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**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

STRESS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF  
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES, ACCRA AND WISCONSIN INTERNATIONAL

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE-GHANA.

**BY**

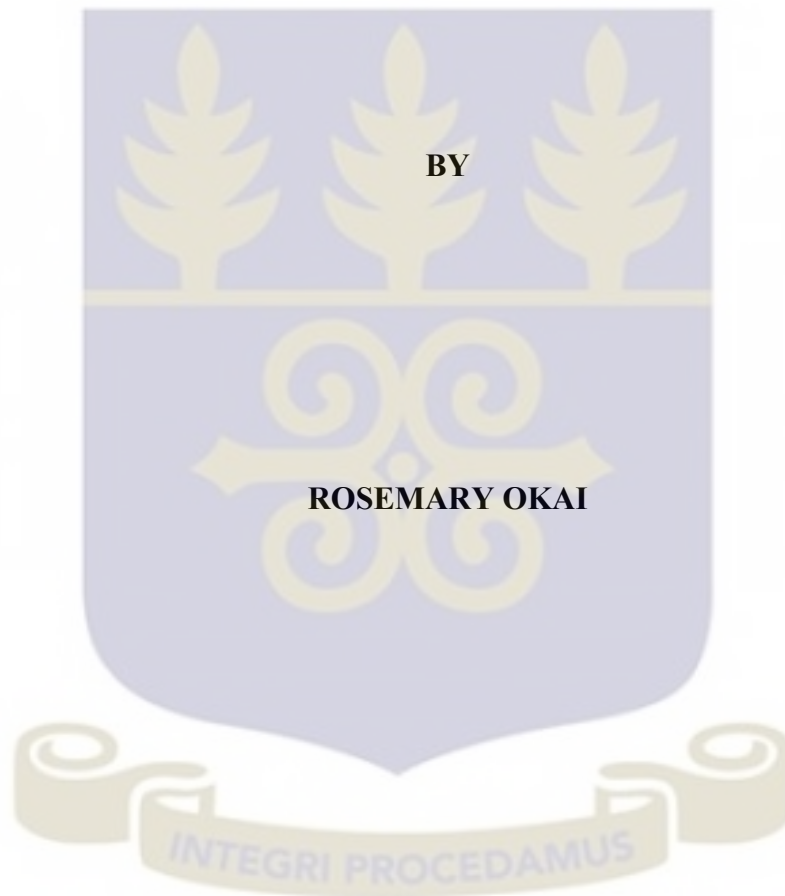
**ROSEMARY OKAI**

THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN  
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## DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that with the exception of acknowledged citations, this thesis is my original work produced under the supervision of Dr. Emmanuel Adjei and Prof. Harry Akussah and that this work has not been presented either in whole or in part to any institution for any purpose.

Student's name : Rosemary Okai

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### Supervisors:

Dr. Emmanuel Adjei: Signature.....

Date.....

Prof. Harry Akussah: Signature .....

Date.....



## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the glory of God. It is also dedicated to Mr. Isaac Nii Teiko Okai, my loving and caring husband, to my mother, Mrs, Comfort Nartey, and my loving children, Samantha Sarah Naa Ayikailey Okai, Samuel Silas Nii Ayitey Okai, Samson Simon Nii Ayikwei Okai and my niece, Ruth Naa Meeley Markwei whose sacrifices, love and support encouraged me to successfully complete the MPhil degree programme.



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## ABSTRACT

The study looks at stress in university libraries. Universities have experienced exponential growth in student population as more programmes had been introduced lately. The increase had not been matched with infrastructure, staff and funding. This situation had made the job of the library very stressful. Stress, is referred to as a state of psychological and or physical imbalance resulting from the disparity resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability to meet those demands. Modern world individuals are experiencing long- term unacceptable high levels of arousal which give rise to chronic stress which every class of people are no exception. The study aimed to identify the main stressors that cause stress for the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh and investigate the coping strategies that they employed to control their stressors with the view of making recommendations to enhance stress coping capabilities.

The study adopted the Bio-Psychosocial Model of Stress Theory which provides a realistic explanation of the complicated nature of stress. To achieve the objectives of the research, the study used a qualitative method approach complemented by observation. All the library professionals and paraprofessionals of the two universities were interviewed.

The study found out that the library work itself, unfavourable working environment, work overload and challenges in relation to users, rudeness of patrons. Other sources of stress found were traffic congestion and job dissatisfaction. In addition, the study established that the library staff stress levels were not high because they had all attended library school and had combined their professionalism with effective coping strategies.

The study concluded that if the managements of both universities would be able to provide adequate equipment and resources, favourable working environment, comprehensive orientation to new students, employment of more staff the library staff will be able to work without much stress. The study recommended provision of requisite resources, favourable working environment, employment of more staff, recruitment of part-time workers during examination period and seminars on stress management.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the study

The workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a fast paced, dynamic and highly stimulating environment which brings a large number of benefits and opportunities to those who work within it. Some workers are sometimes difficult to be approached; their looks even scare customers to go to them for assistance. These attitudes could be reactions to pressure. These reactions occur as a result of stress. As a result of constant interactions with customers from different backgrounds and also due to unfavourable working conditions, service workers are tasked so much that demands and expectations of their work go far beyond what their existing emotional, physical and psychological resources can afford.

Stress may be defined as “a state of psychological and/or physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability to meet those demands”. “Simply put, stress is the rate of all wear and tear caused by life changing demands on people”. In recent years, psychologists have become interested in stress related issues as the phenomenon “stress” has become a universal concept. All classes of people experience stress.

Warner (1996) explained that stress is generally not bad; a small or moderate amount of stress can be good by giving energy to keep one alert and occupied. Good stress equips the individual to face life-threatening situations by increasing their arousal level. When stress occurs occasionally, the body quickly returns to a normal level of arousal. This does not have detrimental effects. This kind of stress has its positive side in raising performance. However,

in the modern world individuals are experiencing long-term, unacceptably high levels of arousal which give rise to chronic stress. This initially, gives rise to tiredness, then exhaustion and ultimately illness and long-term side effects. Stress at work is relatively a new phenomenon in modern lifestyle. However, Meyerson (1994) stated that the term “stress” is widely understood to be emotion or a state in which a person experiences quick changes or development, and wherein the individual will also experience a range of other emotions such as anxiety, annoyance, hurt, desolation, excitement, and other intense emotions, and hence it is also viewed to be undesirable state.

Distressing living conditions can put people under extreme pressure, until they may feel exhausted, empty, burnout, and unable to cope. Many symptoms of stress are visible in behaviour. Increased absenteeism, frequent tardiness, poor job performance, bad attitude including rudeness to patrons and co-workers, accidents, strikes, work stoppages and employee theft are all traceable results of individual distress (Baird & Baird, 2005).

Most research findings suggest that when individuals come under stress, their cognitive performance and decision making may be adversely affected and these affect their output. Owing to this, stress management has become a vital topic for most organisations and institutions who want to improve their output. A research conducted by Saint Paul Fire Marine Insurance Company in the United States revealed that an estimated 75-90 per cent of visits of the workers to physicians are stress related. For example, over 40 per cent of workers surveyed by the North-Western National Life Insurance Company felt their jobs were very or extremely stressful. Such concerns can lead to decrease in performance, increased absenteeism, use of drugs and alcohol and lower commitment to the organisation or

institution. Translating these impacts of stress to the organisation or institution can result in decreased productivity, higher rates of worker turnover, work conflicts and higher financial cost to control the levels of stress experienced by their employees (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998).

Aina (2004) refers to a library as an organised collection of sources of information and similar resources, which are accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. He explained that library provides physical or digital access to materials, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both. An academic library is a library that is attached to higher educational institutions such as universities, polytechnics, colleges which supports the objectives of the institutions in the areas of learning, teaching, research and service. In the case of university libraries, the users are students, researchers, lecturers and support staff (non-teaching staff) and members of the local community in which the university is located.

Johnson (2004) explained that undergraduate students of a university often view the library as a learning center, because it provides materials that are needed for learning for all the courses offered in the university. Postgraduate students use the library essentially for research. The library provides all resources needed for carrying out effective learning and research activities. To the teaching staff of the university, the library provides resources to support teaching and research. It provides resources and services to support research projects. The academic library provides materials of sufficient quantity and in diversity to support research of whatever kind in every subject offered in the university. The support staff of the university uses the library for learning and other purposes. Members in the community in which the

library is located, occasionally make use of the university library for the purpose of consulting local materials collected by the university. A university library is also expected to provide information sources for the purpose of extra-mural studies, recreation, entertainment and general knowledge.

Aina (2004), pointed the services provided by academic libraries can be categorised as follows: lending, inter-library loan service and document delivery, reservation service, provision of seating and study facilities, reference service, current awareness service, exhibition and displays, library publications, user education, information literacy programme, literature search, selective dissemination of information, referral service, translation service, extension and outreach services, rental of premises.

To a large extent, the quality of a university is measured by the services provided by its library because of its unique position in the over-all university system. For a university to perform its myriad of functions, its collections must not only include books and journals but also other materials such as generalised and specialised collections, news papers, magazines, manuscripts, museum objects, photographs, theses and dissertations, audio-visual materials, microforms, Compact Disk- Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) and other necessary equipment's such as microfiche and microfilm readers, computer and CD-ROM drives, which are needed in order to use some of the items in the collection. The library must also have full access to the internet. University libraries collections are always large, running into millions of materials. , the library employs professional librarians who are highly qualified to manage the

library. It is the responsibility of the professional librarian to work hard to make these information resources and services available to the users.

A librarian is an information professional trained in library and information science. He or she is responsible for the organisation and management of information services and informational materials for users. Many university librarians have a minimum qualification of master's degree in library studies, Information Studies or Information Science. Many of them too have doctoral degree in librarianship or in other subjects. The staff required in libraries need to have different competences. The professional librarians are expected to provide leadership role. Their works are supplemented by that of paraprofessionals and other support staff. The paraprofessionals usually have first degree or diploma as academic qualification. They often assist the professional librarians in some other intellectual tasks, such as reference service, cataloguing, current awareness service, among others. The paraprofessionals also perform supervisory roles as well.

Fennell & Mitchell (2013) pointed out that, traditionally, librarians have been associated with collections of books, as demonstrated by the etymology of the word "librarian" (Latin *liber*, 'book'). However, modern librarians deal with information in many formats, including books, magazines, newspapers, audio recordings (both music recordings and audiobooks), video recordings, maps, photographs and other graphical materials, bibliographic databases, and digital resources. Librarians often provide other information services, including computer provision and training, coordination of public programmes, basic literacy education, and help with finding and using community resources.

The professional librarians are responsible for developing and managing collections of books and journals (both paper and electronic), as well as websites; manage buildings, furniture and equipment's; carry out staff management, which may involve recruitment and selection, appraisals, support and development, disciplinary action and training, as well as allocating daily tasks; dealing with budgets and, in some cases, purchasing resources; maintaining relationships with external bodies, such as suppliers. They also contribute to academic course development and liaising with academic departments; managing and supporting the provision of reading lists and allocating length of loans; creating, updating and managing information resources, both electronic and printed; selecting, acquiring and cataloguing information using library and information software; assisting researchers with literature searches using databases, printed resources and the internet; delivering information and learning skills courses for students and staff; dealing with user enquiries, which may involve one-on-one advice sessions; keeping up to date with relevant professional developments in the library sector; participating in professional groups or networks.

University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) was established in 1965 as a private institution providing only business professional courses including accounting, marketing among others. It was taken over by the government in 1978. It was upgraded to a public university status in 2005 and offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) is now a public university that offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It also provides tuition for internationally recognised, acclaimed business professional programmes. The University provides courses in marketing, accounting, business Administration and banking and finance. UPSA also provides masters programmes in auditing, accounting and finance, marketing and master of science & master of

philosophy in global leadership and corporate governance. Currently, UPSA has a student population of about thirteen thousand (13,000). It is a university which is specialised in mainly business programmes.

The UPSA library has two sections; one is for the undergraduate students and the other for the graduate students. The main library which is for the undergraduates has 200 sitting capacity and the graduate school library has a sitting capacity of 32. The library has a unique collection of a balanced blend of both academic and professional reading and research materials that support the University's mission of producing scholars and professionals. The library also has an electronic support unit that stocks very large volumes of electronic journals, databases as well as electronic books which users access for research purposes.

Among the reference materials available in the Library include: UPSA past examination question papers, CDs, Encyclopedias and world books, dictionaries, Revision kits for professional books and Newsletters. A number of publications from both public and private institutions and individuals can be found in the Library's collection. A collection of dissertations are also in the library for reference only. Some of the services rendered by the library are charging and discharging, reference and research, photocopying, binding, library use orientation and electronic search. The Library is manned by a librarian and assisted by twenty (20) staff consisting of assistant librarians, senior library assistants, library assistants, and junior library assistants (UPSA, hand book, 2014).

Wisconsin International University College, Ghana (WIUC -Gh) is a private university which was established in the year 2002. It has a student population of about eight thousand. The

courses that they offer are Accounting, Management, Computer science, Marketing and Law. They offer courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

WIUC-Gh Library is a two-storey building which has various sections such as reference, serial, circulation, cataloguing, electronic support, as well as law library with sitting capacity of about five hundred (500). It offers individual and collaborative learning space as well as rich print, digital collections and expert research assistance. The library seeks to be the “heart” of the academic and research culture of WIUC-Gh and contributes to the intellectual activities of the University. It acquires and maintains adequate information resources, and offer effective instructions on the retrieval and use of materials in a variety of formats. It also provides a state-of-the-art technology for users in all locations. The library has materials in print format, electronic databases and some CD-ROMs. In addition to the electronic databases, it also subscribes to some hard copy journals locally. The services that the library performs are photocopying, on-line databases, scanning and printing, special library instructions, charging and discharging, reference and research, library use orientation and electronic search. The library is manned by a professional librarian and fourteen (14) library staff comprising assistant librarian, senior library assistants and library assistants.

The professional librarians in WIUC-Gh and UPSA are responsible for developing and managing collections of books and journals (both paper and electronic). They are involved in recruitment selection, disciplinary action and training, as well as allocating daily tasks; maintain relationships with external bodies, such as suppliers. They write monthly reports of activities of the libraries. They attend meetings, write correspondents, memos and respond to them. They are the over all managers of the libraries.

The paraprofessionals in the two universities support the professional librarians. Some of them had first degree and some had diploma as academic qualification. They make sure the patrons get their needed information by providing some intellectual tasks, such as reference service, cataloguing and current awareness service, among others. They also perform supervisory roles as well.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

According to Gallagher (2002), job related stress has become a great concern for organisations today which libraries and indeed library staff are no exceptions. It has been observed that the past decades have witnessed a rapid expansion of higher education in developing countries characterized by increasing student number, introduction of different learning modes such as evening classes, week-ends and expansion of academic programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This rapid expansion in most cases has not been matched with increased funding, staffing levels, or increased infrastructure such as computer laboratories and library resources. Instead, most libraries have experienced and still continue to experience a decline in funding, recruitment of qualified human resources and lack of expansion of infrastructure.

Library and information professionals have multiplicity of roles to perform and this could make the librarians experience fatigue. Librarians develop and maintain portfolio of cost-effective, deal with client-valued information services that are aligned with the strategic directions of the organisation and client groups. They also build dynamic collections of information resources based on deep understanding of clients' information needs. All these are

done in the midst of tight budgetary allocation and limited human resource thereby putting stress on library professionals.

Preliminary investigations conducted by the researcher at University of Professional Studies, Accra, (UPSA) and Wisconsin International University Collection- Ghana (WIUC-Gh) have revealed that both universities have experienced exponential growths in student population as more undergraduate and post-graduate programmes have been introduced lately. All the programmes being run by the universities fall under three categories: regular, evening and weekend programme. The increase in student population as a result of the addition of these programmes and extension of working hours have not been matched with increase in terms of infrastructure, staff recruitment and funding.

Although these situations can serve as factors for increased work-related stress of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals in other developed countries there is no evidence of any empirical studies related to stress of Ghanaian university professional librarians and paraprofessionals. This motivated the researcher to carry out this study with the view of understanding the trend of stress among the university professional librarians and paraprofessionals in UPSA, Accra and WIUC-Gh to fill a void in the literature.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the main stressors that cause stress for the professional librarians and paraprofessionals in UPSA and WIUC-Gh and investigate the coping strategies that they employ to control their stressors with the view of making recommendations to enhance stress coping capabilities for improved service delivery.

**1.4 The study sought to address the following objectives**

1. To find out the perception of stress by the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA and WIUC-Gh.
2. To investigate the major sources of stress among the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh.
3. To find out the effects of stress on professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh.
4. To examine the coping strategies adopted by the professional librarians and Paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh.
5. To suggest feasible solutions to coping strategies in the work of professional Librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh.

**1.5 The research questions are:**

1. What is the perception of stress by the professional librarians and the paraprofessionals at UPSA and WIUC-Gh
2. What are the sources of stress among professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA and WIUC-Gh?
3. What are the effects of stress on professional librarians and paraprofessionals in UPSA and WIUC-Gh?
4. What are the coping strategies that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA and WIUC-Gh use?

## 1.6 Significance of the study

For many reasons, studies on job related stress are relevant. The study will be relevant to the staff and management of UPSA, WIUC-Gh, all public and private university libraries, all professional librarians and paraprofessionals in Ghana.

First, for management of institutions and organisations, this study would help to bring a better understanding of worker-work environment so as to exploit the more positive avenues for higher performance.

Secondly, the literature on stress inducing factors and managing strategies linked to the library profession in Ghana and the world at large are very real. It is hoped that the findings will supplement existing literature on improving and addressing the issue of stress and managing strategies among professional librarians as well as the paraprofessionals in Ghana in particular and the world at large.

Thirdly, to professional librarians and paraprofessionals, job stress may be one of several preventable but dangerous situations and thereby providing possibilities for intervention. Besides, these studies bring to the fore hitherto doubtful sources of mental and physical disorders. Such sources maybe inadequate staffing, work overload, job dissatisfaction, unfavourable working environment, lack of resources and tools to work with, inadequate remuneration among others.

The study will serve as a source of reference for researchers in the field. Besides, the findings would help governments, non-governmental organisations and stakeholders of libraries and

other organisations to draw plans and policies for addressing issues of stress and managing strategies among workers in Ghana and the world at large.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation of study**

This study is limited to two universities (one public and one private). This limitation has the tendency to affect the effective and reliable generalisation of the findings since the study could not cover the views of all other professional librarians and paraprofessionals in other public and private universities scattered all over the country. Secondly, due to the opinion about psychological research and the fact that the interview method was employed, there is the possibility that some interviewees might try to hide their true views on the subject, thus constituting some bias.

### **1.8 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the Bio-Psychosocial Model of Stress Theory by Bernard & Krupak (1994). The Bio-psychological Model of Stress Theory offers a realistic explanation of the complicated nature of stress in relation to the inner-relationship between the internal and external world of individuals. The model revealed that psychological processes are of fundamental importance with respect to how an individual reacts to an event or situation. A person's reaction to an incident is due to his perceptions of it and his perceived abilities to deal with it than the situation itself (Bernard & Krupak, 1994).

The situation according to the theory can be considered as a possible 'trigger' to activate the stress response but not necessarily the main cause of its activation. Once the event has passed, the individual may remain disturbed about it due to the action or interaction of different

modalities. For example, a person suffering from a ‘chronic’ form of stress known as post-traumatic stress disorder may frequently see negative descriptions of the event, may have undesirable cognition, physiological symptoms of severe nervousness, and may avoid anything that reminds him of the event. The multi-modal, transactional model or biopsychosocial model has been broken down into five discrete stages (Bernard & Krupat, 1994).

### **Stage one**

Stage one where according to the theorists, pressure is usually perceived by the individuals to be originating from an external source in the environment, for example, having to meet a deadline, having to meet day-to-day physiological and psychological needs or demands in order to survive, such as food. On the part of the professional librarians and paraprofessional of UPSA and WIUC-Gh library staff, this stage will be to perceive the individual patrons requests, management requests, and deadlines etc. as a pressure (Bernard & Krupat, 1994).

### **Stage two**

According to the model, stage two reflects the person’s perception of the pressure or demand and his assessment of his or her ability to deal with it. If the person perceives that he can cope, even if he is being impractical, then he may stay in the situation. If the person perceives that he cannot cope, then at that instant, that person may experience stress (Bernard & Krupat, 1994).

### **Stage three**

This stage is where psycho-physiological changes occur according to the model. These comprise what is normally known as ‘stress response’. There is usually an emotion or

combination of emotions such as anxiety, anger and guilt. These emotions may have behavioral, sensory, cognitive, interpersonal, biological and physiological response (Bernard & Krupat, 1994).

#### **Stage four**

This stage relates to the consequences of the application of the managing strategies or responses of the person (Bernard & Krupat, 1994). Consequently, if an individual believes that his strategy is not helping, he may see himself as failing, which in itself, becomes an additional stress in the situation.

#### **Stage five**

Stage five of the model is concerned with the feedback system. It claims that, a person may either lessen or amend the external and internal pressures. If this occurs, then, the person may return to neutral state of equilibrium. However, if the strategy is ineffective, then the person may experience persistent stress. This has many psycho-physiological consequences, which may even lead to mental breakdown or in extreme cases leads to death. This may be due to the prolonged effect of the stress hormones, adrenaline, or adrenaline and cortisol, on the body (Bernard & Krupat, 1994). Professional librarians and paraprofessionals in UPSA and WIUC-Gh who experience prolonged stress may be at risk of health hazards if proper managing strategies are not employed.

Looking at the above explanation of the Bio-Psychosocial Model of Stress, it is clear that stress can have very far reaching personal effect on the library professionals and an equally negative effect on their productivity and health in that higher and prolonged the stress, the

more devastating its consequences can be on the person and the society at large. This calls for appropriate ways of dealing with stress.

Coping, according to Lazarus (1974), can be classified as problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. The problem-focused coping according to Lazarus, is a cognitive strategy of squarely facing one's troubles and trying to solve them. Emotion-focused coping on the other hand involves responding to stress in an emotional manner, especially using defensive appraisal. A typical pattern in emotion-focused coping is to avoid something and then to rationalise what has happened, deny it is occurring, laugh it off, or call on religious faith support. Active cognitive strategy involves coping strategies or response in which individuals actively think about a situation in an effort to adjust more effectively, thus analysing the situation well before acting. Active-behavioral strategies are coping responses in which individuals take some type of action to improve their problem situation. These two may be equated to which Lazarus referred to as problems-focused coping. The avoidance coping strategies consist of responses that individual used to keep stressful circumstances out of awareness so they do not have to deal with them. This can be extremely harmful to the individual's adjustment to stress especially when they are used for more than a brief relief of experiencing stress. To add to the above, other ways of coping with stress exist which do not fall under the categories stated above.

Confrontative coping is one, which refers to making aggressive efforts to alter the stressful situation. Again, self-control refers to efforts put in by an individual to regulate one's own feelings and actions during stress. Seeking social support being a form of coping strategy involves efforts of an individual in stress to seek feedback and emotional support from others

to help better adjust to the situation. Accepting responsibility involves acknowledging one's own role in the problem and is also a way of coping with stress. Finally, positive reappraisal, which is also a way of coping, describes efforts to create positive meaning of stressful situation by focusing on personal growth. Whatever the form of coping, an individual's ability to cope effectively with stress is paramount to health. This therefore calls for the use of appropriate ways of coping with stress by all.

### **1.9 Definition of Terms**

- Stress - A state of psychological and/or physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and/or motivation to meet those demands.
- Coping - In this study, expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict.
- Patrons/ clientele - People who use the library.
- Paraprofessionals - They are involved in all library operations at all levels. They manage libraries, contribute very specialised expertise in some specific field, engage in routine activities or supervise and direct other staff. They may hold either diploma or first degree in librarianship.
- Professional librarian - A librarian is a person who works professionally in a library, and hold a master degree in librarianship (known either as library science or library and information science).

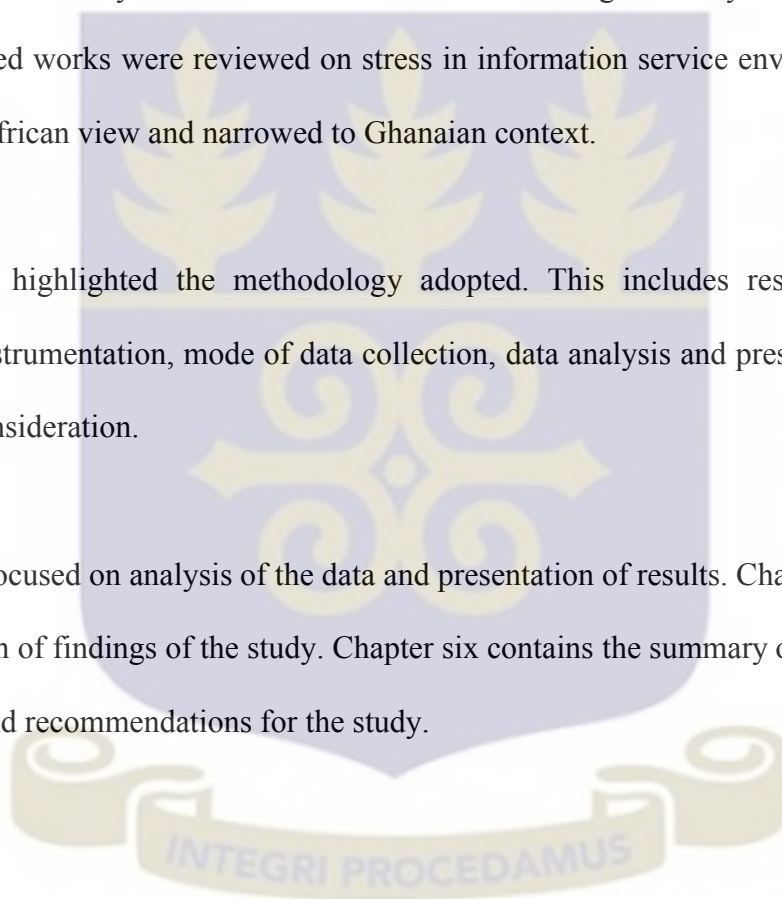
### **1.10 Organisation of chapters**

The study was organised into six chapters. Chapter one is organized under the headings: background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, theoretical framework and organisation of chapters.

Chapter two of the study reviewed relevant literature covering the study. Here both published and unpublished works were reviewed on stress in information service environment from the world view, African view and narrowed to Ghanaian context.

Chapter three highlighted the methodology adopted. This includes research design, the population, instrumentation, mode of data collection, data analysis and presentation of results and ethical consideration.

Chapter four focused on analysis of the data and presentation of results. Chapter five dealt with discussion of findings of the study. Chapter six contains the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for the study.



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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter of the study reviewed related works that contributors have written on the subject. Literature review is a text of a scholarly paper, which includes the current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. It uses secondary sources, and does not report new or original experimental work (Baglione, 2012). Its main goals are to situate the current study within the body of literature and to provide context for the particular reader. Literature reviews are a basis for research in nearly every academic field (Lamp, 2013). The literature review for the study was organised under the following broad themes: meaning of stress, sources of stress, effects of stress, managing stress, and stress in workplace and stress in the academic library environment.

#### **2.1 Stress defined**

The term ‘stress’ is used in a variety of ways; It is often used synonymously with pressure. Understanding of stress has developed from both medical and psychological research. Originally it was viewed from an engineering perspective and seen as an external force on the person giving rise to strain and finally permanent damage. The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Seyle (1956). The term “stress” is applied to the total transaction between the stressor and coping resources in the interaction together, over time, so that one may speak of system being “under stress”. He defined stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand. Coffey and Cook (1998) see stress as the body’s change

that prepares a person to cope with a threatening environmental conditions either by dealing with it (fight) or by avoiding (flight) it.

Bunge (1987) defined stress as a person's psychological and physiological response to the perception of a demand or challenge. He further states that “stress has a number of important elements. First, stress is not something that is out there. It is within the person”. Second, is the perception of how one thinks about the situation, and the third is how the person copes with the stress. When the person's coping strategies are out of control, the person is “burned out”. Occupational stress, according to Ross & Altmaier (1994) is the interaction of the work conditions with characteristics of the worker such that the demands of the work exceed the ability of the worker to cope. Stress according to Mullins (2007) is defined as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important.

Stress is also defined as “continuous process that involves individual transacting with their environments, making appraisals of the situations they find themselves in, and endeavouring to cope with any issues that may arise (Fletcher, 2006). Fletcher (2006) explained that stress represents a situation where a person is under pressure and does not have sufficient ability to cope with it. Fletcher (2006) explained further that stress indicates a direct negative reaction both, for individual and organisation by undermining the original goals attainment. Cole (2002) defined stress as the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of their being unable to cope with the demands being made on them. According to Warner (1996) stress is the physiological and psychological reaction which

occurs when individuals meet a treat or challenge and the individual's perception, whether consciously or unconsciously, that is beyond their immediate capacity. This definition emphasises the interaction of demand on the job and the influence it has on the individual as well as individual reaction to these demands. Stress can be viewed as a reaction to an external or demand while anything physically or mentally demanding or burdensome can create stressful condition, this does not necessarily mean that it occurs' for this to happen the situation must have sufficient impact on the person to attract his or her attention, perhaps because it evokes feelings of disappointment, annoyance, anger or simply because the individual feels the situation should not exist. Early work on stress focused on explaining the nature of stress. It was originally perceived as an external force.

Nelson and Quick (2006) expressed their view by saying that stress is one of the most ambiguous words in the English language with as many interpretations as there are people who use the word, to them, stress has a variety of meanings, to them "stress is the unconscious preparation to fight or feel that a person experience when faced with any demand". Helpguide organisation (2010) defined stress as a normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way. When one sense danger, whether it's real or imagined, the body's defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the "fight-or-flight-or-freeze" reaction, or the stress response.

Gannett health services (2010) defined stress as internal response to external events. In other words, stress is what our bodies and minds experience as we adapt to a continually changing environment. The response can be triggered by a positive experience such as falling in love or passing an exam with flying colours, or by negative experiences such as those pesky daily

hassles, a disappointment, an unexpected loss or a traumatic event. Job stress is a condition arising from interaction of people and their jobs and characterised by changes within the people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. This definition is best conceptualised by viewing the body and the mind of an individual in a state of equilibrium. As a result of a stressor, that equilibrium is disrupted, and the individual functions differently in addressing various situations while in this state of disequilibrium (Beehr & Newman, 1978).

## **2.2 Sources of stress**

Agents that cause stress are known as stressors. Lazarus & Cohen (1997), Auerbach & Gamling (1998) and many other authors have classified stressors into three main categories, namely: cataclysmic events such as natural disasters, for example, wars, fires, floods and hurricanes, earthquakes, automobile accidents as well as violent physical attacks and sexual assaults (Robbins, Powers & Burgess, 1997; Proulx, 1993). The second category is the personal stressors such as the death of a loved one (Potter & Perry et al, 2003; Lehman, Wortman & Williams, 1987; Parkes, 1972) or the losses of one's job (Dooley, Rook & Catalano, 1987; Robbins, Powers & Burgess, 1997). The last category of the stressors is the background stressors. These include events such as daily hassles (Robbins, Powers and Burgess, 1997; Rotton, 1990; Lazarus et al, 1985; Zika & Chamberlian, 1987). Having too much work to do, not having resources to work with, not having enough sleep and money difficulties were the most frequently reported hassles. Traffic congestion, rude people or machines that just cannot work when you want them to, these are all stressful.

Psychologists have propounded a number of sources of stress to include: work overload, crowding, unfavourable working conditions, role conflicts, pressure, life event and daily hassles, role ambiguity, unpleasant social relationships, personality type, career prospects, social support, responsibilities, and so on. For example the inability to satisfy social relationships at work have been tied to job stress (Larocco, House & French, 1980). Perceived inadequate career development can also be a major source of job stress. Work pressure can also be major source of stress (Brook & Muller).

Major sources of stress at work place are numerous. According to Stoner & Fry (1983), job mismatch could be a potential source of stress at work place. They explained that job demands; skill and ability that employees do not possess (job competence) could be the major source of stress. Also if the job does not provide opportunity for employees to fully utilise their skills or abilities (underutilisation), stress sets in. Secondly, conflict expectations can also result in stress. This arises when the formal organisational concept of expected behavior contradicts the employee concept of expected behaviour. Another source of stress identified by Stoner & Fry (1983) is the role ambiguity; employees are uncertain or unclear as to how to perform on the job. The situation where employees are unclear or uncertain about their relationship between job performance and expected consequence (reward, penalty, and so forth) also causes a lot of stress to employees.

Another source of work stress identified by Stoner & Fry (1983) is the work role overload. That is the situation where employees are asked to do more than they are permitted. In this case, the employee might put in all their effort yet might not be able to achieve the expected results. In addition, fear of responsibility is another source of stress at work place. According to Stoner

& Fry (1983), employees are afraid of performing poorly or failing. They feel pressured for high achievement and sometimes also, feel they have responsibility for other people. In addition to these; Stoner & Fry (1983) also identified working conditions as another source of stress. That is, the unpleasant of job environment, for example, inadequacy of lighting or improper regulation of temperature and noise. Also the job requirement might be energy demanding, unnecessarily high, producing pacing problems, social isolation and so forth. Finally, machine designs and maintenance procedure creates pressure as well as job involving long or erratic work hours.

### **2.3 Effects of stress**

According to Kinman (1998) stress manifests itself among employees in several ways. Some of these are: increased absenteeism, job turnover, lower productivity and mistakes on the job. In addition, they pointed out that excessive stress can result in both physical and emotional problems. There is documentary evidence which has far reaching negative consequence in terms of stress related diseases. Travers & Cooper (1993) observed that stress related diseases “cost the average UK company ten thousand (10,000) employees, seventy-three thousand (73,000) working days lost, and death of forty two (42) of its employees each year (between thirty five (35) and sixty five (65) year old) and lost production of over 2.5 million annually”. The cost of stress to organisation in the form of absenteeism, medical expenses and cost of productivity has been estimated to fifty to seventy-five billion dollars per year, or (seven hundred and fifty dollars)750 dollars per employee according to Farish (1987) cited by Acquaye et.al (2012). Persistent high stress levels are dangerous for several reasons. First, the subtle change they make in life and work profile can go unnoticed by the individual affected. Second, the relentless nature of stress may prevent normal adjustment; and individuals may

simply never have the opportunity to decompress and give their mind the chance to unwind. Thirdly, unrelenting stress may damage the body or mind little by little, with age and bodily wear and tear, the nervous system breaks down or the heart fails (Quick & Quick, 1984).

McGrath (1976) study on “Stress and behavior in organisations in Chicago”, as stated by Ndego, Asante, & Arhin (2011), found a reworking of relationship through his process model. This model contends that employees run into organisational situations causing them to appraise the conditions and make a decision about the nature of their response. The response in turn impacts the original situation, altering it in the process. A negative perception about the situation indicates the presence of a stressor, and possibly results in a negative behaviour, for example, lower effort. From the psychological perspective, inordinate and prolonged stress can adversely affect personal factors such as motivation, moral, and the ability to relate to others. All these factors are major contributors to effective work output at work place.

Mustapha (1987) observed that with rapid industrialization and urbanisation, most developing countries, such as Ghana, face the problem of adaptation to living and working conditions that come in attendance. To him, it is a fact that very few investigations have been done on the psychological factors at work and their effect on workers and their productivity in developing countries causing stress to the individual with its effect on low productivity. Boadu (1998) pointed out that work-related stress is recognised as a major productivity hazard. He noted that there are significant amounts of six hundred thousand deaths per year from heart attacks. Several million Ghanaians have some form of heart and blood vessel disease, hypertension, etc which may be linked with job related stress and burnout. According to him a United Nations report entitled “job stress, a global phenomenon” records that stress has become one of

the most serious health issues in the contemporary world and its presence in the work place is real (Awake March 22, 1998). The national academy of science institution of medicine noted that, stress was the leading causes of serious illness and death in the united state of America.

Based on similar study conducted in United Kingdom, researchers believed that 50% of the annual 360 working days are lost due to stress as cited by Ndegoet. al. (2011). According to them, Rosch (1994) reports that 60-80% of accidents can be attributed to suggestion that stress contributes to poor organisational performance not just through the costs of poor decisions made by employees under stress but also through the loss of innovative ideas that may have emerged in a relatively lower stress environment.

#### **2.4 How organisations and employees manage stress**

Every organisation or institution be it public or private must have measures in place to control and manage stress because it is inevitable and part and parcel of the work force. The employers must do that because of the legal and social responsibility to provide a good quality of working life. Excessive stress can result in all forms of illness which can have adverse effect on productivity. Stress can also result in inability to cope with demands of the job which can reduce employee effectiveness and therefore organisational performance (Armstrong, 2007).

According to Folkman (1984), coping is the process of managing external and internal demands that are perceived as taxing or exceeding person's resources. Simply put, the efforts to control, reduce, or learn to tolerate the threats that lead to stress is known as coping. To her, specifically, coping strategies fall into two categories namely emotion-focused coping and

problem-focused coping. Emotion coping is characterised by the conscious regulation of emotions. Examples of problem focused coping include such strategies as accepting sympathy from others looking at the bright side of the situation.

In contrast, problem-focused coping attempts to manage the stressful situation or stimulus. A problem-focused strategy turns to get the person who is experiencing stress to change his or her behaviour, or to develop a plan of action to deal with the stress (Millers, Brody, & Summerton, 1988). In most stressful incidents, people employ both emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies. However, they use emotion-focused strategy more frequently when they perceive circumstances as being unchangeable and problem-focused often in situations they see as relatively modifiable (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1988).

Canon (1929) was the earliest psychologist to propose a mechanism on coping strategy of stress in organisational set-up. He propounded a fight or flight response theory as an approach to managing stress. According to him, stress victims either gather the available psychological or social resources that they have at their disposal to fight the threat or submit to the stressors demanding effects. When victims fail to resist these stressors, they may freeze or become agitated and flee in panic. In extreme cases, some may ultimately grip death as the solution to elude the consequence of stress.

Ivancevich (1984) defined coping as “problem solving effort made by the individual faced with situations that are highly relevant to his welfare”. Ivancevich (1984) proposed a heuristic approach that encompassed three stress-management interventions. These are those that attempt to change the degree of stress potential situation by reducing the number of intensity

of stress present: those that help the individual modify their appraisal of potentially stressful situations and those that help the victim cope more effectively with the consequence of stress.

Khan (1981) has offered a blue print for change in job or occupational stress. He suggested that first, physical work stressors such as noise, crowding or temperature extreme should be reduced as much as possible. Second, an effort in minimising unpredictability and ambiguity in expected task and standards of performance reduces stress. Third, involving workers as much as possible in the decision that affects their work life reduces stress.

## **2.5 Stress in workplace**

Nekzada & Tekeste (2013) in trying to have clear understanding of the causes of stress at a multinational company such as Volvo Trucks AB Umeå, and how Stress by the employees are personally managed, and the strategies that the company has put in place in order to management the employees stressors. Qualitative approach, with a descriptive and exploratory case study approach was used for the study. The data used were collected through conducting semi-structured interviews with 6 different employees from Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå one of whom works as a therapist at the company. It was found out that causes of stress at the work place range from personal problems to work overload, physical working environment, work situation and conflicts among colleagues and managers.

They observed that many employees struggle with stress, in worst cases leading to uncertainties and severe impairments on health and performance. The main situations that generate stress according to the study are likely uncontrollable, unpredictable, and some are

not known. But alternatively there are several resources available which can help the employees to manage their stressors such as personal awareness in coping skills, time management, assertiveness and ways to higher up self-confidence. They detected that stress is related between the employee and the employer as the performance of the employee is affected by his/her stress level which intern affects the company's productivity. Therefore, stress management is Vital for both employees and the company. The most successful stress management mechanisms found was time management, sharing of feelings and leisure activities. However, Management can also utilize some resources for reducing the stress level of the employees by providing services and facilities such as health facilities at the company, giving easy and on time access to therapist and also having free time activities and entertainment.

In Kinman (1998) study on impact on stress, he expressed the fact that in UK the impact of work-place stress is not inherently bad nor necessarily too destructive but it is obvious that this can not be compared with the African situation in which the condition and work environment is incomparably worse to that of UK. His observation and view was that work-place stress can have a wide ranging and negative impact on the well-being of the individual and his or her day-to-day functioning is true of work-place in many African countries. He observed at physical level (e.g. exhaustion, headaches, high blood pressure), at psychological level (e.g. depression, anxiety, low self –esteem), at cognitive level (e.g. absent mindedness, failure of attention and memory), and at behavioral level (e.g. absenteeism, substance abuse, aggressive behavior, usage of abusive language, low work output etc.). This directly or indirectly always leads to organisational lower output or turn-out and ineffectiveness. He then

concluded by observing that it has been suggested that occupational stress is now considered to be amongst the top five work-related health problems in the United State of America. This may not be far from being the same in Nigeria, and library and information profession is now becoming a high risk one. Thus a quick understanding of the stress factors and timely work related clinical trial is desired.

Acquaye.et.al. (2012) observed that job security, job being hectic and demands from superiors at the workplace were the predominant cause of work stress in Ghana Civil Aviation Authority. The nature of job performed by the employees is administrative and technical. The extent of stress on the employees was measured by using Five-point Likert Scale. Hundred copies of questionnaire were obtained out of three hundred and forty-three (343). The data gathered were analysed using chi-square analysis. It was revealed that job stress level is high and it affects the overall performance of the employee. Sleep, leisure and stress reaction education are the most used practice to manage the stress of the employees of Ghana Civil Aviation Authority.

Osei-Adu (2008) examined sources of stress and coping mechanisms among workers of Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) at the headquarters in Accra, Ghana. A sample of 56 participants comprising males and females of the entire work force at the PRAAD headquarters in Accra were considered for the study. The standard questionnaire used was adopted from the works of Baron (1982) on stress inventory as well as coping inventory from Folkman and Lazarus (1981). Five objectives were analysed and tested using t-test, two-way analysis of variance. From the study, both male and female staff of

PRAAD were found to experience some level of stress, but the study indicated that females were better copers of stress than their male counterparts. Also, the older and the young, the married and unmarried are prone to stressful events.

However, the findings of the study also revealed that the highly educated records staff of PRAAD experienced lower stress levels compared to their counterparts who were highly educated. Generally, all workers of PRAAD face some level of stress. The study recommended that the management of PRAAD should take steps to reduce stress inducing factors, adopt performance-based rewards systems for promotion and recognition, and encourage staff to pursue higher education. They should also provide for some degree of flexibility in the work structure and system. Finally, management should institute programmes to ascertain staff problems and establish a network of friends for staff to curb job isolation.

## **2.6 Stress in information service environment**

The academic library, despite being the exciting center for research and student development, is not immune to employee stress. In fact, academic librarians, paraprofessional staff and administrators are all susceptible to experiencing the effects of stress and burnout because of the nature of academia, the stress of providing customer service to students and the pressures of promotion and tenure requirements.

The very nature of library work predisposes the library professionals to stress. A normal library workday can be described as a continuous round of interruptions. When demand for the services of the professional rolls in, for example, reference questions, the staff must set aside whatever he or she was working on and try to satisfy the clientele. This constant

interruption affects the flow of concentration of the staff and makes it difficult for them to complete their task. The repetitive nature of library work induces monotony; boredom can easily set in by doing things over and over again (Baird & Baird, 2005).

Caputo (1991) identifies many work-related stressors that are highly correlated with job stress and burnout. Stressors include: budget cuts, the quick response time to reference questions, censorship issues, heavy workloads, the overload of clerical duties, poor management and supervision, technology-related problems, the lack of time for (or no voice in) collection development duties, the lack of closure for ongoing projects, a shift in priorities, low pay, obnoxious public/patrons and few opportunities for advancement are all reasons that librarians have cited for their stressful workplace.

Burge's (1987) study provides the result from his stress management workshops using group interview to collect data from people participating in the workshop from different kinds of libraries, as well as people holding different positions in the libraries. His findings revealed that different groups of librarians often had similar feelings regarding job satisfaction and stress. He went further to reveal that cataloguers for example expressed that they did not get recognition for their efforts, but instead received complaints regarding subject headings that were not useful and that processing was not done quickly enough.

Jayaprakash, Rekha, & Rajendiran (2013) in their work on “Work Stress among Library professionals in General”, identified the work stress among library professionals employed in various institutions in and around India. The frequency of age group of respondents in respect of this research study was tabulated. It was found out that, out of 19 respondents, the maximum number of respondents pertaining to the age group is between 30-39 years (52.63%). It is highlighted that 78.94% of respondents are Grade-I Librarians. The study highlights the result that maximum numbers of library professionals are experiencing the stress factors such as either mental, physical, both or none. They concluded that, stress is not an illness in itself, but rather the term given to a maladaptive response to pressure. Thus the word stress may be used as an umbrella term covering all of an employee’s physical and emotional problems. Despite their steadfastly conservative image, there is no reason to suppose that librarians are less susceptible to such problems than other professionals. They recommended that work stress could be minimised by coping strategies such as integrating new skills into professional responsibility, effective communication within the environment, giving close attention to physical health, acquiring technological skills continuously and thereby lead to increased feelings of confidence and competence, attending yoga classes and doing regular exercises to reduce stress.

Lemu (2007) studied stress management by library and information science professionals in Nigerian university libraries. He observed that job stress is an uncomfortable condition resulting from a person's interpretation to threatening events or circumstances. Stress exists in almost every working and living environments. The study used survey method of research and selected samples from professional librarians working in Nigerian university libraries. It was established by the study that, stress in Nigerian university libraries is a reality. But the study

has not been able to establish any serious consequences of stress on the job performance of the librarians. The study concluded that stress in Nigerian university libraries is the byproduct of the difficulties encountered by the librarians in performing their duties and responsibilities. However, to reduce stress, the work processes in library should be made simple and easy to handle. Library management should support the librarians by designing work processes that could help the librarians to overcome their frustrations and stress.

Shaughnessy (1998) writing on job stress / plateauing / professional isolation / balance, identified that funding for education and cultural institutions has declined in many states as the costs of health care, public safety, and transportation have consumed most of the dollars available which have caused stress on the job. He cited Minnesota as an example that, the budget squeeze has caused the elimination of many professional positions in school libraries and media centers as well as in some public libraries. He confirmed that US still leads the world in spending for libraries, he said US is eighth in the world when library spending is calculated as a percentage of a country's GDP.

Shaughnessy (1998) in a similar study observed that stress is also increased when work is so routine and mind-numbing. He found that Studs Terkel in his 1985 book, "Working", describes this type of work as "a Monday through Friday sort of dying." Work can become so fragmented that staff are unable to grasp how their work contributes to the library's goals and effectiveness. Yet this is a critical dimension for the purpose of one's work is what gives work its meaning, and meaning is the key to motivation.

Also, sharing his thought on professional isolation in relation to stress, Shaughnessy (1998) pointed out that a feeling of isolation, of being without a peer support group, is sometimes found among people in any profession. A study of physicians practicing in rural Australia found that many were experiencing professional isolation brought on in large measure by the vast spaces separating them. But librarians can also feel such isolation arising from the very specialized work that they do, for example, the archivists who work in library settings and believe that "no one understands the important work that they do." Other examples of isolation might include the branch library with one or two staff members where the librarian may sometimes feel that he or she is chained to the service desk.

Ajala (2011) studied work- related stress among librarians and information professionals in a Nigerian university. The Kenneth Dike Library of University of Ibadan was studied. The purpose of the study was to identify the perceived area and causes of stress among librarians of University of Ibadan. Also, to find out how these librarians are managing their stress and then identify the support system available. He employed the use of group interview in his study. This was found to be appropriate because of the interactive and transactional nature of the individual and the factor of stress. In this study, because of the anthropological approach of study adopted, qualitative method of data collection was used while group and personal interview was employed as data collection instrument. Some of the questions posed to the group and individuals interviewed were base on the following headings: demographic information of respondents, working environment, personal or internal factors, home-work interface, professional and academic demand, management problem, job security, job satisfaction and coping Strategy.

Two groups randomly constituted from the main and faculty libraries in the main campus and eighty (80) library staff were randomly interviewed. The eighty library staff comprised of about 20 academic staff and 60 non-academic staff of the library, located in the main and faculty libraries in the main campus. Gender and status of the sample interviewed were also carefully considered in the choice of the sample so as to have the feelings from every gender and cadres of staff. Because the study was conducted in the same campus it was easier to carry out the interview among the groups and individuals. In order to extract the mind of the sample used and for the richness of the data collected, each interview was given a good time. The analysis of the data collected was purely descriptive.

It was noticed that more education reduces the stress level of library workers. The more they are educated the more they are able to deal with their stress factors; and the easier for them to develop effect coping strategies. On work environment stress they perceived in their work-place, the respondents declared that there are inadequate working tools and resources. A group declared inadequate number of staff in their unit despite the fact that their unit deal directly with the users. This they declared leads to work overload for them.

Other stress factors declared in the work environment include ergonomic problem i.e. poor design of instrument used in the work-place affecting their physical health e.g. some data entry staff complain of development of eye problem because of constantly facing the computer screen; developing continuous pain in the neck due to carriage of books from 1st floor to the 4th floor by the circulation staff; poor job incentives or rewards; interaction with other staff i.e. dealing with conservative or bullying colleague and usage of harsh or abusive language.

Concerning home-work interface some individual declared that at times home problems and demands erode with their work-place demands causing stress. Some mention the problem of widowhood among the library staff. Some professionals, especially the academic staff expressed the stress imposed on them in the process of fulfilling the professional demand in giving services and at the same time fulfilling the publication demand as a criterion for promotion. However, it was observed that no librarian in the Ibadan University library System exercises any fear about the security of their job.

Concerning job satisfaction, most of the staff interviewed show that they had some level of job satisfaction. Most of the staff interviewed on problems concerning management declared that there is no communication problem between the management and the staff though some complained that they have no say in the management of the library. This comprised of very few top senior officers of the library and they expressed that this may be stressful when they want to air their view about the smooth running of the library. From the above findings it is glaring that better stress management with the ever changing library job situation must involve both the individual workers and the organisational effort. He therefore recommended that the individual library and information workers role in avoiding and managing their stress is very important; this will involve three important approaches: identifying the stress, evaluating the stress and then managing the stress.

In the face of the situation in the library and information profession, it can be suggested that the best approach to manage the work-place stress in the library is to reduce its effect and to avoid possible stress factor completely as much as possible. These can be achieved by:

changing your perception and beliefs as a librarian about the profession and its stress area. It is logical to note that if the nature, practice and role in a profession are always changing, its stress area will be changing also. It is therefore good to constitute a positive perception and beliefs about the stress area in librarianship. While you are honest and objective with yourself, it is helpful to perceive your problems in the library to be challenges which are always never last. However these challenges should neither be ignored nor glossed over.

It is also good for librarians to learn to always control their emotional reaction to stress area in librarianship. Emotion can be geared up when conflicting issues like viewing stressors in exaggerated terms, taking difficult stand, making issue a disaster, pleasing everyone, reacting to things viewed as absolutely critical and urgent etc. In such situation, emotion and stress can be perfectly controlled by adopting moderate views, always taking the simplest stand possible, always ready for disaster management, knowing that it is not realistic to always please everyone, putting some situation in perspective and tempering excess emotion, not allowing exaggerations. These can form very strong stress coping resources, as explained by Lazarus Model in 1978.

Again, Ajala (2011) pointed out that it is important in the library to supply the resources that can reduce or completely remove the stress factors in librarianship, create a conducive stress-free working environment around yourself as much as it lies within your power, while physical working infrastructure and professional training plays a major role in this area. Another way to do this is to mix leisure with work.

Farler & Broadly-Preston's (2012) study on "Workplace stress in libraries aimed to analyse the results of a case study conducted in 2008/ 2009 investigating work place in a further education college library service. The results from the questionnaire and a series of semi-structured interviews held with the library staff when analysed revealed that librarians interaction with students could be stressful or enjoyable depending on context. The need to control noise levels, modify students behaviour and balance the needs of different user groups are cited as stressors. The results also show that the library staff exhibited a degree of humour and self-awareness in their work and employ a range of methods to cope with stress.

Pradeepa's (2012) study on "work-related stress among the university librarians of Sri Lanka" found out that Sri Lankan university sector is changing rapidly as a result of educational reforms and the government's emphasis on a knowledge economy. As a consequence, the work environments of the university librarians are also changing. Although this environment could serve as a factor for increased work-related stress of the Librarians there is no evidence of any empirical studies related to stress of Sri Lankan university librarians. This study was carried out with the objective of understanding the trend of stress among the university librarians and to fill a void in the literature. This study was limited only to the University Librarians who were the Heads of the Libraries but not the other librarians below the rank of University Librarians.

To suit the Sri Lankan needs a 95 item instrument which measured the stress level under employment, professional, administrative and health was designed based upon CAUT Survey (Catano, 2011). Total stress levels vary from Librarian to Librarian but five could be grouped into Medium Stress category with two in the High Stress category. Of the four domain

surveyed, Physical Domain proved to be the least stressful domain while the Administrative Domain proved to be the highest stressful. Based on the previous studies researchers have discovered that performance improved with increased stress to an optimal point. Studies have also proved resilient people found a stressful event intriguing and challenging. Considering these findings it was recommended that no initiative should be taken to reduce the current stress levels of the Sri Lankan University Librarians so that their stress factors are considered as a challenge and transformed into positive outcomes.

Ferkol (1998) reported the study of Schneider in 1991 on stress and job satisfaction by comparing people working in public services with those working in technical services in large public library system. The study was conducted because of the growing concerns of the employees working at the library; there were no enough employees to handle the work load and it appeared that this was having a harmful effect on the workers health (Schneider 1991). The findings from the study revealed that apart from too much load of work affecting the health of workers, there were more factors bringing greater stress on the workers like poor funding which definitely leads to poor availability of resources, management's poor communication with workers, failure to allow workers to participate in decision making and poor work environment.

A study by Akakandelwa & Jain (2013) on perceived work related stress among library staff in two academic libraries in Southern Africa sought to explore and compare the current levels of job stress among academic library staff at the University of Botswana and the University of Zambia. The accessible population consisted of 19 library staff at University of Botswana and 25 library staff at the University of Zambia. The purpose of that study was to present the

identified perceived sources and levels of job stress among the librarians at the two universities. The study used a survey method with the questionnaire as the main data collection instrument. Two groups randomly constituted from both universities in the main campuses were purposively selected using non-probability sampling. Gender and status of the sample selected were also carefully considered in the choice of the sample so as to have the perceptions from every gender and category of staff.

The main hypothesis of the study was that there is no significant difference in job stress experienced by library staff in the two African universities. From the findings, it was concluded that library staff at the University of Botswana and University of Zambia were not in an overall state of stress compared with norm data. However, salary-related issues were found to be the highest source of stress among both library staff sampled followed by workload related issues. Low stress items among library staff fell into two broad categories namely conflict-related and management-related items.

Topper (2007) conducted a study on “Stress in the library workplace” which was aimed to help people understand the impact that stress has on library employees and the library as an organisation. She based his article on literature reviews and commentary on this important topic that is not frequently addressed in the library as workplace. She found out that library workers were under stress and the library as an organisation needs to provide training in how to deal with this issue. Strategies for reducing stress were outlined. She identified stress in the library workplace and the importance of stress on employees and will be of interest to those that work within that field. She indicated that Librarians relationships with library patrons are an obvious source of stress for public service staff.

Again, Topper (2007) believed that within the library there is the stress between departments and personalities within the library – not to mention between professionals and non-professionals and public and technical services staff. Topper (2007) cited Bunge also stating that, another set of perceptions that appeared on list of stressors for library staff members was that of “inadequacies in supervision and management”. She supposed that, looking at the physical space of the library, there is the stress of not having adequate work space. Topper (2007) observed that generally, the best space is reserved for the library patrons. She recommended some strategies to manage the stress. They are as follows: seek more information about the situation – information provides one with control of a situation, try to reduce stress by expressing feelings to an uninvolved person. Build your support system outside the workplace, increase your physical exercise to have a greater feeling of wellbeing, try to lighten or brighten the environment by bringing pictures, flowers or food to the workplace, step away from the workspace to have a break or lunch or even take a walk to refresh your mind and search for a philosophical or spiritual meaning in the stressful experience. “What meaning does this experience have in my life?”

Topper (2007) concluded by saying that the library will continue to be a workplace of stress for library employees. Managing one’s stress is a balancing act. However, with practice and planning one can learn to handle stressful situations by learning how to identify stress and developing strategies to deal with them. She recommended that the library as employer should work with staff to alleviate some of the stress by developing staff training programmes.

According to Huprich (2007), Bunge (1987) stated that each area of the academic library has its own stressors. The top ten sources of stress for public services librarians are patrons, workload, and feelings of inadequacy, lack of positive feedback, non-reference duties, fragmentation, physical environment, scheduling, equipment problems and a lack of resources. The fact that patrons are the main sources of stress is troubling for many new librarians. Academic libraries are service organizations and librarians are taught that they should focus on serving the students and catering to their needs. However, some students can be rude, ungrateful and demanding. Librarians can often be torn between a desire to serve their clients and an aversion to their behaviours.

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Cherniss (1980) cited by Huprich, details this dilemma, which is experienced by many in the service profession: for a new professional working in a public human service agency, clients are a major source of both gratification and strain. They can provide the new professional with the appreciation and confirmation that is solely needed at this point in the career, but

they can also criticize, complain, and question. When clients are motivated and responsive, they can facilitate the helping process and make work more stimulating and fulfilling for the professional. But when the client is resistant or apathetic, the professional's task becomes more difficult and there is a feeling of resentment that the client is not keeping his or her side of the "contract".

In contrast to the public services librarians, technical services librarians report more dissatisfaction with their library peers. Bunge (1987) found that public services librarians are much more likely to report stress from a lack of understanding or appreciation on the campus or in the community, while technical services librarians are more likely to feel stressed by lack of appreciation within the library (especially from public services staff). Technical services librarians serve their peers and provide the framework for the organization of the library by acquisitioning and cataloging materials. Despite their differences, both the public services librarians and the technical services librarians are both engaged in thankless, often tedious work.

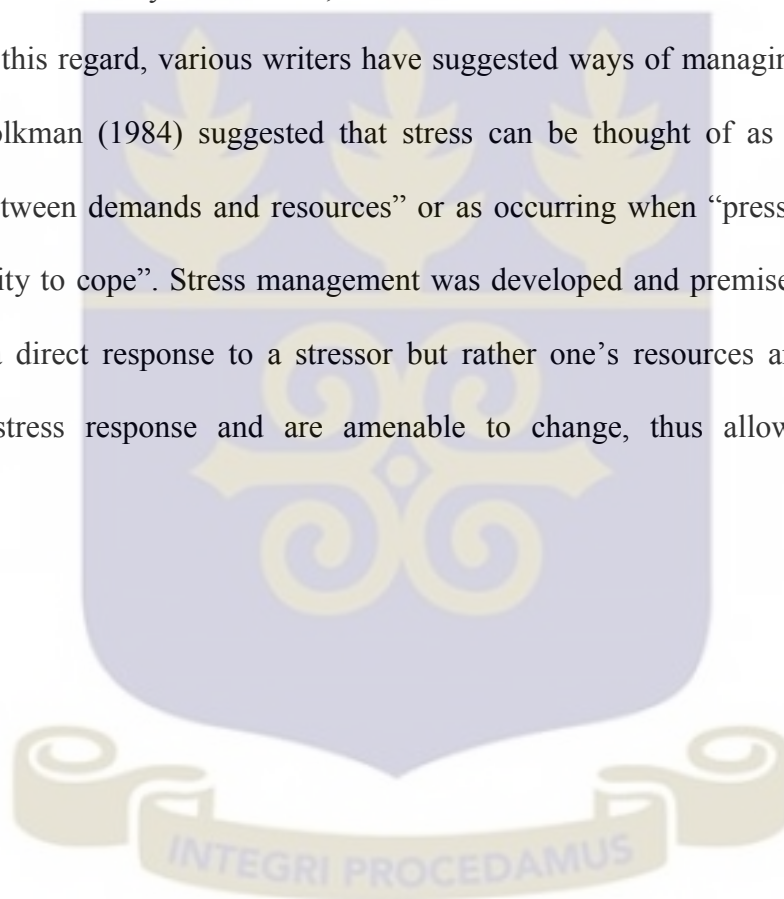
Huprich (2007) & Caputo (1991) identified the following strategies for employers to assist them manage their employees because employees are expensive to replace. He stated that employers should have a properly developed new employee orientation program. Caputo (1991) argues that traditional orientation programs, which immerse the new employee in a round of introductions and training sessions, may leave the employee feeling like a failure because he or she cannot absorb it all.

On the other hand, Caputo (1991) suggests alternating actual tasks with orientation sessions. She says it is important for managers to realistically assess what the new employee can absorb and to understand the level of expertise needed for various assignments. Provide learning opportunities. Caputo (1991) refers to these as “opportunities to grow”. Offering the chance to learn new skills tells employees that you value them and want to invest in their future. Many will be happy to participate if they think it will broaden their marketable skills and lead to advancement. Also, participating in training can be a great way to meet new people, either from their own organisation or other libraries. This, too, makes employees feel more valued and can help forestall burnout. Huprich (1991) indicated that enabling employees to make decisions about their surroundings can help keep them engaged in the workplace. Caputo (1991) found that “the more influence professionals feel that they have over decisions related directly to their work, the less likely they are to experience burnout”.

Martin (2009) wrote that Dawn Rosenberg McKay, a career planning expert who ran a job information center at a large public library, has identified several symptoms of burnout: fatigue, irritability, crying jags, anxiety attacks, loss of appetite, weight gain due to lack of exercise or overeating in reaction to stress, teeth grinding, insomnia, nightmares, increased drug, alcohol or tobacco use, forgetfulness, low productivity and inability to concentrate. Martin (2009) suggested some strategies that can assist employees to manage stress since it cannot be prevented.

## 2.7 Conclusion

The literature review has brought to light issues with work stress across the world, Africa and Ghana. The reviewed literature indicated that stress is inevitable and it affects every class of people of all jobs. Stress can have devastating effects on both employees and the organization including professional librarians, paraprofessionals and libraries in so many ways. The sources of stress are multi-dimensional encompassing employees' personal activities and how they perceive their daily encounters, social situations and environment and working conditions. In this regard, various writers have suggested ways of managing the work stress. Lazarus & Folkman (1984) suggested that stress can be thought of as resulting from an "imbalance between demands and resources" or as occurring when "pressure exceeds one's perceived ability to cope". Stress management was developed and premised on the idea that stress is not a direct response to a stressor but rather one's resources and ability to cope mediate the stress response and are amenable to change, thus allowing stress to be controllable.



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## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the methods, tools, procedures, mode of data collection and presentation and how data was analysed. Research methodology refers to the strategies surrounding the use of multiple methods of conducting a research study as required by different attempts to achieve a high degree of reliability and validity (Powell & Connaway, 2004). Similarly, Rajasekar (2006) defines research methodology as the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena. Likewise, Irny & Rose (2005) describe methodology as the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge. Typically, it encompasses concepts such as paradigm, theoretical model, phases and quantitative or qualitative techniques. In addition, research methodology is a strategy or plan of action that links methods to outcomes, and governs their choice of use. This chapter discusses the research design, target population, instrumentation, and mode of data collection and presentation of results.

#### 3.2. Research Design

A qualitative design was used to explore which events current professional librarians and paraprofessionals perceived as being stressful, and why they believed these events elicit a response of stress, and what coping mechanisms the professional librarians and paraprofessionals used to deal with their stress. A qualitative descriptive design was chosen as this design is known to facilitate in-depth interviewing and yield rich participant narratives. Knowing any phenomenon (or event or experience) requires at the very least, knowing the

‘facts’ about the phenomenon. Qualitative description aids in getting the facts as well as the meaning participants give to those facts (Sandelowski, 2000). The process of collection and analysis of data using a qualitative approach gives significance to word as compared to quantification. It is essential to note that a qualitative research strategy is helpful in understanding in-depth objective of the study. It assists in obtaining the outcomes of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This study sought to explore in-depth stress and managing strategies among professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh.

The limitations with using qualitative data are that it is often subjective because of the open-ended nature. It is also more likely to be concluded in a manner that the researcher views it. Qualitative data is also often hard to reproduce meaning that the results observed and the conclusions reached might be affected by the character, sex and stage of development of the researcher. Other disadvantages of qualitative research are that it is often difficult to generalise from the findings because views of a few people interviewed cannot be able to represent the whole population of employees at a company, an institution or an organisation. It also lacks transparency for example on choosing the interviewees; the respondents of the interview who were selected might be vague which can be considered as another shortcoming of qualitative data.

### **3.3 Selection of case**

University of Professional studies, Accra (UPSA) and Wisconsin International University College-Ghana (WIUC-Gh) were chosen for the study. University of Professional Studies is a public university whilst Wisconsin International University College is a private university. This will provide the level grounds for comparism in terms of who is more stressed, whether

public professional librarians or private professional librarians or public paraprofessional or private paraprofessionals.

### 3.4 Study population

The population for this study comprised all the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) and Wisconsin International University College-Ghana (WIUC-Gh). The professional librarians in UPSA are four (4) in number and paraprofessionals are fifteen (15) adding up to a population of nineteen (19). The professional librarians at WIUC-GH are two (2) and paraprofessionals are thirteen (13) adding up to a population of fifteen (15). The total population for both institutions interviewed is thirty-five (34) comprising six (6) professional librarians and twenty-eight (28) paraprofessionals.

**Table 4.3 Classification of population**

Categories	UPSA	WIUC-GH	Total
Professional librarians	4	2	6
Para-professionals	15	13	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>

### 3.5 Sampling technique and size

There was no sampling because all the population was used.

### 3.6 Instrumentation

Instrumentation has to do with the whole process of preparing to collect data. It entails not only the selection or design of the instrument but also the procedures and conditions under

which the instruments were administered. Several questions arise here such as where, when, how and who will be collecting the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Face-to-face interview was the main instrument used. This was complemented by observation to collect data from the professional librarians and paraprofessionals in both universities.

Interview is a useful method for data collection. It investigates issues in an in- depth way.

Interviews discover how individuals think and feel about a topic and why they hold certain ideas. It is useful to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and thoughts about a topic. Here they allow more detailed questions to be asked and it usually achieves a high response rate. With interviews, interviewees' own words are recorded. Ambiguities can be clarified here and incomplete answers are followed up. Also, precise wording can be tailored to an interviewee and precise meaning of questions can be clarified. Interviewees are not influenced by others in the group. Despite its numerous advantages, it can be very time-consuming: setting up, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, feedback, and reporting. It can also be costly.

The main advantage of face to face interviews is that the interviewer can ask the required questions, clarifies the questions to the interviewee and prevent misunderstandings. Direct interviews can also create room for the interviewer to be more flexible, for example if the question is not understandable for the respondent the interviewer can easily rephrase it. In case the interviewee feels stressed or discomfort, it can be detected through his or her reactions and through body language, but not possible to know through telephone interviews (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

The geographical limitation is the basic disadvantage of face-to-face interviews. If a large survey with vast resources is needed to do in a national level or international level, then it would be difficult to conduct face-to-face interview due to these reasons. First, the costs are high like the cost of training interviewers, and conducting of interviews to a vast geographical area. Second is the time issue and finally the third drawback is the respondents' feelings regarding the anonymity of their responses (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Observation according to Stenhouse (1975) is a fundamental way of finding out about the world around us. As human beings, one is very well equipped to pick up detailed information about his environment through his senses. However, as a method of data collection for research purposes, observation is more than just looking or listening. The main strength of observation is that it provides direct access to the social phenomena under consideration. Instead of relying on some kind of self-report, such as asking people what they would do in a certain situation, one actually observes and records their behaviours in that situation. This, in principle at least, avoids the wide range of problems associated with self-report (Kawulich, 2005).

Manolică, Bobâlcă & Ciobanu (2012), states that using more than one technique of data collection through a process of triangulation is seen as highly desirable as an overarching research strategy. Strength of observation is that it can effectively complement other approaches and hence enhance the quality of evidence available to the researcher. However, observation method of data collection is also characterised by some weaknesses. One main weakness is that it can be time consuming and resource intensive. Observation may be a very desirable strategy to investigate certain research questions, but it may simply not be viable for

the researcher with limited time and resources to carry out the observation and, therefore, alternative strategies would have to be pursued (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). Also, it is susceptible to observer bias, subjective bias on the part of the observer, therefore undermining the reliability and hence the validity of the data gathered. This can be because the observer records not what actually happened, but what they either wanted to see, expected to see, or merely thought they saw. In this manner, scheduled interviews and observation in the libraries were instruments used to solicit information from the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of both UPSA and WIUC-Gh.

During the first step of data collection, the researcher built interview guide by developing a set of questions related to the research field. Mainly, the questions were relevant to the research topic and covered the major part of the interview. The questions were adopted from Springer (2011) and were pre-tested which led to the modification of the questions for the interview. Eighteen (18) questions were asked in all. The questions were categorised under various themes such as meaning of stress, sources of stress, effects of stress and its control by the individuals themselves and managing strategies put in place by management of the universities and suggestions of coping strategies expected from management. This helped in identification of their understanding of stress and the stressors that cause stress for the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of the two institutions. Also, the stress coping strategies that the individuals themselves use and the coping mechanisms that their management had put in place were also identified. Suggestions to coping strategies expected by respondents were also identified. The environment of UPSA and WIUC-Gh were observed. The researcher examined the floor spaces, furniture, lightning systems, air conditioners and computers to know whether they were suitable for use in the libraries.

### 3.7 Mode of data collection

The researcher asked questions and stimulated discussions using an outline she had adopted. The researcher also took notes of responses such as hand gestures, facial expressions, body language, and tone of voices of the interviewees. An audiotape was used to record the interviewees' verbal responses. A research assistant was employed to assist the researcher with the interview. The interview lasted between twenty (20) and thirty (30) minutes for each interviewee. The researcher used two (2) days for interviewing the respondents, that is, one day at each university. The researcher also observed the two universities libraries by going round the whole libraries to view how the environment was like before doing the interviews.

Data transcription occurred immediately as that the material was new in the researcher's thoughts. These written transcriptions which consist of the materials gathered from the interview have helped the researcher to be able to interpret the verbal responses (Hodges & Videto, 2005). Using an audiotape to record the interview, helped the researcher to organise the interviewees' responses, allowed the researcher to review the transcription to ensure accuracy, and allowed the researcher to transcribe the information accurately, which provided written evidence of the interviewees' words. The researcher read over the written transcripts several times in order to submerge herself into the data. This allowed the researcher get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking them into smaller parts (Creswell, 2007).

As the researcher was reading the transcripts, she wrote memos in the margins. Memos are short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that are important to the researcher (Creswell, 2007). The researcher moved from reading to describing, classifying, and interpreting the transcripts. This process is referred to as coding. During the coding process, the researcher described in

detail, developed themes, and provided an interpretation of the transcripts (Creswell, 2007). These codes represented core concepts, central categories, or themes related to stress of professional librarians and paraprofessionals Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006). Every code used was defined and kept in a codebook, which was a complete description of every code and how it related to the research.

### **3.8 Analysis and data interpretation**

Data was analysed through the method of general analytical strategy developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The major phases of data analysis therefore consisted of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. Examining the transcripts of the interviews, the frequency of certain patterns was studied, patterns were combined, and statements coded and recorded. Data was divided into three categories

- a) Stress perception and assessment (typical burdens, sources and symptoms of stress)
- b) Stress management (individual level)
- c) Stress management (organisational level).

Conclusion was then drawn. The data were presented using themes. Themes resulted from the researcher taking important statements and grouping them into larger units. Representing the data using themes provide a complete description of the information and allowed the real meaning of the stress phenomenon of both professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh to be discovered.

### 3.9 Ethical consideration

There are several ethical issues that should be noted while collecting data. It involves several people during the research period, such as the researcher who is the interviewer and the interviewees. Ethical aspects in research works represent the issues of how researchers should treat respondents during the process of research or how to maintain equality between the researcher and interviewees.(Bryman & Bell, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

During the first stage of the interview, the interviewees for the research were informed about the objectives of the interview. The researcher made it clear that the study is intended for academic work and under no circumstance would the information given be used otherwise. As an ethical view, the interviewees' consents were obtained before recording of the interviews for the purpose of the research. It is one of the main responsibilities of researcher to keep the information obtained from respondents strictly confidential. All the interviewees were fully made aware that their involvement was strictly voluntary and that their contributions to the study remain confidential. On this note, the interviewees were assured of their anonymity. The researcher conducted the research in an anonymous manner. Therefore, the interviewees' identities were not disclosed in the research work for the same reason. The research was conducted in line with the University Of Ghana Code Of Ethics for research. The researcher duly acknowledged all the sources which were consulted.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study which seeks to investigate stress among professional librarians and paraprofessionals of University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) and Wisconsin International University College- Ghana (WIUC-Gh). Interview was employed as data collection instrument. Some of the questions posed to the respondents interviewed were based on the following: demographic data, understanding of stress, sources of stress, effects of stress, and managing strategies.

#### 4.1 Population interviewed

Interviews were conducted with both professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh. UPSA had five professional librarians and fifteen (15) paraprofessionals while WIUC-Gh had two professional librarians and thirteen (13) paraprofessionals. In all, six (6) professional librarians and twenty-eight (28) paraprofessionals were interviewed. One professional librarian at UPSA was not available during the interview period. The total number of respondents for the interview was thirty-four (34).

#### 4.2 Demographic data

The professional librarians are staff with Master's degrees in Library Studies or Master's degrees in Information studies. The paraprofessionals hold first degrees in library studies or Diploma in library studies or information studies or diploma in Librarianship. The

professional librarians played managerial role while the paraprofessionals performed the technical and routine duties.

The work experience of the respondents, ranged from two years to fifteen years for both universities. Four of the professional librarians had ten and above years work experience, while two of the professional librarians had five years work experience. The work experiences of the paraprofessionals ranged from three years to fifteen years and beyond. Comparing the work experience of both universities, the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA had more working years experience than the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of WIUC-Gh.

#### **4.3 Perception of stress**

The respondents were asked to explain what they understood by “stress”. Different responses emerged as follows: a professional librarian at UPSA viewed it as physical and emotional factors that could cause bodily tension to a person. Another professional librarian at WIUC-Gh likewise, observed it as anything that unnerves and discomforts. Another professional librarian at UPSA perceived stress as adverse psychological and physical reactions that happen to a person as a result of being unable to manage the demand on him. A professional librarian at WIUC saw stress as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.

All the paraprofessionals of the two universities similarly perceived stress as demand put on an individual, which affects him or her mentally, emotionally and physically. A paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said “stress in my opinion is doing something you feel is too

much for you or doing something that makes you feel too tired, tensed up emotionally, mentally and physically”. Some opined that stress is the less functioning of the state of mind or doing less than what you are supposed to do”. A paraprofessional at UPSA said “basically, stress is a state in which you feel there is so much pressure on you”. Another paraprofessional at UPSA said “stress is a physical activity that weighs you down. It also weighs on your emotions and you will not be able to think or act well. It mostly decreases output”. The definitions of all the professional librarians and the paraprofessionals of the two universities, perceive stress as imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual’s ability and/or motivation to meet those demands.

#### **4.4.0 Sources of stress**

The professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC were asked to identify the sources of stress in relations to their jobs. Themes which emerged from their responses with respect to sources of stress included: means of coming to work, challenges in relation to library users, job satisfaction, recognition of work and inter-personal relationships. Discussions on each were made.

#### **4.4.1 Means of coming to work**

It emerged from the study that both professional librarians and paraprofessionals in the two universities travelled long distances to work. They indicated long distance travels as a source of stress. It was also noted that all the professional librarians of both universities own their cars while all the paraprofessionals of the two universities patronised public transport to work. However, it was observed that both the professional librarians and the paraprofessionals become stressed up before getting to work due to traffic congestions. A professional librarian

at WIUC-Gh said that “coming all the way from home, going through a lot of vehicular congestion for about one and half hours before getting to work, is very stressful”, she lamented. Most of the respondents reported that they mostly got to work already tired due to traffic congestion.

“It takes me 10 minutes to get to the station to pick a ‘trotro’.  
The drivers too, due to traffic jam sometimes delay on the way, stressing you up before even getting to work”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh disclosed.

A paraprofessional at UPSA remarked that apart from the traffic congestion, the lorry drivers stopped anywhere to pick passengers whenever the lorry did not get full up at the station. This made the journey to work in relation to time very long.

“Apart from the traffic jam, I am more stressed when the “trotro” I’m travelling with doesn’t get filled up at the station. In that case, the lorry has to stop at any place that the driver’s ‘mate’ finds a passenger to pick. Even if the person is very far away, the driver has to wait for that person. This makes the journey very long. in fact, it is very stressful”, she lamented.

Some respondents tried as much as possible to leave home early due to the traffic situations, yet they became stressed up because they woke up too early to leave home. “I normally leave home early to avoid the traffic, but I end up being stressed out due to the early movement “a worried paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh grieved.

#### **4.4.2 Sources of stress at work-place**

Respondents were asked to identify what they perceived at work as sources of stress. The following emerged from their responses: sitting for long hours, students’ behaviours, long working hours, unfavourable working environment, home-work interface, inadequate working tools and resources and work overload. It was noted that some sources of stress such as students’ behaviour and end of year examination periods were common sources of stress to

both professional librarians and paraprofessionals in both universities. The other sources of stress were peculiar to either UPSA or WIUC-Gh.

The most common source of stress pertaining to all the professional librarians in both universities was long sitting hours due to busy schedules. It emerged from the study that professional librarians sat for long hours writing reports, correspondents and memoranda. They also sat for long hours when having meetings. This made them suffer backaches, leg and neck pains. Another source of stress for the professional librarians was lack of tools and resources. A worried professional at WIUC-Gh said, “not having the needed resources to work with is enough to get me worried. It makes me feel as if I’m not working to achieve the optimum”.

Some paraprofessionals at WIUC-Gh complained that what most stresses them was carrying of books from one place to another several times to be catalogued. They revealed that they did carry the books because the library did not have trolleys which would be used to convey the materials to their right destinations. One respondent said “movement of books or library materials from one location to another several times stresses me”. Another respondent said that “the lifting of books from the main library to the second floor because there is no trolley to carry the materials stresses me up” he remarked. Also, their computers were inadequate. A paraprofessional claimed that because of their poor quality the computers broke down easily making them very limited. This confirms the professional librarians’ argument that WIUC-Gh library lacked resources to work with.

It also emerged from the interviews that all the paraprofessionals of both universities declared that they became stressed out during end of semester examination periods. They revealed that

it was during this period that majority of the students visited the library. They came either to study or look for past questions or both. They visited the library in their numbers such that the library became full to its capacity. “I normally do not take a break when I come to work. It makes me very stressed and tired especially during the end of semester examination period. We even close late just to satisfy the students” a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh lamented. A paraprofessional at UPSA commented that “during examination period the library becomes very full. To attend to such a great number of students is very stressful considering their behaviours too. Some of them had discussions in the library though they knew very well that is not allowed”.

Again, both the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at the two universities perceived the behaviour of the students’ as bad. Most students disobeyed the rules and regulations of the library. A professional librarian at UPSA said that “the behaviour of the students stresses me up, they mostly default by not returning their borrowed books on due date”. A paraprofessional at UPSA also said that “I don’t understand why students as matured as they are can’t obey just simple rules. It frustrates me”. A paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said “ I’m stressed out the most when generally; students fail to obey rules and regulations. Typically, I get upset because of their behaviour”.

Other source of stress identified by some paraprofessionals in UPSA was home-work interface. Some respondents declared that sometimes home problems triggered off conflicts with their work-place demand, causing stress. Some mentioned problem of salary being meager. They remarked that, mostly a few days to the end of the month, they had to borrow

money before they would be able to come to work. Also, as family men they needed to provide house-keeping money, all these put stress on them.

“sometimes especially getting to the end of the month, I have to borrow money before I can come to work. Also, I need to give “chop money” at home before coming. In fact the salary is insufficient, and it makes me worry a lot”, a paraprofessional at UPSA lamented.

It also emerged from the interview that both professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA saw their work-environment as a source of stress. They revealed that their air conditioners did not function well and the lightning system too was bad. The library space was small and dusty. Likewise, the chairs were not comfortable. These made the library warm and uncomfortable for studies. A paraprofessional said, “uncomfortable chairs and staff crowding for limited space in the mornings are my most source of stress”. Another paraprofessional said “the air-conditioners are not functioning well making the library warm and difficult to stay in”. A professional librarian at UPSA said:

“the sitting spaces, the unstable internet especially in the afternoons make me unhappy. The congested place does not allow room to entertain visitors and the dust that comes into the place is not conducive at all”.

A paraprofessional at UPSA responding to the question relating to the environment said:

“I’m not happy because most of the air-conditioners are not functioning well. Sometimes the library becomes too warm and makes me feel uncomfortable”.

Another paraprofessional who looked worried said, “to be frank and honest with you, I’m not happy. The place looks dirty; I cannot tell if it has to do with the cleaners who are not doing their work well and also all the air-conditioners are not functioning well”. Thus, the study revealed that all the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA were not happy with their work environment.

However, all the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at WIUC-Gh were happy with their working environment. They declared that their working environment was serene. It was observed that they had clean and beautiful environment, good lightning system and well functioning air conditioners. All the staff confirmed that they had good lighting system, clean environment and good air conditioning system. A paraprofessional even described their library as a “state-of-the-art”. A professional at WIUC-Gh said: “Yes I am happy. The environment is okay, serene. Everything is okay for now”. However, another professional remarked that

“the lightning yes, the people I work with yes to a very large extent. Not having the needed resources to work with makes me feel as if we are not working to achieve the optimum”.

All the paraprofessional of WIUC-Gh claimed that they were happy with their working environment. A paraprofessional responding to the question whether he was happy with their environment said “yes, I’m happy. We are doing better than some other universities. The environment is serene and is a state-of-the-art”.

#### **4.4.3 Unique sources of stress pertaining to library**

Some unique sources of stress associated with library work also emerged. These sources were: processing of books, shelving, work overload, unstable internet connectivity, extra hours of working and inability to serve users well. A professional librarian and all the paraprofessionals at WIUC-Gh perceived processing of books as stressful. They indicated that the library software was difficult to work with. They affirmed that data entries must be completed before saving. Power outages during processing meant the whole process must be started again which was stressful. A paraprofessional said

“the current power outages make book processing

very difficult. You can save the entries only when you are done with all the entry data fields. If you are not lucky to save before the power goes off then you are doomed because most of the computers do not have UPS, then you have to start the whole process again”. He lamented.

It emerged that all the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA did not have problems with book processing. The paraprofessionals did manual cataloguing and the paraprofessional in-charge of the electronic support unit did the computerisation. The electronic support unit had Uninterrupted Power Supply Systems (UPS) to deal with the power problem.

It was also gathered from the interview that the paraprofessionals in both universities considered shelving as very stressful. They revealed that students were not supposed to shelve, yet they tried to shelve, thereby mis-shelving. In fact, it was very difficult to correct the mistakes created by mis-shelving. It also emerged that some students, realising the insufficiency of a particular book, tried to hide it, which resulted in mis-shelving. Mis-shelving made the book lost its right location which rendered the book lost. A paraprofessional at UPSA commented that,

“Shelving can also be tedious as well as shelve reading due to the fact that students’ do not adhere to rules. They are not supposed to shelve but due to selfishness they try to shelve by hiding some of the books to prevent their colleagues from accessing those materials. By so doing they end up mis-shelving, which makes our work very, very difficult when we are shelving”.

The respondents complained that the mis-shelving also made retrieval very difficult and stressful. A paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said “when I’m looking for a book and cannot find it, it makes me tired and stressed”.

It was also found from the study that work overload was another source of stress for the paraprofessionals of both universities. They attributed this to shortage of staff. Due to staff shortages a member of staff did work which was supposed to be done by two people. Also because of inadequacy of staff, the few members of staff available were forced to do overtime against their wish. The paraprofessional in charge of UPSA electronic support unit indicated that,

“The work load at the electronic section of the library is quite great. Handling of computers and making sure they are all functioning well for use by students and staff is not easy. Also checking internet connectivity, solving network problems and attending to students related issues whilst giving them the basic guide in searching for relevant information on the internet is not cool. I sometimes do shelving; help the reference team due to staff shortage. Performing electronic cataloguing and doing extra duties as well, is really stressful”, a paraprofessional at UPSA lamented.

A paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh also commenting on shortage of staff said “I pray additional personnel are employed to lessen the pressure on us”, she remarked.

All the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of WIUC-Gh were unhappy with the unstable internet connectivity in the library. Most of the activities in the library needed internet connectivity, therefore the internet service provider’s inability to provide constant access affected service rendered to patrons. A frustrated paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said that “the internet service providers’ inability to provide constant access affects us greatly making our services to clients so poor”, he lamented.

Another paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh also complained about extra working hours. It came to light from the interview that owing to inadequate staff, the staff worked for extra hours, some

even remarked that extra working hours should not be compulsory; the staff must be consulted first. A respondent said “if they want you to do extra work, they have to find out from you whether you want it or not, it should not be compulsory”.

#### **4.4.4 Challenges in relation to library users**

The study revealed that all the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of both universities had problems with the students’ behaviour. However, professional librarians at UPSA had problems with the faculty as well. The professional librarians at UPSA declared that the Deans were written to by the librarian to provide list of materials that would be needed in the faculty for the academic year. They did not bother to provide the list but rather instructed the students to come to the library for some particular titles which may not be available in the library. The professional librarians remarked that it worried them a lot, for patrons to come to the library and did not get what they wanted.

“when you write to the Deans to bring their input for Materials to be purchased for their courses for the year, they do not bother but the lecturers will only instruct the students during the semester to come to the library for those materials during the semester. In fact, it frustrates me for users to come to the library and do not get what they wanted”, an angry professional librarian at UPSA said.

The faculty was allowed to borrow four books per month after which they had to renew or return. The lecturers did not bother to renew or return them unless the library staff followed up to retrieve the books. An angry professional at UPSA said, “I don’t like the way the lecturers borrow books and refuse to return them on due dates or even renew them unless you run after them, it makes me angry”.

It was revealed by both professional librarians and paraprofessionals of the two universities, that students posed a lot of challenges to them. Students did not obey the library rules and regulations. They did exactly what the rules forbid them to do; they used mobile phones in the library which was prohibited; they even had discussions in the library thereby disturbing other patrons. Some of them even borrowed books and refused to return them on the due dates. When some of them visited the library, they were impatient; they wanted preferential treatment, always insisting on their rights. Some even did not respect the library staff. Some students did not go straight to academic work on the web they opened to Facebook to chat with friends and created inconveniences for other users.

A professional librarian at WIUC-Gh said:

“Yes, I have challenges with students. But personally, I have a way of managing people. Dealing with students who have been over pampered is sometimes difficult. You have to be tactful when dealing with them”.

A paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh responding to challenges they have with students said:

“we do have challenges at times. When talking about Wisconsin we have students coming from different backgrounds. I think for now we have about 13 nationalities or so and they all have different upbringings and all that. So handling them at times become difficult, but as a professional, you need to find ways and means of handling them. Sometimes we encounter challenges in handling them. I do not know about other places but here, “yes”. You ask them not to do this but they ignore. You put up a notice and still you have students doing all sorts of things. New cameras are being put in place and will help monitor some of these challenges come next semester”.

Another paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said:

“Yes, 200 percent challenges relating to students. There is a communication gap as well as culture difference among the students with different attitudes. We have about 95 percent foreign students. They also do not conform to our rules and regulations. They bring forbidden items such as sweets, water and food into the library”.

Another paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked that:

“students picking up books from shelves and then mis-shelving them after using although they have been asked not to shelve books is a challenge to me. They keep repeating the same mistakes all the time. They also disobey library rules as well; this really is a challenge to me”.

A professional librarian at UPSA also responding to the question of challenges in relation to users said:

“students though they know the rules will still bother you with issues that make you feel stressed up. They keep repeating the same mistakes. Do not bring water in there, he will ask why and he will repeat another time by pretending he doesn't know”, so annoying, she said.

A paraprofessional at UPSA also responded that:

“Challenges with the students are numerous. The disturbances some bring into the library as a whole affect other users in the electronic support unit. So controlling them is a problem. Though some of them prove to be nuisance, as a professional, I try to put things in order to ensure sanity is maintained”.

#### **4.4.5 Satisfaction with condition of work**

The study revealed that all the professional librarians and the paraprofessionals of WIUC-Gh were not happy about their conditions of work. The professional librarians mentioned research and book allowance which had been scraped off. Again, both professional librarians and the paraprofessionals reported of delays in payment of medical claims, cancellation of Christmas bonus, delays of overtime payment and inadequate staff as problems which were causing their dissatisfaction.

It emerged that the professional librarians at WIUC-Gh were not satisfied because their book and research allowance and Christmas bonus had been cancelled. “I'm not satisfied with the

conditions at all. Things like research and book allowance have been scrapped off”, a professional lamented. It was also noted that payment of medical bills either delayed or were not paid in full. “The issue with medical bills claims is yet another issue to deal with. The payment of the bills is either delayed or not paid in full”, another professional librarian commented.

Also, the amount paid for extra work load was not encouraging. “I’m not happy for now, because the amount paid for extra work done is not the best” a paraprofessional said angrily. Again, the paraprofessionals believed that the payment of their overtime delayed and the amount was too meager considering the job they did. For example, they revealed that sometimes they came to work at 8.00a.m. and closed at 8.30 p.m. “The overtime payment always delays even though the amount is meager and effort to compel management to increase the amount has proven futile”, a paraprofessional lamented.

The professional librarians at UPSA revealed that they were satisfied with their condition of work. However, it was noted that majority of the paraprofessionals of UPSA were not satisfied with their condition of work. Some of them felt that they were being cheated, considering their salary; they believed that they should be paid more than they were earning now. A paraprofessional said, “I’m not really satisfied, I feel that I’m due more than I receive now looking at the current cost of living”. They also believed that if management could employ more personnel, it would reduce their work load. “More personnel are required to reduce the pressure on us”, a paraprofessional opined. They were also not satisfied because some allowances which they were enjoying had been scrapped off. “Formerly, I was enjoying risk allowance but it has been cancelled so I’m not happy at all”, he ranted.

It also emerged from the study that the respondents were not too happy about incentives and promotions. All the professional librarians at the two universities were not too happy about promotions. All the professional librarians were regarded to be under academic. They articulated the stress imposed on them in the process of fulfilling the professional demand in giving services and at the same time fulfilling the publication demand as a criterion for promotion. If one was unable to further his or her education and to do any publication then the person could not be promoted. "Promotion depends on upgrading or Publication of more articles. Despite all the hard work, if you don't publish you don't get promoted as a professional librarian. In fact, it is very worrying", a worried professional at WIUC-Gh lamented. A professional at UPSA also commented that "how can they use the same criteria for lecturers' promotion for library professionals? It's not fair", she lamented.

However, all the paraprofessionals at the two universities did not have any problem with their promotion. They were normally promoted when they were due. However, they did not get any incentive. A paraprofessional at UPSA said that "when my promotion is due I get promoted. I do not get any incentive though", he remarked.

#### **4.4.6 Recognition of work**

The study also revealed that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals responses concerning recognition of work were all in the affirmative with the exception of a paraprofessional at UPSA who felt because his promotion was delaying, it meant his superior who was supposed to recommend him did not recognise his work. It emerged from the responses that all the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at both institutions felt that

their work was recognised. A professional librarian at WIUC-Gh believed that one should not wait for people to recognise him or her before doing his or her work well. She believed that one had to do his or her best at all times. She said:

“I do not know how people recognise it but we recognise it ourselves because if what you are doing is not being appreciated you have to appreciate it yourself making sure you brighten the corner where you are”.

Another professional at WIUC-Gh commented that she knew that she was recognised because she was consulted first on anything concerning the library. She said, “Yes, to a very large extent. Anything that had to do with the library, I am the first to be contacted or consulted. So in this regard I believed I’m recognised”.

“yes, I felt I’m recognised because I sometimes bring new ideas which are usually accepted and implemented”, a professional librarians at UPSA said.

“Yes I am recognised”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said.  
“I would say yes because, during appraisal the positive indications written about me is a proof of my recognition and hard work”, a paraprofessional at UPSA said.

However, a paraprofessional at UPSA felt he was not recognised by his superior. This was what he said angrily, “if the one working on my promotion refuses to do it for me then I’m not recognised”.

#### **4.4.7 Interpersonal Relationship**

The study also revealed that all the respondents had cordial relationship with their superiors. The paraprofessionals regard their superiors as mothers; because although they had cordial relationship with them, when they misbehaved they did not pamper them but rather corrected them. It emerged from the study that even those who thought that their superiors were hard on them believed it was their fault. The study also revealed that both the professionals and the

paraprofessional at the two universities had cordial relationships with each other. It also emerged that they stood in for each other and they even chatted and shared jokes with each other to release tension. There was no conflict among them, they worked as a team.

“For now, I have one superior that is the Head Librarian and my relationship with her is very cordial. Apart from her being the boss, our relationship is more like family related because we work together as a team and most of the time she delegates me to supervise and give her the feedback from time to time”, a professional librarian at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“I report directly to the VC. I have a good relationship with my boss. I can walk up to my superior and talk to him. I relate to him very well though not always attending to things put across”, a professional librarian at WIUC-Gh said.

“The relationship is very cordial. She is like a mother yet very strict when it comes to work. She also expects us to be proactive. There may be some criticisms though, but this keeps us to put up our best”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh indicated.

“Sometimes she gets hard on us when work is not progressing well. But the relationship is cordial”, a paraprofessional at UPSA said.

“The relationship is however cordial, because she opens up to me anytime I approach her for directions, she doesn't look down on people but rather allows room to share views and suggestions,” a paraprofessional at UPSA commented.

“We get time to chat on things beneficial to us and feel at home” a UPSA paraprofessional said.

A paraprofessional at UPSA felt otherwise. He felt his colleagues' should stand in for him in his absence but they were not doing so. He said: “my relationship with my colleagues is normal but they do not stand in for me when I am not around. I am not happy about it”.

#### 4.4.8 Is library work stressful?

The interview revealed that the entire professional librarians and paraprofessionals found the library work very stressful. All the professional librarians at both universities declared that library work was stressful, particularly when required resources were not available to work with. All the paraprofessionals at both universities believed that library work was very stressful, especially with shelving of books and shelve reading. They also declared that library work was stressful particularly when they were unable to satisfy patrons. All the respondents of WIUC-Gh supposed that library work was stressful particularly with processing of books due to the power problem.

“Library work is very, very stressful, especially with Processing of books and long hours of sitting”, a WIUC-Gh paraprofessional said.

“Library work is very stressful, particularly when looking for a book and cannot find it, it makes you very tired”, another paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“Very stressful, when unable to provide services to clientele due to unstable internet connectivity” a paraprofessional at commented.

Most paraprofessionals saw examination period as very stressful. A paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked that “very stressful, especially during exams period when I normally do not take my break and closed late due to extra work”.

“Extremely stressful, when I virtually have to do everything on the same desk, clearance, registration of student, cataloguing and referencing which could have been done in different sections. In fact, library work is very stressful”, a worried paraprofessional at UPSA remarked.

#### 4.5 Effects of stress

It emerged from the interview that the professional librarians and the paraprofessionals at both institutions suffered from physical and emotional symptoms of stress. Some respondents

declared that they suffered from headache, dizziness, tiredness due to the stress they went through. Some respondents suffered from insomnia. Some respondents also suffered from backache, waist pain, neck, and knee pain because of long sitting. Some respondents also suffered from cold and catarrh due to excessive dust. Another respondent affirmed that he suffered from heavy eyes and headache due to excessive use of computer. Another respondent claimed that he was an asthmatic patient but his disease was worse now due to the excessive dust that he inhaled.

“I’m an asthmatic patient but due to the dust I inhale frequent during shelving, the disease is getting worse” a paraprofessional at UPSA commented.

A respondent reported that she had hypertension because of worry. She got worried when she was getting late to work due to traffic congestion. It also emerged from the study that some respondents also suffered emotional symptoms such as frustration, anger, moodiness and worry due to stress.

Others reported of extreme tiredness and loss of focus and sometimes anger especially when they made request and they did not get what they wanted.

“when I request for service personnel and is not forth coming or management seem not to do anything about it, I get angry”, a WIUC-Gh professional librarian commented.

“Stress put me in a moody situation. I sometimes get annoyed and even will not feel like talking to anyone. I don’t really know why”, a paraprofessional at UPSA remarked.

“I get worried when I’m not able to satisfy users”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

Most of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals revealed that too much stress affected the effectiveness of work. Some respondents affirmed that stress slowed down work. Some respondents believed that tiredness affected performance negatively. Some respondents claimed worry compromised effectiveness.

“Yes, it slows down my work”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.  
“When I’m worried, I cannot do effective work”, a professional librarian at UPSA commented.

“Yes when I’m extremely tired I make mistakes” a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“Whenever I’m stressed up it reflects on my output. Either I make mistakes or unable to complete my task or schedule” a professional librarian at WIUC-Gh commented.

“Yes, it affects my work, if I’m not able to come to work early due to tiredness it affects my work and performance”, a paraprofessional at UPSA remarked.

However, some of the respondents claimed that stress did not really affect the effectiveness of their work.

“I have adapted to the situation and therefore i do not let the pressure weigh me down”, a paraprofessional at UPSA commented.

“The stress I experience rather makes me feel like doing more, working more”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh commented.

#### **4.6 Level of stress**

It was revealed from the responses that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals stress was not high. Some respondents indicated that they managed the stress so it was not high. Some respondents also claimed that they controlled the stress so it was not that high. Some respondents also remarked that they did not let problems weigh them down. When the question “is your stress level high?” was asked, these were some of their responses:

“In my opinion, my stress is not high because some people end up killing themselves in some cases” a professional at UPSA remarked.

“No, my stress is not high”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh claimed.

“I manage it, so it is not high” a professional at WIUC-Gh said.

“I try to control it after having hypertension” another professional At UPSA remarked.

“Not really” a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said.

“No” a paraprofessional at UPSA said.

It also emerged from the interview that, those who had allergies and diseases which should be controlled or managed visited the clinic regularly. However, majority of the respondents specified that they visited the clinic occasionally when they were not well. This was what they said when they were asked about how often they visited the clinic:

“Very often because of my allergy and advice from the doctors” a paraprofessional at UPSA remarked.

“Monthly, because of the hypertension, I have to go for medication” a professional librarian at UPSA commented.

“Occasionally, because I don’t normally fall sick”, Another paraprofessional at UPSA said.

“Not often only when I feel so uncomfortable or unwell” a professional librarian at WIUC-Gh said.

“Not often only when I felt sick” a paraprofessional At WIUC-Gh remarked.

This is a clear indication that the stress levels of the entire professional librarians and paraprofessionals were not high.

#### **4.7 Methods of coping with stress**

It was revealed in the interview that the professional librarians and the paraprofessionals in the two universities had their own different ways of coping or managing stress. These ways could be negative or positive.

Some respondents declared that in order to manage their stress they avoided sitting for long. Some stretched in between work by going round monitoring the patrons (students). A respondent claimed that she talked a lot and did not keep things to herself. Also, as a christian, she sought spiritual help as a way of managing stress. A respondent remarked that he over eat as a way of managing stress. He even complained that over eating was making him fat. Some respondents walked a lot, chatted a lot and drank a lot of water to manage stress. Some respondents indicated they listened to cool music to reduce stress.

Other respondents also remarked that they watched humorous movies as a way of managing their stress. A respondent claimed that he normally isolated himself for some time as a way of managing stress. Some respondents indicated that they did have long sleep after work to manage stress. These were what they said:

“personally for now I do not sit for long, I stretch in between work. I may sit down by my computer for sometimes without doing anything. Also do short monitoring i.e. going round to check on students”.  
a professional at WIUC-Gh said

“Personally I talk; I do not keep things to myself. I talk at meetings on issues that concern me or the library. Also as a christian, I always trust God to handle every situation and this has been working well for me”, a professional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“when I’m stressed up I over eat. I’m growing fat because of over eating which I know is very bad because fatness is associated with a lot of diseases”,  
a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“Usually I take a walk and drink a lot of water anytime I’m stressed up” a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“I talk a lot and do a lot of walking as a means of dealing with stress issues”, a professional at UPSA said.

“I personally chat with my colleagues when I’m stressed up” a paraprofessional UPSA commented.

“when I’m stressed up I drink a lot of water and listen to cool music. I also watch movies that are humorous just to make me laugh and this takes away some stress out”, a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“I normally move away from people or staff in the library to ease myself from stress” another paraprofessional at UPSA said.

“I love music so I listen to music a lot to distress myself. I also talk on issues that will ease my stress” a paraprofessional at UPSA said.

“I usually have a long sleep whenever I get home” a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh said.

#### **4.8 Actions taken by Management to assist employees cope with stress**

It emerged from the responses from both the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA that, UPSA Management had put up a club house for the senior members to assist them relax and exercise. The club house had a mini restaurant and a bar where they could take their lunch and drinks. It also had a hall with television where they could relax during break to listen to news. The club house also had a gymnasium facility for exercising. Both the professionals and paraprofessionals indicated that nothing of that sort had been put in place for the senior and junior staff.

“The senior members’ club has been put in place for senior members only where they can engage in various fitness exercises. But nothing has been done for the junior and senior staff” a paraprofessional lamented.

All the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of WIUC-Gh revealed that Management had not done much for them. A professional who had worked for quite a long time for about ten years at WIUC-Gh was the only one who once experienced a talk on stress management.

“We once had a talk on stress management and how to cope with its effects but it has not been consistent. It was some professionals who came to talk to us on effects and management of stress. Though it might not be the best but they have started something”, She said.

A paraprofessional from WIUC-Gh remarked that they had christian worship on Wednesdays for both the staff and the students. The aim was to instill discipline in them. However, he believed that it had underlying function of distressing them. He held the view that this worship helped them to do something different from their normal work. He said:

“We have been having worship on Wednesdays for both staff and students to instill discipline in us. It has latent function of distressing us. It helps us to do something which is different from our normal work but I don’t think people have realised it”.

All the respondents of both institutions also revealed that their managements had also provided a clinic to see to the health needs of the entire staff, their spouses and their two children each who were below eighteen years old. The entire respondents believed the clinics would be rather visited when they had been burnout.

“I have not seen anything yet. May be the clinic but this is for serious cases”, a paraprofessional at UPSA remarked.

“For now I do not know if there is something in place to manage stress, may be the clinic. But you visit the clinic after the stress has burn you out” a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh commented.

All the respondents of the two institutions also revealed that their managements had put in place two months annual leave for each staff to assist them manage stress. “I think it’s just the annual leave we’ve been taking” a paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

#### 4.9 Suggestions about what Management can do to assist employees manage stress.

It was revealed from the responses of the entire professionals and paraprofessionals of both institutions that in their view their Managements should provide all requisite resources needed to work with. All the respondents also suggested that management should organise seminars on stress and its management for staff regularly. They also held the view that Management should sometimes have listening ears to them in order to address some of their issues. Management should provide healthy environment in the library. Also, workers should be motivated to improve performance. The paraprofessionals at UPSA held the view that a recreational center like a research commons room should be created for senior and junior staff to read papers and articles, and watch television news during break time to distress them. The respondents also suggested that Management should provide a bus to transport staff from their homes to work and to take them back home. This, they believed would reduce the stress that they go through when coming to work. They also suggested that management should employ a psychologist to educate staff on stress management. Furthermore, they suggested that management should provide a canteen for staff so that they would not travel far to have their lunch.

“Management ought to make sure all requisite resources are available to work with”, a professional at UPSA said.

“I am here to work so needed equipment are a requisite and after I have worked I need to be rewarded. For instance, my previous employer with its new director set a target for all staff and when the profit was realized bonuses in a form of double salary were paid to each employee. This motivated us such that each year there is an increased in profit margins due to extra effort and dedication to hard work, we were also rewarded according to the percentage increase. So each year for five consecutive times there has been some increase”, a professional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“There should be short seminars for staff on stress

Management” another professional at WIUC-Gh remarked.

“Management should have listening ears for the staff so that they can take up some of the issues we bring across”, a paraprofessional at UPSA said.

“staff bus to convey the staff to their various homes after the day’s work is also recommended. So that staff can enjoy comfort and relaxation in the company’s car to various homes without going through the hustles”, a paraprofessional at UPSA commented.

“A canteen for staff is also recommended so that staff will not travel for long distance to have their lunch”, another paraprofessional at UPSA remarked.

All the paraprofessional at WIUC-Gh held the view that Management should employ security personnel to take care of the security issues in the library. This they believed would help reduce the pressure on them. They also said that the orientation of students about the use of the library, particularly, the rules and the regulations of the library should be a concern for Management.

“Security personnel should be brought to attend to students’ belongings to properly check the students when they are leaving the library. This can reduce some pressure on the staff and, orientation to students on the use of the library must be a concern to management”, one remarked.

They were also of the view that too much work should not be imposed on an individual. Management should take the health of the staff into consideration, because staff replacement was expensive. They also held the view that extra work (overtime) should be optional, it should not be compulsory. They also suggested that management should have regular meetings with staff and motivate them to improve performance. These were what they said:

“Too much workload should not be enforced on a single person. Staff health status must also be taken into consideration because staff replacement is expensive”. Another respondent commented.

“extra work should be optional; it shouldn’t be imposed on the staff”, another stated.

“In my view, management should be constantly having meetings with staff and motivate them to achieve the best”, another respondent pointed out.

#### **4.10 Findings of observation made**

The environments of both libraries were observed.

##### **4.10.1 Observation at UPSA**

The researcher found out that the floor space of the library was small. It could be seen that the floor space had not been expanded since its establishment. It could be realised that the library space do not match the student numbers, the place looked crowded. The air conditioners were old and made a lot of noise and some were not functioning properly. The library was very warm making patrons rather sweating. Regarding the lightning system, some of the bulbs were not on making the library a bit dark. The furniture was not adequate and looked old. The patrons had opened the louvers which the researcher believed that it was because of the warm they were experiencing. The environment was dusty, the dust had settled on the books which the researcher believed could be the result of the louvers that had been opened. The researcher also observed that the usage of the computers at the electronic support unit was regulated; patrons were given only forty minutes for the usage especially during peak period.

##### **4.10.2 Observation at WIUC-Gh**

The floor space of the library was very big and spacious whilst the environment was clean and beautiful. The lightning system was good and the air conditioners were all functioning well, keeping a good ambiance in the library. They had adequate furniture which was attractively arranged. The atmosphere of the library was conducive for learning. In fact, the environment

was serene. The library was a modern one with the state of the art facilities. However, the computers were not enough considering the size of their electronic support unit.

#### **4.1.1 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study revealed that, the professional librarians and paraprofessionals sources of stress were, the library work itself, traffic congestion, inadequate resources and tools, unfavourable working environment, job dissatisfaction, work overload, and challenges with users.

Their stress levels were not that high as they were always at work even though they suffered from tiredness, headaches, backaches, waist pains, neck pains, knee pains, dizziness, insomnia, cold and catarrh, asthma, hypertension, worry, anger, moodiness and frustration due to stress. It could be that, their coping or managing strategies were effective in helping them to cope well. Also, it could have happened that due to the fact that they had all had training in librarianship they had combined professionalism with effective managing strategies which had kept their stress levels low.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### 5.1.0 Introduction

The study sought to investigate the sources of stress among the professional librarians and paraprofessionals in UPSA and WIUC-Gh. It was noted that the respondents' sources of stress fell under the last category of the stressors which is the background stressors. These include events such as daily hassles as indicated by Robbins, Powers and Burgess, (1997); Rotton, (1990); Lazarus et. al. (1985); Zika & Chamberlian, (1987); Coffey & Cook(1998);Bunge (1987); Stoner & Fry (1983).The sources of stress identified have been grouped under the following: library work, traffic congestion, inadequate resources, unfavourable working environment, work overload, job dissatisfaction and challenges in relation to users.

#### 5.1.1 Library work

The study revealed that library work was stressful. Library work was stressful when considering processes such as book processing, shelving, users and their demands and the behaviour of students. These findings were supported by the works of Shaughnessy (1998) which stated that it was doubtful that an average person would ever think of librarianship as a stressful job. He noted that many librarians are experiencing more job stress and less job satisfaction. However, Bunge (1987) was seemingly in two minds on this issue. On one hand, he was convinced that library work could be very stressful, citing “patrons” as being a cause of stress, but conversely, they were also categorised as “bringers of joy and fulfillment”.

### **5.1.2 Traffic congestion**

The findings also revealed that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals became stressed up due to traffic congestion. This condition made the journey from their homes to work very long. Owing to long travelling, librarians had to leave home very early to enable them get to work early. To support this assertion, Catanese (1972) stated that first urban commuters spent a sizable proportion of their day travelling between home and work making transportation environment one that may exert pervasive effects on their lives. Turner, Layton & Simons (1975) also supported the assertion that traffic situations, especially during rush hours, were potentially stressful because of delays they imposed and the hostility they sometimes provoked. It was no doubt that both the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA and WIUC-Gh experienced stress through traffic congestion.

### **5.1.3 Inadequate resources and tools**

The findings of the study revealed that professional librarians and paraprofessionals did not get resources that they needed to work with. This had caused a lot of stress for them. Resource such as trolleys to convey materials from one place to another were not available. Computers to work with were not adequate in number. The internet access was unstable to meet the demands of patrons, and the number of staff was not adequate. Inadequate staff led to extra work, and finally caused work overload. This finding corroborates Bunge (1998) studies. He pointed out that a feeling of not having adequate resources to meet a demand can be an occasion of worry. He explained further that managing the amount and nature of stress in one's life consist of attempting to achieve a balance between challenges and demands of one's life and the resources available to meet these challenges. He concluded that when we feel that there are too many demands or too few resources to deal with, we will experience excessive

or painful stress, which is either strain or distress. This indeed explained why the professional librarians and paraprofessionals get worried and frustrated when they were unable to meet demands of patrons.

#### **5.1.4 Unfavourable working environment**

Likewise, the study found out that some professional librarians and paraprofessionals were not happy with their work environment; they viewed it as a source of stress. The unfavourable working environment, bad lighting system which could affect the eyes of the staff, air-conditioners which were not functioning well which affected the library by making the place very warm were all uncomfortable for studies. The chairs were not comfortable to sit on, that was (an ergonomic problem) an indication most of the respondents claimed they suffered from backache. The library space was very small; a confirmation of the place becoming crowded especially in the mornings when the staff presences was relatively large. Moreover, the dust was a worry. The whole environment was dusty. This had affected everything in the library, the books, shelves, tables and the computers. The staff have to take time out of their busy schedules to dust the books. The staff at the electronic support unit have to service the computers regularly. This was in variance with the study by Oyedum (2011). His investigations pointed out that for effective use of university libraries to be achieved they should not only provide and preserve information materials for all categories of users but should endeavour to keep the reading environment inviting and attractive. Thus, the environmental factors such as good ventilation, noise-free reading areas and physical facilities such as furniture and lighting / illumination, good air-conditioners, good curtains, are necessary for adequate use of university libraries. The findings are in agreement with Ajala (2011) who found out that the working environment is a source of stress to library staff. He

declared a factor like ergonomic problem that is poor design of instrument used in the work-place affecting their physical health. It is no doubt that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA were not really happy with their working environment.

### **5.1.5 Job dissatisfaction**

The findings of the study revealed that professional librarians and paraprofessionals were not satisfied with their job because of poor remuneration, lack of resources to work with, shortage of staff, book processing, and extra duty allowance payments. The professional librarians were also not happy about their promotions (professional demand). According to Luthan, (1998), job satisfaction is the employee's perception of how well a job provides those things that are viewed as important, such as the work itself, pay, promotion opportunity, supervision and contentment. This study validates Kaya's (1994) study which revealed that several members of library staff in university libraries of Ankara, Turkey were dissatisfied regarding physical working conditions, obtaining respect with the job conducted, job security, promotion, wages, social services, having authority and responsibility. However, this study contradicts Kaya's (1994) study which stated that university libraries in Turkey are relatively in good condition as regards to job satisfaction. However, he concluded that job satisfaction in public libraries is extremely low, while special libraries in Turkey have the best conditions for librarians when compared to others which disagree with this study.

It was also found out that some professional librarians were dissatisfied because of the stress imposed on them in the process of fulfilling the professional / academic demand in giving services and at the same time fulfilling the publication demand as a criterion for promotion. This study corroborates Ajala (2011) who pointed out that the interface between these two

demands, giving services and publication demands, poses a serious stress on academic librarians. This explains why the professional librarians and paraprofessionals were not satisfied with their jobs.

### **5.1.6 Work overload**

The majority of the respondents indicated work overload as a major source of stress. The professional librarians and paraprofessionals pointed out that they were confronted with too much work. Heavy work schedules, such as writing of memoranda, correspondence and reports, attending meetings, attending to students, which exceeded their humanly possible limits of work they could deal with. They had much work with few staff. A staff member did a work which was supposed to be done by two people; all because management was not prepared to employ more staff. A respondent even cited an example of coming to work at 8.30 a.m. and closing at 8.30 p.m., with just an hour break in between, just because the adequate number of staff was not employed. This showed that some staff work for eleven hours a day. This of course would stress up the staff. This contradicts the Ghana Labour Law (2003) which requires that an individual must work for a maximum of eight hours in a day. Overload constraints the professional librarians and paraprofessionals to work way beyond their regular overtime.

The finding confirms the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), United Kingdom's report findings published which showed that the primary reason for working long hours was work overload. A major review of the literature on the relationship between excessive hours of work and health by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) also concluded that there was some evidence that working long hours could lead to stress or mental ill-health.

The study also conforms to Mueller's (2012) work which claimed that an overly crammed schedule and constant overworking, delegated tasks, additional responsibilities, new projects or feeling unable to say 'no' could also add to overload. He concluded that work overload can be harmful; it causes stress and a lot of pressure, given the fact that it reduces recovery time between workdays.

The professional librarians and paraprofessionals also reported that they sometimes felt pressured, moody, headaches, waist pains and chest pains. This finding also supports Hick's (2015) work which stated pressured, moody, headaches, waist pains and chest pains as symptoms of work overload. He explained further that chronic stress overload can cause serious health issues including: high blood pressure, diabetes, heart attack, stroke and depression. It is a disease that must be treated to avoid long-lasting physical and mental effects on the body. However, the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh did not experience high levels of stress. It may be due to the fact that they have all attended library school so they have good knowledge of the job. Also, they may have good managing strategies; therefore they did not experience burnout.

### **5.1.7 Challenges with users**

The findings revealed that all the professional librarians and paraprofessionals at UPSA and WIUC-Gh complained that patrons, especially, the students put a lot of stress on them. One could say that there was a contract between the staff and the students. Staff must provide information resources and services for them in the library to use and their responsibility was to obey the rules and the regulations of the library (Bunge, 1987). Whilst the professional librarians and paraprofessionals tried to keep to their part of the contract by providing the

information resources and the services for the students, the students refused to abide by the contract. They did not obey the library rules. They did exactly what they are not supposed to do. They are even not supposed to shelve the books that they had used because they do not know how to shelve properly. Every book which is mis-shelved means a lost book, because it will be difficult to locate that book. A respondent angrily said that the students went to the extent of writing insults on the rules that had been pasted. The study confirms Bunge's (1987) work which regards students' behaviour as rude because they go contrary to the library rules. These put a lot of stress on the professional librarians and especially the paraprofessionals, instead of concentrating on their work they rather go round checking on students who were supposed to know better. This kind of behaviour of the students sometimes makes the professional librarians' and paraprofessionals very angry. Farler & Broadly-Preston (2012) had apparently two minds on this issue. Their work pointed out that a librarian's interaction with students can be stressful or enjoyable depending on the context.

The finding of the study also showed that the respondents stress level is not high. This is an indication that they visited the clinic occasionally only when they were unwell, with the exception of the respondents who had chronic diseases who needed to be attended to on regular bases. The findings similarly revealed that although the respondents' stress had effects on their work, the effects were not significant. This was so because they may have good managing strategies that helped them manage their stress.

## **5.2 Employee management of stress**

The study also examined the coping strategies that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh used to manage their stressors. The individual professional librarians and paraprofessionals in avoiding and managing stress had to identify

the stressor first, evaluate and manage it. Due to the widespread damage stress can cause, it is important to know one's limit. How much stress is "too much" differs from person to person. Every individual is different. According to Bunge (1987), "some people were able to roll with the punches, while others seem to crumble in the face of far smaller obstacles or frustrations". The findings pointed out that professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh use different strategies to cope with stress.

This corroborates Warner's (1996) work which indicated that there was no right way to manage stress but different ways which would suit different people. Taylor (1998) pointed out that there are two distinguished coping strategies. Problem-solving strategies which are efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful circumstances and emotion-focused coping strategies involved efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful or potentially stressful events. Folkman & Lazarus, (1980) observed that research indicated that people use both types of strategies to combat most stressful events.

### **5.2.1 Social support**

It was found out that some professional librarians and paraprofessionals manage their stress by relying on social media. They claimed it helped them to chat with friends and by so doing helped them to reduce their stress. This corroborates Cohen & Wills' (1985); Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher (1999) findings which indicated that social support has been consistently related to well-being and, because it measures the availability of help from others, it is reasonable to assume that it constitutes a personal resource against stress. They explained that social support could intervene in the stress process in various ways. They explained further that like any resource, social support was deemed to play a role in the appraising process: the

higher one's access to social support was perceived, the more one felt able to tackle the encountered problem. In addition, received social support might help people appraise a stressful situation.

Kinicki & Davy (1997) also supporting the assertion, showed that social support could also influence the coping strategy adopted when people are confronted with a stressful situation. It could have an additional role on stressors themselves. First, as claimed by Cohen and Wills (1985), a high level of social support protects people from encountering some stressful events. However, a loss of social support might be a stressor in itself, which is consistent with the Conservation of Resource (COR) theory. Social support's assumed effects on the stress process described above have been translated into two effects, that are the direct effect on strain, which means that the relationship between social support and strain has the same intensity whatever the exposure to stress; and the "buffering" effect on the stressor strain relationship, which means that social support alleviates the impact of stressors on strain. It is obvious the reason why the professional librarians and paraprofessionals who chat with people or use social support's stress was not high.

### **5.2.2 Effect of music on stress**

Some of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals pointed out that they listened to cool or slow music as a strategy of managing stress. They claimed that when they were down emotionally, they did listen to cool music to reduce the stress. Labbe, Pharr & Balnin (2007) support the assertion of the finding that music as a coping strategy reduces many psychological and physical manifestations of stress, as well as stresses itself. They indicated that cool music was an emotion-focused adaptive coping strategy in that it was typically

geared towards the reduction or elimination of perceived feelings that arose in response to stress, rather than the stressor itself. They also claimed that music helped to lower perceived stress levels in patients, as well as lower more biologically measurable quantities such as the levels of epinephrine and cortisol. Additionally, Nechama (2011) also supported the claim that music therapy programmes have been repeatedly demonstrated to reduce depression and anxiety symptoms in the long term. The American Music Therapy Association also revealed that studies had shown that listening to slow, relaxing music slows down pulse and heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and actually decreases levels of stress hormones in body. Listening to more music is one of the easier strategies to fit into routine, and it's also one of the most effective. They concluded that music is so effective at relieving stress. It is not surprising that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals who managed stress by listening to cool music have low stress levels.

### **5.2.3 Effect of humorous movies on stress**

Some professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh revealed that they watched humorous movies to manage their stress. They claimed that it made them laugh a lot which helped them to release tension and made them forget about the stress they had gone through during the day. This finding corroborates Barkdull's (2011) work which disclosed that humour is a very effective, simple and inexpensive way to decrease emotional stress. He explained that it is an effective stress-relieving method for numerous reasons. He said humour functions as a distraction, interrupting the chain of thought that results in stress. Effective humour also results in laughter, which is a physical release of tension. Humour shifts the focus of attention away from oneself and focuses it instead on others. He explained further that this shift of attention enlarges people's anxiety-narrowed perspective to include the

misfortune of others, thereby reducing the perceived need to stress about their own problems. He concluded that humorous stories often help people to recognise that, however bad their situation might be, there is always someone who is worse off. It is relatively easy to add humour to your everyday life and to use it as a means of coping with stressful events. It is therefore not surprising that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh who manage stress by watching humorous movies do not have high stress levels.

#### **5.2.4 Walking to ease stress**

Another strategy used by the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh to manage their stress was by walking. They indicated that they took some time off their busy schedule to walk around just to stretch the body in order to assist the blood to circulate well. They claimed this strategy distressed them. The finding supports Ebelthite's (2011) study which claimed that walking is a great way to improve or maintain overall health. He explained that just 30 minutes' walk every day can increase cardiovascular fitness, strengthen bones, reduce excess body fat, and boost muscle power and endurance. It can reduce risk of developing conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers. Ebelthite (2011) explained that walking helps to build stronger bones and improve balance. It also helps to maintain healthy joints to stave off conditions such as arthritis. A good walk can help strengthen and shape legs, giving great definition to calves, quads, and hamstrings and lifting glutes (buttock muscles). Additionally, he said it improves management of conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure), high cholesterol, joint and muscular pain or stiffness. Unlike some other forms of exercise, walking is free and does not require any special equipment or training. Going for a nice walk outdoors not only provides with exercise, but it also significantly reduces stress levels. It is not surprising that

the professional librarians and paraprofessionals who used walking as a managing strategy had low stress level.

#### **5.2.5 Relaxation to reduce stress**

Relaxation is one of the strategies that some of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals used to manage their stress. They indicated that they took a little time of their busy schedule to stretch all the parts of the body just to release stress. National Health Service, United Kingdom supports the view that with good relaxation, all the physiological events in the stress reaction are reversed; pulse slows, blood pressure falls, breathing slows and muscles relax. They further concluded that relaxation can therefore help to relieve the symptoms of stress. It helps calm one down and take a step back from a stressful situation. This explains why the professional librarians and paraprofessionals stress level were not high.

#### **5.2.6 Long sleep as a means to reduce stress**

Some of the professional librarians and the paraprofessionals used long sleep as a strategy to manage their stress. They reported that when they were tired and had a good long sleep, they woke up feeling better and refreshed. This study supports Rapoport (2012) who specified that adequate sleep is a key part of a healthy lifestyle, and can benefit heart, weight, and mind. According to him, the mind is surprisingly busy while you snooze. He explained that sleep can strengthen memories or "practice" skills learned while awake, a process called consolidation, it therefore improves memory. He explained further that sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout life. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety. It also helps to pay attention, make decisions, and be creative. However, too much or too little sleep is associated

with a shorter life span as indicated by Raymonde Jean (director of sleep medicine, St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York City). Gibbons (2014) supported the assertion by indicating that not only can stress and worry cause insomnia, but lack of sleep can leave you vulnerable to even more stress. He also noted that when well-rested, it is much easier to keep emotional balance, a key factor in coping with job and workplace stress. He also stated that sleep is an important way of reducing stress. This was an indication for the low stress level of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh.

### **5.2.7 Drinking a lot of water to reduce stress**

Another strategy that some of the professional librarians and paraprofessional used to manage their stress was drinking of a lot of water. They claimed that they became refreshed and relaxed after drinking water. The finding supports Permanente's (2014) claim that drinking water is essential to health. It also increases energy and relieves fatigue. Nessler's (2009) observed that stress can cause dehydration, and dehydration can also cause stress. He said it is a vicious cycle. He pointed out that one can break the cycle by building more water consumption into one's day. Nessler explained further that Stress can result in many of the same responses as dehydration, such as increased heart rate, nausea, fatigue, and headache. He concluded that if one can remain hydrated he or she can reduce the magnitude of the physiological responses he or she has to stress. Carlson's (2014) was undisputable that studies have shown that being just half a liter dehydrated can increase cortisol levels, a stress hormone. Shaw's (2009) also claimed that staying in a good hydrated status can keep stress levels down. He concluded that if the body does not get the needed fluids, it puts stress on it. This was an indication of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals low level of stress.

### **5.2.8 Realisation of God as a means to reduce stress**

Some of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-GH practiced realisation of God as a means of managing their stress. They believed that God knows what was good for them and whatever came their way was God's plan. Therefore, instead of worrying, they accepted anything that came their way in good faith and took everything to God in prayer. This helped them to manage their stress well. The finding confirms Fairchild's (2015) assertions that though it is impossible to lump all of Christianity into one common position, he believed that most Christians do share the thinking that God is sovereign and in control of their lives. They also believe he is the author and composer of their life of faith. They likewise believe God has given them everything they need for life. Most of the times when stress dominates lives of Christians, somewhere along the way they have failed to trust God. Though this explanation appears simplistic, it is not meant to imply that a stress-free life in Christ is easy to obtain. Fairchild's (2015) explained that life is much too complicated, and we are much too vulnerable in our human condition to ever escape the inevitable battles with stress. But for Christians, stress does have a positive side. It can be a reminder that their lives have drifted away from God. It might be an indicator that they have stopped depending upon Him daily for strength. Perhaps they have forgotten the many promises in his Word. Fairchild suggested some practical disciplines that a Christian can and should exercise to avoid stress. Getting enough rest, a proper diet, regular exercise, and keeping a balance between work, ministry and family time; these are all practical ways the Bible teaches Christians to regulate stress in their lives. Fairchild concluded that from a spiritual standpoint, stress relief for a Christian begins and ends with these three basic disciplines. Instead of worrying over their problems, further compounding their anxiety and stress, the Bible recommends taking everything to God in prayer.

### **5.2.9 Social isolation**

Some of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh also managed their stress by isolation. They separated themselves from colleagues for some time trying to be alone without any disturbance. A study by Good Therapy organisation's (2014) claimed that social isolation is distinct from the experience of solitude, which is simply the state of being alone, usually by choice. Taking time to be alone can be healthy, rejuvenating experience that allows one to reconnect with one own needs, goals, beliefs, values, and feelings. The organisation elucidated that withdrawing from other people and isolating yourself is a common reaction to problem situations. It is a way of avoiding being hurt again by hiding from others what you may feel is your own inadequacy. They believed it is a problem that leaves you with no support. However, the organisation held the view that when a person experiences too much solitude or feels socially isolated from others, he or she may develop feelings of loneliness, social anxiety, helplessness, or depression. All these are symptoms of stress. The danger in using ineffective coping strategies to deal with stress is that they can become habitual, even addictive or fatal. The organisation concluded that the strategy was to reduce stress not to add more to the situation. Therefore frequent isolation for a long time was a bad way of managing stress.

### **5.2.10 Avoidance of prolonged sitting**

Another strategy used by some of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-GH to manage their stress was avoiding prolonged sitting. They indicated that they did get up to do some monitoring to avoid too much sitting. This finding supports Levine's (2015) assertion that researchers have linked sitting for long periods of time with a number of health concerns, including obesity and metabolic syndrome; a cluster of conditions

that includes increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist and abnormal cholesterol levels. He said too much sitting also seems to increase the risk of death from cardiovascular disease and cancer. According to Levine's (2015), a new study suggests that taking really short but frequent walks can counteract the harm caused by sitting for long periods of time. Health Day News' (2014) reported that researchers found that even just a five-minute stroll can help. Thosar's (2011) noted that American adults sit for approximately eight hours a day. He pointed out that the impairment in endothelial function is significant after just one hour of sitting. He pointed out that it is interesting to see that a light physical activity can help in preventing this impairment."According to background information from Indiana University, sitting for a prolonged period of time can cause blood to pool in the legs. This happens because muscles are not contracting and pumping blood to the heart as effectively. As a result, the ability of blood vessels to expand from increased blood flow can become impaired. Being sedentary is also linked to high cholesterol and a larger waistline, which increase the risk for heart and metabolic disease". Thosar's (2011) has also noted that there is plenty of epidemiological evidence linking sitting time to various chronic diseases and linking breaking sitting time to beneficial cardiovascular effects, but there is very little experimental evidence. He concluded from a study he conducted: "we have shown that prolonged sitting impairs endothelial function, which is an early marker of cardiovascular disease, and that breaking sitting time prevents the decline in that function".

The researchers examined the effects of three hours of sitting on eleven healthy men who were not obese. The men, who ranged in ages from 20 to 35 years old, participated in two trials. First, the men sat for three hours without moving their legs. When the study began and once every hour afterwards, the function of their femoral artery was measured with a blood

pressure cuff and ultrasound technology. During the second trial, the men sat for three hours but also walked on a treadmill for five minutes after 30 minutes, 1.5 hours and 2.5 hours. The men walked at a slow pace of 2 miles per hour. The function of their femoral artery was again measured with a blood pressure cuff and ultrasound technology. Overall, the researchers found the ability of the arteries in the legs to expand was reduced by as much as 50 percent after just one hour of sitting. The men who walked for five minutes for each hour they spent sitting, however, had no reduction in the function of their arteries during the three-hour period. The researchers concluded that the increased muscle activity and blood flow from the small amount of exercise offset the negative impacts of sitting (Dallas, 2014). This strategy was also very good for managing stress.

#### **5.2.11 Over eating to reduce stress**

Finally, the study revealed that a respondent ate a lot as a strategy to manage his stress. He indicated that the more he became stressed up the more he ate. He even complained that it was making him fat. This finding contradicts Annigan's (2014) who supposed that healthy eating includes consuming high-quality proteins, carbohydrates, heart-healthy fats, vitamins, minerals and water in the foods you take in while minimising processed foods, saturated fats and alcohol. He also indicated that eating in this manner helps to maintain the body's everyday functions and promote optimal body weight and can assist in disease prevention. Wellness Library's (2013) questioned whether one could "use food to relax or calm nerves because of too much stress?" They explained further that when feeling stressed, food can have a calming effect. However, the trouble was that eating food as a response to stress did nothing to alleviate the real cause of stress. They concluded that though "comfort foods" might

provide short-term relief, using food to relieve stress could lead to an unhealthy habit of stress-driven overeating.

If food is used to cope with stress and other negative emotions, even afterwards one feels even worse. A person with symptoms of compulsive overeating as stated by Knoll's (2015) had what could be characterised as an addiction to food. The one who used food and eating as a way to hide from or manage his emotions or to fill a void felt inside, or to cope with daily stresses had problems in his life. Overeating produced emotional, psychological and physiological side effects that could dramatically compromise quality of life and hope for the future. Overeater consumed excessive amounts of food which Knoll's (2015) remarked that it could produce a euphoric feeling similar to that experienced through drug usage.

The overeaters feel a temporary release from psychological stress and a diversion from feelings of sadness, shame, loneliness, anger or fear. Researchers have speculated that it is an abnormality of endorphin metabolism in the brain of compulsive eaters that triggers the process (Knoll, 2015). Attempts to abstain from compulsive overeating may result in higher levels of depression and anxiety due to the decreased levels of serotonin, he explained further. Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders' (ANSAED) (2014) reported that latest research shows that overeating does not reduce stress. Overeating preoccupation with body weight and the respondent himself testified that it makes him grow fat which he expressed his displeasure. He is much aware of health issues associated with fatness that is why he seems so worried about his bad eating habit.

Interestingly, the findings of the study revealed that none of the respondents tried to manage their stress with alcohol or smoking. From the examination of the coping strategies that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals used to manage their stressors, it was realised that most of their strategies were very good except those of isolation and overeating which did not reduce stress. The good coping strategies adopted were the evidence of their stress levels not being too high. Apart from their good coping strategies, they had all acquired training in librarianship; therefore they had combined their professionalism with their good coping strategies to reduce the effects of stress.

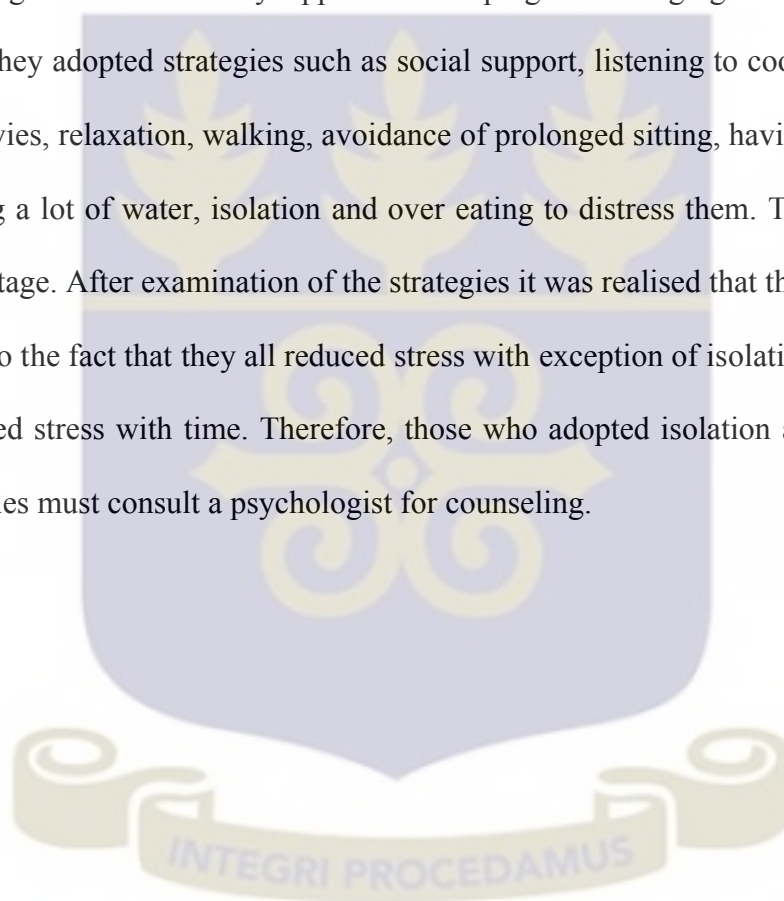
### **5.3 The relationship of the study to the theory**

The Bio-Psychosocial Model of stress by Bernard & Krupat's (1994) has been broken down into five discrete stages. Stage one was where the individual perceive pressure to be emanating from external environment. Stage two was where the individual assesses the pressure to see whether he would be able to cope with it or not. Stage three was where psycho-physiological changes occurred when the individual could not cope with the stress, which was the stress response (effect). Stage four was related to the consequences of the application of coping strategies. Stage five was concerned with feedback. The intervention could reduce or prolong the stress. From the findings, all the stages of the model have been captured.

The first and second stages were where the professional librarians and paraprofessionals identified the sources of stress and assessed them. They identified traffic congestion, library work itself, inadequate resources and tools, unfavourable working environment, job dissatisfaction, work overload and challenges with users as their major stressors. The third

stage was where they experienced the effects. The study revealed that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals experienced tiredness, headache, backache, dizziness, waist pains, neck pains, knee pains, insomnia, cold and catarrh, asthma, hypertension, worry, anger, frustration and moodiness. The study also revealed that the stress that they experienced slowed down their work and compromised effectiveness.

The fourth stage was where they applied the coping or managing strategies. The study revealed that they adopted strategies such as social support, listening to cool music, watching humorous movies, relaxation, walking, avoidance of prolonged sitting, having long sleep after work, drinking a lot of water, isolation and over eating to distress them. The final stage was the feedback stage. After examination of the strategies it was realised that their strategies were effective due to the fact that they all reduced stress with exception of isolation and over eating which increased stress with time. Therefore, those who adopted isolation and over eating as coping strategies must consult a psychologist for counseling.



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## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter recapitulates revelations made in the study, concludes and finally makes recommendations based on the findings. The study identified main sources of stress and managing strategies that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals in UPSA and WIUC-Gh employed to control their stress.

#### 6.1 Summary of the findings

##### Sources of stress for professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh

The study revealed that professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh viewed the library job itself, traffic congestion, work overload, inadequate resources and tools, unfavourable work environment, job dissatisfaction and challenges with users as their sources of stress.

##### 6.1.1 Library job

With regards to the library job, the study revealed that processing of books was stressful because the library had no uninterrupted power supply (UPS) to hold the power till they had finished the entries and saved.

##### 6.1.2 Traffic congestion

It was found out that traffic congestion stresses them. They spent a lot of time travelling from their homes to work.

### **6.1.3 Lack of transport**

The study revealed that the paraprofessionals get much stressed because they woke up early to leave home for work in order not to report late to work because they did not own their vehicles.

### **6.1.4 Work overload**

Overload of work was another stressor identified. It was found out that the paraprofessionals were made to do extra work and did not sometimes did not observe their break during examination periods all which made them got home much stressed because the staff is few.

### **6.1.5 Resources and tools**

The study revealed that the library lacks trolleys to carry books to the required destination making the staff experience headaches and neck pain, which were symptoms of stress. It was also revealed that unstable internet connectivity and limited computers made it difficult for the staff to render good services to their clientele.

### **6.1.6 Unfavourable work environment**

It was found out that UPSA library was small and therefore could not accommodate the number of clientele. The lighting system was bad which made the place looked dark. The air conditioners were old and made a lot of noise and could not cool the room which affected the ambiance of the library. The furniture were old which made patrons and staff uncomfortable because it makes the place unattractive.

### **6.1.7 Job dissatisfaction**

The study found out that the professional librarians were not happy because their promotion depended on making scholarly publication no matter how hard and well you worked. The paraprofessionals also felt that they were not happy because they did not have appropriate channel to communicate their grievances.

### **6.1.8 Challenges with users**

The study found out that the students were rude to the library staff. Also, they did not obey the library rules and regulation. They did exactly what they were not supposed to do.

### **6.1.9 Effects of stress**

The study revealed that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh suffered from physical and emotional symptoms of stress. They experienced tiredness, headache, backache, waist pain, knee pain, heavy eyes, cold and catarrh, insomnia, asthma, dizziness and hypertension as well as moodiness, annoyance, frustration and worry. All these affected their service delivery as some made mistakes which slowed down service delivery. However, their stress level was not high to burnout. The evidence was that they did not visit the clinic often; they visited the clinic occasionally only when they felt unwell. This was so because they had all been trained in librarianship so they were good on the job and knew the challenges they expected to encounter on the job. They also had good managing strategies. They therefore, combined professionalism with effective managing strategies in preventing their stress level from getting high.

#### **6.1.10 Managing stress**

With regards to managing strategies, the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh used relaxation, walking around for some time, listening to cool music, social support, watching humorous movies, eating a lot, avoiding long sitting, drinking a lot of water, seeking spiritual intervention, isolation, and having long sleep after work to manage their stress. From the examination of the strategies, it was revealed that all the strategies were good to reduce stress with the exception of isolation and eating a lot which would rather worsen the stress with time. It was also revealed that they had all gone through appropriate training; therefore, they combined the professionalism with the good coping strategies which helped them to reduce their stress. These prevented them from burnout or leaving the job.

Apart from their individual coping strategies, the managements of the two institutions had put some strategies in place to help cope with stress although respondents said this was not enough. The managements have provided clinics for the employees to check their health status occasionally and then to take care of them when they were unwell. They have also put in place a two- months leave in a year for staff in distress. In the case of WIUC-Gh, management had introduced worship on Wednesdays in the morning which lasted for about thirty minutes to uplift their soul as a form of stress reduction. UPSA management had put in place a club house for only senior members to relax and exercise in order to reduce stress. However, nothing of that sort had been done for junior and senior staff.

#### **6.1.11 Suggestions about what Management could do to assist employees manage stress**

All the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of both universities suggested that their Managements should provide all requisite resources needed to work with. Also, they should organise seminars on stress and its management for staff regularly. They should sometimes

have listening ears to the staff in order to address some of their issues. In the case of UPSA, they also suggested that management should provide healthy working environment in the library. Also, workers should be motivated to improve performance. The paraprofessionals at UPSA also suggested that a recreational center like a research commons room should be created for senior and junior staff to read papers and articles, and watch television news during break times to relax them. Similarly, management should provide a bus to convey staff from their homes to work and to take them back home. They believed these would reduce the stress that they endured at work. They also suggested that management should employ a psychologist to educate staff on management of stress. Furthermore, they suggested that management should provide a canteen to make it convenient for staff to have lunch.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The objectives of the study have been met. The purpose of this study was to identify the main sources that caused stress for the professional librarians and paraprofessionals in UPSA and WIUC-Gh and the managing strategies that they employed to control their stress with a view to making recommendations to enhance stress coping capabilities for improved service delivery for national development. In analysing the data collected for the study, it was found out that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals stress levels were not high, although they experienced some physical and psychological symptoms of stress. Their major stress inducing factors were the absence of uninterrupted power systems (UPS) which made book processing stressful, absence of trolleys to carry books which caused pains in their necks, unstable internet connectivity and inadequate computers which made it difficult for them to provide good services to patrons, limited staff which made the staff to do extra work and the rudeness of patrons who did not obey the rules and regulations of the libraries. It was realised

that most of their stress inducing factors were the cause of their managements' inability to provide necessary equipments and resources and recruitment of additional staff for the libraries. Therefore, if the managements of both universities would be able to provide uninterrupted power systems (UPS), trolleys, more computers, stable internet connectivity, more staff and spacious library accommodation and provide comprehensive orientation to new students about the use of the library, the library staff will be able to work without much stress, thereby increasing good quality services to their clientele.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

It was revealed from the study that the entire stress inducing factors were caused by management inactions. Management should therefore assist the professional librarians and paraprofessionals to reduce stress in order for them to provide efficient and effective service to their patrons. The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

#### **6.3.1 Provision of requisite resources**

The employees lack some resources such as adequate computers, regular internet access provision and regular power to work with. It is, therefore, highly recommended that the management of UPSA and WIUC- Gh should provide all requisite resources and equipments such as Uninterrupted Power Supply System (UPS), trolleys, stable internet connectivity and adequate computers for the professional librarians and paraprofessionals to be able to work without much stress.

### **6.3.2 Favourable working environment**

It emerged from the study that professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA were not happy with their work environment in terms of the bad lighting system, air conditioners that were not functioning well, ergonomic problems and space problem as well as dusty environment which were not appealing for learning. It is, therefore, recommended that the air conditioners that are not working should be repaired or replaced. Also, adequate comfortable chairs should be provided in the library. The lights that are not working should be replaced to get a brighter environment. More cleaners must be employed in order to clean the library well. The library space should be expanded in order to prevent the crowdedness. These will help to create favourable working environment for the professional librarians and paraprofessionals to work comfortably without much stress.

### **6.3.3 Employment of more staff**

It was revealed in the study that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals experienced stress due to inadequate staff which had resulted in work overload. It is, therefore, recommended that more professional librarians and paraprofessionals be employed in order to reduce the work load. In the case of WIUC-Gh, more national service personnel could be employed to complement the permanent staff. Also, security persons should be employed to assist the staff with security issues which was additional job for the library staff. This will help to reduce the work load of the library staff.

### **6.3.4 Recruitment of part-time workers during examination period**

It was revealed that some of the professional librarians and paraprofessionals sometimes did not take their break during examination periods due to excessive workload; however, they

needed to get away from the job for some time to reduce stress. It is, therefore, recommended that part-time workers should be recruited during examination periods to assist the staff in order to reduce stress. The part-time workers will relieve the staff for short period to enable them to enjoy their break to distress them.

### **6.3.5 Seminars on stress management**

The study revealed that there had not been any seminar on stress management for a long time. It is, therefore, recommended that management should organise seminars on stress management regularly in order to assist the professional librarians and paraprofessionals to add professional touch to their coping strategies.

### **6.3.6 Institution of programmes to ascertain staff problems**

The study revealed that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals encountered many problems that stressed them but they did not have appropriate channels to communicate those problems to management. It is therefore, recommended that programmes should be instituted to ascertain the professional librarians and paraprofessionals' problems for prompt resolution rather than wait for the problems to stress out the staff before taking action.

### **6.3.7 Provision of transport**

Means of coming to work was a great stress inducer as noted from the findings. It is recommended that transport should be provided in the mornings for the paraprofessionals to come to work comfortably without much stress.

### **6.3.8 Provision of intensive orientation for students**

The study revealed that the entire professional librarians and paraprofessionals' major stressor was students and their rudeness and negative attitude toward towards them. It is therefore recommended that newly admitted students should be given proper orientation about the use of the library. During such orientations, the students should be introduced to all rules and regulations which govern the conduct and behaviour of users of the library. Also, these students should be made known of the qualifications held by the library staff. This will go a long way to foster healthy working relationship between students and staff.

### **6.3.9 Promotion should be based on performance.**

The study revealed that promotion of professional librarians depended on publications of scholarly articles. No matter how well they did their work, they were not promoted unless they published scholarly articles. This does not promote hard work. It is therefore, recommended that management of UPSA and WIUC-Gh should take the performance of the staff seriously and promote them accordingly to get the best out of them.

### **6.3.10 Provide learning opportunities.**

Providing learning opportunities refers to “opportunities to grow”. Offering the chance to learn new skills tells employees that you value them and want to invest in their future. Many will be happy to participate if they think it will broaden their marketable skills and lead to advancement. Also, participating in training programmes and workshops can be a great opportunities for staff to meet new people, either from their own organisations or other libraries. This, too, will make employees feel more valued and can help forestall burnout. It is

therefore recommended that training programmes and workshops be organised for the professional librarians and paraprofessionals' of UPSA and WIUC-Gh to sharpen their skills.

#### **6.3.11 Re-location of staff**

The study found out that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals got stressed because they spent a lot of time travelling from home to work due to traffic congestion.

#### **6.3.12 Adoption of stress managing strategies**

As indicated earlier, the study revealed that the professional librarians and paraprofessionals of UPSA and WIUC-Gh stress level were not high due to the effective coping strategies that they used. In addition to their effective coping strategies, it is recommended that professional librarians and paraprofessionals should consider adopting the following strategies which will go a long way to enhance their coping strategies.

They should eat balanced meal and take their leave when it is due.

They should observe their lunch breaks as well; they should also get away from the job when they can.

They must also know their limitations, they must not be perfectionist.

They should go home on time, they should not stay late. They should not take work home.

Finally, they should also set realistic limits and keep to them.

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## QUESTIONS FOR STRESS INTERVIEW

### **What is stress?**

#### **Sources of stress:**

2. How do you get to work? Is it easy?
3. What do you most associate with stress at work?
4. What stressors do you feel are unique to the library?
5. Do you encounter challenges in relating to students?
6. Are you happy at work? (In terms of the environment in which you work).
7. How is your relationship with your superior like? (Do they permit you to make decisions on your own, held responsible for mistakes from co-workers, receive criticism from superiors).
8. What is your relationship with your colleagues at work? Do they stand in for you?
9. Do you feel library work is stressful? Does stress reflect on your working effectiveness?
10. Do you feel satisfied with your condition of work?
11. Are you recognized for the work you do?
12. What about remuneration, incentives or promotion
13. What negative effects caused by stress do you experienced?
14. How often do you visit clinic?
15. Is your level of stress very high?

#### **Coping with stress**

16. What actions do you take to cope with or prevent your stress?( do you isolate yourself, cry, eat a lot, talk to someone, move around, change location etc)
17. What has your organization been doing to assist in coping with or prevent your stress?
18. What can organization (i.e. management) do in order to help employees exposed to stressors?