agreement from respondents.

Likewise, the median of “Training and development offer employees’ skills to respond adequately to stressful work environments”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.55, suggesting high level of agreement from respondents. By the same token, the median of “Training increases employees stress management abilities, improves work-life balance, and reduces psychological stress”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.27, indicating high level of agreement from respondents.

The results indicate the existence of good Training and development among employees and employers, which has the tendency of enhancing stress management at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. This is evident as the median of five indicators were all above 3.00. This discovery is in line with the statement made by Asfaw, Argaw & Bayissa (2015); Arikewuyo (2004) that, on-going, frequent

Training and development is one of the most important components of a comprehensive stress management strategy. In a similar study, Karanja (2014) in a study submitted that Training and development is important in promoting stress management practices and a conduit for increased employee performance.

### **Job redesign as an element of Stress Management Practices**

In assessing the Job redesign as a component of stress management practices in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, five indicators were measured on a five-point likert scale (Table 6). Score ‘5’ showed the strongest agreement while score ‘1’ showed the strongest disagreement. These scores are generalised based on respondents’ level of agreement with each of the statements provided under “Job redesign” on the questionnaire.

**Table 6: Job Redesign**

	N	Median
Redefining Job roles	257	3.32
Reducing role overload	257	3.18
Increasing participation in decision making	257	2.96
Job enrichment to enhance job control	257	2.55
Reducing role conflict	257	3.33

Scale (Median): Low = 1.00 – 2.90; High = 3.00 – 5.00

Source: Field survey (2020)

From the Table 6, the median of “Redefining Job roles”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.32, demonstrating high level of agreement from respondents. Moreover, the median of “Reducing role overload”, as an indicator,

from a sample of 257 is 3.18, indicating high level of agreement from respondents. In the same way, the median of “Reducing role conflict”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.33, suggesting high level of agreement from respondents. On the contrary, the median of “Increasing participation in decision making” as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 2.96, suggesting low level of agreement from respondents. In the same way, the median of “Job enrichment to enhance job control” from a sample of 257 is 2.55, demonstrating low level of agreement from respondents (Table 6).

The results suggest the existence of some good level of job redesign among employees and employers, which is key to minimising the negative influence of stress on the performance of various employees at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. This is because, out of the five indicators that measured “job redesign”, a majority of three indicators had median scores which were above 3.00. This finding is in agreement with the statement made by Siengthai & Pila-Ngarm (2016) that, job redesign is a vital stress management practice in improving stress management among employees in all organisations since they are compelled to explore other defined roles and not feel bored for working with a specified role for a couple of years. Similar results were recorded by Odhong and Omolo (2014) who carried out their study in Kenya. According to the researchers, job redesign is essential in encouraging and promoting stress management in all organisations.

**Employee Welfare Programmes as an element of Stress Management Practices**

In assessing the employee welfare programmes as a component of stress management practices in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, five indicators were measured on a five-point likert scale (Table 7). Score ‘5’ showed the strongest agreement while score ‘1’ showed the strongest disagreement. These scores are generalised based on respondents’ level of agreement with each of the statements provided under “Employee Welfare Programmes” on the questionnaire.

**Table 7: Employee Welfare Programmes**

	N	Median
Employees’ welfare programs provide better physical and mental health to workers for a healthy work environment and thus enhances employees’ commitments	257	3.49
Facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers’ families help in raising their standards of living; making workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increase their commitments.	257	4.54
Employees’ welfare programs enhance a feeling of involvement and participation among workers and therefore they take active interest in their jobs and work	257	4.41
Employee welfare measures increase the productivity of organisation and promote healthy industrial relations thereby maintaining industrial peace.	257	3.57

Scale (Median): Low = 1.00 – 2.90; High = 3.00 – 5.00

Source: Field survey (2020)

From the Table 7, the median of “Employees’ welfare programs provide better physical and mental health to workers for a healthy work environment and thus enhances employees’ commitments”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.49, indicating high level of agreement from respondents. In addition, the median of “Facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers’ families help in raising their standards of living; making workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increase their commitments.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 4.54, indicating high level of agreement from respondents. The median of “Employees’ welfare programs enhance a feeling of involvement and participation among workers and therefore they take active interest in their jobs and work”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 4.41, showing high level of agreement from respondents. And finally, median of “Employee welfare measures increase the productivity of organisation and promote healthy industrial relations thereby maintaining industrial peace.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.57, suggesting high level of agreement from respondents.

The results demonstrate the existence of strong employee welfare programmes held by employees and employers, which can enhance stress management and reduce the impact of the negative effect of stress on the performance of employees at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. This revelation confirms the findings of Austin, Shah and Muncer (2005) in Palestine, where they concluded in the study that, employee welfare programmes had the highest degree

of approval from the view point of the employees as a dimension that can improve stress management practices and minimise the adverse effect of stress on employee performance.

**Stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast**

Based on the descriptive statistics, the study found that there are good stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. This was based on the fact that, majority of the indicators that measured each of the study practices (psychological support; training and development; job redesign; and employee welfare programmes) were more than 3.00, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast**

Stress Management Practice	Total number of indicators	Indicators with median more than 3.00	Indicators with median less than 3.00
Psychological Support	5	4	1
Training and Development	5	5	-
Job Redesign	5	3	2
Employee Welfare Programmes	4	4	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Field survey (2020)

**Table 9: Mean Ranking of Stress Management Practices**

Stress management Practice component	Overall mean scores	Rank
Psychological Support	3.46	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Training and Development	3.33	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Job Redesign	3.07	4 <sup>th</sup>
Employee Welfare Programmes	3.97	1 <sup>st</sup>

Source: Field survey (2020)

It was also noted that Employee Welfare Programmes had the highest degree of consent from the view point of the employees, then Psychological Support, followed by Training and Development, and lastly, Job Redesign as shown in Table 9 above. This finding is consistent with that of Waititu, Kihara & Senaji (2017). Waititu, Kihara and Senaji discovered that, of the many practices of managing stress at the work place or organisations, employee welfare programmes should be taken into much consideration since it has the greatest potential to influence the performance of the employees.

It is therefore worthy to note that, these stress management practices have a greater potential of minimising the adverse effect of stress and thereby increasing the performance of employees within the organisation. Improvising upon the effect of these practices may lead decreased performance and at its worse, a decline in the overall performance of the organisation. As Waititu, Kihara & Senaji (2017) submitted that, organisations or institutions must be able to understand the needs of the employees and to which approach may best fit and meet the stress within the

stipulated time in life of an employee. They further opined that, implementing the right stress management practices within the required time in the life of employees faced by the adverse effect of stress does not only help combat it, but also aids in creating a conducive working environment needed to increase organisational performance.

**Research Objective two: To assess the level of employee performance at the University of Cape Coast.**

The second objective of this study sought to assess employee performance at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. In achieving this objective, nine indicators were measured on a five-point Likert scale as shown in Table 10 below. Score ‘5’ showed the strongest agreement while score ‘1’ showed the strongest disagreement. These scores are generalised based on respondents’ level of agreement with each of the statements provided under “Employee Performance” on the questionnaire.

**Table 10: Employee Performance**

	N	Median
The management strategies motivate me to be a delight to customers.	257	3.71
I perform my work to the expected standards.	257	3.41
I have complete knowledge and understanding of my tasks.	257	3.04
I have the required level of motivation to perform the task with minimum will and efforts.	257	3.38
I can manage my time and allocate resources effectively.	257	3.27
I can make snap judgments with limited information.	257	3.20

I can judge a given work situation and respond to it.	257	3.24
The rewards packages influence me to show loyalty to UCC	257	3.34
Resources needed for the proper functioning of the organisation are always available	257	3.13

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Scale (Median): Low = 1.00 – 2.90; High = 3.00 – 5.00

Source: Field survey (2020)

From Table 10, the median of “The management strategies motivate me to be a delight to customers.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.71, showing high level of agreement from respondents. In the same vein, the median of “I perform my work to the expected standards.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.41, suggesting high level of agreement from respondents. Equally, the median of “I have complete knowledge and understanding of my tasks.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.04, showing high level of agreement from respondents as shown in the Table 10. Correspondingly, the median of “I have the required level of motivation to perform the task with minimum will and efforts.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.38, demonstrating high level of agreement from respondents.

In addition, the median of “I can manage my time and allocate resources effectively.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.27, indicating high level of agreement from respondents. Likewise, the median of “I can make snap judgments with limited information.”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.20, demonstrating high level of agreement from respondents. Similarly, the median of “I can judge a given work situation and respond to it”, as an indicator, from a sample

of 257 is 3.24, showing high level of agreement from respondents. Likewise, the median of “The rewards packages influence me to show loyalty to UCC”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.34, demonstrating high level of agreement from respondents. And finally, the median of “Resources needed for the proper functioning of the organisation are always available”, as an indicator, from a sample of 257 is 3.13, demonstrating high level of agreement from respondents. The results show high level of employee performance at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

**Research Objective three: To examine the influence of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast.**

In order to meet the research objective three, a Pearson’s Correlation was performed. Correlation is a measure of the relationship or association between two continuous numeric variables. It indicates both the direction and degree to which they vary with one another from case to case without implying that one is causing the other (Crossman, 2013). Thus, in order to determine the statistical measure of the strength of a *linear* relationship between stress management practices and employee performance, correlation analysis was performed. Table 11 below indicates the result.

**Table 11: Correlation between Employee performance and Stress management practices**

		Employee Performance	Stress management Practices
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	257	257
Stress Management Practices	Pearson Correlation	.698**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	257	257

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field work (2020)

From table 11, it can be seen that the Pearson correlation coefficient value of ( $r = 0.698$   $N=257$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) confirms that there is a positive linear correlation between the two variables (Employee Performance and Stress management practices). Thus, it can be said that there is very strong evidence to believe that both variables are positively related. This positive connection between the two variables (independent and the dependent) is confirmed by the t-test result which also showed a significant outcome ( $t\text{-value} = 16.139$ ,  $N=257$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) as can be seen below.

**Table 12: Relationship between Employee Performance and Stress Management practices**

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t-	Sig.
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.604	.161		16.139	.000
	Stress Management Practices	.212	.055	.897	3.863	.000

**A. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance**

Source: Field work (2020)

Table indicates a standardized Beta of .897 and this is significant at  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ , T-statistics= 16.139. The results show that Stress management practices has a positive significant impact on the performance of employees of the University of Cape Coast. In order to determine the extent of Stress Management Practices influence on Employee Performance, simple linear regression was also carried out and the results had been depicted in Table 13 below.

**Table 13: Model Summary of Stress Management Practice influence on Employee Performance**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.897 <sup>a</sup>	.805	.803	0.31234

**a. Predictors: (Constant), Stress Management Practices**

**b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance**

Source: Field Work (2020)

The key values of concern in the model summary are the Correlation coefficient (R), the coefficient of determination (R-squared). From Table 13, the models show an R value of 0.897 which shows the value of the correlation between the independent variable (Stress management practices) and the dependent variable (Employee Performance). Cohen (1988) suggests the following guidelines for the interpretation of the magnitude of correlation coefficient;  $r=.10$  to  $.29$  or  $r=-.10$  to  $-.29$  small,  $r=.30$  to  $.49$  or  $r=-.30$  to  $-.49$  medium,  $r=.50$  to  $1.0$  or  $r=-.50$  to  $-1.0$  large. Per the criteria by Cohen (1988), it can be concluded that Stress management practices has a strong positive significant relationship with Employee performance. A position already established by Table 11.

According to Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011), the coefficient of determination represents the variation in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variable. The results show an R-squared of 0.805, this means that almost 81 percent of the variation in employee performance at the

University of Cape Coast is accounted for by stress management practices. In scholarly research that focuses on marketing issues,  $R^2$  values of 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25 for dependent variables can, as a rough rule of thumb, be respectively described as substantial, moderate, or weak (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012; Henseler et al., 2009). This leads to the conclusion that stress management practice has a substantial variation on employee performance. The other 19 percent of the variation in employee performance may be accounted for by variables not considered in this model.

Table 13 above shows that the coefficient of determination  $R$  square is 0.805 and  $R$  is 0.897 at 0.05 significant levels. The implication of the coefficient of determination is that 89.7% of the changes in the response to employee performance can be explained by stress management practices, while the rest of 10.3% are explained by other variables which are not part of this study. The inference here is that stress management practices are significant factors that play important roles in improving staffs' or employee performance although other factors are far better in influencing it. On the basis of the argument made by Joy (2020), it can be said that this positive stress management practice implies that employees consider their personal wellbeing and stability as well as the tasks they are involved in positively. This can be attributed to the fact that the employees have sufficient levels of resources to complete their work.

Also, considering the views of Joy (2020), it is right to suggest that the levels of employee performance could emanate from an organisation's stress management practices in terms of psychological support, job redesign, training and development

and as well as employee's welfare programmes (physically, emotionally, and psychologically). Thus, these employees with the presence of these stress management practices have little or do not experience an adverse influence of stress (i.e., a negative workplace climate) and therefore do not develop a downward spiral of emotions which could result in a narrowing of resources that end in feelings of loneliness, ostracism, and burnout (Kihara, 2018; Akussah, Dzandu & Osei-Aduo, 2012).

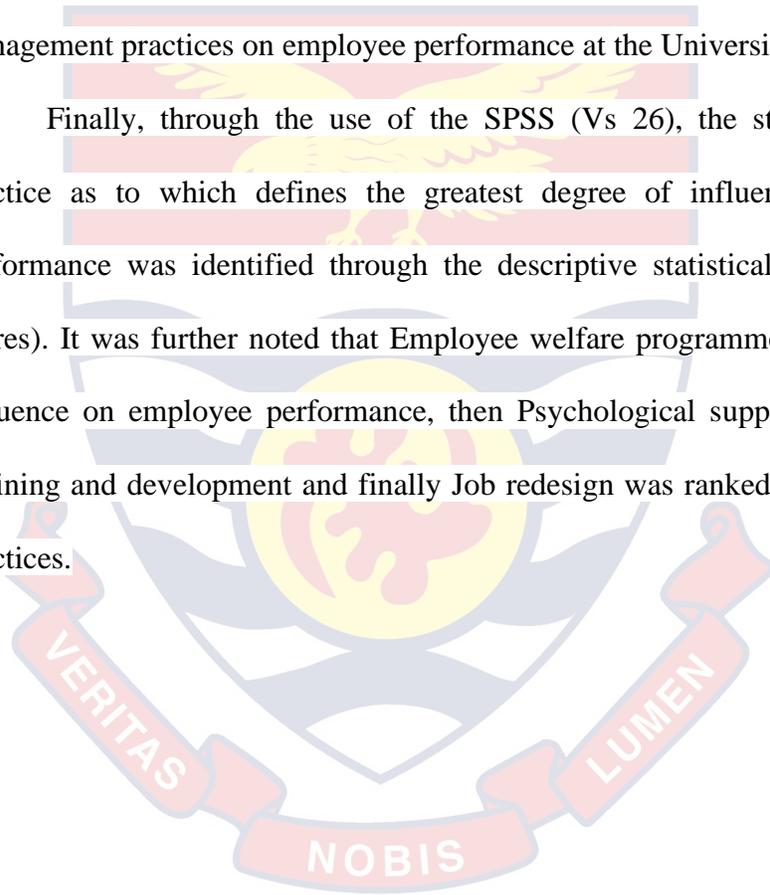
This finding is therefore significant and it is in support of a study by Hammen (2005) who reported that stress management practice has positive influence on employee performance as it was meant to engage, align and improve individuals and group effort to constantly improve the execution of the overall organisational mission. Hammen (2005) disclosed that, stress management practice provides some basis for identifying and correcting disparities in employee performance. Thus, from the point of view of Hammen (2005) stress management practice is activities oriented which contributes to organisational performance. The findings posit that, stress management practices posit a higher degree of influence on employee performance and if given much attention by the management of the University Community, could tend to increase the individual performance of employees.

### **Chapter Summary**

The discussion of this chapter has focused on the influence of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast in Cape Coast, Ghana. Accordingly, this chapter has provided the findings and

discussions which reflect on the core study objectives. The first section discussed the demographic features of those respondents which centred on sex, education, age, staff ranking and experience. However, the second section addressed the specific research objectives relating to the topic namely: to identify the stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast, to investigate employee performance at the University of Cape Coast, and to examine the effect of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast.

Finally, through the use of the SPSS (Vs 26), the stress management practice as to which defines the greatest degree of influence on employee performance was identified through the descriptive statistical measures (mean scores). It was further noted that Employee welfare programmes has the highest influence on employee performance, then Psychological support to employees, Training and development and finally Job redesign was ranked the least of these practices.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the findings of the study and discussed them accordingly. This section presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for the study. The study sought to find the various stress management practices at the university; assess employee performance in the university. Finally, to examine the influence of stress management practices on employee performance at the university.

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast in Cape Coast, Ghana. The following research questions were outlined to guide the research in achieving this purpose:

1. What are the various stress management practices in University of Cape Coast?
2. What is the employee performance in University of Cape Coast?
3. What are the effects of stress management practices on employee performance in University of Cape Coast?

The study was a descriptive survey design which adopted a quantitative methodology. The population considered for the study was nine hundred and twenty-three (923) administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. From a population of 923 staff, a sample size of two hundred and sixty-nine (269) administrative staff was selected for the study based on the Krejcie and Morgan

(1970) criteria. Questionnaires were used in the collection of information from respondents on their respective knowledge on how the stress management practices and its influence on their performance. Out of the 269-sample size, questionnaires were administered, however, two hundred and fifty-seven (257) were filled and returned representing a response rate of 95.5%. Based on the claims of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 95.5% is very good for analysis. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics; mean standard deviation (SD), frequencies, percentages, correlation and regression analysis.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

The findings were organised in line with the research objectives which were formulated to guide and give the study direction. The findings revealed that:

Beginning with the first objective of the study, the researcher sought to assess the various stress management practices at the University of Cape Coast. In this objective the researcher sought to identify the stress management practices that were evident within the university and the extent to which these practices are practiced by the University management based on the views of administrative staff. With regards to these practices, the study discovered that the stress management practices evident in the University include; psychological support, training and development, job redesign and employee welfare programmes. It was further revealed that, these stress management practices have a greater potential of minimising the adverse effect of stress and thereby increasing the performance of employees within the organisation. Improvising upon the effect of these practices

may lead decreased performance and at its worse, a decline in the overall performance of the organisation.

The second objective as per the study was designed to employee performance at the University of Cape Coast. The researcher employed the descriptive statistics (median) in the determination of the employee performance within the University. The study revealed that, from the view point of administrative staff at the University, there were organisational, team and individual levels of employee performance within the University of Cape Coast.

The third objective in this study sought to examine the influence of stress management practices on employee performance at the University of Cape Coast. Here, the stress management practices variables as per the study- psychological support, training and development, job redesign and employee welfare programmes; were regressed against performance. The R value of 0.897 per the regression analysis indicated a strong positive effect of stress management practices on employee performance. This was followed by assessing the statistical significance of the regression model. The p-value was found to be well below .05 ( $p=.000$ ); followed by a Beta also .897 a strong impact of the independent variable on the dependent. On the bases of the analysis, it can be said that stress management practices had a strong and significant impact on employee performance in the University of Cape Coast.

### **Conclusion**

This section presents conclusions drawn from the results of this study. The study has buttressed the fact that employee's perception of any stress management

practice is key in determining their performance. The results proved that though majority of employees were satisfied with the stress management practices at the University, the cumulative percentage of those left unsatisfied is relatively high (39%). This shows that stress management practices at the university does not serve the interest of its entire employees. The results of the employee inputs in determining the stress management practice shows that most of the workers are not consulted. The study concludes that employee engagement in determining the stress management practice is imperative and as such every worker must have a say in determining their stress management practice.

The results of this study have brought out a unique dimension of studied on stress management practices with its particular application on agency employees. The conclusion that could be drawn from both the results of the correlation and the regression analysis is the fact that based on the nature of the employment of most of these workers, it is also the stress management practice attached to their employment that will provide them with the urge to perform well. The conclusion of this study is that stress management practices has an impact on employee performance among employees employed by an employment agency.

When management or organisations take time to invest in stress management practices, employees feel valued by their organisation and thus work extra hard to enhance their performance. It is therefore worthy to note that, these stress management practices have a greater potential of minimising the adverse effect of stress and thereby increasing the performance of employees within the organisation. Improvising upon the effect of these practices may lead decreased

performance and at its worse, a decline in the overall performance of the organisation. Therefore, implementing the right stress management practices within the required time in the life of employees faced by the adverse effect of stress does not only help combat it, but also aids in creating a conducive working environment needed to increase organisational performance.

### **Recommendations**

This study recommends that the management of the University of Cape Coast should allocate adequate resources to improve on the stress management practices available at the institution. This would intend improve on the work performance of employees within the University for efficiency. Moreover, it would does curb the inconsistencies and excuses which may be made by employees in order to embark on vacations and have time for themselves.

It is recommended that the management of the University should involve the employees in deciding on the particular stress management practices that will benefit them and the entire organisation as a whole. This would intend help address the conflicting issues as to which stress management practice may be deem efficient and effective as far these employees are concerned. Also, it would help the management of the University to channel their resources to the particular stress management practice and thence develop it well for the employees.

Also, it is recommended that the management of the University should organise training and development seminars for the employees in other to enlighten them on how to manage stress related issues both at work and at home. These practices should be designed and administered with the full participation of

employees or their representatives so as to yield a greater level of influence on their performance.

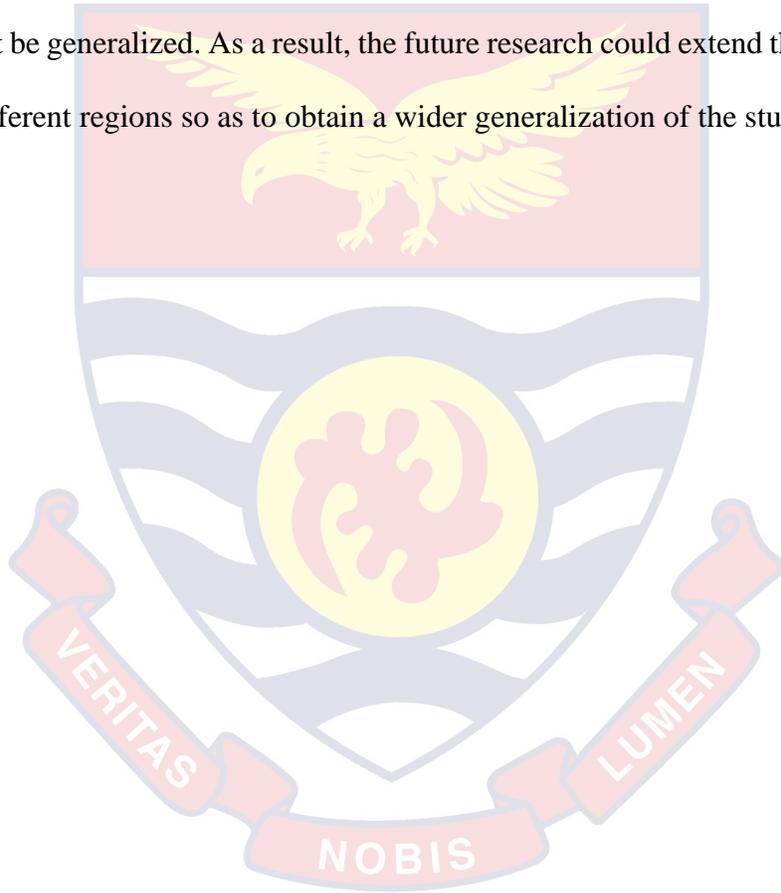
The study revealed that stress management practices have great impact on employee performance. Thus, it will be very important for top management to be employing and implementing these stress management practices for employees if they want performance to be increased. It is also recommended to the management of the university to practice a combination of all the practices of stress management discovered in this study. These practices include; psychological support, training and development, job redesign and employee welfare programmes. This would ensure that, a weakness in one of these practice in curbing the increasing levels of stress in the university would be catered for by the other. More so, it is recommended to practice all these practices since its combination produces greater effect on the performance of employees.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Bearing in mind the limitations of this study, it is recommended that a broader study be undertaken encompassing staffs of various universities to unearth the impact of stress management practices on employee performance within that educational sector.

This study was also based on quantitative analysis which only developed its construct on an already established research instrument, but in the near future, both qualitative and quantitative methods should be used and this will help employees to better describe the situation and also explain in detail the reason for the answers that have been uncovered using quantitative.

It is also recommended that future researchers consider the role those demographic variables play on the relationship between the various stress management practices and employee performance. Also, future research could be conducted to address one of the limitations outlined in this study. For example, this study only concentrated on administrative staff at University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, in the Central region of Ghana. This means the views of the employees could not be generalized. As a result, the future research could extend the investigation to different regions so as to obtain a wider generalization of the study.



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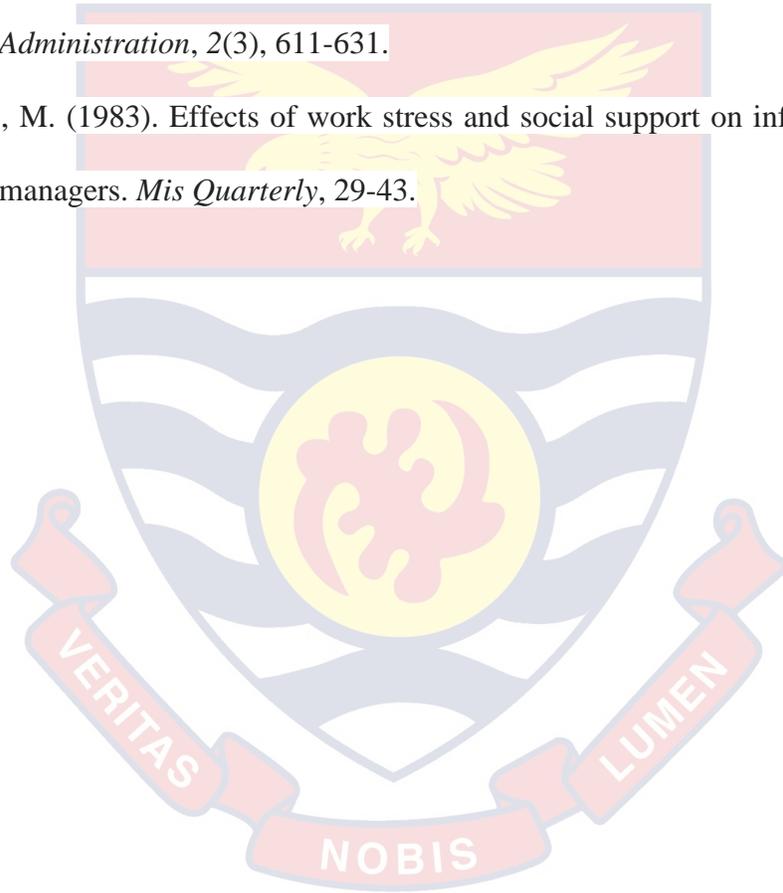
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**APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT**

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of University of Cape Coast, offering Master of Business Administration (Human Resource Management) programme at the School of Business, Department of Human Resource Management. This questionnaire is designed to ascertain information for my research work on the topic: **“STRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST”**. This research is in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of a Master of Business Administration Degree in Human Resource Management at the University of Cape Coast.

All the answers you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and for academic purpose only. Please feel free to answer the questions as candid as possible.

Thank you

Felicia Assibey-Ankrah

## SECTION A

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

To answer a question, kindly tick [] on the space provided where necessary.

1. Gender: MALE [] FEMALE []

2. Age: 20-30 [] 31-40 []

41-50 [] 51 and above []

3. Marital Status: MARRIED [] SINGLE [] OTHER []

4. Years of Experience: 1-5years [] 6-10years []

11-15years [] 16 and above []

## SECTION B

### QUESTIONNAIRES ON THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF STRESS

#### MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

The statements are about the assessment of the various Stress Management Practices in the University of Cape Coast. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you agree or disagree. If you have never agreed or ever agreed with the statement, kindly tick the strongly disagree (SD), Disagree, (D); Neutral (N); Agree, (A); and Strongly Agree (SA) in the column after the statement.

In your own opinion, to what extent are the following forms of psychological supports are effective in managing stress among employees in UCC? Use a scale of SD to SA; where SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree and SA = Strongly Agree

	<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Meditation interventions					
2	Relaxation interventions					
3	Time management interventions					
4	Goal-setting interventions					
5	Counseling and psychotherapy					

To what extents are the following aspects of job redesign effective in managing employees' Stress Management in UCC? Use a scale of SD to SA; where SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree and SA = Strongly Agree

	<b>JOB REDESIGN</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
6	Redefining Job roles					
7	Reducing role overload					
8	Increasing participation in decision making					
9	Job enrichment to enhance job control					
10	Reducing role conflict					

Kindly indicate your opinions with the following statement regarding training and development and stress management in UCC. Use a scale of SD to SA; where SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree and SA = Strongly Agree

	<b>TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
11	Training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure					
12	Training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees' commitment					
13	Training help individuals set job- related goals, identify and implement adequate behavioural strategies to accomplish the goals, and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals					
14	Training and development offer employees' skills to respond adequately to stressful work environments					
15	Training increases employees stress management abilities, improves work-life balance, and reduces psychological stress					

Kindly indicate your opinions with the following statement regarding employees' welfare programs and stress management to enhance employees' performance. Use a scale of SD to SA; where SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree and SA = Strongly Agree.

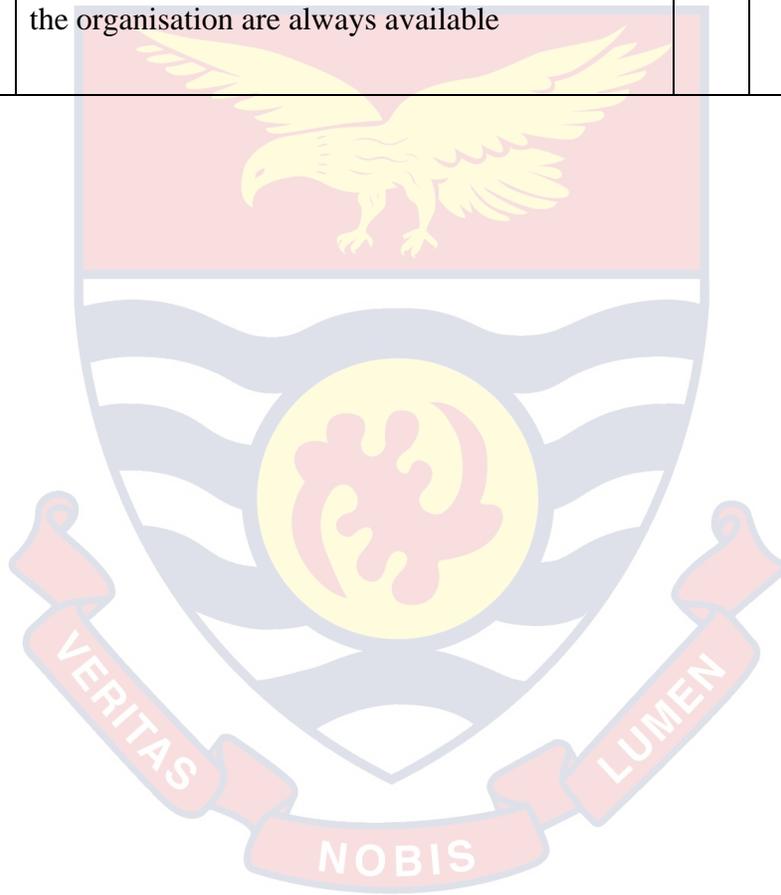
	<b>EMPLOYEE WELFARE PROGRAMS</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
16	Employees' welfare programs provide better physical and mental health to workers for a healthy work environment and thus enhances employees' commitments					
17	Facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers' families help in raising their standards of living; making workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increase their commitments.					
18	Employees' welfare programs enhance a feeling of involvement and participation among workers and therefore they take active interest in their jobs and work					
19	Employee welfare measures increase the productivity of organisation and promote healthy industrial relations thereby maintaining industrial peace.					

**EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

*This section contains statements assessing the performance of employees. Please tick as appropriate in the boxes using a tick (√) or cross mark (x) the statement that describes your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements. In a 5-point Likert scale, where SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree, N – Neutral, A – Agree, and SA – Strongly Agree, rate the following statements on the level of employee performance in UCC.*

	<b>Statement</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
24	The management strategies motivate me to be a delight to customers.					
25	I perform my work to the expected standards.					
26	I have complete knowledge and understanding of my tasks.					
27	I have the required level of motivation to perform the task with minimum will and efforts.					
28	I can manage my time and allocate resources effectively.					
29	I can make snap judgments with limited information.					

30	I can judge a given work situation and respond to it.					
31	The rewards packages influence me to show loyalty to UCC					
32	Resources needed for the proper functioning of the organisation are always available					



**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING**

**APPENDIX B**

*Krejcie and Morgan's Sample Size Determination Table*

*N= POPULATION, S= SAMPLE SIZE*

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382

210	136	1100	285	1000000	384
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