



Occupational Stress among Lecturers: The Case of Female Lecturers in University Education, Winneba

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore occupational stress among female lecturers in University of Education, Winneba. Two research questions were framed to guide the study. A triangulatory mixed method approach of quantitative and qualitative methods were used in order to obtain a fuller picture on female lecturers' stress with future recommendations grounded in the research. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Seventy-five respondents were selected using purposive sampling method using structured questionnaires and six were interviewed using semi-structured interview guide. The results revealed that the causes of stress among the female lecturers are abundant and wide-ranging extending from heavy workload, pressure from meeting deadlines, overlapping responsibilities, demands from career expectations, to working home at the expense of rest among others. Stress experienced by female lecturers affected their work as well as their home life. The study recommended amongst others that the university should reduce the workload of female lecturers by employing the services of more lecturers or Teaching Assistants and also female lecturers should be supported to manage stress through counselling and assertive training.

Keywords: Occupation; stress; distress; stress management; workplace.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work related stress has been seen as a key challenge to workers' health and the well-being of their organisations [1]. Pressures from home and work can lead to stress. While employers cannot guard their employees from stress ensuing from family demands, a lot can be done to lessen stress rising through work. This is very dangerous given that the upsurge in the reported occurrence of stress affects companies bottom line as employees who are stressed are expected to be unhealthy, have low levels of motivation and a smaller amount of productive at work.

Research has recognized and documented that conflict amongst the work and family spheres has a number of substantial undesirable consequences for individuals. Employers are therefore under growing compression to design healthier jobs to decrease stress at work. A healthy job is expected to be one where the compressions on personnel are suitable in relation to their capabilities and resources, to the volume of control they have over their work, and to the care they obtain from people who matter to them. As health is not simply the lack of disease or sickness but a positive state of whole social well-being, physical and mental [2]. A strong working atmosphere is one in which there is not only lack of harmful environments but plenty of health-promoting ones. It is for the above explanations and many more that this study is conducted to explore into work-life stability practices and how it disturbs female lecturers and their career development.

Stress, as a perception is now becoming more recognized as cogent in nature, concerning some kind of connections amongst the individual and the environment. It remains to be defined in numerous basically different ways, each of which has consequences for the way it is measured and the way in which outcomes are described. While there are still some uncertain matters as to whether stress can be described as a stimulus, a response or some compound transactional terms or process, several models have been established to describe occupational stress.

Stress is a practice by which environmental events or forces intimidate the well-being of an individual in the society. It is the interruption of

the emotional stability of the individual that brings a state of disorganisation within the personality and behaviour [3]. It is biological that is knowledgeable by all persons irrespective of their socio-economic position, occupation, rank or age [4-5] for instance saw stress as a slippery concept because it is a process of appraisal which enables victims to cope with environmental threats and challenges. This means that in dealing with problems of stress, the researcher has to see it as a process that deals with environmental threats. The relevance of this definition is that, it enables the researcher to take into consideration the variations in the definition and the values that they entail in stress. Besides, teachers and administrators are seen as sluggish recipients of stimuli who unavoidably experience stress when under pressure [6]. If a response definition is used to operationalise stress, the psychological and physiological reaction consequences such as anxiety, anger, headache, and blood pressure might be used as measures of stress [7]. Says that stress occurs when demands that people cannot cope with, or adjust to, are made on them. This means that how stressful an event is, depends on how well people think they can cope with it. This is why what is stressful for someone, may not be stressful for another person and vice versa.

[8] also differentiated two types of stress: "acute" and "chronic". He described acute stress as single event such as a life transition or an uncharacteristic event. Examples would be sickness or getting into trouble at work place or school. Severe stress, also called acute stress disorder or psychological shock or mental shock, is basically any psychological disorder arising in reaction to a frightening or traumatic event. Chronic stress on other hand refers to reoccurring demand such as financial difficulties, academic concerns or a disability [9]. Stated that "acute stressors can turn into chronic stressors, the longer they prevail".

An occupation is a job or profession. It is an activity that serves a one's regular source of livelihood. [10] state that one's occupation includes thinking, sitting, playing or myriad of activities that claim one's attention. In the context of work, it is that specified activity which one is engaged for a living. In an economic setting there are such activities or occupation as farming, fishing, driving, engineering, teaching, trading,

medical practice and legal practice among others.

The term work stress, job stress, or occupational stresses are inter-changeably used [11]. Employers and governments have had increasing worry about occupational stress for over twenty years [12].

recent trends such as organisational downsizing, competition for funding and high demand jobs have led to rising occupational stress [11] [13] also discussed how to the increase of job stress is becoming uncontrollable though many are much more aware of it. It is worth noting that gender and occupational matters are not only lifelong individual and joint experiences but also they are natural. This is why [14] maintains that women are more stressed up during labour because of the severe and sustained pain. He further orated that loss of staff compassion through making too much noise during labour is another stressful event to women. These submissions reflect what is happening all over the world. People of diverse races, gender and occupation undergo stress in one form or the other.

Stress knows no barriers. the rich and the poor, women and men, the old and the young, the employee and the unemployed, the paid and the unpaid and each job has instants of stress. It is slight wonder then, that the 1992 United Nations Reports called "Stress" the 20th century "Epidemic", and the World Health Organisation mentioned job stress as a World Wide Epidemic". It is also amazing, therefore when [15] described stress as the "Big S" of the 1990s. This author believes that stress is still a big "S" in the beginning of the 21st century. [16] also defined stress commonly as a dynamic situation in which an individual is challenged with an opportunity, constraints or demand on being, having and doing what he or she wishes.

In Ghana and other developing countries, there are life threatening, dangerous and challenging conditions which are stressful to people's existence and well-being. Some of these include economic instability, poor working conditions, promotions, religious intolerance, political intolerance and insecurity. The professional and personal concerns that seem to produce stress among university female lecturers in Ghana include: poor salaries, poor working conditions, and the status of the profession, poor inter-

personal relations and the feeling of inadequacy as a lecturer [17].

Stress is a most important concern in many, if not all, educational institutions all over the world. Most of the institutions remain spending huge sums of money in an effort to avert, and even, help their staff manage the stress they go through in carrying out their duties and responsibilities [18]. Among the major causes of occupational stress are numerous roles allotted to academic staff within the universities. Lecturers, in Ghana, especially those at UEW, Winneba campus are no exception. At the university, the administrative duties have increased together with the intensifying demands accompanying with teaching and research responsibilities [18].

Modern Ghanaian universities have not been exempted from emergent force of stress in the country. Notwithstanding the notion, pronouncement of the importance of university education in the national development agenda and the part it plays in sustaining manpower needs, there are actually no universities, private states or region that will sincerely claim to enjoy the simple facilities and resources except students are in severe short supply [16]. Stress inducing issues in our universities comprise absence of institutional resources, pitiable interpersonal relationships among (academic and non-academic) and amongst students and administration, waves of student's campus aggressiveness and incontrollable student populace. For example, during the 2019/2020 academic periods, the student's populace of the University of Education, Winneba was 45,663. (Basic Statistics, University of Education, Winneba 17th Congregation, April 2019). An imperative associated factor is government involvement in the university governance, and efforts by the academicians and administrators to make the universities further approachable to the industrial and economic desires of the country have been observed as a key attack on the political leaders and on intellectuals who "play politics" with the educational policies of the country, policies that according to [19] should be protected by academic considerations.

In consequence of this, some lecturers and senior administrators in contemporary Ghanaian universities are continually faced with a multifaceted collection of stress inducing factors while meeting the day-to-day learning and behavioural desires of students. The United

Kingdom National Health Service declared that stress is not a weakness, but if overlooked it can lead gradually to a reduction in performance of work, poor health and long term absence from work. Simply put, stress is basically the rate of wear and tear of the body induced by some stimuli. It is difficult to live without going through some level of stress at some point in one's life time [20]. Job stress is a state wherein job-related factors intermingle with the worker to change his or her physiological state such that he or she is forced to digress from normal functioning [21].

In the developed world, considerable work had been done in the part of stress, and institutions and organisations have begun to produce work environment that will support decrease risks of work stress. For example, a 1998 Survey by the Families and Work Institute realized that 26% of female lecturers at the University of New York said, that they were "often or very often" stressed by their work and this habitually affected their work performance negatively. Also, in the United State, the National Institute of Occupation Safety and Health states that, stress related disorders are increasingly becoming the most prevalent cause for worker's disability and that 40% of worker's turnover is because of job stress. Moreover, job stress is predictable to cost American industries and higher educational organizations over 200 billion dollars yearly as assessed by absenteeism, employee turnover, diminished productivity, accidents, direct medicals, legal and insurance fees, workman's reimbursement awards [22-23] based on the Confederation to British Industry (CBI) statistics from the 1998 sickness and nonexistence account, estimated the cost of stress connected absence to be over seven billion pounds. This does not comprise the cost of poor productivity due to stress connected illness.

Stress affects a person's capacity to concentrate and to relax, creates irritability and generates moods of malaise and nervousness. Observations are affected-stress-ridden persons may become irrational, emotionally instable and disproportionately suspicious (24 Stress is ostensibly endemic to contemporary organisational and institutional life of and personnel and others who go through stress-created weariness will be dull, clumsy, and not able to think plainly or perform work for lengthy periods. Performance at work classically depreciates when persons experience prolonged exposure to high levels of stress and with this,

the direction of a person's reaction is problematic to foretell. In a survey conducted by [24] pointed out that some workers become antagonistic, others withdraw into themselves. Tension, tiredness and anxiety often lead to outburst of hostility and aggression. Workers become emotional to criticism and progressively unable to relate to working colleagues and friends. In consequence of this, the general rundown in a person's health can lead to frequent colds, upset stomach and other minor illnesses. [25] again stated that routine errors become frequent and marital and family difficulties are common among stress-ridden people which consequently affect their performances at work places.

Human stress is not a modern phenomenon, it has been since the dawn of humanity and human bodies have evolved over time in response to it. Work related stress is perhaps, one of the most important experiences that affect people's health and adjustment in life [21] According to [21] stress touches almost every segment of life and it had been seen as one of the major contributors to diseases. It is dangerous to both mental and physical health, and could lead to total breakdown of the individual's systems.

Stress could also come from personal factor, which is stress that emanates from within an individual person, and interpersonal factor is the stress that results from one's relationship with others such as husbands, children, relatives and workers [26]. Selye further pointed out that environmental factors are those that relates to things around us such as noise, air and water pollution and continued that organisational stress that relate to institutions and management and this could result from much work-load, poor interpersonal relationship and communications barrier. When stress is considered in relation to female lecturers and heads of departments and deans work performances, one will see Ghanaian universities, especially female lecturers of the University of Education, Winneba as most vulnerable.

Administratively, the lecturers work as counsellors, examination officers, postgraduate coordinators, departmental heads, directors, deans and many other positions of responsibilities. Regarding to their teaching loads/responsibilities, some teach tremendously large classes (up to 400 students per semester), supervise theses, dissertations and project work. Certainly, in some extreme cases, some lecturers supervise up to 30 students per

semester, due to the running of both regular and sandwich programmes [18]. Nevertheless, lecturers are anticipated to publish high-quality research in reputable journals to be promoted within the institution. Thus, the lecturers work under increasing pressure to meet targets set by the university. However, according to [27] attempts made by the University to support the academic staff to manage with these increasing pressure seems to prove unsuccessful, as lecturers do not patronise the counselling services provided by the university to empower them to overcome such pressures.

Findings by [28] reveal important factors manipulating stress among academic staff to comprise strike and school interruption, delay and irregular payment of salary, lack of instructional facilities, preparation of examination results, invigilation of examination, campus militancy, high cost of living, office accommodation, lack of research facilities, lack of annual leave/holiday and underfunding of education. On the other hand, management role expectations and home-work interface were also considered to be factors influencing stress among academic staff [29]. Additional sources of academic stress known in studies by [30] showed high self-expectation, acquiring financial support for research, inadequate development in the field, inadequate salary, manuscript preparation, role overload, conflicting job demands, relaxed progress on career advancement, recurrent interruptions and long meetings as causes of stress among academic staff. Working conditions, poor motivation, peripheral factors and low status were recognized by [31]. Arguing, [32] posited that constrained resources and scarcity of time, slow progress in career advancement, poor faculty communication, professional disillusionment and insufficient salaries were directly related to pressure experienced by academic staff.

[33] maintained that hefty work load, role uncertainty, conflicting job demands, frequent interruption and publication efforts were causes of stress on academic staff. However, higher level of stress was reported as arising from funding cuts to universities, heftier teaching loads, difficulty in securing research funds, lack of resources, poor relationships with colleagues and impracticable expectations from management by [34].

Ofoegbu and Nwadiani (2006) found that the level of stress amongst academics was

ominously high. On gender, level of stress was established not to be dissimilar among male and female academic staff [28] Nonetheless, Liu and [35] found that female academic staff experience fewer stress than their male colleagues.

In modern times more women are entering the formerly perceived male-dominated professions in Ghana, and university teaching is one of such areas. An investigation into what difficulties and pressures female lecturers face appears practical at this point in order to be able to challenge the job-related stressors better. There is a complete approach to understanding the job stress experience because stress may not be for work-arena alone [36] had shown that stress in the home or private lives of individuals may influence stress at work and vice-versa.

[37] attributed work stress to destructive physical and emotional responses in the absence of needs, capacities and resources. He refers to other influencing factors such as interaction of workers' characteristics and working conditions. [38] observed that stress is not only common but working hours were longer and exerting rising expectations and competitions. [39] points out how stress affects teacher's emotionally and poses a threat to their self-esteem and well-being.

[40] conceptualised occupational stress as damaging and potential injurious to teachers based on the following three aspects of their job and circumstances:

- The demands are being made on them
- That they are unable to meet or has difficulty in meeting these demands
- That failure to meet these demands threatens their mental or physical well-being

[41] stated that the concept of teaching and stress are virtually synonymous. He noted that greater accountability and public assessment have resulted in disillusionment among teachers [42] was on the view that no one reaches peak performance without being stressed, whether an athlete, a teacher, and office worker or a manager. Hence, the need for this study to examine the occupational stress and its coping strategies among female lecturers in the university of Education, Winneba.

The turbulent environment in which some workers conduct their work requires that

organisations, researchers and other concerned parties scrutinize their practices. Working at the tertiary level is an intrinsically stressful profession with extended working hours, heavy workloads, problematic students and contradictory demands [11] studies further suggests that physical and psychological burdens of lecturers make them more susceptible to high levels of occupational stress.

A lot of research has been carried out on stress in general but most of the reviewed literatures focused primarily in other fields of endeavour with particular attention to male population. On the flip side, stress-related studies on females in the sphere of teaching has been relegated to the background. The studies of [43-44] are examples of the relatively little literature on female lecturers as there had been a paucity of research studies in the field of education.

In Ghana, for example, little research has been undertaken to find out the causes of occupational stress among female lecturers in public universities as a whole and how they cope with these stressful events or states of which the University of Education, Winneba is not an exception. There is the belief that work lives of female lecturers in the University of Education, Winneba are not easy.

From interaction and observation with some female lecturers in the university, it was seen that lecturers face high amounts of stress during teaching and handling students. Recently where the university's population is growing and the lecture halls remain overcrowded with insufficient infrastructure to encounter these growing demands, lecturers face rigorous verbal communications, prolonged standing, and high volume of workload. Lecturers are also overburdened with consistent teaching work and non-teaching work as administrative work, family hopes, publishing articles, writing of books, attending both local and international conferences or workshops, among others to upgrade or grow on the job. These matters make it significant for a research to be carried out to arouse further investigation into occupational stress among female lecturers in the university and also to present the circumstances as it is currently at the University of Education, Winneba.

1.1 The Rational of the Study

The rationale of this study was to explore occupational stress and coping strategies among

female lecturers; and to identify the sources of the occupational stress among female lecturers at the University of Education, Winneba. The study was also to explore the effects of these occupational stresses on the female lecturers at the University of Education, Winneba.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were framed to guide the study:

1. What are the sources of occupational stress among the female lecturers?
2. What are the stress effects on the job performance of female lecturer's face?

1.3 The Limitations and Delimitations

This study focused on occupational stress and coping strategies among female lecturers at the University of Education, Winneba. The scope of the problem under consideration was also limited to the sources of occupational stress, its effects on the job performance, the management strategies they use to cope with the stress experienced and also stress on interpersonal relationship.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

A triangulatory mixed-method design was adopted for this study. This is a one-phase design in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in collecting data during the same time frame [45]. The method allowed the researcher to collect and analyse data and appreciate how the two approaches complement each other in helping to understand the occupational stress and its coping strategies among female lecturers.

In the field of stress and coping, various researchers suggest the use of mixed method which conglomerates both qualitative and quantitative approaches [46]. The paradigm of mixed method studies is pragmatism [46]. Pragmatism discards the epistemological position of either objective or subjective points of interpretation and as an alternative, it holds both of them [46].

In justifying the use of mixed methods approach, [45] states that using diverse sources and

methods in the research procedure helps the researcher to build on the strengths of each type of data and minimise the weakness of any single approach. Therefore, collecting and analysing both words and numbers in a single study will permit the researcher to reveal the way in which people tend to understand the world around them.

By merging both inductive and deductive thinking the researchers tend to base knowledge claims on realistic grounds [46-47]. state that through mixed methods researchers can build a study based on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods which can provide a more complete picture of a research phenomenon [45] contends that mixed methods design can produce richer, more valid, and more trustworthy findings than evaluations based on either qualitative or quantitative methodologies alone.

The rationale of combining the qualitative and quantitative approaches is that each of them has its particular advantages. Quantitative approach provides an opportunity to obtain numerical data for traits and situations. The quantitative approach is thus used to show the general profile of stress and coping among female lecturers. Qualitative approach on the other hand, emphasises on subjective meaning and its context [48]. Indicate that qualitative method is particularly suitable for studying new topics. Since very little has been known about stress and coping among female lecturers in the University of Education, Winneba context, qualitative approach was used to attain background information. The qualitative data may add to a better understanding of the context of the study. This is not only significant for exploring the subjective meaning, but also important for the interpretation of quantitative data.

2.2 Population

The population comprised all female lecturers in the University of Education, Winneba campus numbering 75. The University of Education, Winneba has six faculties in three campuses; namely North, Central and South.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sixty-seven (67) female lecturers were sampled for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used for sampling. Purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling technique

ensures that the researcher carefully selects the sample to reflect the purpose of the investigation [49]. These are specific people who would provide the desired information to meet the researcher's criteria. In view of this, all females who were lecturers in the University were involved in the study. All the 67 female lecturers were requested to respond to the questions for the quantitative data, while a sample of 6 from the same 67 were made to provide the qualitative data.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

The instruments used for data collection in the study was the semi-structured schedule and structured questionnaire. Semi-structured interview was used for the qualitative segment while structured questionnaire was used for the quantitative segment of the study. Semi-structured interview according to [45] is neither fully fixed nor fully free and are possibly seen as flexible. Interviews generally start with some defined questioning plan, but pursue a more conversational style that may see questions answered in an order natural to the flow of the conversation. It might start with few defined questions but follow any exciting talents that may develop [45].

To design the semi-structured interview schedule, the main aim was to collect data that would answer the research questions. Therefore, a set of questions relating to the central theme in each research question was stated to solicit the desired responses and opinions of the participants. The interview guide contained questions pertaining to stress and coping strategies [50]. Argues that interview allows the collection of people's views and opinions, allows spontaneity in the interviewer's questioning and the interviewee's responses.

The second instrument used in data collection was the structured questionnaire which was used to collect the quantitative data. According to [47] structured questionnaire comprises prearranged standardised questions or items meant to collect numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis. The Correlates of Stress Questionnaire (COSQ), revised by [44] based on items collected from the literature on stress such as that of [51] were revised by the researcher for the construction of the instrument. The questionnaire was separated into three parts: the first contained items on work-environment pressures. The second part contained home – environment

pressures while the third contained items on stress outcomes due to work or home pressures respectively based on a five-point Likert scale requiring response such as 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'not certain', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree'.

2.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researchers spent some weeks visiting the various faculties in the three campuses of the University of Education, Winneba for data collection. Letters of introduction was obtained from the Department of Counselling Psychology for access to conduct research in the University. Personal letter was also written to explain the purpose and significance of the study to seek the consent of participants. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to all female lecturers and conducted the interview one-on-one with participants. Questionnaires were distributed to seventy-five (75) female lecturers and collected a week afterwards to ensure that importance is attached in answering the questions for data analysis.

The interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants. Participants were personally consulted for scheduled date and time. Each participant was allotted twenty-five to thirty minutes (25-30) face-to-face interview which was recorded with permission. Prior to each interview session the consent of the interviewee was sought to record the conversation for the purpose of accuracy. The researcher took brief notes against recorder malfunction.

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2.7 Data Analysis

The study was the mixed triangulatory method. All data collected through the interviews were analysed manually through the constant comparative thematic approach [45]. The data was first organised by the researcher, immersed herself in and transcribe the data, generate themes, code the data, and describe them in line with the sub-themes to correspond with the research questions posed for the study [52].

In analysing the data for mixed methods approach, the researcher used the level of interaction for the data in which the level of interaction for the quantitative and qualitative strands was compared. This was done by comparing across the quantitative results and qualitative findings and making an assessment of how the findings addressed research questions.

According to [45] transcription is the method of transforming audiotape recordings into text data. Here the researchers listened to each tape repetitively to familiarize themselves with the conversation and cautiously wrote them down in the words of each interviewee. The researcher read through all the data to be familiar with the text and reflect on the overall meaning in order to reduce the voluminous data for analysis and clarity. Themes were then generated before the detailed analysis with the coding process [45] refers to this kind as pre-set themes. The researcher identified a set of themes from the literature reviewed and looked for data that matched the predetermined themes.

The data were coded to generate description categories for analysis. Coding according to [45] is the method of organising the materials into parts or text before bringing meaning into information. It involved segmenting sentences into categories and labeling them to form description in the actual language of the participants. This was done by circling texts and

assigning codes that precisely described the meaning. The researcher then used the description and themes to represent the qualitative narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis. For the purpose of anonymity participants were identified by prefixing the abbreviation of their respective titles with codes of 1, 2 and 3.

The research questions were analysed using frequency counts and percentages. The purpose of descriptive analysis was to explore and describe the phenomenon in real-life situation. During the analysis of the findings, associations and relationships between responses were explored in making interpretation. However, data collected were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively in separate sections in view of the purpose of the study. The quantitative data preceded the qualitative data whereby the qualitative data was used for thorough information to augment the findings for the quantitative data analysis and used as

explanatory information to buttress the research findings.

3. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analyses were presented research question by research question and their respective tables. Qualitative analyses were presented in themes and transcribed responses.

Research Question 1: *What are the sources of occupational stress among the female lecturers of the University of Education, Winneba?*

The first research question wanted to identify the various sources of occupational stress among female lecturers of the University of Education, Winneba. The responses gathered are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sources of occupational stress

Statement	Agree		Disagree	
	%	N	%	N
Teaching and assessment of students	64	43	36	24
Pressure from meeting deadlines	79	53	21	14
Lack of adequate logistics for teaching and assessment	68	44	32	23
Effects of work on social life	68	44	32	23
Inability to give equal attention to domestic chores and professional demands	60	40	40	27
Demands from career expectations on private life	78	52	22	15
Work overload	67	45	33	22
Acting on decisions affecting me without my knowledge or involvement to enable me plan.	45	30	55	37
Conflict between academic responsibilities and administrative roles besides teaching	67	45	33	22
Over lapping responsibilities	84	56	16	11
Working at home at the expense of rest	72	48	28	19
Unfavourable policies affecting especially women	28	19	72	48
Lack of tailor-made promotion prospects for women	48	32	52	35
Lack of management support for development	48	32	52	35
Rigid promotion procedures for women in this university	39	26	61	41
Conflicting management procedures	43	29	57	38
Getting feedback only when my performance is inadequate	57	38	43	29
Not Knowing what the people I work with me expect from me	33	22	67	45
Inadequate opportunities to hold power embedded positions of influence	45	30	55	37
Post – retirement uncertainties	34	23	66	44

Source: Fieldwork data, 2021

Table 1 presents the analysis for research question 1 showing the main sources of occupational stress as reported by the respondents. The common types of occupational stress as reported by the respondents are as follows – overlapping responsibilities (84%, n=56), pressure from meeting deadlines (79%, n=53), demands from career expectations on private life (79%, n=52), working at home at the expense of the rest (72%, n=48), work overload (68%, n=55), conflict between academic responsibilities and administrative roles besides teaching (68%, n=45), lack of adequate logistics for teaching and assessment and effects of work on social life (66%, n=44) respectively, teaching and assessment of students (64%, n=43), inability to give equal attention to domestic chores and professional demands (n=60%, n=40), getting feedback only when my performance is unsatisfactory (57%, n=38), lack of tailor-made promotion prospects for women and lack of management support for development (48%, n=32), acting on decisions affecting me without my knowledge or involvement to enable me plan (46%, n=30), inadequate opportunities to hold power embedded positions of influence (45%, n=30), conflicting management procedures (44%, n=29), , respectively, rigid promotion procedures for women in this university (39%, n=26), post – retirement uncertainties (35%, n=23), not knowing what the people I work with expect from me (34%, n=22) and unfavorable policies affecting especially women (28%, n=19).

The main source of stress as reported by female lecturers of the University of Education, Winneba was overlapping responsibilities with 84% (n=56), pressure from meeting deadlines (79%, n=53) and demands from career expectations on private life (79%, n=52). This finding is in agreement with what [11] pointed out that too much or too little work may cause stress. Also the assertion by [33] supports the present study's finding of overlapping responsibility as a source of stress when he says major occupational stress includes too much or too little responsibility.

Research Question 2: *What are the effects female lecturers face in combining work and family?*

The research question two sought to explore the effects of these occupational stress on the female lecturers of the University of Education, Winneba. The responses gathered are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the analysis for research question 3 showing the main effects of occupational stress as reported by the respondents. It can be seen from the data presentation that the effects of occupational stress as outlined by respondents was increased marital problems and tension (95%, n=64), anxiety/frustration (66%, n=44), inability to meet deadlines (69%, n=46) and feeling of fatigue or ill-health (67%, n=45). The other effects which were not as dominant as the above three were poor time management (48%, n=35), pettiness (46%, n=31), procrastination (46%, n=31), unfriendly and uncooperative attitudes towards colleagues (42%, n=28), depression (41%, n=27), aggression (42%, n=28), poor quality of work (25%, n=17) and resignation/pre-mature retirement (26%, n=18). The highest effect of stress from the data analysis was increased marital problems and tension (84%, n=64) and the least acknowledged effect of stress was poor quality of work (25%, n=17). This shows that the respondents did not allow stress to affect the quality of work.

The main effects of stress as experienced by the female lecturers in the University of Education, Winneba are pointers of burnout. This is in line with the findings by [18] which argues that the consequence of stress which has clear implications for both people and the organization is burnout. This is also in line with the finding by [35] which states that when burnout occurs individuals may start fearing going to work in the morning not as much like before and may normally display mental and physical exhaustion. In the current study respondents' effects of stress were similar to those in the study of Zhu.

3.1 Theme One: Sources of Occupational Stress

The researcher enquired to know the sources of occupational stress that were mostly experienced by female lecturers in the university. Analysis from the responses revealed that there was no one particular source of stress experienced by female lectures rather the prevailing situation determines the source. In addition, the data revealed that demand from career expectations, pressure from meeting deadlines, overlapping responsibilities as well as working at home at the expense of rest were said to be some of the sources of stress. However, a female lecturer had this to say:

I teach so many programmes in the department during the regular and sandwich periods. I also teach in other departments as well. Apart from my teaching commitments, I supervise a lot of undergraduate students and grade their results. [Respondent 2]

3.1.1 Another lecturer had recounted

It involves a whole lot, ranging from preparing of lecture notes to teaching various classes on different times and in different locations. I am also required to write about 3 to 4 publishable articles a year which also necessitate the need to supervise various students project works and thesis not to mention the stress in marking of examination scripts [Respondent 1]

Regarding other sources of stress, data gathered revealed that meeting of deadlines, and academic publications cannot be overlooked. A female lecturer, for example, is expected for her promotion in academia to publish articles in reputable journals coupled with university mandates of a lecturer to submit examination results as soon as possible.

3.1.2 A female lecturer narrated

Attending meetings here and there. Meeting deadlines for publication of journals and marking and recording of scripts of students [Respondent 4]

Additionally, collated data shows that the respondent attributes stress to teaching a lot of

courses during the regular and sandwich session and preparing lecture notes which all relate to work in the academic environment. The sandwich session usually starts right about the time the regular session ends and due to the compressed nature of the programme there is a lot of pressure on the lecturers to deliver. A lecturer for instance is expected in preparing notes for various classes and different courses is time consuming as well as researching and publishing articles. These in itself are recipes for occupational stress. A lecturer narrated:

As a female in academia, one can be easily associated with stress in that one has to compete in an area dominated by males, meet deadlines for article publications, submission of results, and still manage the home. There is the tendency for one to be stressed, frustrated and overwhelmed and I fall into this category. [Respondent 5]

The need to prove one’s self in a male dominated field is often a cause of stress as there is the need for you to work twice as hard as the male counterparts and also in combining it with other responsibilities as a woman. Men usually do not have as much responsibility as women do with respect to house chores, taking care of children, cooking etc., and as such have more time on their hands to work unlike women. This can cause a lot of stress to women. Thus these comments point to a theme that there is a lot of occupational stress in the academic environment when looked at from a female perspective.

Table 2. Effects of occupational stress

Statement	Agree		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%
Aggression	28	42	39	58
Poor Quality of work	17	25	50	75
Anxiety/ Frustration	44	66	23	34
Depression	27	40	40	60
Unfriendly and uncooperative attitudes towards colleagues	28	42	39	58
Forgetfulness	29	43	38	57
Poor time management	35	48	32	52
Procrastination	31	46	36	54
Inability to meet deadlines	46	69	21	31
Pettiness	31	46	36	54
Feeling of fatigue or ill- health	45	67	22	33
Resignation/pre-mature retirement	18	27	49	82
Increased marital problems and tension	64	95	3	5

Source: Fieldwork data, 2021

3.1.3 Theme two: Effects of occupational stress

This part presents findings relating to the effects of occupational stress experienced by female lecturers. In this study, the data revealed among other things that little time for family, increased marital problems and tension, procrastination, poor quality of work, aggression, forgetfulness and feeling of fatigue or ill-health were identified by interviewees as the effects of occupational stress. With regard to little time for family matters, the data suggested that married female lecturers hardly make time for their family. A respondent explained:

I have little time for my family. No time for leisure e.g. watching a movie/reading a novel, no time for self-grooming – going to the salon every weekend to make myself beautiful and feel good about myself. [Respondent 1]

3.1.4 Another respondent also narrated

As a female lecturer, it is really difficult managing my occupation with my family. Occupational stress sometimes translates to aggression, frustration, unfriendliness toward subordinates and colleagues, forgetfulness's and most importantly inadequate time for family (spending quality time with my husband and children) and personal activities like reading, attending social gatherings etc. [Respondent 6]

3.1.5 Furtherance to the challenge at work, a female lecturer expressed that

It is very difficult managing my home and work. Not having adequate time for my children, that is I cannot attend most of their programmes at school and this really hurts, [Respondent 5]

Data attest to the fact that there is a gap for most female lecturers in handling both work and the family. These difficulties result in the respondents having little time for their family. This can lead to a lot of stress with regard to family members feeling neglected and this can also lead to tension in the home. In most cases when there is tension in the house it also goes a long way to affect the persons involved and often times this is transmitted to their working environment.

Tension, mood swings as well as ill-health were some indicators expressed by female lecturers. With the increasing workload and demands, a

female lecturer recounting her usual schedules, indicated:

Stress causes fatigue, sleep problems, feeling of being overwhelmed and occasionally mood swings in my life, I feel so tired and sick most of the time [Respondent 3 & 4]

These are typical pointers to how stress affects the persons experiencing it. The feeling of being overwhelmed, tired, sick etc. leads to one's inability to deliver and when that happens you are constantly swimming against the tide.

3.2 Counselling Implications of the Results

Stress in human results from interactions between persons and their environment that are perceived as straining or exceeding their adaptive capacities and threatening their well-being. From the results of this study, it can be seen that treatment of stress is one area in which the boundaries between traditional and alternative therapies have changed in recent years, in part because some forms of physical exercise (yoga, tai chi, aikido) that were once associated with the counterculture have become widely accepted as useful parts of mainstream stress reduction programs. Other alternatives for stress that are occasionally recommended by mainstream medicine include aromatherapy, dance therapy, biofeedback, nutrition-based treatment (including dietary guidelines and nutritional supplements, acupuncture, homeopathy, and herbal medicine.

Complete prevention of stress on the campuses are neither possible nor desirable, because stress is an important stimulus of human growth and creativity, as well as an inevitable part of life. A person's ability to remain healthy in stressful situations require the development of stress hardness – a cluster of personality traits that strengthen the individual's ability to cope. These may mean that lecturers need to develop such traits as viewing life situations and changes as positive opportunities rather than threats.

Universities among other things, provide the highest training grounds for the requisite human capital for national development. If Ghana is to achieve her developmental goals therefore, she needs to adopt practices that may help to alleviate stress among university lecturers, it is counselled that the university executive should ensure that lecturers go on annual leave as at

when due instead of engaging them in extra part time teaching programme to generate funds for the institution.

Recreation facilities and social support packages should be boosted up in the university environment. The Government on their part should look into the inadequate and deteriorating infrastructures. The collapsed municipal services (water, sewage, electric power and waste disposal etc.) should be addressed with all urgency. Functional well equipped counselling centres should be established in all Ghanaian universities, so that competent counsellors can offer professional services to all female lecturers. Additionally, in addressing the issue of occupational stress and interpersonal relationship, counsellors should encourage female lecturers to network with other colleague lecturers for their professional growth in the university. The networking which could be strengthened through group counselling sessions will augur well for female lecturers to share experiences and ideas relating to their field of endeavour and this could create the platform for productive suggestions from other colleagues.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions have been strained from the study based on the findings.

Female lecturers in the University of Education, Winneba experience high stress levels due to work-overload, time pressure to meet deadlines, teaching and assessment of students, lack of adequate logistics for teaching and assessment, effects of work on social life, inability to give equal attention to domestic chores and professional demands. Authorities in the university should employ graduate assistants to minimise their stress level.

Stress also had an impact on the academic work. As a result of stress, most female lecturers easily forget things and sometimes made mistakes due to oversight and tiredness. They also sometimes fall behind schedules due to stress. Authorities should try to organise fieldtrips to various tourist sites in the country to relax and be rejuvenated.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. The university should reduce the workload of female lecturers by employing the

services of assistants. In the case of female lecturers who also engaged in teaching activities, senior research assistants and assistant lecturers could be employed to assist ease the workload.

2. The counselling centre undertake counselling sessions, workshops and seminars on stress and stress management for all workers in the university to provide them with relevant information on stressors and coping strategies.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It emerged from the analysis that the factors that mostly accounted for stress was work overload, time pressure to meet deadlines, teaching and assessment of students, lack of adequate logistics for teaching and assessment, effects of work on social life, inability to give equal attention to domestic chores and professional demands, demands form career expectations on private life, were the strongest factors that accounted for stress among female lecturers in the University of Education, Winneba.

Regarding the effect of stress on female lecturers, it emerged from the data that indeed stress had an impact on the health of female lecturers and this was revealed when the responses of the participants indicated that they experienced headaches, back pains, high blood pressure, tiredness, nervousness and sexual weakness as a result of stress. The comments of participating female lecturers indicated that they easily forgot things and sometimes made mistakes due to oversight and tiredness. They also added that they sometimes fell behind schedules due to stress.

It also emerged that the University did to have adequate stress management interventions and the only prominent source of intervention which was the counselling service patronised by staff, though there was the belief that the center belongs to students.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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