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**EFFECTS OF STRESS ON PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CASE
STUDY OF VOLTA RIVER AUTHORITY**

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This thesis is submitted to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and
Technology, Kumasi in partial fulfilment of the requirement for award of

MASTER'S OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all of the submitted contents of this work are original in form and substance and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made specifically in the text and references. All of the content of this work has been submitted as a part of partial fulfilment of Masters of Public Administration programme.

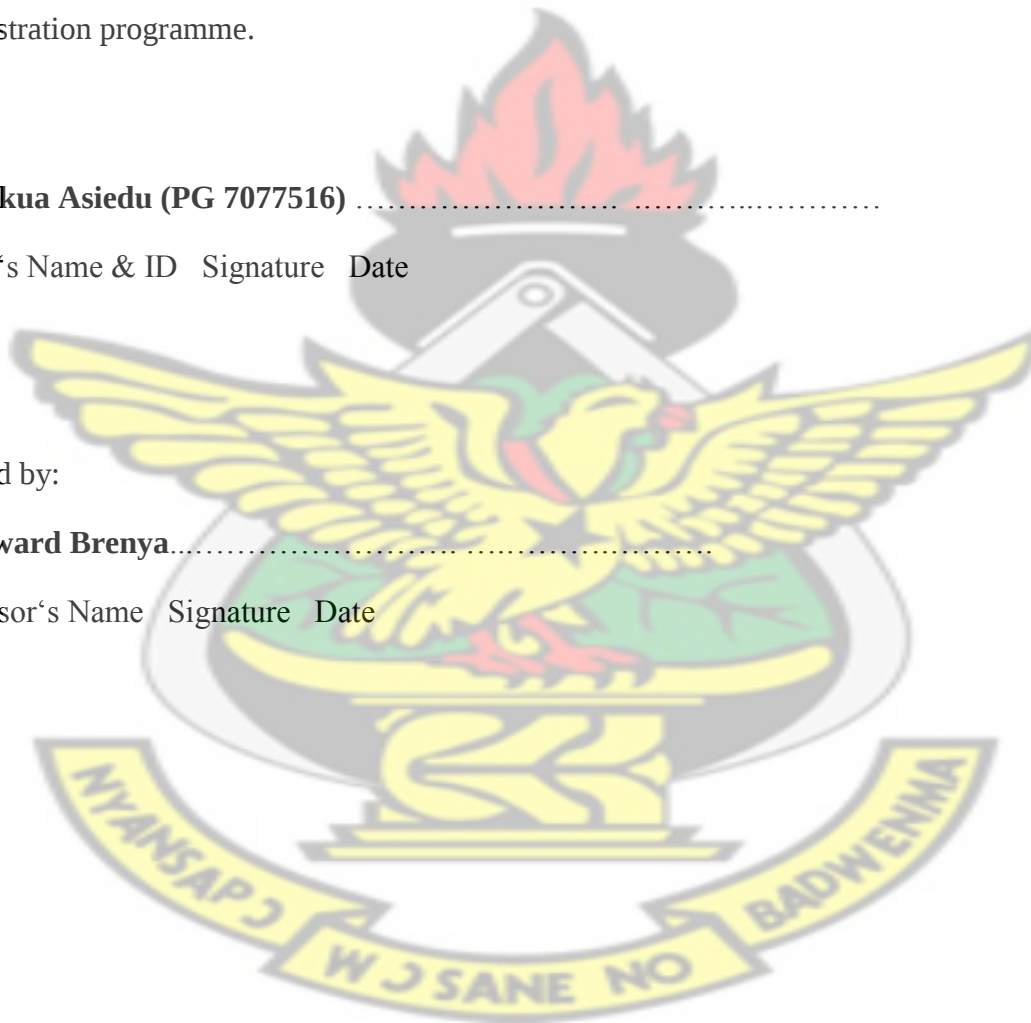
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Ex WO1 Lawrence Kwesi Yeboah and Mrs Mary Yeboah for their unconditional love and prayers in making my dream a reality.

KNUST



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Thanks to almighty God for his faithfulness and for giving me the opportunity to pursue this academic programme. To my husband Jude Yaw Asiedu, I really appreciate the encouragement and support you gave me throughout my stay in school, not forgetting my children. Nana Baa, Panyin, Kakra and Akosua Boatemaa, I say thank you so much for backing me up. You people are so amazing.

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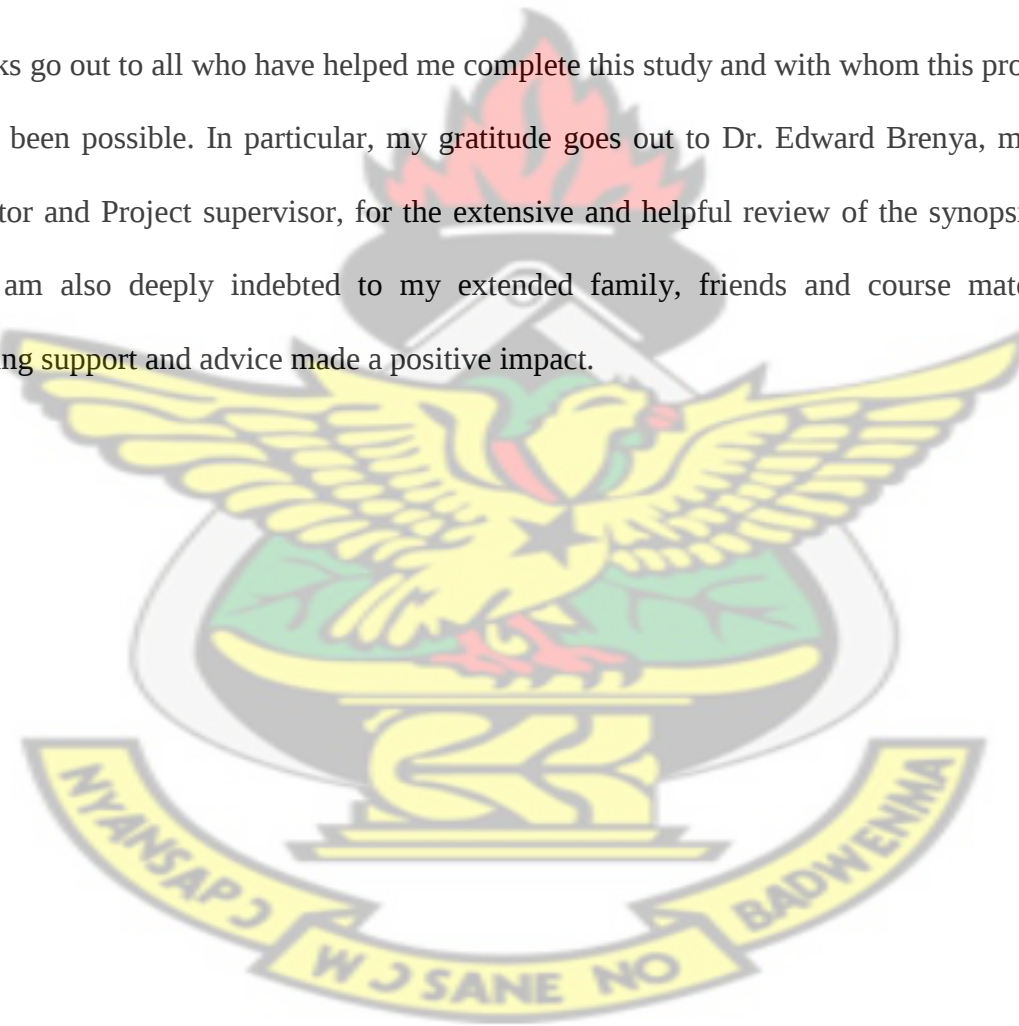


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ABSTRACT

Work-related strain or anxiety and its effect or undesirable bearing on a worker's productivity or efficiency is an essential element in the business environment, with far-reaching practical and economic consequences. Effect of work-related stress on worker's performance has remained acknowledged as an essential area of disquiet for business or corporate entities. Deleterious stress disturbs the physical and psychological well-being of the workers which reflect performance on job. Consequently, it is important to comprehend dissimilar work-related stress instigators vis-à-vis different aspects of job performance. This study evaluates existing writings and texts on the subject matter to appreciate the occurrence or event in order to advance apposite stress controlling tactics to not only protect the workers from diversity of well-being glitches but to progress their (workers) execution of task or function and the execution of task or function of the organisation.



CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Employers and employees experience the effects of stress on work performance. It is either positive or negative, depending on how situations are perceived by people. Negative stress has become a major concern for employees and employers because of its negative impact in the work environment. That is, incapacitate employees and very expensive for employers to deal with the situation (Barden, 2001). The only constant thing facing mankind is change just as stress has become a common occurrence at the work place in recent times (Michie, 2002) due to countless reasons. There are internal and external factors that cause stress. Former relate to for example, job restructure and greater demand of performance on scheduled task. Per Tennant (2001), it must be noted that the above may lead to higher job insecurity among employees which results in stressful and distressful situations. Employees go through stress incessantly and reactions thereby are to be expected (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003).

Stress becomes a mental condition based on the vulnerable nature of persons exposed to stress factors. Thus, the nature and demand of an employee's job description determines stress risk levels. Work stress is an issue irrespective of gender, the position one occupies or type of employment (casual or permanent). It must be understood that stress has a nexus with a person's ability to manage internal and external factors that result in stress.

In understanding the subject, this study highlights Volta River Authority (hereafter referred to as VRA) being an ever revolving public sector organisation in Ghana. Technology is a global phenomenon in recent times and this has a bearing on the activities of VRA. Work schedules

have also become more automated as against the manual way associated with the past. Employees experience stress when they are compelled to work beyond their natural capacities simply because task involved in accomplishing their job schedules have increased considerably. The above scenario per CIPD, 2008 result in dire consequences for employee and employer. Employee saddled with work overload and employer saddled with employee absence and low productivity.

1.0 Research Background

In the electricity generation sector, work stress poses a great challenge managers have to deal with on daily basis. According to Ross, 2005, level of employee performance suffer as a result of work stress regardless of the level the employee is situated. Past researchers point to the fact that employees' stress is an important concern because stress leaves employees physically drained and fatigued which eventually affect the quality of services they provide customers (Kim, 2008). The physical and physiological indicators associated with stress bears its teeth on employees. Thus, the full potential of employees are never realised which automatically impugns productivity. To change this tide comes with huge cost to employers but it is gratifying to note that public sector organisations boast of a skilled Human Resources Department or Units who provide support for employees to enhance quality service delivery. This way, the delight of the customer is ensured at all times thereby enhancing organisational reputation and corporate goodwill.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

For any customer oriented organisation, internal and external factors that foster stress has become a focus. There exist conflicting job demands on the employee and that of stakeholders, for which the customer is part. As stated by Ruyter, Wetzels, and Feinberg (2001), these conflicts provoke dissonance or discord for employees, who may otherwise have very good intentions in contributing their quota to the growth of the organisation. Employees are the bedrock of every business entity and organisation. In order to fulfil the organisational vision and mission, employees must be productive in work schedules and this is accomplished if such employees are free from stress and satisfied at what they do on daily basis. Needless to point employees take efficiency a notch further if managers create a convenient working environment that reduces stress factors. For example, managers and specifically supervisors should set out clear guidelines as how task should be accomplished and also motivate employees especially when physical and physiological demands of task or job schedules are at their peak.

It is only a concise understanding of the internal and external stress factors that a thorough programme can be embarked on in a bid to assist employees of VRA to deal with or manage stress so as to raise performance levels. This will be hinged on whether the burden of stress varies on the nature and position of the job. Changes in performance or efficiency levels at the work place are a major indicator of stress on the employee. A simple way to know this is through observation but it behoves on supervisors and managers to do this through a more professional or scientific scrutiny of the association or connection amongst stress and effect of performance. Unfortunately, previous studies have done little to make a link between stress and its effect on performance. In view of the above, this instant study seeks to scrutinise the effect stress has on

the performance levels of employees, because it has a far-reaching practical and economic consequence on the organisation.

1.2 Study Objectives

The following constitute the objectives of the study:

- To detect the role of job requirement, capabilities, resources and needs of employees on stress levels.
- To explore occupational stress levels at different departmental units of the organisation.
- Whether or not stress ultimately impact employee performance based on gender.
- To explore strategies of stress management at the work place.

1.3 Research Questions

- Is stress levels dependant on necessities of the job, skills and needs of the employee?
- Are occupational stress levels related to job schedules of different departments of the organisation?
- Are the effects of stress gender based?
- Is there the need for stress management at the work place?

1.4 Significance of study

The study forms the perspective of practical implications and also beneficial academically. In identifying stress levels that negatively affect employee performance levels, employees will themselves have a fair idea of how to cope with the rigours of stress whiles management is rightly placed to embark on suitable programmes to reduce stress. Educators and students can

derive valuable lessons from the findings to incorporate into their curriculum and to make excellent use of the information at the work place in the area of quality of work respectively. Finally, literature on the topic will be enhanced.

The study's justification hinges on helping management solve the problem of job-related stress thus enhance employee performance.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study narrows the opinions of permanent public sector employees. These opinions relate to how productivity is hampered by negative stress in the work environment. For the records, the definition of permanent employee is restricted to that given by the employer or organisation. The Volta River Authority is the focal point of this study; therefore, selected employees of VRA formed respondents. The definition of stress per this study is the disorderly or disturbing effects that affect an individual negatively in the job environment.

1.6 Organisation of the study

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one contains the introductory elements of the study. Literature review of applicable literature is expressed in chapter two. The profile of VRA and conversation of the methodology employed is highlights in chapter three. Chapter four features findings of the topic in relation to the Volta River Authority (VRA), Head Office. Conclusions drawn from the findings of the study together with suggestions are featured in last chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

An in-depth understanding on the nature and effect of stress on productivity levels of employees is presented in this section. Views held by various writers are relied on to provide an enhanced conceptual appreciation of work stress in its entirety.

2.1 Stress Defined

It is appealing to contemplate how stress has been given a meaning to enunciate the diverse phases in our appreciation of the terminology with every one phase expressive of the inquiry prominence of the period. Recounting stress meanings as moving ahead through a sequence of phases provides, possibly, a more organised composition to the manner they progressed than in reality happened. Academic project work investigators, reliant on their personal schedule, charted diverse tracks, influenced to some extent by the demands of their personal discipline and prodded along by societal, fiscal, and politically related issues, that aids to elucidate reasons diverse strategies were unappreciated. Additionally, each time the term stress was talked about, or efforts made to give meaning to it, a justly vigorous deliberation ensued (Cooper et al., 2001; Dewe, 2001).

Initial meanings of stress defined in expressions of an inducement, reaction, or the collaboration or interaction amongst the two. Devoid of uncertainty, these meanings have made available or delivered copious required information and a substantial hoard of knowledge currently exists as to the form and physiognomies of these diverse constituents and their interaction (Dewe,

O'Driscoll, & Cooper, 2010). This is not to indicate that such meanings ought to now be allocated to the archives of the past (history), even though they do have this excellence of time and framework. According to Cooper et al (2001), such meanings also have an evolutionary excellence, permitting investigators to carry on with exploring their nature and appraise their physiognomies in terms of their importance to present-day work familiarities, as well as going on to reconnoitre whether the collaboration amongst the two is superlative articulated as some sort of inequity between the individual or person and the environs. Dewe et al (2010) orates the significance of these old-style definitions now lies less in the familiarity they deliver and remain to provide, and more in whether they possess the capability to offer a comprehension of the intricacy and fruitfulness of the stress procedure itself.

Per the contemporary World Health Organization's (WHO) description or meaning, occupational or work- related stress "is the reaction persons may well have when offered with work demands and heaviness that are not corresponding to their knowledge and capabilities and which challenge their capability to deal with."

Steve, (2011) also describe stress as a response of a worker as soon as some demands, pressures and expert facets have to be confronted or encountered at the work place which does not correspond their understanding echelons in so doing posturing a challenge and danger to the competences of the worker which in turn would generate a conflict for existence in terms of being employed in a place.

2.2 Types of Stress

Controlling stress can be intricate and perplexing for the reason that there exist diverse categories of stress— acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress — every single one with its peculiar physiognomies, warning signs, time frame and management and treatment attitudes.

Acute stress

Stress certified as acute is the common form of stress. It emanates from workloads and pressures of the recent past and expected workloads or demands and burdens of the immediate future. Acute stress is electrifying and exhilarating in insignificant dosages, but too much is gruelling. For the reason that it is short term, acute stress does not have adequate time to deliver widespread mutilation concomitant with stress that is long-term. The most common warning signs are:

- Emotional distress — selected amalgamation of rage or cantankerousness, apprehension and downheartedness the three stress emotions.
- Strapping teething troubles comprising tautness headache, backbone agony, jaw agony and the strapping tautness that lead to pulled muscles and ligament and sinew snags.
- Abdominal, gut and bowel snags like heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhoea, constipation and cantankerous bowel disorder.

Episodic acute stress

At hand are persons who take on too much responsibility at work, have countless irons in the fire, and cannot systematise the slew of self-inflicted pressures and demands and yearning for their attention. They appear everlastingly in the grasps of acute stress. It is usual for persons with acute stress responses to be over stimulated or aroused, quick-tempered or impatient, tetchy,

apprehensive and edgy. Time and again, they label themselves as possessing "a lot of edgy energy." At all times in haste, they incline to be abrupt, and occasionally their tetchiness comes across as aggression. Interpersonal associations worsen quickly as soon as others react with actual aggression or antagonism. The workplace turns out to be a very traumatic place for them. The cardiac predisposed "Type A" persona labelled or tagged by cardiologists, Meter Friedman and Ray Rosenman, is comparable to an extreme instance of episodic acute stress. They further established Type A's to be much more expected to cultivate coronary heart disease than Type B's, who display an reverse configuration of behavior. One more form of episodic acute stress emanates from never-ending disquiet. The warning signs of episodic acute stress are prolonged over arousal: tenacious tautness headaches, migraines, hypertension, upper body pain and heart disease. Only the assurance of liberation from agony and awkwardness of their warning signs or indications can keep them in cure or remedy and on track in their recovery program.

Chronic stress

Even though acute stress can be electrifying and exhilarating, it is not. This is the unending stress that wears persons away each passing day, year after year. Chronic stress takes a toll on bodies, minds and lives. It perpetrates or inflicts mayhem by means of lasting or permanent wear and tear. It is stress characterised by poverty, of dysfunctional kinfolks, of being stuck in a calamitous matrimony or in a loathed profession, job or career. Chronic stress emanates as soon as somebody at no time sees a way out of a despondent circumstance or condition. It is the stress of inexorable demands and pressures for ostensibly ceaseless phases of time. Hopelessly, the person experiencing chronic stress gives up the probe for a way out. The most awful aspect of chronic stress is that persons get used to it. They overlook the fact that it exist. Chronic stress

wears down people to an eventual breakdown. Thus, effects of chronic stress could be dire. It slays through suicide, fierceness, heart attack, stroke and, possibly, even cancer. For the reason that physical and mental resources are exhausted or drained through lasting wear and tear, the warning signs of chronic stress are difficult to treat and may well necessitate protracted healing or medical as well as behavioural treatment and stress control or management.

2.3 Stress in organisational life

One of the most imperative teething troubles in today's business and corporate in which competition is heavily experienced is stress. The most operational element in the procedures of job contentment, job output and productivity, absenteeism, is stress. Occupational stress is triggered by the overlay of opposition anticipated from workers and their capability.

2.4 Factors Causing Stress

It is substantially challenging and intricate to conclude the reasons causing stress. Virtually the whole lot that transpires in a person's daily life might lead to stress (Akdemir, 2010, 128) as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014). Stressors are the name for factors or elements that cause stress. These elements or factors as indicated by Sabuncuoğlu, Tüz, 2001 and cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014) are scrutinised under assemblages. These are:

2.4.1 Physical Environment Conditions

Elements like light, sound, heat, air pollution, design and crowd with stress make up the physical situations or circumstances of the workplace. Sıgır (2007), opines that these elements have been

investigated by numerous authors and academicians. This assertion was cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014).

2.4.1.1 Noise and Vibration

Being exposed to noise in a setting can do damage to the individual in two ways: firstly, threat of deafness emanating from work demand. Secondly, noise echelons can interrupt the person's psychosomatic equilibrium by snowballing the sensitivity to sound (Weinberg, 2010). The wellbeing difficulties triggered by being imperilled to vibration can be forfeiture of equilibrium, exhaustion, unresponsiveness or lazy fingers and probable fillet or bone injury (Weinberg, 2010).

2.4.1.2 Lighting

Decent lighting is a circumstance or state obligatory for enhanced work accomplishment or performance, innocuous operation of work and pleasant place of work (Weinberg, 2010).

2.4.1.3 Heating and Ventilation

Good ventilation should be taken seriously at the workplace and provision should be made for heat when normal working environment is cold. This keeps nervousness in check since levels of heat that are out of the usual level cause nervousness with its attendant effect on efficiency exhaustion and discontent as espoused by Ergun, 2008.

2.4.1.4 Atmospheric Conditions

Carbon monoxide is key to low quality of air at the workplace. This is so when carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide gets amalgamated to the breathing precinct and supplementary

injurious vapours and grimes at the workplace also gets mixed with air in the work environment. The degree of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the air is significant. According to Ergun (ibid), this leads to fainting and suffocation which are serious health problems.

2.4.2 Organizational Factors

Many studies have focused on how organisational stress has a bear on stress related to job description of employees. Literature provides numerous categorisations on the sources of culture associated with organisations. This is opined by Aydın et al., 2011as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014). Below is the general state of affairs as summarised:

2.4.2.1 Elements about Nature of Work

Disproportionate amount of work or Reduced work: It represents the most known factor of stress in an organisational setting. It is considered in relation to extent and nature on the employee. The extent of workload refers to a situation that the employee has tasks and duties beyond her/his skills or competencies. Regards nature, it is explained as the difficulty of work or in situations where the rudiments or fundamentals of work outdo the intellectual background or technical ability of the individual, in this case, the employee. This resonates with the view of Sıgır, 2007 as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014).

Work-related Illnesses: Beside the precarious elements which place the worker's well-being at risk at the place of work (accident, tumbling, impairment etc.) and cause demise, there may perhaps be several elements that lead to life-threatening ailments and wounds.

2.4.2.2. Factors about Organizational Structure and Management Structure

Administrative Construction and Climate: Administrative construction has an emotional impact on the person's responsibilities in the corporate body and the form of undertaking. For the reason that the judgments in the main emanate from superiors towards subordinates in vertical establishments or organisations, workers do not discover adequate possibility to partake in policymaking or decision formulation. In horizontal establishments or organisations, judgments can be arrived at junior or lower echelons, so involvement in judgments or conclusions can be made certain (Sığrı, 2007).

Responsibility Behaviours: It can be defined, as —Responsibility or role is the configuration of anticipated behaviours concerning specific stances or postures of personalities in the organisational construction.

Responsibility Conflict: This means various inconsistencies plus paradoxes amongst the personality and her/his obligation in the establishment. Variances amongst the principles possessed by member of staff plus the norms ascending from the form of task may well cause responsibility conflict (Gül, 2007) as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014).

Responsibility Vagueness: Once persons or personalities do not possess sufficient information with regards their roles or responsibilities, role or responsibilities vagueness is witnessed. Role or responsibilities vagueness occurs as soon as workers find it difficult to accomplish or comprehend or appreciate the necessities of the role or responsibility (Weinberg, 2010, 104).

2.4.3 Individual Factors

Persona: Regarded as the most noteworthy of the causes of personal stress. A Type and B Type dispositions appreciated in persons are static persona attributes. Such attributes like wish for upgrade and accomplishment, exhilaration, emotiveness, impulsiveness and the propensity to finish tasks as quickly as practicable are all attributes of A Type personality. Attributes like being relax on work execution, self-confidence, accommodating things as they exhibit themselves, paying attention to well-being issues and quest for excellent execution of tasks are all attributes of B Type personality. It is not far-fetched to appreciate why A Type personality are susceptible to stress B Type personality instead of B type personality (Soysal, 2009, 341). Because B Type personalities are tenacious and full of endurance, they turn out more effective (Gümüştekin, Gültekin, 2009, as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014).

Work Experience: People pick up knowledge better through experiences at work and such experiences are viewed as a stress plummeting element. These manifest in two modes. To begin with, it is conceivable for persons employed for longer periods in an organisation acquire stress-resistant physiognomies. Again, persons acquire and cultivate the contraption of surmounting glitches with the passage of time at the work place.

Frequency of Modification in Life: Levels of stress that are extraordinary points to numerous physiological, psychosomatic and behavioural injuries on persons or individuals. It similarly adversely has an emotional impact on employees, invariably taken a toll on productivity and performance. It is the gradation of whether the person's life is steady or otherwise. Diverse investigative studies have point to the fact that insignificant modifications in person's life can be a progressive cause of stress. It however usually manifests itself some years later.

2.5 Consequences of Stress

Extraordinary levels of stress generate several physiological, psychosomatic and behaviour injuries or wounds on people. This, invariably have a toll on the physical and mental state of workers, thus decreases efficiency levels. Individuals may as a result also experience challenging policymaking mechanism and behavioral volatility (Yılmaz, 2006, 104). An explanation of the individual and organisational consequences of stress is given as follows (Sabuncuoğlu, Tüz, 2001):

2.5.1 Individual Consequences of Stress

Physiological Consequences: Cardiovascular ailments, headaches and lumbagos, cancer, diabetes, cirrhosis, lung and skin diseases are observed.

Psychological Consequences: Family related concerns, unbalanced sleep sequence (insomnia), melancholy; psychosomatic disarrays and weariness can be witnessed or perceived.

Behavioural Consequences: Smouldering which refers to smoking, alcoholism which refers to heavy drinking of alcohol, exhibition violent tendencies, lack of enthusiasm and responsiveness deficit are observed

2.5.2 Organisational Consequences of Stress

Stress is turning out to be a progressively salient worry for businesses given that it can result in momentous fiscal ramifications on the organisations and pose a threat to public relations (Babatunde, 2013). Stress demotivates employees. It also makes them prone to health related

concerns that result in performance loss, employee turnover rate, absenteeism and alienations in the organisation. Sabuncuoğlu, Tüz (2001), gives a detailed account on the preceding statement:

Performance Loss: Stress delivers both affirmative and destructive effects on productivity and effectiveness. Yerkes and Dodson on this score conducted the original research in 1908. They observed to some degree, a rectilinear relationship involving or concerning strain and performance. Termed as Y-D law, the research revealed that beyond some point, upsurge in stress resulted in a decline in productivity and effectiveness on the job.

Employee Turnover Rate: Boosted staff hiring and resignation rate might be the pointer that the workers are performing various tasks under stress. Incessant work strain or tension averts the workers from being assimilated with the organisation, thereby guaranteeing job gratification or contentment.

Absenteeism: Stress conditions like remunerations, organisational strategy, boredom, amount of work and inequity possibly will cause the workers to seek solace under absenteeism (Yilmaz, 2006, 105) as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014).

2.6 Job Performance

The meaning of performance is given as the gauge of the outcomes and means to accomplish the objectives; accomplishment level of the well-defined objective; effectiveness and quality of a bustle with a determination. The review of existing academic work displays that performance is

generally scrutinised in two classifications: individual and organisational performance (Gül, 2007).

2.6.1 Individual Performance in Organisations and Individual Performance Factors.

Individual performance is well-defined as the person's performance of a job or task suitable to the traits and abilities or expertise defined for him/her contained by tolerable bounds (Ergun, 2008). Present are essentially three factors that may possibly negatively impact the individual performance at several echelons contingent on the circumstances. These remain organisational factors, individual-related factors and other factors (ibid).

Administrative Factors: Although well thought-out to be associated to the worker at an initial peek, individual performance is a notion connected to the acuity of the organisational state of mind and guidance panache contained by the corporate climate. In the midst of the precise administrative factors concerning the performance upsurge are meaning of mission and vision, meaning of the tactics, headship, involvement, communiqué, inspiration, stress controlling and performance appraisal (Özmutaf, 2007, 44) as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014).

Individual-Related Factors: The outcomes of the stress elements unfavourably impacts the individual performance as overstress disturbs the person's enthusiasm to work unpleasantly, thus having a bad influence on the performance (Erbaşı et al.) as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014). Amongst the very essential individual-related elements are sociodemographic facets (age, sexual category, conjugal status, and educational upbringing), cultural upbringing, range of know-how or skills and income acuity (Özmutaf, 2007, 48).

Other Factors: In the midst of the other factors ensuing in a decline in the performance are persons' drill of careers in precise fields, passing on of current technologies to the establishment, deficiencies in societal safety and distance between the home and workplace (Özmutaf, 2007, 50).

2.6.2 Relation between Organisational Stress and Performance.

Stress is the utmost or paramount phenomenon negatively impacting performance of employees.

Deficit in performance is significant in flagging the ready for action power of a company and generally noted as a difficulty or snag occasioned from the worker himself/herself (Yılmaz, 2006) as cited in Mehmet, O. B & Ahmet E. S. (2014). Stress delivers both encouraging and undesirable effects on performance. The association amongst productivity and stress echelons elucidates how effective the workers are. Stress has a linear association with the performance and productivity up to a point. After an assured point (breach point), performance and productivity display a decline while stress surges (Ergun, 2008, 56). Persons act in response to stress in ways that are poles apart. Some replicate considerably better than others and enduring less of the destructive consequences of stress. Just as stress differs as a function of the individual, so does it differ as a function of one's type of profession or career. Certain professions or employments are, of course, innately more stressful than others. All of the stress-strain-health associations have an evident influence on the organisation and business. Both physical and psychological ailment renders the worker unlit or gloomy for work, and coalesces both to reduce the gratification or contentment attained from work and diminish job performance and output levels. At hand are countless ways that stress warning signs or consequences are mirrored at the place of work. Substantiation or testimony from an increasing pool or reservoir of research

proposes that some persons, in a selection of professions or careers, are progressively more open to undesirable levels of job-related stress (Schultz & Schultz, 2002).

Job-related or professional stress is any apprehension which is felt and perceived at an individual level and activated by occurrences, happenings or circumstances that are overly concentrated and recurrent in form so as to surpass an individual's coping abilities and means to deal with them passably (Malta, 2004). Occupational stress can be given a meaning as the "damaging physical and emotive reactions that take place when the necessities of the job do not correspond with the abilities, means and necessity of the employee" (Sauter and Murphy, 1999). Performance means the results and accomplishments appreciated by the organisation or establishment that one works in. Every single individual is wide-open to a variety of stressors both at work and in their individual lives which in the long run impact his or her performance. Work pressure can be affirmative culminating in augmented productivity. Conversely, when this pressure turns out to be extreme it produces a negative impact. The individual see themselves as being incapable to handle and not to own the required abilities to fighting their stress. Stress is recognised to be one of the key reasons for absence from work (Mead, 2000).

The occupational stressors can be pigeon-holed into four main assemblages.

- First, the operational circumstances, comprising shift and week-end work, insufficient salary or wage, working hours, inequity and welfare at the work environs or setting.
- Second, association at work comprising excellence of relationships with contemporaries, juniors and superiors.
- Third, role skirmishes and vagueness together with nebulous role, functions, anticipations, and responsibilities.
- Fourth, organisation structure and environment which comprises communication strategy and procedure, foremost modifications at the place of work, values and beliefs of the organisation, and deficiency of partaking in decision-making.

One more cause is career progress comprising underutilisation of abilities or failing to reach full potential.

2.7 Gender and Stress

Findings put forward that while women are more probable to report physical warning signs concomitant with stress, they are performing a good job in linking with others who matter, regardless of status. These links are essential to their stress controlling tactics (American Psychological Association – Gender and Stress 2010).

2.7.1 Stress on the Rise for Women.

Although they communicate analogous normal stress echelons, women are to be expected than men to voice out that their stress echelons are escalating. It should be noted that there seems to

be variations in the manner connubial (married) women experience stress and how spinsters (unmarried women) experience stress. Men and women report extensive fissures between determining what is significant and how fruitful they are at accomplishing those conducts. Only thirty-three percent (33%) of women communicating being efficacious in their attempts to get sufficient sleep [likened with seventy-five percent (75%) who trust this is essential]; only thirty percent (30%) communicate triumph in their attempts to cope stress [likened with sixty-nine percent (69%) who trust this is essential]; thirty-six percent (36%) communicate triumph in their attempts to eat well [likened with sixty-four percent (64%) who trust this is essential]; and only twenty-nine percent (29%) are efficacious in their attempts to be physically energetic [likened with fifty-four percent (54%) who trust this is essential], *ibid*.

Only twenty-five percent (25%) of men communicate being efficacious in their attempts to get sufficient sleep [likened with fifty-eight percent (58%) who trust this is essential]; only thirty percent (30%) communicate triumph in their attempts to cope stress [likened with fifty-nine percent (59%) who trust this is essential]; only twenty-five percent (25%) communicated triumph in their attempts to eat well [likened with fifty-two percent (52%) who trust this is essential]; and only twenty-six percent (26%) are efficacious in their attempts to be physically energetic likened with fifty-four percent (54%) who trust this is essential(*ibid*).

2.8 Strategies for Managing Stress

Irrespective of the causes of stress that men and women communicate, and the physical and emotive indications of stress, both assemblages say they cope and control stress in very diverse

ways (American Psychological Association – Gender and Stress 2010). Inactive activities like reading, listening to music and watching television are some ways to managing stress.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

The study relied on the following theories.

2.9.1 Conservation of Resources Theory (COR Theory)

This theory is the handiwork of Stevan Hobfoll in 1989. His viewpoint is a semblance of the People-environment fit model (P-E fit model). Both methods scrutinise the interaction of the individual and the environs, plus the gradation of connection amongst demands in the environs and the person's means to tackle with those demands. A vital dissimilarity noted by Hobfoll in 2001 is the fact that the P-E fit model centres in the main on individual's acuties of fit, while the COR theory integrates extra unprejudiced pointers of real fit. The central rule of the COR theory is imply this —persons make every effort to acquire, keep, safeguard and nurture those items they worth. It goes without saying that individuals make an effort to mutually conserve resources and to amass resources in a bid to properly traverse their journey through the tribulations and tests of life. A resource is whatever thing that is significant or vital to the individual, which plays a positive role to their good fortune and empowers them to make adjustments. Hobfoll postulates personal and environmental (external) resources. Former (according to Nelson & Simmons, 2003) comprise qualities or traits like values or principles (for instance the significance of success), resilience, self-confidence etc. while latter is exemplified by independence on the job, feedback on job output or efficiency, and reward systems (Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008). Societal backing from contemporaries and

administrative backing for persons (obliging their necessities) similarly epitomises key environmental resources, which can decrease or lessen the burden of stress and burnout (Halbesleben, 2006), as well as improving health (Luszczynska & Cieslak, 2005). Contingent on the work setting an employee operates in, environmental resources may differ.

COR theory probes environmental physiognomies that play a role in the preservation of resources, therefore (according to Hobfoll), has a more applied submission. The rudimentary inkling fundamental to COR theory is that stressful state of affairs in an individual's life invariably lead to loss of resources. Case in point, squabbles or dissension with contemporaries can deplete or empty the energy level of an individual (people take time to handle such situations and divert their attention from rudimentary job responsibilities, wholly leading to losses of resources). Conversely, good circumstances ensures resource upsurges; for example, when persons take delivery of constructive feedback on their work responsibilities from superiors or supervisors, this will definitely escalate their encouraging touch and boost their self-worth, as well as substantiate their job performance.

Additional doctrines of COR theory is significant to point out: these are resource spirals (helixes) and resource caravans (cavalcades). The doctrine of spirals is founded on the view or belief that, as soon as persons are deficient of resources to deal with stressful happenings, they are not simply more susceptible in that condition but also loss lead to extra loss of resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Resource upsurges can also spiral, just as when an effective performance paves the way more accomplishment, even though Hobfoll has proposed that loss spirals characteristically have additional effect on health of individuals than do gain spirals. Resource caravans recommend

that resources can be accumulated and improved upon. Caravanning of self-efficacy with hopefulness is one illustration by Hobfoll. Self-efficacy is boosted by effectual job execution or discharge. This way the individual turn out to be more hopeful in regards to their ability to execute tasks efficiently in times yet to come. Correspondingly, the accessibility of societal backing may well reinforce or fortify self-worth of persons, directing or guiding them to experience consolation or solace in the hunt for further social backing or assistance in the future.

A fresh study in 2009 by example Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, exemplifies the relevance of the COR theory. In an inquiry in the midst of workers in an electrical engineering and electronics firm in the Netherlands, Xanthopoulou and contemporaries scrutinised the give-and-take interactions amongst job resources (independence, societal backing, supervisor tutoring, feedback related to performance, chances for professional progress), personal resources (self-worth and hopefulness) and work engagement (based on Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). They witnessed that any time employees experienced improved resources, their work commitment got better and, on the other hand, high levels of commitment were also connected with larger resources at the second time period.

2.9.2 The Job Demands–Control–Support Model of Work Design

A rather dissimilar, but however balancing tactic to the ones delineated above, is a theory of work plan suggested originally by Karasek (1979) and later comprehensively expatiated by Karasek and Theorell (1990). It ought to be stated that Theorell has delivered an exhaustive depiction of this theory. The original suggestion by Karasek is the Job Demands–Control (JDC) Model, even though the terminology was also utilised by Karasek as an alternative expression for control. He postulated that though excessive physical and psychosocial strain has an effect or

bearing on stress, the degree of pressure experienced by employees at the place of work is also a factor worth considering. The extent of anxiety and pressure persons go through at work will be ascertained by whether or not they have some regulatory mechanism over the demands they have to deal with. That is to say, per Karasek (1979), there will be interactive effects of Demands $\times$ Control (or discretion) on stress echelons. Put differently, regulatory mechanisms will cushion the effect of the difficulties of the strain.

Numerous concerns stayed unsolved or unexplained so far as this model is concerned. Foremost, is whether the consequences of exigencies and regulation are additive or multiplicative? Opinion on this question by investigators or researchers is split, and there is backing for the varied views. Secondly, whether unprejudiced regulation or biased or prejudiced regulation is the decisive or crucial element in defining stress responses? In certain researches, indirect means have been relied on to delineate a number of unprejudiced degree or extent of regulation, however nearly all inquiry on this model has concentrated on employees' acuties of control, arguing how much control the individual perceives to possess over their work environment. This is more crucial than a number of objective indications of regulation. Empirical backing for the JDC model has been turned out, with a number of studies indicating a moderating influence of freedom of choice or control on the association involving job demands and psychosomatic strain (Beehr, Glaser, Canali, & Wallwey, 2001).

Nonetheless, there is polemic stance on whether the tactic is universally valid or relevant. For instance, a current academic project work (Panatik, O'Driscoll, & Anderson, 2011) did not gain moderator effects for perceived job control in a trial of Malaysian technical employees, but

somewhat found that attachments of self-worth worked as a moderator of demands–strain relations. It is conceivable that the Western importance on individual regulation (at work, societal and family life) does not take a broad view of non-Western values and beliefs, which tilt towards group-oriented structures. The swotted formulation of this viewpoint, suggested by Johnson and Hall (1988) and Karasek and Theorell (1990), included societal backing to the amalgam of elements which will have a positive bearing on an individual's echelons of psychosomatic tension (and eventually their psychosocial security) at work. The model then metamorphosed to Job Demands–Control–Support (JDCS) model. Karasek and Theorell recommended that the beneficial effects of regulatory mechanisms (discretion) will be further boosted as soon as the individual obtains societal backing (either practical or emotive) from contemporaries and supervisor. The inclusion of societal backing to the model was founded on wide-ranging verification or confirmation that this variable can play a considerable part in lessening or easing stress in employees (Cooper et al., 2001), though there has been substantial deliberation over whether its effect or bearing is direct (that is, more backing is straightforwardly linked with reduced tension) or indirect (that is, backing will cushion the effect of stressors on strain). The latter vista, well-known as the buffering hypothesis, instinctively makes plenty of sense, but has not continuously been substantiated empirically (Cranford, 2004; Kickul & Posig, 2001). Even though some studies have achieved the anticipated moderator (buffering) impacts of societal backing, others have stated straightforward deleterious associations amongst backing and tension or, in certain circumstances, a affirmative association amongst societal backing and tension, which is termed reverse buffering (Kickul & Posig).

Dr.Hans Selye studied on stress for many years and contributed to literature on the effect of job related stress on people. The stress concept propounded by H. Selye holds response structures of the organism and it is referred to as the General Adaptation Syndrome. As deduced from this theory is the response of organism with regards to stress, which progresses in three stages; —Alarm reaction, resistance and exhaustion (Sabuncuoglu, Tuz, 2001, 232).

Alarm stage: It is the foremost condition in which organism pick out peripheral stimulus as stress. Hormones are key here. Indication signs of stress are experiential. If stress factor vanishes, unwinding take place and the body go-slow in such goings-on as sleep and digestion. If stress carries on, the phase of resistance begins.

Resistance stage: If a state of affairs appropriate for adaptation occurs regardless of stressful conditions, resistance ensues. The warning signs of organism in the event of alarm response disappear. At this stage, the resistance of body is beyond the usual level. If organism repels, stress can be overpowered. Concentrated and incessant tightness wear off the defense of organism and carries it to the stage of exhaustion.

Exhaustion stage: If stress is long-standing, the ability of body is expended. Defense diminishes and ailments ensue. We by and large are of the view that stress is a negative phenomenon. On the other hand, we perceive stress as something, which devours our psychological and physical sources. Despite the fact that too much stress can render an individual incapable of working, it can also create grave health difficulties. Conversely, there is a positive angle to stress. Such type of stress gives rise to physical and mental changes in organism, growth and maturing.

The critical variance amongst positive and negative stress is contingent on how the individual sees stress triggering event or environs and how s/he copes with it. In short, it means keeping the consequence of stress at positive level always. Every person has a positive stress level in which that individual is most productive and efficient. The key to dealing with stress is to appreciate the periods and situations when we are above or below this level. Experts say that a certain degree of stress is essential for every person (Hisli, 1998, 17-21).

2.10 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and the two theories discussed, my conception of the association amongst stress and job accomplishment is that employees undergo cognitive appraisal of situations they find themselves in the work environment and then choose an appropriate reaction in decision making. This reaction is expressed through performance. Per the job demand control model, when employees are under high demand and high work control, they mostly exhibit extra positive levels of performance. Work-related stress is also based on the concept of an interactive viewpoint – between the employee and the environment within which he or she operates. In this case, there is the internal (precinct of the workplace) and external environment (outside the precinct of the workplace, example, home).

There is not a clearly defined relationship between stressor and job performance. Those which exist are general predictions. Most stressors could indirectly affect job performance through antecedents of performance, which are influenced by inherent personal motivation. That is, personal abilities, thinking styles, personalities and value systems. Work-related stress places some negative influence on the employee and or organisation – decrease performance levels,

production, and undermine creativity. It is worthy to note that if stress is well managed; employee's potential would be aroused, thereby increasing job performance.

2.11 Conclusion

Stress since Seyle coined it in 1956 is a phenomenon that is here to stay. It is a term that is not effortlessly defined by researchers or investigators, neither is it easy to conceptualised. The sources and causes of stress are countless and wide-ranging, whether situate within or without the company, which were discussed comprehensively in this chapter. They include but not limited to work-hours, control at work, style of management and role demands.

Stress is not essentially bad for employees but contingent on the capability of the individual to manage the perceived stressors, it may have damaging consequences for both employee and company. Management of companies should be mindful of the dangers of stressors so as to take appropriate measures to enhance not only employee well-being but also employee commitment and performance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section outlines a profile of the case study institution (VRA), defines the research strategy or plan used for this academic project work, the several techniques and procedures that was activated to assemble and scrutinise the records. That is, the tools employed for this project work and the process of analysis of the records).

3.1 Research Design

Selecting the applicable enquiry technique can be a challenging task in every study or academic project work. The study is a descriptive enquiry purposely aimed assessing work related stress and its influence on employee productivity at VRA. A descriptive study just like this instant one recognises and delineates the problem, chooses tools for assembling records or data, defines, analyses and construes the assembled records or data. The preceding statement reflects Creswell (2002). Subsequently, this academic project work pursues an examination of the influence of work related stress on productivity levels of workers. Again, in line with Savage-Austin & Honeycutt (2011), a case study encompasses an appreciation of diverse human viewpoints. As indicated by Stake (2010), an analytical enquiry or research comprises rationalised assembly of facts and records. The investigator cautiously selects participants who have practical knowledge of the phenomenon. That is the exact research strategy employed for this academic project work. Conceptual validity is an essential component of a case study technique and just as is indicated by Neuman (2011), the design employed assisted my efforts in the discovery of a determined accurate setting.

3.2 Profile of Volta River Authority (VRA)

The Volta River Authority (VRA) was founded on April 26, 1961 as a business entity. The legal framework under which it was founded is Act 46. Its mandate is to produce, transmit and allocate electric power. In 2005, subsequent to the pronouncement of a key modification to the VRA Act in the framework of the Power Sector Reforms of government, the obligation of VRA is now centred on electricity generation. The modification has a significant role of ensuring the facilitating environs to entice autonomous companies engaged in production of power onto the energy market. Subsequent to the modification, the transmission role is allocated to the Ghana Grid Company (GRIDCo).

Power Activities

VRA runs an aggregate installed production capacity of 1,970 MW. This comprises two hydroelectric plants at Akosombo and Kpong Generating. Hydro generation presently represents forty-eight percent (48%) of the aggregate supply in the arrangement. This is supplemented by the thermal facilities at Aboadze, near Takoradi and the ones at Tema and Kpone. Gas is being explored at Aboadze.

Renewable Development

The VRA is dedicated to developing renewable energy. This is to secure the environs and public health, and similarly assist in the reduction of emission levels that cause variations in global climate, while guaranteeing a system of multiplicity and security in the supply of electricity. Furtherance, wind power is seriously being considered at sites in Anloga, Anyanui, Lekpoguno and Akplabanya. VRA again has a goal of making bigger expanding its Solar PV plants located

at Navrongo, Kaleo and Lawra. In addition, viability studies for the 48MW Pwalugu Multipurpose hydro dam project is moving ahead inch by inch.

Customers

Chief clienteles of VRA are the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) and Northern Electricity Distribution Company (NEDCo) who are responsible for power in the southern and northern zones respectively. AngloGold Ashanti, Newmont Ghana Gold Ltd., Goldfields Ghana Ltd., Golden Star Resources Group, Aluworks, Akosombo Textiles Ltd., and Diamond Cement Ghana Ltd represent bulk sale customers of VRA.

Sub-Regional Cooperation

The VRA is playing a part in the development of a power pooling mechanism to deliver the West Africa sub-region with increased availability, convenience and affordability to electricity under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The VRA is moreover the key foundation client of the West African Gas Pipeline Project (WAGP), which saw the construction of a 20-inch diameter 600km long natural gas transmission pipeline from Nigeria to Ghana and connected facilities to back the energy needs of the West Africa sub-region.

Non Power Activities

VRA also administers Local Authority functions in Akosombo Township in harmony with Executive Instrument (EI) 42, 1989. The Authority stays committed to continuous running of its first and second cycle schools. So do they deliver the health needs of employees, their

dependents and local communities within its Akosombo, Aboadze, Akuse and Accra operational zones.

Corporate Social Responsibility

VRA embark on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities predominantly in the publics they function. Their CSR enterprises are targeted at promoting the wellbeing of individuals in the area of skills, education and enterprise development thereby promoting jobs, assuaging poverty. We continue to build indigenous abilities to provide local solutions, under our local content policy.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The researcher whiles undertaken a qualitative enquiry or research advances a plan on how the research will progress. This certainly relate to a well thought out tactic for sampling and recruitment of candidates as championed by Marshall & Rossman (2011). With a population of 54 individuals, the study concluded face to face dialogues in the form of interviews with 20 respondents (representing the sample population) selected purposefully at the Head Office of Volta River Authority (VRA). Answers to open ended questions (queries) were answered by the respondents. The queries permitted the researcher or investigator the opportunity to discover the stress individual respondents go through in the work environment. The reasoning for picking 20 respondents was to guarantee adequate data (records) for the academic project, as stated by Suri (2011). The respondents comprised of employees with at least 3 years of employment with the organization (VRA).

3.4 Sampling Technique

Per Stake (2010), respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique. Purposeful sampling comprises picking respondents who meet definite benchmarks. In this instant study, respondents were selected purposefully because they had experience and knowledge about workplace stress and its relation to job performance. Consent forms meant to be filled were handed respondents for confirmation of their willingness to be interviewed. All the respondents obliged the researcher. In line with the view put out by Harsh (2011), clarity of issues and purpose pertaining to the study was laid out through two follow up tête-à-têtes by means of a telephone. It is noteworthy that the interviewees (respondents) were drawn from different departments and organisational echelons.

3.5 Ethical Research

In building trust and understanding with study respondents and to preserve ethical values and the truthfulness of the research procedure, as put up by Baez (2002), the principle of confidentiality is utmost. It is important to note that issues of privacy or secrecy are resolved or determined at the data collection stage. According to Wiles et al, (2008) in so far as research is concerned, privacy refers to situations where information shared by respondents is not divulged to third parties and discoveries are presented in ways so as not to disclose the identity of the respondents. Amdur & Bankert (2011) reiterates researchers should protect the safety of respondents even when there is no prospect of harm to them. In the words of Yin (2009), the researcher should pay attention to reviewing the repercussions respondents of the view respondents hold about the problem, not the connotation the investigator (in this case, the researcher) brings to the research work. In view of the above point, confirmed respondents had at least 3 years work

experience. Anonymity of respondents was ensured by allocating pseudonyms and had the option of declining participation when consent forms were handed to them (ibid).

3.6 Data Collection

Semi structured face to face conversations as in interviews and questionnaire was deployed as data collection tactics for this academic project. Interviews are an outstanding procedure to form viewpoint of persons (Turner, 2010). Face to face interviews render benefits like introducing the investigator (research) into the circumstantial setting of the interview and providing the investigator with the chance to witness body language (facial expressions and gesticulations) of the respondent or participant, which could complement the construal of responses (Neuman, 2011). Using semi structured discussion or interview questions granted respondents the space to expatiate viewpoints regarding the topic for the study. Per Yin (2011), using semi structured interview queries also permitted me to chart a definite set of questions consequent from the protocol pertaining to a case study.

Questions were distributed in person to respondents (which included interviewees), after attaining or securing approval from the management team of VRA. Respondents were implored to give sincere and truthful answers to every detail on the questionnaires.

The study used primary data which was collected through a structured questionnaire. According to Sapsford & Jupp (2006), a questionnaire administered by the researcher personally is the only way to prompt self-report on people's opinions, thoughts, views, attitudes and principles. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the bio data and the main part which covered the

background of the study, the causes of employee stress, indicators of employee stress, the effect of occupational stress levels on employee performance as well as stress management techniques. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents for them to fill and were collected later for analysis.

KNUST

3.7 Instruments

In qualitative processes, the investigator is a significant tool because facts and records are gathered by probing documents, behaviour observation, or interrogating respondents (Stake, 2010). Semi structured interviews, which is one of the three interviewing types per Marshall and Rossman (2011), involve questions organized in advance and possibility of follow ups. This interrogative process allows the researcher the liberty to discover more information founded on answers by respondents. Semi structured discussions afford new thoughts debated at the interview stage because of what the interviewee says (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Semi structured head-on and phone conversations and questionnaire were utilised to collect data for this academic project work. These strategies were employed to elicit information useful to this study. A questionnaire allows for the collection of the most complete and accurate data in a logical flow. This is done in order to reach reliable conclusions from what researcher plans to observe. A questionnaire was relevant in this study because a well-designed questionnaire meets the research goals and objectives and minimizes unanswered questions. Rubin and Rubin (2012) encouraged interviewing to disclose and scrutinise complex, obscured phenomena. Open interviewing highlights the collective participation of both the interviewee (respondent) and the interviewer. To attain dependable and sound elucidation, the interviewer should create a mutual

association with the interviewees and display respect to building a forthcoming partnership. Qualitative trustworthiness obliges the researcher's methodology to be unfailing across different investigators (researchers) and different academic projects (Yin, 2011).

3.8 Data Collection Technique

The researcher secured audience with respondents by tenaciously making personal arrangements for discussion or interview sessions. Where necessary as elucidated by Harsh (2011), follow up conversations by telephone were carried out. Each interview session lasted between thirty to forty minutes. The interviews were recorded by means of a digital recorder to guarantee precise data preservation as well as comprehensive appreciation of respondents' experiences. In addition, notes were taken during the interview (Yin, 2011).

In qualitative research, the sample size of participants is abstemiously in significant or minor but contains abundant information (Yin, 2011). The uniformity of the creation of 20 persons in management and employment of three years or more reinforced the study's data discoveries against growing biases and prejudgments (Yin, 2011).

3.9 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was done in line with that of Taylor-Powell & Renner (2003). They are of the view that qualitative facts and records comprise words and observations but not figures. As the case may be with all data, scrutiny and construal are essential to convey order and appreciation. Consequently, this entails originality, self-control and a methodical approach (ibid). In analysing the data therefore, meaning was derived from the answers to the questionnaire and responses from the conducted interviews, in relation to the research questions. An examination

of how participants responded to each question on the questionnaire and topic during the interview sections were undertaken to establish consistencies and or differences.

According to Taylor-Powell & Renner (2003), some people refer to categorising information as coding or indexing the facts and records. Nonetheless, categorising does not contain conveying geometric encryptions as is the case in quantitative scrutiny where you tag selected variables with predetermined encryptions or variables. In this study, meaning to words was identified into themes and patterns. These themes and configurations relate to notions, thoughts, comportments, interactions, incidents, jargons or idioms used (ibid). Again, organising words into coherent categories brought out meaning and that was what this study did in the analysis stage. This involved reading and re-reading the text and documents so as to allocate condensed encryptions of an insufficient letters, words or signs and situate them next to the leitmotifs and thoughts running through the data. A descriptive label/name for each category created was provided. As the categorisation of the data took place, there was the identification of other themes that served as sub-categories. The categorisation continued until all relevant themes were identified and labelled.

Instead of using predetermined leitmotifs or groupings, the transcript was thoroughly read to find themes and matters that recurred in the facts or records, representing data. The categories might be thoughts or notions that one has not averted their minds to. This allowed the classifications to appear from the facts or records after having operated with the facts or as a consequence of working with the data.

The categories included the following:

- Employee's conceptualisation of work-related stress
- Nexus between work-related stress and performance
- Gender and stress
- Stress management

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3.10 Reliability and Validity

Yin (2009) insinuates that creating and executing reliability and validity tactics are crucial in every research work so as to concretise the outcomes as valid (binding) and reliable (dependable). Qualitative reliability call for the researcher's tactic to be regular across different researchers and different academic project works (Yin, 2011). Wise, et al., (2011) employed open ended queries to guarantee dependability and validity. According to Neuman (2011), the investigator safeguards the regularity of processes (e.g., Interview questions and the order of questions) when undertaking interview sessions. The ultimate objective of this procedure is to table outcomes or findings that are precise, honest and binding (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

3.10.1 Reliability

Researchers ought to keep a record of the stages of proceedings for trustworthiness when doing case studies (Yin, 2009) by excluding transcription errors and guaranteeing coding inaccuracies are at a lowest. Respondents were queried on issues that required responses concerning workplace stress in relative to job performance and individual experiences within the work setting. Riiskjær et al., (2012) employed open ended queries which permitted respondents to select from an unhindered number of answers and permit respondents to reply in detail. Having

the interviews recorded ensured the study paid attention to taking precise or exact notes which were transliterated as soon as realistic using respondents background data such as the present position, years of experience in management and the number of years as an employee of current organization. Data permeation involves getting new respondents into the study until facts and records are complete (Bowen, 2008). Data permeation was attained once adequate information stretched to the point of fading returns by tallying respondents when essential until reproduction of facts and records arises. Once the assembly of fresh facts and records does not deliver supplementary information on the problem, saturation is complete at that point.

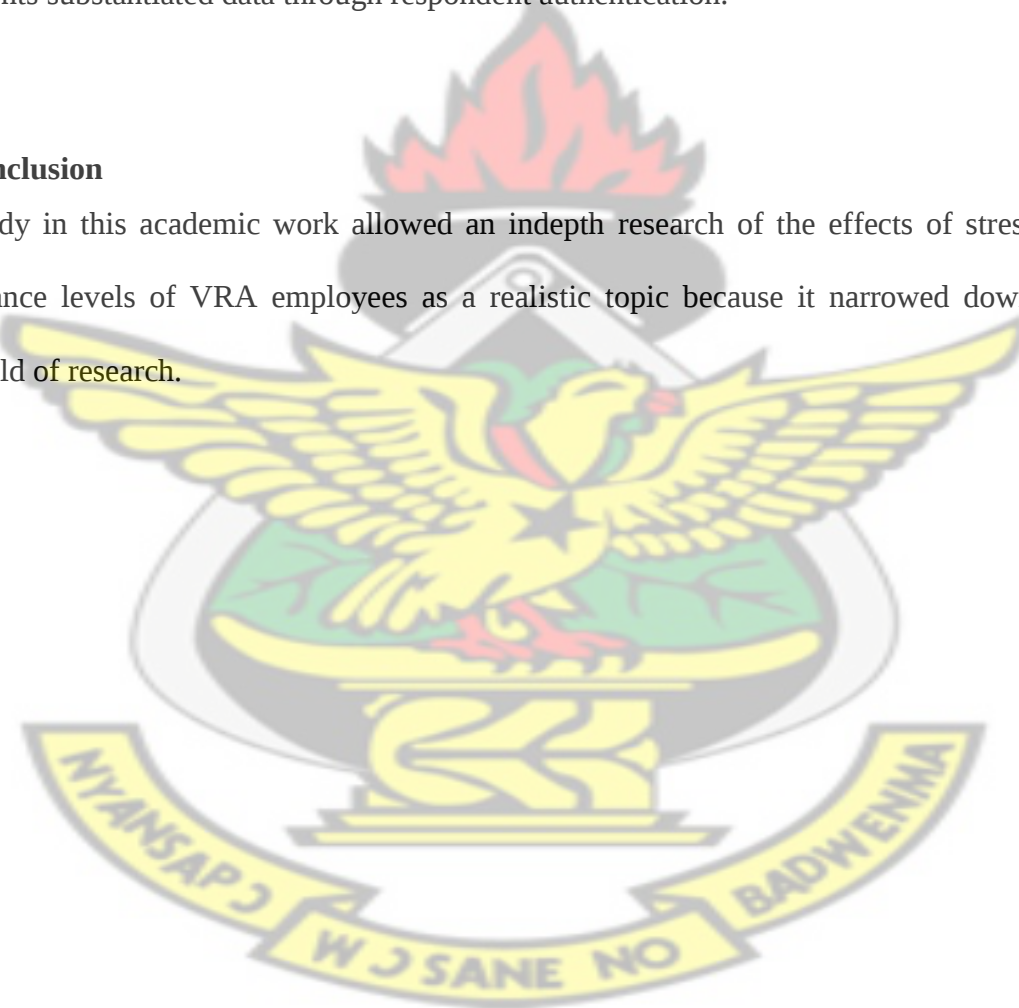
3.10.2 Validity

Marshall and Rossman (2011) pointed that the investigator or researcher ought to expect queries regarding the integrity and dependability of the discoveries or findings. Weak sampling strategy conclusions or decisions could portend these discoveries. To rationalise a sample, the investigator ought to appreciate the creation of the prospective population and its changeability (Stake, 2010). Developing dependability and integrity is a crucial or significant element to legitimacy. Qualitative investigation founded on more than one technique of data assembly can improve the study's significance (Williams & Morrow, 2009). In guaranteeing the trustworthiness or reliability of the study, data was assembled by means of a case study and discussions or interviews (Stake, 2010). Wise et al., (2011) substantiated the legitimacy of their study by means of dependable queries and proportional case study strategy. The investigator chronicled the interviews in their totality and then transliterated all interviews strictly (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Guaranteeing the information is spot-on by swotting notes and respondent authentication for lucidity will lessen slip-ups and avoid inaccuracies (Williams & Morrow, 2009).

In qualitative investigation or enquiry, an investigator could employ participant checks or respondent authentication. Respondent authentication happened during the period of data assembly or gathering when researcher receives response from participants about the exactness of the facts or records (data) presented, as well as the researcher's construal of that data (Williams & Morrow, 2009). The total objective of this procedure is to produce outcomes that are valid, genuine and binding (Williams & Morrow, 2009). In this academic project, respondents substantiated data through respondent authentication.

3.11 Conclusion

Case study in this academic work allowed an indepth research of the effects of stress on the performance levels of VRA employees as a realistic topic because it narrowed down a very broad field of research.



CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

Stress is applied in copious ways in the present day, recounting everything from inkling ill at daybreak to apprehension resulting in dejection. Between some scientific assemblages, stress has both destructive and constructive undercurrent. In the framework of this study, stress will simply be well thought-out as having a potentially destructive influence if unaddressed and will be dealt within the context of the work environs. Stress is not well-being damage, but is the principal indication of a injurious physical and emotive reaction. This chapter presents a thorough discussion of data collected from the field (VRA Head Office) in relation to the research questions. A total of fifty-four (54) respondents was utilised for this study (thirty-two male and twenty-two female). The age range for respondents was thirty (30) years to fifty-five (55) years. Academic qualification of respondents was undergraduate degree, post-graduate degree and PHD holders. Over ninety percent (90%) agreed that work-related stress was an issue in the organisation. Moreover, closely seventy per cent (70%) of respondents indicated that job-related stress was a cause of greater concern in particular departments of the organisation.

4.1 To identify role of job requirement, capabilities, resources and needs of employees on stress levels.

Yes, stress has everything to do with the environment at the organisation. That is, design of job schedules and employment relation issues. These happen once the expectations of the job do not equal or surpass the skills, resources, or necessities of the employer or at a time the understanding or skills of an employer or assemblage to survive are not in line with the culture

that the organisation believes in. This description highlighted the vibrant interface between the office or work environment and human factors. An undesirable interface amidst work- related circumstances and human influences can result in emotional instabilities, behavioural difficulties, biochemical and neuro-hormonal vicissitudes, handing over extra risks of mental or physical ailment. On a different score, once working circumstances and human influences are in equilibrium, work or effort produce a sense of mastery and self-assurance; escalates enthusiasm, working ability and contentment; and brings an improvement in health. This last point is consistent with VRA. Respondents reported a clear management policy of guaranteeing sufficient staff strengths and countenancing workers voice in how their work is to be performed. Again, in the area of workload, a regular assess time requirements is in place as well as assigning realistic targets. Management guarantee that working hours are foreseeable and rational. As one respondent puts it:

relative to workspace, connoting the swiftness at which a task or job has to be accomplished and the manner and control of the striding necessities. The workplace layout is good and there is no exposure to hazardous agents to threaten our psychological and

In the words of Steve, (2011) stress is occasioned when definite demands, burdens and professional characteristics of the employee need to be tackled at the place of work which does not equal their understanding echelons. This poses a herculean task and danger to the skills of the worker which invariably generate a struggle for survival in relation to being employed in an organisation. Respondents acknowledged management's dynamism in matching job descriptions

to the physical and emotional abilities and capabilities of the employees. Management ensured that departmental heads and supervisors allot responsibilities according to know-how and capability of team members so as to guarantee proper utilization of skills. This aspect of culture related to an organisation and its function are principally important: the organisation as a job accomplishment setting, as a problem resolving setting, and as a personal improvement setting. It no doubt reduces the stress levels of employees of VRA. A respondent at the Human Resources Department remarked thus:

resolving setting, and as a personal improvement setting, then this is expected to be connected with amplified echelons of stress among staff.

Research points to the fact that bigger chances for playing a part in decision-making by employees are linked with bigger contentment and an advanced touch of self-esteem. Per the JDCS Model, involvement in policy making controls the stressor effects of work demands and eventually brings about a reduction in psychological pressure. On the above point, a respondent at the Management and Information Systems Department said:

insignificant levels of independence in the performance of responsibilities at the departmental levels are valuable for the mental health and efficiency of employees.

4.2 To explore occupational stress levels at different departmental units of the organisation.

Some jobs require lengthy hours to accomplish and this often time disturb the physical and health improvement of the workforce. An example is the shift systems at the workplace. Coronary heart ailments are triggered by the workers involved for extended epochs as the obligation of lengthy shifts. Dangerous lassitude, insomnia amongst employees is witnessed because of capricious job shifts. Often times, employees fall asleep for the duration of night working hours; which is not simply risky but serious too. All six (6) respondents from the Technical Department confirmed this as their foremost stressor and were substantiated by twenty-five other respondents from other nontechnical departments who sympathised their situation. This statement by one respondent from the Technical Department was profound:

is witnessed in the second part of the night shift since lowest conceivable vigilance is detected amongst the workforce in the

Employees, regardless of the field they are working, experience a lot of different kind of stress and in varying levels. Here this respondent who is a senior staff at the Human Resource Department included that:

ful working in this department. It is a people facing role and duty with diverse kind of challenges, which take new forms and magnitudes each working day. One should always keep employee interest in mind, as well as benefits. Complaints related to team conflicts and how best to resolve them can be a daunting task. Nonetheless, because I am passionate about my job,

Following from the above remark, it ought to be emphasised that on-the-job stress is not just a creation of work condition since not all employees, wide-open to similar circumstances, recognise pressure or strain. Anxiety is regarded as having two elements – state anxiety (provisional element which displays once a person notices daunting demands or threats) and trait anxiety (the more unwavering element which can be considered as a disposition characteristic). Personalities high on state-anxiety were in danger of making errors related to their job description (in the line of duty). Higher trait-anxiety predicted psychological distress.

A respondent from the Finance Department said he virtually worked twelve (12) hours a day, although his official working hours is eight (8) hours daily. To him, the job was stressful. He had very little time for rest. Closing the books at the end of each month is one task he dreads. He summed up as follows:

within work and personal roles triggering behaviour-based, time-based and strain-based skirmishes at the workplace can make role demands in the family challenging or

Some of the respondents included two Security Guards who are permanent staff of VRA. They indicated that their work schedule required constant vigilance over the course of long hours. Incidents sometimes occur that leave them feeling frustrated and overwhelmed. They find themselves needing to deal with enforcing rules and protecting property. These make them prone to stress. One of the Security Guards retorted:

en my mood changes. I pause and consider why. A sure sign of stress occurs when I am faced with the feeling of agitation without being able to

4.3 Whether or not stress ultimately impact employee performance based on gender.

The connection between professional and domestic responsibilities is gradually being acknowledged as a probable cause of stress, principally for couples who are career oriented and those living through financial problems or life predicaments. A suitable equilibrium between career or professional and personal life can be challenging to attain, especially once employees are going through fast-paced and exhaustive task, shift work, asymmetrical working times, insensitive conduct by management, direct supervisors and work colleagues, and a deficiency of control over the details and organisation of work. Respondents view (over 90%) on the above was to the effect that the working environment at VRA was that of mutual respect for all levels of staff. Official and communal interactions both within and outside the place of work are most ordinarily observed as playing a regulating role, while hostile impacts of exposure to other psychosocial dangers are more evident once relationships deliver petite support. It was established that women agonise from more stress at the workplace than men. Discrimination, pigeon-holing, conjugal/job interface, and societal loneliness are just a few of the stress factors in women. Thus, sexual category plays an essential role in the level of stress experienced at place of work. Fortunately, at VRA, only the marriage/work interface that acts as a stressor for the women employees.

This was the view of seventy-four percent percent (74%) of the female respondents. This is how they unanimously summed up:

We as women carry on the responsibility for the bulk of household chores (cleaning, cooking) and are consequently living through the stress of a packed day. Women are similarly expected to take on other roles in the family setting like taken care of elderly parents, and finding appropriate childcare. In this era where the phenomenon of house-helpers can sometimes be a security and moral threat, we as women are still very much involved in keeping the home which takes a toll on our physical stability.

Again, absence of career advancement has been advocated as a main basis of job stress for women and it has been connected to deleterious health penalties and abridged gratification. The reverse is the case here at VRA. We are assimilated in numerous organisational structures, and there is indication that we face no “glass ceiling” at the place of work. The glass ceiling denotes an elusive but authoritative obstacle that restricts women’s career progression to top management in large organisations.

Women and men react to and cope with stress in diverse ways. Majority of studies on gender and stress are concentrated on women. The American Psychological Association in its 2010 survey in Stress in America reports that women and men exhibit diverse responses associated with the impact of stress. Men and women endeavour to cope with stress and recognise their capability coping with it (stress) inconspicuously dissimilar ways. Whereas women are more probable to show physical signs related to stress, they succeed better at communicating and relating with

others in their lives. These relations play a role in managing stress. An overwhelming ninety-two percent (92%) of female respondent corroborated the above in this thematic term:

Many times, the finest stress-reducer is just talking about a dear one (your husband, mother, father or even your children). This way support comes handy and empathy, particularly at a one-on-one level can be a pragmatic way of gusting off steam and recapturing your calmness. The other individual listen good.

There also seem to be dissimilarities in the manner married women and spinsters experience stress. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of single women in this study indicated that their stressors were more external. Addiction to social media like whatsapp, facebook, twitter, instagram etc. long hours after close of work (late nights) inhibits their daytime efficiency, ingenuity, problem-solving abilities, and capacity to remain focused. They are of the realisation that the better rested you are, the reenergised you are to perform job duties or schedules and deal with place of work stress. An aggregate of 8 hours of night sleep is what many adults require to operate at their utmost efficiency. For married women, finding equilibrium between paid task and unpaid task time and again leads to stress, melancholy and lassitude, and can be for the most part challenging once earnings is near to the ground (low) and societal services and backing are deficient.

Psychosocial vulnerabilities specific to married women consist of:

- the combination of career or professional and domestic roles
- social expectations of gender roles
- domestic violence and menace of sexual harassment in the work setting
- discrimination in wages and job requirements based on gender.

It is worthy to note that the third and the last bullet points (psychological hazards) above did not feature in responses for this study.

Men seem more unenthusiastic to trust that stress is taking a control on their own well-being; they also put not as much prominence on the necessity to cope with their stress than women, have a reduced amount of assurance in psychologists, and are less probable to employ tactics to make variations in daily life schedules.

The Job Demands-Control-Support (JDCS) model's vital proposition is simply that stress related to job escalates as job demands increase and a decline in control and support echelons. Accordingly stress will possibly require enough negative effects on health in careers with high workloads, and little control and social backing. In contrast, stress will possibly deliver not as much of a damaging effect on health in professions with less demands and a high echelon of regulation and social backing. Collected works has so far not reach an agreement on the buffer effects of control and backing, and the connections amongst diverse forms of demands, control and backing. Respondents in this study authenticate the capability of the JDCS model to expound the detrimental effects of health as a result of job. The sexual category (gender) as a regulatory variable is key, and its outcomes are at variance on numerous levels.

4.4 To explore strategies of stress management at the work place.

Per Karasek's demand control model, strain at the place of work gives an indication on how arduous an employee's job schedule is and in what manner of regulatory mechanisms (preference, power or judgment autonomy etc.) workers have over their individual everyday duties. This generates four categories of jobs: inactive, energetic, low strain and high strain. The requirement of decent interpersonal affiliation between employees to guarantee improved job routine at the work arena can be comprehended by evaluated facts and records for this study. The facts or records disclose that thirty percent (30 %) of respondents had availed to themselves numerous leaves in the preceding two months from work because of monotony and non-existence of interest in their present work description. This fact indicates the importance of job contentment and employee output and their desire to remain in the job. It can be interpreted from the facts and records that a drop in work contentment results in monotony and decrease the desire to work. Karasek's theory is substantiated by the absence of interest mirrored in employee job performance echelons too.

The effect of occupational stress on place of work efficiency and the wider economy is significant, looking at how strategic VRA is placed. Occupational stress can harshly have an effect on employees' over-all success echelons in a deleterious manner with respect to both effectiveness and precision. Respondents exposed some associated forms of conduct hurting output, effectiveness and the corporate image of VRA albeit not on a wider scale. For instance, apart from the impact on employees' fitness and health, a deplorable psychosocial (undue political interference in day to day administration) working setting contributing to job-related stress can bring about many cases of absence from work and presence at work for more hours than is required, likewise a decrease in enthusiasm, gratification and assurance. Ninety-six

percent (96%) of respondents agreed with the above assertion. In summary, they indicated that the above assertions can have a damaging effect so far as human, social and fiscal cost to VRA and the nation.

Nonetheless some exceptions exist to the canon that stress hinders work output or productivity. As an illustration, some persons perform task better in periods of misfortune and or predicaments. They tend to meet anticipations and display extraordinary productivity during periods of unlimited stress. Evidence was clear from respondents at Engineering and Operations (E & O) branch. They reported having know-how in the tasks they accomplished, making their distinction very high. They continued indicating that as individuals who possess extraordinary abilities and capabilities at a task, they always rationally evaluated a conceivably traumatic situation as a challenge and not as a danger.

In conclusion, it can be said that stress in negatively or positively affecting performance is reliant on elements like work tricky situations, the abilities and know-how of the worker in carrying out a task, individual traits of workers involved, etc. Hear the comment of a respondent from the E & O branch:

onest communication so this has developed a setting in which we are not as much possibly to be hassled out, allowing us to completely employ our

In some nations, the fortification of psychological fitness and welfare is concealed in Occupational Safety and Health law as an employee's privilege or as an over-all obligation of

employers, comprising their duty for innocuous working environs, working circumstances and work configuration. For example, in Ghana, the Labour Law institutes that work ought to be undertaking in circumstances of security and self-respect to permit employees advance their potential, ensuring: (a) their physical, intelligent and ethical progress; (b) training and knowledge-sharing in the social work process; (c) time for rest and leisure; (d) a healthy work environs; (e) the fortification of life, health and security at work; and (f) the prevention of, and carrying out of procedures to circumvent, any form of pestering. Again, the employer is under compulsion to make available to employees with operational environments that aid their regular physical, psychological and societal growth, as well as the freedom of their ethical and municipal awareness. To this end organisations must permit employees sufficient period for time-out, training, leisure and societal life.

The employer must build a satisfying work setting to moderate employees' physical lassitude and psychological stress. Some state laws and statutes refer to the organisation's obligation for the preclusion and regulation of psychosocial dangers, job-related stress, psychological exhaustion, or psychosomatic workload.

The control of stress at the place of work is a valuable expertise that numerous people and organisations do not fully utilise. Individuals (employees) and managers alike get entangled in daily tasks. Countless occupational duties might keep you full of activity. The outcome is that controlling stress is repeatedly ignored or disregarded as an answer to corporate problems. Whatsoever motive one may adduce for not utilising stress controlling techniques is a big blunder. Today's life pressures expose us to so much stress without boundaries. We are confronted with daily stress at the work place and at home.

One modest way out to dealing with stress is to comprehend what stress management is and how to tackle place of work stress. Controlling stress is crucial to resolving corporate difficulties connected to physical and emotive capabilities of employees, for the following reasons:

Improves your ability to motivate employees

The consequence of stress on self-confidence and organisational values is sometimes shattering. Workers may lose focus, detached and in some ways hysterical. This affects motivation which is a potent method to build co-operation and endure workers self-confidence or optimism. It is worthy to note that stress is the number one killer of motivation.

Lessen opportunity for decreases in productivity

Once control of stress is regulated, there decrease in productivity is held in check. We should also be mindful of other factors beyond stress that can hurt productivity. These include non-existence of communiqué, output and miserable time management abilities. Handling stress surely bolsters your likelihood of accomplishing maintainable efficiency levels. Employees have a major role in a company's culture. Healthier employees operating under manageable levels of stress will be happier and more positive, helping to maintain a strong, healthy workplace culture that is conducive to creativity and productivity.

Improves your capability to lead

As a trailblazer, handling stress in the work environment could be your finest workmate. As soon as times are frazzled or tired-out, a lot of workers will turn to the trailblazer for control, regulation and the course to chart. Some possibly will look out for you for assistance, founded on

the cause of the stress (face to face interaction). If the trailblazer is revealed as the cause of the stress, then too bad. Take note that worthy trailblazers have the trust, confidence, admiration and respect of their workers and subordinates. By appropriately managing stress and recognising nerve-wracking or stressful concerns appropriately, you will be in a better position to be at the forefront in the hard-hitting periods. Be minded of the fact that it is not enough for a worthy leader to earn the respect of subordinates or employees but prepared to go where others dare not. Simply put, the ins and outs of a standout leader should be at your fingertips.

Reduces likelihood of unprincipled concerns

Unscrupulous or unprincipled concerns time and again rear its obnoxious cranium in periods of high hassle and strain on an individual. There comes periods when unprincipled practices come handy for shortcut purposes (most times, the consequence is more trauma than previously). Managing or controlling stress at the work environment can be the answer to moral virtuous concerns. The fact that stress plays an important role in ethical concerns should always be underscored. One may on no occasion be capable of pulling the brakes on a worker who decides to be unprincipled or immoral for motives not related to stress. Hasten to indicate that one can deliver sessions or talks on ethics and stress as a means of limiting the likelihood of unprincipled practices.

Reduces possibilities of workplace conflicts

Several skirmishes arise owing to dissimilarities in opinion, dispositions and mainly stress. Skirmishes that arise through anxiety usually shape up with time and then blow up. Thus, handling anxiety or stress and being conscious of conceivable concerns at stakes at any given

period will render the life of every person stress-free, as skirmishes at the place of work end up generating commotion and gigantic distractions you do not require as an employer.

Reinforces communication procedure

The minute anxiety or stress echelons are high; there is a conforming robust undesirable result on communiqué. The procedure of communiqué in the organisation is a vital component to corporate accomplishment. As soon as the process takes nose-dive, it can produce a chain response. Leaders or supervisors who are resilient in dealing with stress related concerns typically can recognise a problem and find a resolution.

Improves your capability to develop co-operation and team building

You shape team harmony once stress is controlled or managed in the organisation (together, everyone achieves more). As put by Simon Sinek, a team is not an assemblage of individuals who work collectively but an assemblage of individuals who trust each other. A lot of times stress damages your fortuitous to shape co-operation or teamwork. Trailblazers who hunt out anxiety or stress management or controlling resources discover positive or constructive outcomes. Handling stress becomes an instrument while eliminating stress factors and building team harmony becomes the mantra.

Helps in the writing performance evaluations

Stress can have a bearing on work routine. It is an aspect that is quantifiable or determinate. It can likewise be employed to make a judgment on exactly how best workers relate to each other in task work situations. Employees who aren't overly stressed are much more likely to stick

around, and prospective employees are much more likely to work for an employer that promotes a low- stress work environment and takes the initiative to help keep their employees healthy.

Respondents summarised the importance management placed on stress management:

Stress cannot be entirely eliminated, and a healthy amount of stress leads to productivity and both them personally and the overall health of the company. Actively working to reduce stress through measures like stress management programs and policy shows that you care about your employees and their health and happiness.

4.5. Conclusion

The role of individual differences play a pivotal part in the work-happiness balance. Different personality traits influence happiness. Happiness also depends on the different sorts of comparisons individuals make about themselves in relation to others and the environment they find themselves on daily basis. To ensure you have happy, healthy, and engaged employees, stress management in the work place is a must.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section draws conclusions based on analysed data. Summary of findings will also be presented connected to the aims of this academic project work as well as implications for management. The foremost aims of this work were:

- To detect the role of job requirement, capabilities, resources and needs of employees on stress levels.
- To explore occupational stress levels at different departmental units of the organisation.
- Whether or not stress ultimately impact employee performance based on gender.
- To explore strategies of stress management at the work place.

5.1 Summary of findings

In the present day it is evident that a petite stress will impede employees' work rate and performance eventually. Employee Stress stays negatively correlated to their work performance because fairly minor stress disturbs an employee. Employees' encountering stress ponders the nauseating moods and sentiments instead of the job to be tackled or performed. Subsequently, performance on the job agonise. Stress undoubtedly disturbs people's logical or rational, emotive, and interactive workings. Employee's job/work performance can thus be lowered as a result of prolonged or recurrent disclosure to even inconsequential stress echelons. Employees experiencing stress are unable to find and use their ingenuity and inventive skills simply because their thoughtful and discerning capability is tightened. These were evident to a less extent in this study. It is interesting to note that there is however some exemptions or immunities to the canon

that stress impedes performance at the work place. Case in point, most employees (respondents) pointed out that they were efficient on the job when crisis loomed because they possess prodigious know-how or proficiency and capabilities in the performance of task. Individuals who possess extraordinary abilities and know-hows at a task may cognitively appraise a conceivably stressful nerve-racking circumstance or situation as a trial time and not as danger.

Therefore, whether stress brings about a decline or an escalation in job performance is reliant on elements like difficulty in performing the work, the expertise and know-how or proficiency of the worker or operative in undertaking a task, particular traits of personalities/workers or operatives involved, and so on. VRA reported a clear management policy of guaranteeing satisfactory staffing strength and permitting employees a voice in how their daily work schedule ought to be carried out. Again, in the area of workload, a regular assess time requirements is in place as well as assigning reasonable deadlines.

VRA encourages an uncluttered and straightforward communication process and procedure. This has developed a conducive working setting workers are less likely to experience stress and its ravaging effect. At VRA, connecting with colleagues and co-workers is significant and a priority. Delegating responsibilities by senior officers to dedicated and skilful subordinates is a positive feature in VRA's work ethics. Senior officers ought not to do it all by themselves. They let go of the craving to regulate each petite phase or stride, thereby preventing pile up of needless stress in the course of work.

The willingness to finding the middle ground especially when it leads to the successful completion of a job by a female employee was noteworthy. The male staff usually bend a little at work (so long as it is not injurious to the national interest) for their female counterparts so as to ensure give and take situation that diminishes the stress levels for all and sundry (be minded that female employees are more vulnerable to stress).

Per the dictates of the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR Theory), departmental heads and supervisors praise good work performance by subordinates verbally, so does management on organisational level. Management respects the self-esteem of every single worker and has a zero-tolerance policy with regards sexual harassment because the dignity of each human capital treasured and cherished. VRA also ensures a decent backing-up structure of work processes as part of its organisational culture. This consists of hands-on back-up from superiors and emotive backing emanating from contemporaries. A petite of either of the backing-up system renders the worker or employee marooned on the job.

The VRA Health Services plays a major role in the management of employee stress. The moment an employee is excessively engrossed on the job, it becomes simple to pay less attention to one's physical well-being. But remember you are robust (stronger) and greatly resistant to stress mainly at the time you take the decision to back your well-being and physical fitness with proper nutrition. This is where tips on healthy living organised twice yearly by the VRA Health Services comes handy. Employees now appreciate the fact that taking care of one's self does not necessitate an overall lifestyle refurbishment. Do not forget that minor things like engaging in aerobic exercises can boost your disposition and bring an upsurge in energy or oomph levels.

Aerobic exercises are organised once every month at VRA. Employees are advised to as often as practicable engage in at least thirty (30) minutes (on most days) of cadenced steps, such as taking a walk, jogging and boogying, which is actually comforting for the nervous system and supreme strain reliever. If it is tranquil to fit into your timetable, break up the activity into two or three shorter segments. When stress is intensifying at workplace especially, employees have been advised or counselled to take a fast discontinuity and stride away from the situation that makes them stressful so as to pick a stroll outside the workplace for example, if possible. It is guaranteed that you can reclaim or recover your balance through this physical movement.

Breaks are well planned at VRA as part of measures to reduce stress. The Human Resource Department continually counsels staff to pick breaks from work at short intervals during the day at work. You can utilise such breaks by engaging in a professional tête-à-tête with any colleague wearing a friendly face. Lunch time for example is best. This way, you get tranquil and rejuvenated for productive ventures.

5.2 Recommendations

A workforce experiencing occupational stress can lead to lower efficiency levels and lost workdays, not to mention higher turnover of staff. The duty of a manager or a supervisor, amongst others is to lower workplace stress, if not its elimination. This is not to say employees have no role to play in addressing the issue. Grounded on the findings and conclusions of this academic project or study, this section seeks to provide some recommendations for management and employees to manage stress, since it has the potential of having a negative impact on employee job performance.

5.2.1 Management Tips for managing stress

Role model

Managers, supervisors or head of departments must assume responsibility as positive role models. Keeping a cool head in nerve-racking or stressful circumstances or conditions make it easy for subordinates to follow suit.

Consult employees

Have a dialogue with employees on exact reasons that render their jobs nerve-racking or stressful. It is understandable that concerns like deteriorating tools, weakened staff strength, or an absence of supervisor feedback may be somewhat straightforward to resolve. A listening ear is all the employee needs to be heard and understood. This way, he achieves a sense of belonging which somehow lower their stress and yours even if it takes some time to address their concerns. Further, workers should be given room to offer suggestions leading to policy decisions that impact their jobs. Be certain the amount of work is fit employees' skills and resources; evade impracticable time limits for completion of tasks. Employee participation on work rules, when possible should be encouraged. Once they are a part in the process, commitment will be unwavering.

Expectations must be clarified

Vagueness or ambiguity about the job, career and future of employees is greatly reduced if information on those is shared with them. Employees' work roles, responsibilities, and objectives guarantees peace of mind when clearly or unmistakably defined. Management must endeavour to take actions fair and rational which is consistent with organisational values or standards.

5.2.2 Employee Tips for managing stress

Prioritize and organise

Tackle high-priority tasks first. If you have something particularly unpleasant to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result. If a large project seems overwhelming, emphasis must be put on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on the whole thing at once.

Ensure a balance in scheduling

Make time for recreation since too much work and no play is a recipe for exhaustion or weariness. Ensuring a balance in scheduling is paramount between career/professional, family life, social life and lonely recreations as well as daily responsibilities.

Eschew lateness

Do not compound your stress concerns and echelons by running late to work and daily engagements. Make sure you do not hysterically rush but ease into your daily activities and tasks.

Discuss workplace stress factors with employer

Healthy and content workforces are extra motivated and industrious. This serves as incentive for the employer or organisation to confront (headlong) workplace stress each and every time it rears its ugly head. Rather than coming up with a grievance list, voice out to your employer exact circumstances or situations impacting work performance.

Elucidate your job description

Humbly request from your superior a better explanation of your job schedules and duties. You might gain some leverage by realising that you have repeatedly been putting in work over and above the limits of your job.

Take time off

If exhaustion appears unavoidable, take a whole retreat from work. Go on holiday, taken advantage of sick days, request a provisional leave-of-absence —whatever thing to eliminate yourself from the stressful condition. Utilise or exploit the period of absence from work to rejuvenate your energy levels and take a standpoint.

Look for satisfaction and meaning in your work

Feeling jaded or displeased with what you do for a greater part of the day can be the basis of high echelons of stress and take a grave toll on your physical and psychological well-being. However, for majority of us, taking up a dream job is just the reality. Even if one is not in a situation to swap occupations or profession to something that you cherish and are avid about—and most of us are not—you can still find purpose and ecstasy in a job that you do not cherish. Even in certain ordinary jobs, you can frequently concentrate on how what you do aids others, for instance, or delivers a much-needed manufactured goods or service. Concentrate on facets of the job that you do relish—even if it is just chit-chat coworkers at lunch. Altering your mind-set towards your job can similarly aid you salvage a sense of purpose and control.

Create healthy borders

A lot of people experience strain and tensions round the clock and such people continuously accommodate the act of checking our smartphones for job-related information and updates. Nonetheless, it is imperative to retain phases where you are not working or thinking about matters related work. That might mean refusing to check emails, whatsapp or picking job-related phone calls at home in the evening or at weekends.

Do not over-commit yourself

Resist the temptation of having a tight daily itinerary or having a loaded to-do list in a working day. If you have got too much on your plate, make a distinction between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop responsibilities that are not truly essential to the bottommost of the list or exclude them completely.

Extricate negative thinking

Pay less attention to the negative aspect of each state of affairs and interaction. This way, an individual gets exhausted of energy and motivation. Maintain a positive attitude about work, avoid the company of negative thinking contemporaries, and give yourself a thumbs-up on minor accomplishments, even when no one else does.

Do not try to control the uncontrollable

The behaviour or actions of other people is one thing that is beyond our control, especially in a working setting. Instead of fretting over them, pay attention to things you can exercise control over, for example, the manner of responding to difficulties or challenges.

5.2 Conclusion

Participative management style is to be expected to lessen the deleterious influence of role skirmish or clashes while corporate backing can temperate the negative effects of role skirmish and emotive fatigue (Kisamore, Stone, & Jawahar, 2007). It is evident (high supervisor support) from this study that role clarity moderates work demands and psychological strain on employees of VRA. This is closely linked with organisational support which shows robust impacts on role uncertainty and skirmish. Most respondents reported a decrease in emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation due to organisational support which also minimised their role ambiguity and conflict.

VRA employees exhibit a high sense of psychological safety due to positive relationships with supervisors and departmental heads. This type of relationship promotes increased engagement, especially with first line supervisors.

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondents say they can work and record swiftly and efficiently, so to them their job performance is not affected though they admit that they experience the effect of stress sometimes due to work over commitment. Almost same percentage says they are prepared to go the extra mile in terms of supplementary hard work to meet their marks or objectives. This is a clear signal that stress has least bearing on the job performance on this category of workers. Due to better conditions in the regulation and support systems over work, workers of VRA are capable of accomplishing task well, thus neutralising the consequence of stress in retarding the output and efficiency of workers.

It is the case that at VRA, there is no connection concerning job related stress and the efficiency and output levels of the employees. So far as human existence or presence goes, stress is normal or standard. The science of managing stress therefore is to retain stress to a motivating level that is healthy and controllable and convenient for the workforce.

The study was an attempt to identify the variables affecting job stress and productivity. The variables for the study that are found in existing research literature on job stress are workload, role ambiguity, gender discrimination, interpersonal relationship. The variables for productivity found in existing literature are timings/work schedule, competence of supervisor, compensation, systems and procedures, group dynamics, absenteeism and presenteeism. The research work that links job stress and productivity are few in number. The study was also carried out based on a portion of data collected from the women employees. Very few research studies have been done on job stress with respect to women employees. Hence the Conservation of Resources Theory and The Job Demands-Control-Support Model of work design research were proposed to link those two constructs to know the extent to which job stress influences productivity.

The present research makes use of the stimulus-response approach to stress in which workplace stress is viewed as a transaction between the individual and his or her environment. Although the stimulus-response approach allows for the use of different models, the present study will use the physical as well as the psychological characteristics of the individual. The focus is on the important role of specific demands and the individual's ability to deal with them.

The changing demographics and the corresponding changes occurring within organizations in the public sector necessitate continuing research on the causes and consequences of stress in the

workplace. As the major causes of stress have been discussed affecting the individual in the workplace some of the specific consequences need to be discussed in more depth.

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Websites:

www.vra.com/about_us/profile.php

www.vra.com/.../management_team.php

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APPENDIX 1

Interview questions are represented here in 3 categories

Demographic questions

- ☐ How old are you?
- ☐ Are you an employee at VRA?
- ☐ How long have you been working?
- ☐ In which department do you work?

Questions related to stress

- ☐ How many hours per week do you work?
- ☐ Have you ever felt stress during your work?
- ☐ Does stress affect your productivity at the workplace?
- ☐ Have you ever give up a job because of having stress?
- ☐ What is the main source of your stress?
- ☐ What makes you feel stress?

Questions related to management of stress

- ☐ How do you cope up with stress?
- ☐ Does management conduct some programs/activities in order to decrease your stress?
- ☐ If yes, what do you think? Is it helpful or not?

Interview guide for Respondent (Physician at VRA Clinic)

- ☐ Do the employees have stress at VRA?

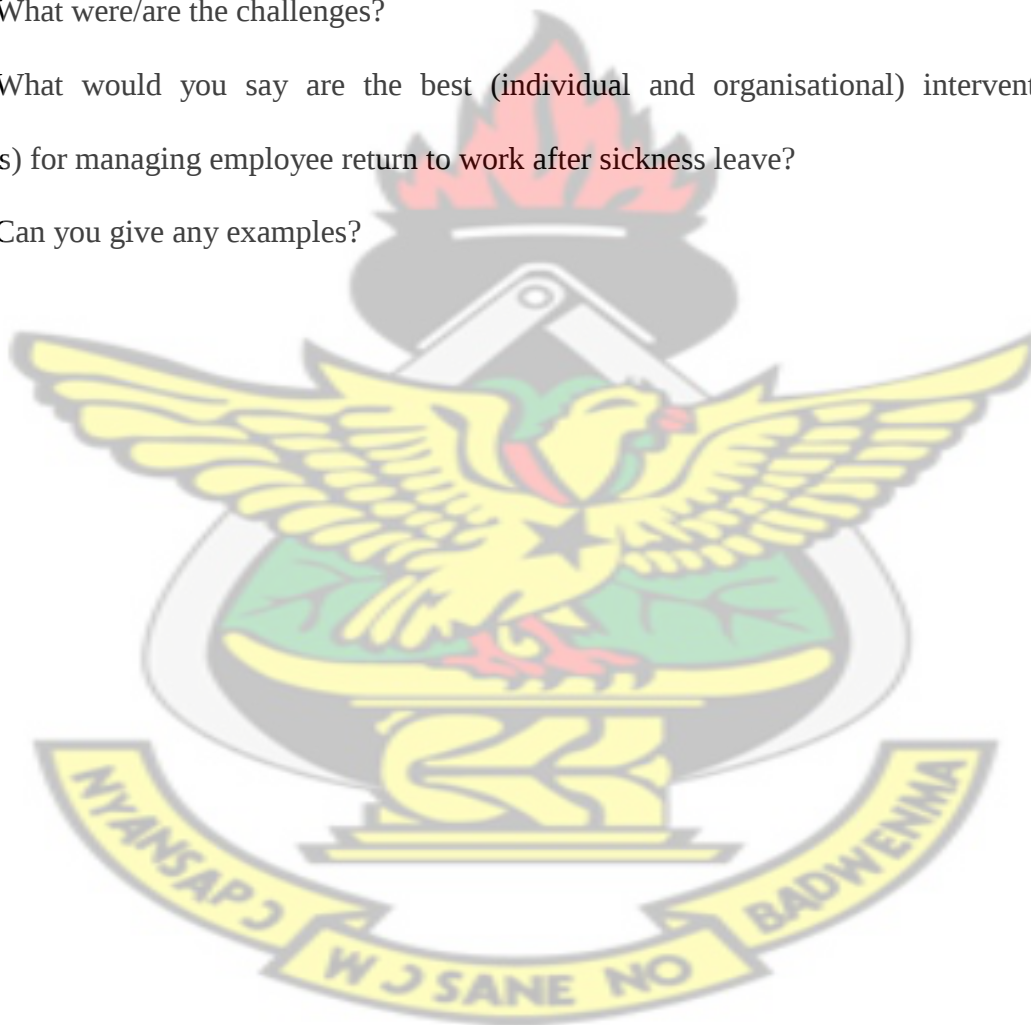
- ☐ How do you evaluate the employees' stress level?
- ☐ How many patients visit you with stress related problems?
- ☐ Do the employees feel stress as a result of job or other personal issues?
- ☐ How do you identify the employees who feel stress?
- ☐ What are the symptoms of stress?
- ☐ How do you help the employees who feel stressed?
- ☐ What is the process for stress treatment or management?
- ☐ What are your recommendations for the employees not to feel stress?

General questions to start the interview

- ☐ Tell me a few things about your job
- ☐ How do you find your job with regard to demands, pressure, working hours, etc.?
- ☐ Are there any elements in your job that you find stressful?
- ☐ What would you say are the most significant factors that can cause stress at work?
- ☐ What are the common organisational factors that can cause stress at work?
- ☐ What are the common individual factors that can cause stress at work?
- ☐ How do you manage yourself in terms of stress at work?
- ☐ If you manage other people, how do you manage their stress related concerns?
- ☐ What were/are the challenges?
- ☐ What would you say are the best (individual and organisational) stress management interventions (or practices) for yourself and for other employees?
- ☐ Can you give any examples?

Managing return to work (managing both yourself and other people)

- ☐ Have you ever been off sick because of stress?
- ☐ How do you manage your return to work after sickness?
- ☐ Have you had any experience of managing someone who has been off sick because of stress?
- ☐ How do/did you manage their return to work after sickness?
- ☐ If no experience, how would you manage their return to work?
- ☐ What were/are the challenges?
- ☐ What would you say are the best (individual and organisational) interventions (or practices) for managing employee return to work after sickness leave?
- ☐ Can you give any examples?



APPENDIX 2

This study is to assess occupational stress and its effects on job performance. You have been purposively selected to take part in the research. I shall be grateful if you could spare some time to answer the questions below. Please do not write your name. Be assured also that your identity would be fully protected.

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Once you have the questionnaire, please read the statements in each section and answer by ticking (✓) the response that best suits your opinion or position.

Section 1: Personal Information on Respondents

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. How old are you? (i) 15 – 24 [] (ii) 25 – 34 [] (iii) 35 – 44 [] (iv) 45 – 54 []
(v) 55 and above []
3. Level of Education: (i) Diploma [] (ii) Graduate []
(iii) Post Graduate [] (iv) Other Specify
4. Position/Rank:
5. Marital Status: (i) Single [] (ii) Married []

Section 2: Stress and its Effects on Performance

7. Do you have any idea about occupational stress? (i) Yes [] (ii) No []
8. Do you experience occupational stress? (i) Yes [] (ii) No []
9. If yes to above question, what accounts for your occupational Stress? (i) Workload [] (ii) Role Overload [] (iii) Role Ambiguity [] (iv) Role Insufficiency [] (v) Other (s)

10. What do you experience as symptoms of occupational stress? Provision of multiple answers is permitted.

Anxiety [] Irritability [] Depression [] Loss of interest in work [] Problems sleeping []
Fatigue [] Trouble concentrating [] Loss of appetite [] Other (s).....
.....

11. Does occupational stress have any effect on your performance? (i) Yes [] (ii) No []
(iii) Don't know []

12. If you answered yes to the above what effects did it have on you? (i) Absenteeism []
(ii) Reduced productivity [] (iii) Low morale [] (iv) Poor work relations (v) Other (s)
.....

Section 3: Control Scale

14. How much influence do you have over the availability of tools and equipment you need to accomplish job description? (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-What [] (iii) A little [] (iv) Not At All []

15. Does your job schedule leave you with little time to get things done? (i) Rarely [] (ii) Occasionally [] (iii) Sometimes [] (iv) Fairly Often [] (v) Very Often []

16. Can occupational stress be minimised? Yes [] No []

17. If you answered yes to the above, which is your best option? (i) Work Redesign [] (ii) Stress Management Training [] (iii) Management Development [] (iv) Organisational Development [] (v) Early detection [] (vi) Other (s).....

Section 4: Support System

How much assistance does each of these people do to make your job schedule easy?

19. Management (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-what [] (iii) A Little [] (iv) Not At All []

20. Your immediate supervisor (boss) (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-What [] (iii) A Little []
(iv) Not At All []

21. Other people at work (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-What [] (iii) A Little [] (iv) Not At
All []

22. Your spouse, friends and relatives (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-What [] (iii) A Little []
(iv) Not At All []

23. How much can each of these people be relied on when things get tough at work?

Your immediate supervisor (boss) (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-What [] (iii) A Little []
(iv) Not At All []

24. Other people at work (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-What [] (iii) A Little []
(iv) Not At All []

25. Your spouse, friends and relatives (i) Very Much [] (ii) Some-What [] (iii) A Little []
(iv) Not At All []

Section 5: Stress and Health

26. Do you think your work schedule can affect your health? (i) Yes [] (ii) No []

27. If you answered yes, in what ways can your work schedule affect your health?

.....
.....

28. What measures do you suggest to management in the area of stress management?

.....
.....

Thank you for participating in this study.