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Job Stress and Academic Staff : A Case Study at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana

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Abstract:
Job stress can lead to loss of productivity among employees across occupations. The study was to investigate how job stress affects academic staff in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The objectives of the study are description of the nature of the job, examination of the stress factors related to the job and productivity level of academic staff. The two hypotheses used by the study are whether there is significant positive relationship between nature of job and stress factors; and whether stress factors have positive significant influence on the productivity of academic staff.

Keywords: *Job stress, Person-Environment fit theory, Physiological Reaction, Academic Staff*

1. Introduction

Job stress is becoming an issue globally due to a host of factors such as employer expectations, career development, and family pressures, amongst others. Houtman and Jettingh off (2007) initiated that "job-related stress is a matter of growing concern in developing countries as it will inevitably have future negative consequences for the health, safety and well-being of workers and the productivity and cost-effectiveness of the organisation they work for" (p.15). The multidimensionality of stress is evidenced by the fact that it takes different forms, results from different factors and occurs in all types of environments. For instance, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health indicated that job stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (Levine, 2000). One type of job stress encountered by those in the academic profession, such as teachers and lecturers is academic stress, which has the potential to affect their productivity. Academic stress has been reported all over the world (e.g., Biron, Brun, &Ivers, 2008; Jacobs, Tytherleigh, Webb, & Cooper, 2007; Leung, Siu, & Spector, 2000; Smith, Anderson, &Lovrich, 1995; Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, & Ricketts, 2005; Winefield& Jarret, 2003).

Despite the positive function of a certain amount of stress on an employee, research has consistently demonstrated that excessive occupational stress has adverse effects for both physiological and psychological well being (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). Equally, research indicates that elevated stress levels in an organisation are associated with increased turnover, absenteeism, and low morale (Geurts, Schaufeli, &Rutte, 1999; Jackson, 1983). The work environment includes an individual's expectations and perceptions regarding workload, control over one's work, tangible and intrinsic rewards of work, the relationship and sense of community among co-workers, perceptions of fairness in the workplace and the role of personal and organisational values (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). If the fit between an individual and the environment is incompatible it results in job stress. Similarly, lack of fit between the demands placed on individuals and their abilities to meet those demands can result in stress. This congruence benefits both the employer and the employee. The employer benefits are likely to include higher levels of productivity, morale, organisational commitment, and employee retention. The employee benefits are largely associated with favourable work attitudes and lower levels of work stress (Holland, 1985). The person-environment fit theory of Edwards (2000) underpins this argument.

The effects of job stress on workers negatively influence their productivity. Employee productivity is a particularly important issue to managers and supervisors as the primary purpose of their job is to get the most out of the people they are responsible for. In today's cost-competitive world, the emphasis is on getting things done through increasing the productivity of employees. According to Creswell (1986), productivity in academics at the University of Nebraska, includes research publications in professional journals and in conference proceedings, writing a book or chapter, gathering and analysing original evidence, working with post-graduate students on dissertations and class projects, obtaining research grants, carrying out editorial duties, obtaining patents and licenses, writing of monographs, developing experimental designs, producing works of an artistic or creative nature, engaging in public debates and commentaries. Ghanaian universities now place more importance on publishing or research to earn tenure, promotion and salary increase, Consequently, faculty members are under pressure to go beyond the traditional mandate of teaching and supervision of students' theses to publications in referred journals.

According to Boyer (2000), students appear to appreciate faculty members who are productive researchers more than lecturers who seldom do research. The lecturers who carry out more research also teach students well and assist their students to produce more

desirable outcomes. Teachers are considered as important human resource for successful education system. Teaching has often been attributed to be a physically wearing and psychologically stressful occupation (Basu, 2009). In higher education, pressure is mounting from the general public, management as well as from state and central government, to increase productivity and efficiency. Winefield (2000) reported that stress among academics was widespread and alarming. Stressed academics were also reported as showing a wide range of reactions such as cynicism toward work, lack of organisational commitment and intention to leave the university (Taris*et al*., 2001).

It is generally believed that an optimum level of pressure on individuals at work will result in higher productivity (Dollard, Winefield, Winefield& de Jonge, 2000). The Yerkes-Dodson law implies that a certain level of stress improves performance (Powell, 2000). However, some academics do experience high level of stress that is not easy to manage. This is evidenced by a line of research that linked stress among academics to resource constraints (Dua, 1994; Gilliespie*et al*., 2001; Taris*et al*., 2001), showing that academics who experience shortages of research funding or lack of research facilities run the risk of becoming exhausted and alienated from their work lives.

Consequently, we examine the stress factors related to the nature of the job performed by academic staff of the University of Cape Coast and how this affects their productivity. The rest of this paper provides the theoretical and conceptual issues, methodology, results and discussions, and conclusions. The paper ends with some recommendations for policy and social implications.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Issues

The study focused on the most influential and prevalent theories of occupational stress and employees' productivity, which include the Person-environment fit theory, the framework of occupational stress, and the demand-control-support model (Vandenberg, Park, DeJoy, Wilson, &Griffen Blake, 2002). The P-E theory was conceptualised by Murray (1938) and has been supported by Edwards (1995, 1998, 2000).

The basic premise of the person-environment fit theory is that stress arises from a misfit between person and environment – not from the two components separately, but as the factors of each relate to one another. When individuals perceive that their work environments are not good, or do not fit well with the needs, wants, and desires that they personally would like fulfilled from work, the discrepancies create diverse strains, which are then hypothesized to affect workers' health and wellbeing.

Environmental demands here include job requirements, role expectations, and group and organisational norms. Countering these demands are the individual's abilities represented through aptitudes, skills, training, time and energy the person uses to meet the demands. The idea is that the larger the discrepancy between person and environment, the greater the likelihood that stress will increase and its adverse influence on employees' productivity. The P-E fit theory is useful in this study because, the environment or workplace that an employee works serve as a major factor that could influence an employee's stress level and finally it affect his/her productivity (Edwards, 2000)

The theory of framework of occupational stress is based around the same foundation as the P-E fit theory. They share two basic premises, first, that stress arises from the misfit between person and environment, and second, that subjective perceptions of work environments primarily determine stress. The difference between the two viewpoints is the framework's core definition. It states that occupational stress is a total process including the environmental sources of stress and the individual's perception of them, short-term and long-term physiological, psychological, and behavioural responses, as well as a number of modifying factors that influence the relationships among variables in the stress process (such as social support, and the quality of interpersonal relationships within the work environment).

Perceived stress and the resulting strains are explained as a "snowball effect", a reciprocal association where the negative feelings regarding work increase strains, which in turn contribute even more to the negative feelings. The end result is that the accumulation of physiological, psychological and behavioural strains will eventually result in long-term outcomes such as acute depression, alcoholism, unemployment, physiological problems (e.g., cardiovascular problems) and other costly results. A study by Yang, Hongsheng, and Spector (2008) explored the actual and preferred conditions at work, with respect to two key issues—career advancement and relationships at work-in a sample of Chinese workers. Expectations concerning career development are clearly salient to many employees, and opportunities for advancement within their career are typically important. Yang et al. (2008) hypothesized that correspondence between the preferred level of career advancement and perceptions of opportunities available to employees would enhance job satisfaction, mental and physical well-being, whereas misfit between preferred levels and perceived opportunities would predict reductions in these criterion variables. A similar prediction was proffered by Yang and colleagues in relation to social relationships at work. They suggested that maintenance of harmonious social relationships is a critical need (perhaps even more so in a collectivist culture such as China), and that good social relationships will enable people to fulfil their need for affiliation and need for belonging. These researchers argued that a better fit between preferred levels of social relationship and actual levels would be related to greater job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions.

Finally, the demand-control-support model emphasizes the role of work content as the major source of workplace stress. Work content here is divided into two components: worker perceptions regarding the tasks that need to be completed in performing the job (job demands), and worker perceptions about the degree of control or discretion they have in performing the job tasks (job control). These two constructs are thought to interact with one another in affecting the

amount of stress experienced by employees. The strongest levels of strain, and hence, the greatest levels of occupational stress were expected to occur in situations where there were extremely high demands, and very low control. This model also includes social support as a third component. Social support is not thought to eradicate strain, but rather to buffer it to some degree. Research tends to

be very supportive of the demand-control-support model; it has been effectively used to predict psychological strain and cardiovascular disease risk.

The demand-control-support model is useful for this study because each employee has different level of work experience and qualification, these normally determine how an employee will perceived the completion of the task assigned to him/her and when the employee has the necessary experience and qualification for the assigned task, he or she will have a high degree of control. Social support from work colleagues, friends, and family members also sometimes serves as assistance and encouragement that increases the degree of control resulting in less or no stress and increasing employees' productivity.

Workplace stress does not have the same effect on all individuals. There are a range of personal, social, and environmental moderators within each of person that influence our susceptibility and coping abilities in relation to the stressors employees experience. Personality differences, gender differences, age, and social support all seem to be important factors in determining how well individuals cope with workplace stress (Wichert, 2002).

First, personality differences are one of the factors that influence the degree of workplace stress on individuals. Personality differences can be categorised into two forms namely, Type A and Type B personality, and locus of control. With respect to individual personality differences, one can view workplace stress as a function of the relationship between work characteristics and the attributes of, and resources available to, the individual worker. A well-known perspective on personality variables and their relations to stress are the distinctions between "Type A" and "Type B" personality types, which were derived by two cardiologists looking to explain the role of psychological factors in cardiovascular disease. Type A behaviours include such things as ambition, aggressive competitiveness, and an eagerness to get things done on time, as well as self absorption, and a tendency to be cynical and hostile.

On the other hand, the Type B personality includes behaviours that are much more relaxed and less competitive. Lewis (1998) reported that individuals displaying Type A characteristics have a significantly increased risk of experiencing the deleterious effects of stress, specifically with respect to cardiovascular disease. It is argued that individuals exhibiting Type A behaviours aremore likely to enter into demanding jobs, more to over react to them, and for this reason would be more vulnerable to stress and coronary heart disease in particular (Cowley, Hager & Rogers, 1995; Wainwright & Calnan, 2002).Another distinction that may be related to the Type A personality, involves types of people known as "hot reactors". These are individuals who, when facing the challenges of daily life, suffer extreme surges in blood pressure. Other individuals, who do not exhibit this reaction to stressors, have been found to be less at risk for the deteriorating effects of workplace stress (Cowley et al, 1995).

Lewis (1998) investigated occupational stress among college administrators in Ontario using a survey and found that both type "A" behavior (aggressive) and the quality of interpersonal relationships at work had significant influence on the intensity of perceived occupational stress. Similarly, Grant (1991) surveyed stress factors affecting college educators in Ontario. Results showed that 53percent (66 out of 125) who returned the questionnaire rated stress level from moderate to quite stressful. Areas causing stress were: students' literacy and numeracy skills, indoor air quality, lack of students' motivation and resources. The key recommendation in this study was to enhance both corporate and personal wellness.

Locus of control is another personality factor that has been found to affect individual reactions to stressors. People can be differentiated on the basis of their 'generalized expectancy' concerning internal and external control of life events and outcomes. Specifically, some individuals feel that events are caused by factors external to them which they have little or no control over (meaning they have an external locus of control), while others tend to feel that events are caused by internal factors which they have a great deal or entire control over (meaning they have an internal locus of control).There is evidence to suggest that individuals who have an external locus of control tend to respond to perceived stressors with negative emotions and may be more prone to the negative effects of stress when they feel pressured at work. Specifically, these individuals have been shown to report more burnout, higher levels of perceived stress, less job satisfaction, greater anger, frustration and hostility, and higher levels of anxiety.

Whereas, the internal locus of control is associated with a number of highly desirable behaviours and attributes, including higher job motivation and better performance, higher job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. The underlying premise is that individuals who define stress factors as controllable will be more likely to try and cope with them using a problem solving approach and will thereby experience fewer ill effects. Externals might not take active steps to resolve their feelings of stress (Grimshaw, 1999).

In a study by Kohn and Schooler (1983), it was noted that occupational self-direction leads to self-directed orientations. Self–orientations in their view is the personal capacity to take responsibility for one's actions as well as the belief that society is so constituted as to make self-direction powerful. For example, to Kohn and Schooler, men who experienced self–directed work were more likely to be non–authoritarian, more likely to be self-confident, less anxious and less conforming in their ideas. This means that work requiring initiative and independent judgment in stills habits of self direction and a flexible approach to problem solving. However, in terms of specific effects of job characteristics, their findings suggest that out of the three measures of occupational self-direction only substantive complexity significantly predicts contemporaneous distress (Kohn & Schooler, 1983). They concluded that substantive complexity is the cornerstone of the entire job structure, affected by and in turn affecting other job conditions. Kohn and Schooler's study is relevant to this work because it provides guidelines in the identification of job characteristics that are important not only for personality but more importantly for the well-being of the worker.

Second, gender difference is another factor that is important in determining susceptibility to workplace stress. Research indicates that women are more likely than men to experience the negative effects of stress. Several factors appear to magnify the effect of workplace stress on women. These factors include: first, the predominant role that women still play in the provision of family care - It is well established that the total workload of women who are employed full time is higher than that of their male counterparts, particularly where they have family responsibilities. The second factor is lower levels of control in their jobs, since the great majority of women still tend to occupy less senior jobs than men. The third factor is the higher proportion of women who work in precarious forms of

employment. The fourth factor is the proliferation of women in high stress occupations. The fifth factor is the prejudice and discrimination suffered by many women who are in more senior positions, such as managerial jobs, both as a result of organisational and corporate policy and from their colleagues at work.

A study conducted by Archibong, Bassey and Effiom (2010) identified stress source among private university academic staff with regards to four occupation-related areas; interpersonal relationships, research, teaching and career development, and to determine if gender difference existed in stress level of academic in the study variables. The sample consisted of 279 (168 males and 111 females) academic staff. A questionnaire was used for data gathering. The findings reveal that students were the greatest source of stress to academic staff with respect to interpersonal relationships. With respect to research, sourcing funds for research was the highest source of stress. With regards to teaching, it was collation of results, while sourcing funds for career development was the highest with respect to career development. The overall results show that career development is the greatest source of stress to academic staff. The results also indicated that male and female academic staff differed in perceived stress level in teaching. The recommendations made include making more funds available to academic staff for research and career development purposes.

Largely due to these kinds of factors, women are significantly more likely to report burnout, stress-related illnesses, or a desire to leave their jobs (International Labour Organisation, 2001). Also important to note is that there may be differences in the coping mechanisms men and women use to deal with stress. It has been found that in general, women tend to use more social emotional strategies to cope with stress, whereas men are more likely to use behavioural/mental or drug/alcohol disengagement. Men tend to cope by way of problem focused strategies while women characteristically use more emotion focused strategies to manage their stress. There is also evidence to suggest that women may have been socialized in away that predisposes them to ineffective coping, for example, women get sick as a way of coping with stress more often than men do (Korabik, McDonald, & Rosin, 1993).

Third, age is another factor that determines how individuals react to workplace stress. Even though age can influence workplace stress experienced by individuals, it tends to be specific to certain aspects of the job. With increase in age, job stress also increases (Lambert et al., 2007). For example, in a study conducted by Williams (2003) more workers over the age of 45 felt stress as a result of having to learn computer skills, as compared to workers between the ages of 15 and 24. With respect to stress as a response to risk of injury or accidents, more young men felt this as a significant source of stress than older male workers. Young employees were significantly less likely than older employees to feel that too many hours or too many demands were a source of stress. Wichert(2002) reported that with respect to job security, older employees tend to experience less stress than their younger counterparts but experience more stress than younger workers when it comes towork intensification.

Fourth, social support is another factor that can buffer the effect of workplace stress that an individual experiences. Social support refers to the resources (both emotional and practical) that are derived from an individual's social network of family, friends, co workers and other social contacts. There is a substantial body of evidence suggesting that lack of social support may lead to ill health, and in fact has been shown to exert a positive effect on people's health and well beingin a range of stressful situations. It has been suggested that social support brings health benefits irrespective of the degree of stress encountered by the individuals, and also acts as a 'buffer' against the negative effects of stress by fulfilling specific needs – through practical help, advice and information or emotional comfort. Additionally, social support may serve to: reduce the importance of the perception that a situation is stressful; in some way tranquilise the neuroendocrine system so that people are less reactive to perceived stress; facilitate healthy behaviours, such as exercising or getting sufficient rest.

When it comes to appraising potential stressors, the availability of emotional, informational, and instrumental support may substantially effect an individual's perception of threat. Emotional support may increase individuals' confidence in their ability to deal with the challenges that confront them. Informational support may yield new strategies for resolving particular problems, or reduce the perceived magnitude of the challenge by placing it in the context of difficulties encountered by others. Finally, instrumental support may offer the resources to resolve a problem or stop it from arising in the first place (Wainwright &Calnan,2002; Wichert, 2002).

There is some relationship between performance and productivity; performance ensures that organisational goals are achieved by ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the activities of employees. However, when an organisation monitors the activities of employees by directing their actions towards the attainment of organisational goals it leads to improved performance, which always results in higher productivity (Diewert& Denis, 1999).

A study by Donald, Taylor, Hohnson, Cooper, Cartwright, and Robertson (2005) suggested a relationship between well-being and organisational commitment in determining self-rated productivity. Well-being is the state of been physically and mentally sound to perform an assigned duty or go about your normal schedule. Organisational commitment is the situation whereby an employee sees him or herself as part of the organisation and he or she does his or her best to improve productivity. They used ASSET—a shortened organisational stress evaluation tool—to examine the relationship between eight stressors, organisational commitment, physical and psychological health, and self-rated productivity in a large sample of employees in the United Kingdom from 15 different organisations. In contrast to much of the earlier research, Donald *et al.* (2005) found that stress levels typically did not have a direct linear relationship with self-rated productivity; most of the variance in their data was predicted by psychological well-being, perceived commitment from the organisation, and stress related to resources and communication at work.

Donald *et al.* (2005) argued that their model is generalizable to other employee groups. An earlier research by Jamal (1985) also reported associations between stress and changes in organisational commitment, with organisational commitment having a strong moderating effect on the stress-productivity relationship. These findings suggest a complex relationship between stress and productivity influenced by the way stress is conceptualised and measured, the way in which individual productivity and organisational performance are measured, category of employee, health and well-being of staff, and organisational commitment.

Stress puts drastic effects on employees. Employees in stress cannot meet the expectations of their organization, because of facing physical, psychological and organizational burnouts (Khattak et al., 2011). Employees in service organisation are subjected to high degree of work related stress, which is the major reason for employees' poor performance at job (Ismail & Hong, 2011). Job stress affects negatively on the female employees' well-being which creates dissatisfaction and negative emotions towards work and ultimately their productivity decreases (Tsaur& Tang, 2012). Most of the employees in organizations feel that their job is stressful, that in return decreases their performance (Shahid, 2012). The condition of "high demand and low control" is highly associated with cardiovascular and heart problems, anxiety, demoralization and depression, use of drug (Alcohol) and susceptibility to a wide range of infectious diseases. The condition of "high effort and low control" is also associated with high rate of cardiovascular, anxiety, depression and conflict related problems. Where both these conditions are present, high incidents of back pain and receptive strain injuries are occurred. Collectively both these conditions stifle the productivity of employees (Barbara et al., 2009). Smoking is the result of stress. Mostly, people do smoke to reduce the stress. Tobacco smoke is associated with new onset asthma in children (Shankardass, 2009). Employees having no control over their work, lack of financial rewards, unsupportive management system face serious physical problems, such as heart disease, increase in blood pressure and headaches. Through this employee's commitment towards work decreases (Malik, 2011). At job, stress affects the physical, psychological and financial balance of the employees. In result of stress, employees are absent from organization and loose working hours (Pediwal, 2011). Stress increases the employee turnover from job, which influences the employees as well as organizational productivity (Shehzad et al., 2011).

Stress directly affects the employees' productivity and both of them are mutually related to each other, without stress there is a death of human being (Salami et al., 2010). Role ambiguity, work relationships, job security, lack of job autonomy, work home interface, compensation and benefits, lack of management support are the key sources of creating job stress. Due to these sources of stress, employee engagement to work decreases and ultimately it negatively affects the productivity of employees (Coetzee & Devilliers, 2010). It is estimated that 40 to 60 percent of all employees rate their jobs as being stress and having drastic impact on their family balance and health. More than 70 percent of U.S workers think that there is no healthy link between their family lives and work, and more than 50 percent women in U.S have chosen to stop out from professional careers after large investment in formal education and training (Nowack, 2010). Stress has a considerable importance for the organizational concern, because it has a direct effect on the employee's health and their performance (Bytyqi et al., 2010). Due to globalization and high competition among organizations, employees perform their duties beyond the routine working hours. Such changes in the nature of job increase the job stress, which affect the workers physical and mental health. These effects of job stress are not only destructive to the individual employees, but also for the organization (Salleh, 2008). It is the most important issue in health, because it has an adverse or negative effect on the safety and health of personnel (Conway *et al*., 2008). Stress in employees' is becoming a serious issue in hospitality industry. It affects both employees and employers alike and declines their productivity and job performance (Neill & Davis, 2009). High level stress can cause nervousness, tension, strain, anxiety, depression, cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders and gastrointestinal disorders (Medi bank Private Inc., 2008; Ghaleb and Thuria, 2008). It is having the undesirable effects on the organizational performance, and it is to be understood in the perspective of employees working in these organizations that costs regarding the stress are very high (Dhar & Bhagat, 2008). Stress influences the people both in positive and negative way. At initial stage, it influences positively by motivating employees, but if it is consistent for long time it influences the people in negative way through increasing frustration, anxiety and tardiness (Jing, 2008).In the organization, if stress is not ignored then it destroys the profitability of the organization gradually (Ongori and Agolla, 2008). At job female employees are affected more than the male employees through stress. With increase in age, job stress also increases (Lambert et al., 2007). Hyper stress is found to be responsible for physical and psycho- physiological disorders, which leads to poor performance of an employee (Shah, 2003).

3. Methodology

Descriptive survey was used for the study. The University of Cape Coast is one of the public universities in Ghana, which was originally mandated to train graduate professional teachers. The target population for the study was all the teaching staff of the University of Cape Coast, which include full professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, and assistant lecturers. Stratified sampling method was used to select the sample from the teaching staff from each faculty or school. The sample size was determined using the table of sample selection by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The required sample size for a population of 624 academic staff was estimated to be 250.The number of teaching staff to be selected from each faculty or school (Y) was determined by calculating a proportionate number with respect to the sample size and the population.

The data collection method that was used in the study was questionnaire administration. The reasons for using questionnaire was its quick way of collecting data from the respondents, since they were all literates with heavy working schedules. The questionnaire was distributed to the teaching staff to complete. Both primary and secondary data was used in the study. An instrument developed byIdris (2009) and used for the study of occupational stress in academic life of Malaysian public universities was modified and used forthe study. This instrument was chosen because it measured the causes and consequences of job stress on academic staff. The completed questionnaire was coded and tabulated using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) application software. The main statistical techniques applied in the analysis were the frequency counts, and simple percentage descriptions. Chi-square was used to measure the relationship between the nature of job and stress factors of academic staff; and the relationship between the stress factors and the productivity of academic staff.

4. Results and Discussion

The first section deals with the background characteristics of the respondents, the second section provides the results of the findings, and the third section deals with the discussion of findings as related to the research questions. Two hundred academic staff completed the questionnaires, given a response rate of 80 percent.

Eighty-five percent (170) of the staff were males. A possible reason for the imbalance in the sex distribution could be attributed to the fact that many females lack the qualification to become academic staff in the universities (Gaertner&Nollen, 2009). According to literature, some research indicates that women are more likely than men to experience the negative effects of stress. Due to the fact that majority of the respondents were males compared to their female counterparts, most of these respondents would be able to withstand the negative effect of stress compared to the minority.

About two-fifth of the respondents (39%) of the males were within the 41 – 50 age category while as 43.3percent of the females were also within 41-50 age category. According to literature, age is a factor that determines how individuals react to job stress. This confirms the finding of Lambert *et al.* 2007 that with increase in age, job stress also increases.

In terms of percentages there were more young female respondents than their male counterparts. This is supported by Williams (2003), that when individuals are below the age of 40 years they are classified as young. As academic staff one would have expected that all of them should have been 40 years and above. The account of this deviation could be linked to the educational reforms that have lessened the number of years spent in school. In spite of the year difference among the academic staff, it is reasonable to assume that the academic staff would portray common or comparable experience to make the objectives of this study to be achieved.

According to the literature, sex difference is another factor that is important in determining susceptibility to job stress (Lambert *et al*., 2007). Some studies revealed that males are able to withstand the negative effect of job stress as compared to their female counterparts. This implies that the females representing the minority (15%) are likely to experience the negative of the job stress as compared to their male counterparts representing the majority (85%). One of the factors is the predominant role that females play in the provision of family care. In addition males tend to cope with job stress by way of problem focused strategies while females characteristically use more emotion focused strategies to manage their job stress (Korabik, McDonald, &Risin, 1993). According to Frost (2003), female response to stress triggers hormones that support care giving rather than fight or flight behaviour.

4.1. The Nature of Job Performed by Academic Staff of the University of Cape Coast

The first objective of the study was to describe the stressful nature of job performed by academic staff of the University of Cape Coast. In order to achieve this objective, a Likert-type scale was used with four-point scale (1 – 4). Fourteen items were used, which described the nature of job of the academic staff and this is depicted in Table 1 below:

Statement/Response	Not at all		Seldom		Sometimes		Always	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Been able to concentrate on your job	65	32.5	74	37.0	21	10.5	40	20
Lost much sleep over worry due to job	46	23.0	64	32.0	55	27.5	35	17.5
Felt you are playing a useful part in organisation	46	23.0	65	32.5	49	24.5	40	20.0
Felt capable of making decisions about job	30	15.0	55	27.5	68	34.0	47	23.5
Felt constantly under strain	47	23.5	59	29.5	60	30.0	32	16.0
Felt you could overcome your job difficulties	32	16.0	46	23.0	53	26.5	69	34.5
Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day job activities	80	40.0	35	17.5	30	15.0	55	27.5
Been able to face your job challenges	52	26.0	47	23.5	72	36.0	29	14.5
Been unhappy or depressed at work	73	36.5	28	14.0	98	49.0	1	0.5
Lost confidence in yourself at work	53	26.5	38	19.0	89	44.5	20	10.0
Do you see yourself as a worthless person at work	95	47.5	45	22.5	60	30.0	0	0
Does workplace environment minimise stress	60	30.0	40	20.0	63	31.5	37	18.5
I have become less enthusiastic about my work	29	14.5	61	30.5	64	32.0	46	23
I have become less interested in my work.	44	22.0	55	27.5	71	35.5	30	15.0

Table 1: Description of nature of job performed by academic staff

With respect to how respondents were able to concentrate on their job, a little above one-third (37.0%) of the respondents indicated seldom with respect to been able to concentrate on their job. This is clear from the responses indicated by the respondents that they experience concentration problem which is an indication of stress in their job.

In terms of respondents losing much sleep over worry due to job, about one-third (32.0%) of the respondents indicated seldom while the least (17.5%) of the respondents indicated always. This finding is consistent with Menze (2005), that occupational stress results in worry which normally gives sleepless nights to staff involved.

With respect to whether respondents felt they were playing a useful part in organisation, about one-third (32.5%) of the respondents indicated seldom while 24.5percent of them indicated sometimes. This confirms the literature by Wichert (2002), that job stress affect the self esteem of workers whichmakes them sometimes think they are not playing a useful part in their organisations.

In terms of whether respondents felt capable of making decisions about job, more (34.0%) of the respondents indicated sometimes. This finding supports the literature by Wainwright and Calnan (2002), that job stress negatively affect workers decision making

capabilities. This means that the decision making capabilities of respondents were affected which would also have a negative effect of their productivity.

About one-third (30.0%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes felt they were constantly under strain. Literature by Shahid (2012) supports this finding that workers who feel they were constantly under strain is an indication that they were experiencing some level of job stress.

More (34.5%) of the respondents indicated that they always felt they could overcome their job difficulties while 26.5 percent of them indicated that they sometimes felt they could overcome their job difficulties. This finding confirms the research by Wainwright and Calnan (2002), that when workers do not have confidence that they could overcome their job difficult, it implies that the nature of the job may be stressful to those employees concerned.

About four-tenth (40.0%) of the respondents indicated that they do not at all enjoy their normal day-to-day job activities whiles 27.5 percent of them indicated that they always enjoy their normal day-to-day job activities. Literature by Menze (2005) is consistent with this finding that when employees do not enjoy their normal day-to-day job activities, then there is the likelihood that the job they perform may be stressful.

A little above one-third (36.0%) of the respondents indicated that they were sometimes able to face their job challenges while 26.0 percent of them indicated that they do not at all able to face their job challenges.

About half (49.0%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes feel unhappy or depressed at work while 36.5 percent of them indicated that they do not at all feel unhappy or depressed at work. This finding agrees with Jayashree (2010), that an employee is likely to become unhappy or depressed at work as result of mismatch between the individual capabilities and organisational demand.

More (44.5%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes lose confidence in themselves at work while 26.5 percent of them indicated that they do not at all lose confidence in themselves at work. The research of Pediwal (2011) supports this finding that workers who do not have the abilities or skills to perform assigned duties usually have low esteem with regard to their work. More (47.5%) of the respondents indicated that they do not see themselves as a worthless people at work while 30.0 percent of them indicated that they sometimes see themselves as worthless people at work. One of the findings of the research by Lewis (1998) was that when an employee is stressed they sometimes see themselves as worthless people at work. Therefore the result of this research also confirmed the finding of Lewis (1998).

About one-third (31.5%) of the respondents indicated that the workplace environment sometimes minimize stress while 30.0 percent of them indicated that the workplace environment does not at all minimize job stress. The finding is in agreement with Townsend and Rosser (2007), that when the workplace of an employee is not well structured to minimise stress, then employees are likely prone to job stress which adversely affect their productivity. These researchers added that some of the common indicators that could minimise workplace stress were proper lighting, well ventilation, spacious office space and others. The finding is also consistent with Thomson and McHugh (1995) that contemporary accounts of the stress "process" often follow the notion of stress as resulting from a misfit between an individual and their particular environment. Thus this gives an opportunity for the organisation to explore this problem further. This finding also confirm the main theory underpinning this study, the Person-Environment fit theory; that stress is experienced as a results of a mismatch between the person and his/her environment (Edward, 2000).

About one-third (32.0%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes become less enthusiastic about their job while 30.5 percent of them indicated that they seldom become less enthusiastic about their job. More (35.5%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes become less interested in their work while 27.5 percent of them indicated that they seldom become less interested in their work. Literature by Malik (2011) support this finding that when employees become less interested in their job, then it is an indication that the nature of job is stressful or some conditions of the job is no more favourable to the employee.

Table 2 depicts some ailments that some respondents suffer due to the nature of their job.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Common influenza	43	21.5
Head ache	57	28.5
Fatigue	89	44.5
Depression	9	4.5
None of the above	2	1.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2: Some ailments that some respondents suffer due to the nature of their job

More (44.5%) of the respondents indicated that they experience fatigue due to the nature of their job while 57 (28.5%) of them indicated that they suffer from head ache due to the nature of their job. However, 43 (21.5%) of the respondents indicated that they suffer from common influenza due to the nature of their work while 9 (4.5%) of them indicated that they suffer from depression due to the nature of their job. The above mentioned ailments that some of the respondents suffer from are all symptoms of stress. This implies that some of the respondents were experiencing stress symptoms which has a negative effect on their productivity.

4.2. Stress Factors Applicable to Academic Staff of the University of Cape Coast

The second objective of the study was to examine stress factors applicable to academic staff of the University of Cape Coast. In order to achieve this objective, five main factors of stress were selected, these include interpersonal relationship, research, teaching,

students' supervision, and career development. Twenty-two items were used to examine the stress factors applicable to academic staff with a Likert-type scale of four-point scale (1 – 4) and this is depicted in Table 3 below:

Stress factor/Response	No Stress		Stressful		Very Stressful		Extremely Stressful	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Interpersonal relationship								
Students	20	10.0	78	39.0	85	42.5	17	8.5
University management	25	12.5	95	47.5	45	22.5	35	17.5
Heads of department	15	7.5	92	46.0	80	40.0	13	6.5
Colleagues	80	40.0	67	33.5	30	15.0	23	11.5
Non-teaching staff	90	45.0	42	21.0	41	20.5	27	13.5
Research								
Seeking research grant	9	4.5	95	47.5	54	27.0	42	21.0
Linkage to other professionals	80	40.0	49	24.5	42	21.0	29	14.5
Publication of finished articles	82	41.0	57	28.5	41	20.5	20	10.0
Access to relevant literature	89	44.5	51	25.5	43	21.5	17	8.5
Teaching								
Duration of teaching	15	7.5	83	41.5	62	31.0	40	20.0
Collation of exams results	8	4.0	92	46.0	74	37.0	26	13.0
Marking of exams scripts	9	4.5	95	47.5	67	33.5	29	14.5
Setting of exams questions	16	8.0	87	43.5	78	39.0	19	9.5
Development of course content	12	6.0	88	44.0	91	45.5	9	4.5
Deciding on the appropriate methods for lesson presentation	64	32.0	79	39.5	37	18.5	20	10.0
Students' supervision	4	2.0	79	39.5	63	31.5	54	27.0
Project work/dissertation thesis supervision								
Number of students supervised	10	5.0	86	43.0	71	35.5	33	16.5
Career development								
Seeking funds for career	19	9.5	83	41.5	75	37.5	23	11.5
University conditions/provisions for professional development	25	12.5	90	45.0	72	36	13	6.5
Linkage to avenues of professional development	23	11.5	89	44.5	74	37.0	14	7.0
Having the required publications for promotion	14	7.0	81	40.5	93	46.5	12	6.0
Obtaining the required qualification	17	8.5	95	47.5	73	36.5	15	7.5

Table 3: Stress factors applicable to academic staff of the University of Cape Coast

About two-fifth (42.5%) of the respondents report that their interpersonal relationship with students is very stressful while as 78 (39%) of them report that their interpersonal relationship with students is stressful. This is supported by Appelbaum and Hare (2006), that academic staff interpersonal relationship is very stressful, especially in situation whereby the lecturer-students ratio is very high.

More (47.5%) of the respondents report that their interpersonal relationship with the university management is stressful while as 45 (22.5%) of them report that their interpersonal relationship with the university Management is very stressful. Research by Saks (2008) report that interpersonal relationship with some university management is stressful, however there are some university management that remove all administrative and other barriers to ensure that academic staff have less or no stress in dealing with university management.

About half (46%) of the respondents report that their interpersonal relationship with their heads of department/unit is stressful while as 80 (40%) of them report that their interpersonal relationship with their heads of department/unit is very stressful. Saks (2008), confirm this finding that it is not only the interpersonal relationship with university management that is stressful but also academic staff interpersonal relationship with heads of department is even more stressful as academic staff are more closer (in terms of organisational hierarchy) to their heads of departments than the university management.

Two-fifth (40%) of the respondents report that there is no stress with their interpersonal relationship with their colleagues while as 67 (33.5%) of them report that their interpersonal relationship with their colleagues is stressful. This finding is supported by Bandura (2001), that interpersonal relationship with colleagues at the workplace sometimes becomes stressful due to individual differences. This author added, when an employee is appointed, in the initial stage he or she may experience some degree of stress as the employee tries to familiarize him/herself with their workplace colleagues.

More (45%) of the respondents report that there is no stress with their interpersonal relationship with non-teaching staff while 42 (21%) of them report that their interpersonal relationship with non-teaching staff is stressful. Appelbaum and Hare (2006) confirms that academic staff interpersonal relationship with non-teaching staff is normally less or no stress.

In general with respect to interpersonal relationship as a stress factor, there is some level of stress experienced by respondents. This finding is consistent with Schnall (2011), that interpersonal relationship which could be emotional or practical that are derived from an individual's social network of family, friends, coworkers and other social contacts is important. This author added that substantial body of evidence suggest that lack of social support may lead to job stress and health consequences to the employee. In addition, when

an individual has a good social life, when he or she is faced with a challenge, the person is able to contact some of his or her close associate and share such a challenge with them.

In terms of seeking research grant, 95 (47.5%) of the respondents report that seeking research grant is stressful while as 54 (27%) of them report that seeking research grant is very stressful. Research by Bogler (2004) report that when academic staff are not able to get the research funds or grants, academic staff becomes frustrated or stressed with their research activities.

Two-fifth (40%) of the respondents report that there is no stress with respect to linkage to other professionals in their research discipline while as about one-quarter (24.5%) of them report that linkage to other professionals in their research discipline is stressful.

About one-fifth (41%) of the respondents report that there is no stress with respect to publication of finished articles while 57 (28.5%) of them report that publication of finished articles is stressful. This finding confirms the research by Bogler (2004), that the aspect that academic staff do not encounter much stress is the publication of finished articles. This finding is also in agreement with Porter and Umbach (2001), that research and teaching were the main workload of academic staff. They added that any factor that results in the adverse effect on research and teaching must be seriously addressed as it would have a major impact on their productivity.

A little above one-fifth (44.5%) of the respondents report that there is no stress with respect to access to relevant literature while as 51 (25.5%) of them report that access to relevant literature is stressful. This support the finding of Gmelch, Lovrich and Wilke (2009) that one area of research which is a source of stress to academic staff is having access to relevant literature.

About one-fifth (41%) of the respondents report that duration of teaching is stressful while as 62 (31%) of them report that duration of teaching is very stressful. This finding is in agreement with Kusku (2003), that when the duration of teaching is long, academic staff experience stress, especially when the class is large and there is no public address system for the teaching.

About half (46%) of the respondents report that collation of examination results is stressful while as 74 (37%) of them report that collation of examination results is very stressful. The stressful nature of examination results collation happens when the class size is large and many forms of examinations are conducted for a particular course (Marchiori&Henkin, 2004).

More (47.5%) of the respondents report that marking of examination scripts is stressful while as 67 (33.5%) of them report that marking of examination scripts is very stressful. Marchiori and Henkin (2004) also state that marking of examination scripts becomes stressful when there are many students involved and the type of examination question also demand more time for marking, especially essay type of questions.

A little above one-fifth (43.5%) of the respondents report that setting of examination questions is stressful while as 78 (39%) of them report that setting of examination questions is very stressful. Dick and Wagner (2001) support this finding that setting examination questions is stressful, especially in situations whereby multiple choose questions are set. These authors added that there is less stress in setting essay questions and questions that demand short answers.

About half (45.5%) of the respondents report that development of course content is very stressful while as 88 (44%) of them report that development of course content is stressful. This finding is in agreement with Witkin and Altschuld (2005), that there is some degree of stress with respect to development of course content but a well-developed course content facilitate the preparation of lecture note and its delivery.

About two-fifth (39.5%) of the respondents report that deciding on the appropriate methods for lesson presentation is stressful while about one-third (32%) of them report that there is no stress in deciding on the appropriate methods for lesson presentation.

About two-fifth (39.5%) of the respondents report that project work/dissertation/thesis supervision is stressful while as about one-third 63 (31.5%) of them report that project work/dissertation/thesis supervision is very stressful.Jian andRong (2000) report that supervision of students' dissertation is stressful to academic staff as it is also time consuming.

More (43%) of the respondents report that the number of students they supervise is stressful while as about one-third (35.5%) of them report that the number of students they supervise is very stressful. Jian and Rong (2000) also state that academic staff experience higher degree of stress when they are supervising many students, that is when the students-lecturer ratio is high.

In general students' supervision was found to be the most stressful factor. The problem of high number of lecturer-students ratio in most of the public universities in Ghana may have accounted for result. In addition, in the University of Cape Coast for example there exist the situation whereby many students are being supervised by a lecturer. This normally put pressure on the lecturers concerned and prolong the completion rate of students. In the University of Cape Coast, this problem has reached its highest peak for graduate students. The School of Graduate Studies and Research Board has approved a "step-down" policy, whereby overstayed graduate students who have not submitted their dissertation or thesis are given the option to apply for a "step-down" degree. These overstayed graduate students will be given a "step-down" degree by course work if they satisfy all necessary requirements by the School of Graduate Studies and Research Board. An overstayed graduate student who enrolled for Master of Philosophy/Commerce programme and apply for a "step-down" degree will be awarded M.Ed/MA/M.Sc/MBA by course work as determined by the Department/Faculty/School Committee on Graduate Studies (J. C. Sefenu, personal communication, October 22, 2013).

About two-fifth (41.5%) of the respondents report that seeking funds for career development is stressful while as 75 (37.5%) of them report that seeking funds for career development is very stressful. This confirms the research by Bogler (2004) that academic staff experience some degree of stress with respect seeking funds for career development. The government of Ghana has also planned to institute a research fund to assist all academic staff within the public universities in Ghana to assess funds for their research work. If this plan is initiated it could reduce the stress academic staff go through in assessing funds for their research.

A little above two-fifth (45%) of the respondents report that the university conditions/provisions for professional development is stressful while as 72 (36%) of them report that the university conditions/provisions for professional development is very stressful.

More (44.5%) of the respondents report that linkage to avenues of professional development is stressful while as 74 (37%) of them report that linkage to avenues of professional development is very stressful. This is in agreement with Heaney (2003) that employees

experience some degree of stress with respect to linkage to avenues of professional development. About half (46.5%) of the respondents report that having the required publications for promotion is very stressful while as about four-tenth (40.5%) of them report that having the required publications for promotion is stressful.

More (47.5%) of the respondents report that obtaining the required qualification is stressful while as 73 (36.5%) of them report that obtaining the required qualification is very stressful. Obtaining the required qualification was the second ranked among the factors of career development. This could be explained by the current policy for public universities in Ghana that all academic staff should have their doctorate degree within some number of years. This has compelled many of the academic staff to pursue their doctorate degree either within Ghana or abroad in order to meet the academic qualification demand by public universities in Ghana. Due to this academic requirement, most lecturers without Ph.D. are now pursuing part-time Ph.D. programme in order to maintain their job. This support the research by Jian and Rong (2000), that in situation whereby lecturers combine their work with their studies, this brings stress on these lecturers concerned. In addition, because these lecturers are combining work with their studies, getting time to research and publish articles or books also become a challenge to them. Promotion of these academic staff in Ghana is based on their research publication and other factors, due to lack of research publications by some academic staff, the university management has terminated appointment of such academic staff.

4.3. Productivity Level of Academic Staff of the University of Cape Coast

The productivity level of academic staff of the University of Cape Coast were also assessed. In order to achieve this objective, a liker scale of four-point scale was used. Six items were used to assess the productivity level of the respondents. One of the items was the number of publication of articles or books per academic year. The views of respondents on the productivity level were assessed using the Likert-type scale (1 – 4), thus from "poor" to "excellent".

About one-third (30.5%) of the respondents indicated average with respect to number of article or books published within an academic year while the least (13.5%) of them indicated excellent. In terms of quality graduate, through quality grades, more (39.5) of the respondents indicated average while the least (20.0%) if them indicated excellent. In general, all the productivity indicators were rated average by more of the respondents. In addition, the sum of the number of responses from poor and average categories are more than the sum of the responses from good and excellent categories. This is supported by Townsend and Rosser (2007), that when the nature of job performed by employees is stressful, productivity of these employees are not good. In addition, Ongori and Agolla (2008), also confirm this finding that when employees experience job stress, the inputs in the organisation reduces and therefore affect productivity.

Literature by Blumenthal (2003) is in agreement with this finding that a sense of power and control has been shown to contribute or reduce stress. People with intrinsic sense of control or personal responsibility (that is those who have a sense of being able to make changes in their environments) are generally less stressed than those who believe they have no control. This author also propagates the theory of personality types, maintaining that the type A person is hard driving, conscientious, aggressive, ambitious, competitive, shows an over commitment to productivity and is filled with a sense of time urgency and impatience, multitasks, has poor relationships and little concern for others. For respondents who believe that their success depends on hard work may be having a sense of power and control over their situation. In addition, Blumenthal (2003) confirms that whether an event is experienced as stressful depends on a person's psychosocial orientation with things like culture, spirituality, values and beliefs. According to literature, individual with internal locus of control (individual with the feeling that they have total control or great deal on events that happen to them) usually use problem-solving approach to every challenge they experience and therefore are not likely to be affected by negative symptoms of stress. Individual with external locus of control (those who have the feeling that they have little or no control on the events that happen to them) are much affected with stress when they encounter challenges in their life. It was clear that majority (51.1%) of the respondents have internal locus of control.

Most (81%) of the respondents indicated that they are highly competitive driven at work. However, 31 (15.5%) of the respondents indicated that they are not highly competitive driven at work. This finding is consistent with Thompson and McHugh (1995) that propagate the personality type theory; they are of the opinion that traits associated with type A behaviour includes achievement orientation, status insecurity, time urgency, competitiveness and aggression. Type A behaviour patterns have been labeled coronary prone behaviour due to the correlation with increased rates of coronary heart disease. There are many factors that may have influenced the competitiveness of respondents as the majority of the respondents are young men who by virtue of their youth are competitive. The fact that the most of the respondents (81%) reported to be competitive may be an indication that they are influenced by the active nature of the youth. The finding also support, that type A personalities; people who are workaholics and who feel driven to be always on time and meet deadlines, normally place themselves under greater stress that do others (Desseler, 2000).

4.4. Testing of the Research Hypotheses

The objectives of testing these research hypothesis was to accept or reject hypothesis on whether there is significant positive relationship between nature of job and stress factors; and whether stress factors have positive significant influence on the productivity of academic staff.

4.4.1. Research Hypothesis One

- → H_0: There is no significant positive relationship between nature of job and stress factors;
- → H_1: There is significant positive relationship between nature of job and stress factors.

The Pearson chi-square of nature of job and stress factors of respondents is shown in Table 4.

Variables	Nature of job and Stress factors
Pearson chi-square	2308.170
Df	2176
Asymp. sig. (p)	0.024
N	200

Table 4: Chi-square of nature of job and stress factors of respondents

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the nature of job and stress factors of the respondents. There was a significant positive relationship between these two variables, X^2 (2176, N = 200) = 0.024, $p < 0.05$. The decision is that, there was a significant positive relationship between the nature of job and stress factors of the respondents. This implies that H_1 should be accepted, as the nature of job influences the stress factors experienced by the respondents.

4.4.2. Research Hypothesis Two

- → H_0: Stress factors do not have significant influence on the productivity of academic staff;
- → H_1: Stress factors have significant influence on the productivity of academic staff.

Table 5 shows the Pearson chi-square of productivity of academic staff and stress factors. This is to help decide whether to accept or reject H_1; that is whether stress factors have positive significant influence on the productivity of academic staff.

Variables	Stress factors and productivity of academic staff
Pearson chi-square	1450.732
Df	1496
Asymp. sig. (p)	0.795
N	200

Table 5: Chi-square of stress factors and productivity of academic staff

A chi-square of independence was performed to examine the relationship between stress factors and productivity of academic staff. There was no significant positive relationship between these two variables, X^2 (1496, N = 200) = 0.795, $p > 0.05$. The decision is that, stress factors do not have positive significant influence on the productivity of academic staff. This implies that H_0 should be accepted; stress factors do not have any relationship with the productivity of academic staff.

In summary, the results and discussions of the study taking into considerations the objectives and research hypotheses. It was found that some of the respondents experience some level of stress due to the nature of their job. Students' supervision was also found to be the most stressful factor the respondents. The general productivity level of the respondents was rated at average. It was also found that respondents who experience stress symptoms are unable to meet their productivity standards. It was found that there is no positive significant relation between the nature of job and stress factors; and also stress factors do not have positive significant influence on the productivity of academic staff. This result contradict the finding from objective five, the reason may be due to the fact that other factors should have been considered in analysing the objective five and hypothesis two, which is a limitation to this study.

5. Conclusions and Policy Implications

On the basis of the findings reported in this study, it can be concluded that job stress had a negative effect on the productivity of academic staff. The nature of job performed by academic staff revealed that most of them experience acute stress which fatigue was identified as the major stress symptoms that they do experience. The results also showed that academic staff experiences some degree of stress with respect to students' supervision and career development. Therefore lack of stress management strategies and techniques such as creation of recreational activities for academic staff negatively affect their productivity.

Academic staff turnover is not a problem at the University of Cape Coast but as some of the staff have the intention of leaving the university is a seriously problem that can result in lower productivity and absenteeism. Employee assistance programme can be organised for the academic staff to know the way forward to prevent academic staff from leaving the university.According to the study, there is a positive significant relation between the nature of job and stress factors.

5.1. Recommendations - Policy and social implications

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations on policy and social implications were made:

It is recommended due to the stressful nature of job of academic staff, the University of Cape Coast management should encourage its staff to take their annual and sabbatical leaves. In addition, the University of Cape Coast management should organise compulsory regular medical check-up for its academic staff. Compulsory medical check-up for academic staff is also another measure that that reduces or prevents academic staff from suffering from job stress. This can be done monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or yearly based on the task or schedule of the academic staff. In general, the Health Services of the University of Cape Coast can do medical check-up for all academic staff after every academic year. This would ensure that academic staff assess their health status, especially job stress related symptoms. The University of Cape Coast management should also establish more recreational activities for academic staff.

This means that after the week days of teaching and research, the academic staff can have some recreational activities during weekends or after work on weekdays as a measure to manage job stress. The academic staff should take advantage of these recreational activities by exercising and relaxing to prevent or minimise the effect job stress.

An employee assistance programme has to be introduced by the University of Cape Coast management for early identification and intervention on job related problems experienced by academic staff so that productivity levels do not decrease but rather improve. Academic staff with stress-related problems could also see the counselling centre of the University of Cape Coast for assistance.

It is recommended that policies should be formulated on the following employment of more academic staff to reduce lecturer-student ratio. This would reduce the number of students, especially graduate students that academic staff supervised in order to reduce the pressure on academic staff with respect to supervision of students.

Establishment of research funds within the various public universities, so that academic staff who need funds for research could write proposal and apply for such funds. Even though, academic staff are given books and research allowance, this is not enough because some research really demand huge sum of funds and the establishment of this research funds by the public universities or government would ensure that the research that productivity of academic staff would increase.

There should be a policy on adequate remuneration and incentives for academic staff. This could improve the productivity level of academic staff and would motivate them to work harder. In addition better and improved conditions of service would also help improve the productivity of academic staff.

It is also recommended that academic staff should manage their time well. They should plan their schedule of duty and know when certain duties should be done, so that they would have ample time for relaxation and rest. They should learn to meet deadlines and should not wait to put pressure on themselves at the last minute with the aim of meeting deadlines.

It is recommended that academic staff should ensure good interpersonal relationship among their students, colleagues, head of department, university management, and non-teaching staff. In addition, they should establish good social life, this would ensure that they could easily fall on others when they encounter any problem. This would lessen their chances of experiencing stress that could have impact on their job.

In summary, it is recommended that management of Universities should ensure that the enabling environment are provided for academic staff to minimize or prevent job stress to enhance productivity in their work. Management of Universities should provide recreational facilities and regular medical check-up, introduce employee assistance programmes, provide adequate remuneration and incentives, provide the needed funds for research, educate academic staff on time management, and also organise social activities for their academic staff.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Studies

Job stress and academic staff – a case study in the University of Cape Coast has been carried out in this study. It would be helpful if future researchers could conduct this type of study with different occupational groups to provide more evidence for the generalizability of the findings from this study. In addition this study could be carried out in other universities in Ghana to give a general picture on job stress in the universities of Ghana.

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