

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

MANAGING STRESS AMONG LIBRARY STAFF IN PUBLIC  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GHANA

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DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES

JULY, 2017

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UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GHANA

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
PHILOSOPHY IN INFORMATION STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES

JULY, 2017

## DECLARATION

I hereby do 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.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the glory of the Almighty God. It is also dedicated to Mr. Kofi Ntim and Mrs. Adwoa Ntim, my loving and caring parents, to my siblings, Akosua Akyere-Birago, Kwame Ntiamoah Ntim and Kwaku Kyeremateng Ntim whose sacrifices, love and support encouraged me to successfully complete the MPhil degree programme.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Almighty God for taking me through this course successfully.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Emmanuel Adjei and Prof. Harry Akussah, all of Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. I am greatly indebted to them for their patience, advice, suggestions and above all, their priceless contributions toward the production of this work.

To all my hardworking lecturers of Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, I say a big thank you for your pieces of advice and encouragement.

To Dr. Asamoah-Gyimah, the Head of Department, Education and Psychology, University of Cape Coast, Mr. Bernard Kissi-Abrokwah, a PhD candidate of University of Cape Coast, I say thank you for your tremendous supports and encouragement.

I am also grateful to Mr. Kofi Ntim and Mrs. Adwoa Ntim my loving and caring parents, to my siblings, Akosua Akyere Birago, Kwame Ntiamoah Ntim and Kwaku Kyeremateng Ntim for proof- reading this work. Lastly, to all who in diverse ways contributed immensely toward the successful completion of this course, I say a very big thank you.

## ABSTRACT

The study aimed at investigating the causes and effects of stress encountered by library staff of University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Cape Coast and the various strategies adopted by such staff to combat stress in their workplaces. Using the purposive, simple random and convenience sampling techniques, the researcher sampled 153 respondents from UG, KNUST and UCC to respond to the questionnaire and interview questions. Descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviation), inferential statistics (Multiple Regression and ANOVA) were used for the quantitative analysis while content thematic analysis was used for the qualitative analysis.

The study among other things found that poor administrative support, lack of support systems, lack of in-service training and inadequate resources, anxiety and frustration, staff conflict, ill-health and smoking and drinking were the major causes of stress among public university library staff in Ghana. However, it was revealed that library staff also adopt numerous coping strategies such as taking time off work and leave, positive thinking, building strong human relationship and going for counselling in an attempt to manage their stress. It was recommended that universities institute proactive guidance and counselling measures, strong social support systems and compensation for additional work.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Everyone may experience stress in one way or the other within the family, business, organization, work or any social or economic activity (D'Arcy, 2007). Modern living is accompanied with, not only innumerable means of comfort, but also an overabundance of increasing complexities and competitiveness in living standards that tax the human body and mind. People often have too many of these demands placed on their time such that they become worried about the uncertain future, and have little time for themselves and their family. In the fast changing world today, no individual is free from stress and no profession is stress free (Sharma & Bagga, 2016). This suggests that one of the most important issues of today's struggling world is stress and psychological pressure considered by physicians, psychologists and management behavioural science researchers as human, physical and mental disorders generators (Andreassi, 2013).

Stress is an inescapable reality of most working environments (Ahmad & Xavier, 2010). Every individual is subjected to stress either knowingly or unknowingly, but would one be better off without stress? A stress-free life would offer one a life without hustle in every aspect of ones being. Thus, each and every organism must solve his or her problems to strive and thrive (Adeoye, Durosaro & Olugbemileke, 2009). Gradually, stress as a major challenge to workers health and the healthiness of their organizations is gaining recognition worldwide (Andreassi, 2013). It is now generally accepted

that prolonged or intense stress can have a negative impact on an organisation and individual, affecting individual's mental and physical health as well as the efficient performance of an organisation (Landy & Conte, 2016). Stress emanates from today's tough economic times, therefore it requires that the physical and mental health of workers is maintained (Williams, 2014).

Stress has become an important topic in academic circles as well as in our society. Many scholars in the field of Behavioural Science have carried out extensive research on stress and its outcome and concluded that the topic needed more attention (Agolla, 2009; Ongori & Agolla, 2008). The stress experienced by people of different occupations and job roles has been discussed in many papers and a number of such people of different occupations being described as experiencing above average levels of stress (Stevenson & Harper, 2006).

Hans Selye coined the term "stress", in 1936, and defined it as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change" (Shah, 2015). It was derived from the Latin word "stringere"; which means the experience of physical hardship, starvation, torture and pain. Stress has been defined by various authors and writers to mean any form of intensive pressure caused by numerous activities one engages in which tends to affect one's wellbeing either physically, mentally or emotionally (Griffin & Clarke, 2011; Furnham, 2012; Meyer & Dale, 2010).

However, stress may be best defined as a psycho physiological process, usually experienced as a negative emotional state, resulting from physical or

psychosocial demands. Physical stress is one that irritates or brings immediate or long term negative effects on one's physical health but not necessarily on one's mental status. Psychological stress is what brings immediate or long term irritation or negative effects on one's mental status which may not necessarily have any immediate effect on one's physical status but these two can be interactive (Akakandelwa, 2013). Extreme stress conditions are detrimental to human health, but in moderation stress is normal and in many cases, proves useful. As such, stress is not a medical diagnosis, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or more severe mental health problems (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2012). Stress is healthful and necessary to keep us alert and occupied. A researcher of stress Selye (1936), referred to such healthful stress as "eustress". But intense stress can overtax the individual's adjustive capacity, dampen the mood, impair ability to experience pleasure, and harm the body (Adeoye, 2008). D'Arcy (2007), therefore, emphasizes that everyone experiences stress a little differently; it can either be good or bad depending on the experience but overload of it is a different story.

A library may be defined as a building or a series of rooms containing collections of records of human culture in diverse formats and languages, preserved, organized and interpreted to meet broad and varying needs of individuals for information, knowledge, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment (Alemna, 2001). Aina (2004) sees libraries as institutions responsible for the collection, processing and storage of recorded knowledge for the purpose of reading, study and consultation. There are different types of libraries and they

are set up to serve a specific group of people. A personal library is one's own collection of books, but libraries set up by institutions and governments are of five main types namely academic, special, school, public and national. For the purpose of the study emphasis has been on academic library that is also known as a university or college library.

Olurotimi (2014) defines academic libraries as libraries attached to tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, college of agriculture, college of technology and research institutes. Academic libraries are at the forefront of providing services to students, lecturers, and researchers in order to support their teaching, learning and research needs. Scholars have emphasized the crucial role of academic libraries in research and scholarship in institutions of higher learning.

The academic library has been described as the "heart" of the learning community, providing a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge. Jubb and Green (2007) observe that academic libraries have for centuries played critically important roles in supporting research in all subjects and disciplines within their host universities or colleges. The main purpose of an academic library as stated by Aina (2004) is to support the objectives of an academic environment in the areas of learning, teaching, research, and service. A well stocked academic library is a storehouse of information, or a record of human experience to which users may turn to for data or information. Yusuf and Iwu (2010) note that the use of university libraries promotes active learning, thus contributing to students' ability to think critically and work well independently or in a group.



The library staff acquires, catalogues, classifies and arranges library materials for easy retrieval. The specific activities involved are as follows: acquisitions, processing of the materials such as stamping, cataloguing, classifying and lettering and displaying the materials in the appropriate areas under the lending and reference sections in the library either for borrowing or reference by users. All these are done sequentially in various departments of the library. The library staff provides numerous services to users, addressing their diverse needs and interests. However, with the advent of online catalogues, CD-ROMs, online data-bases, other electronic resources, new methods of document delivery and access to information, the role of the academic library has begun to change. With the internet and the availability of new technologies and numerous indexes, abstracts, and databases, the range of services that academic libraries provide has increased dramatically (Ilo, 2009; Olurotimi, 2014). Students and faculty can access online catalogues and unrestricted databases without stepping into the library building.

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), does not offer a library-related definition of stress, rather it recommends that provided by the Health and Safety Executive, 2008 (Shah, 2015). Job stress in tertiary institutions is something that all academic and administrative staff encounter (Duze, 2011). The library staff in universities face very busy and highly unpredictable workdays with many individuals and groups competing for their time (Ekwelem, 2015). Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie and Alam (2009) identify stress inducing factors in the duties of university staff to include: work overload, homework interface, role ambiguity and performance pressure.

Listing the most related stressors on university staff, Ahmandy, Changiz, Masiello and Brommels (2007) include workload, conflicts, demand from colleagues and supervisors, incompatible demands from different personal and organization roles, inadequate resources for appropriate performance, insufficient competency to the demands of their roles, inadequate autonomy to make decision on different tasks and the feeling of underutilization. Work related stress such as high turnover, poor job performance, accidents and errors, alcohol and drug abuse, burnout, absenteeism and hypertension could also make employees who are physically present at work to perform and produce less (Ikonne, 2015).

Many jobs in a library require staff to lift, carry and shelve heavy books and push or pull carts loaded with books. All of these activities can put stress on various parts of the musculoskeletal system and, specifically can cause injuries of the upper extremities and back (Ekwelem, 2015). Library jobs are repetitive in nature; therefore, doing a monotonous job that lacks variety will no doubt lead to high occupational stress levels (Ekwelem, 2015). Changes are evident in role definitions, tasks, organizational structures, user expectations, vendor relations, and campus perceptions of academic library and learning resource personnel (Ranjna, 2015). The library environment has changed drastically over the last few decades, work stress among the academic library staff is prevalent due to inadequate budget, lack of skilled man power, job insecurity and library infrastructure problems (Salunke & Hemade, 2015). Library staff must ensure availability of resources and efficient services which in turn bring satisfaction to the clients.

According to Salunke and Hemade (2015), stress in the library can be derived from three sources such as physical, mental and situational. Physical stress can occur as result of overworking, lack of rest and poor diet. Mental stress can be traced to a person's mental state of mind which involves expectation, fears and regrets. Situational stress is derived from the interaction with the external world like interaction with modern technologies or even the role as a library manager. The library staff is exposed to a considerable amount of stress in their day-to-day work and different events which are responsible for stress factors are technological change, changing library environment, change in type of document, change in library physical facility, changing users' demand reduce staff strength. Library professionals experience stress as they readjust their lives with the changing library environment, job rotation and job promotion. While adjusting to such changing library environment, stress will either help or interrupt us depending on how we react to it (Somvir, 2013).

The current working environment continues to change due to the increased use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) (Ayyagari, Grover & Purvis, 2011). The emergence of ICT in university libraries has brought a turnaround in the previous manual activities of the library staff. Apart from using various forms of ICT facilities to acquire and process materials, the library staff engages ICT in other professional assignments such as indexing and abstracting, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services and user education (ILO, 2016). Changes in ICT mean that the library staff involved in providing a reference service may need to develop new skills,

while at the same time maintaining their traditional skills (Chawner & Oliver, 2013).

There is pressure on the library professionals to adopt knowledge of new technologies along with traditional methods of functions and services. But there is limited scope for training programs, higher studies, refresher courses, and these become a cause of stress among library professionals. The fear about job security is also a reason of stress among library professionals, because a lot of departments give appointment to the computer professionals (Somvir, 2013). The interference of the home front, coupled with work place demands, sometimes constitutes stress to library staff especially when the staff concerned is not able to manage both effectively. Library stress gives rise to poor health conditions, low work output, increased heart beat and fear, poor services to users resulting in user frustration. The library staff has many roles to perform in the library and any of the roles could be stressful as every task in the library needs to be executed while considering the human factor in undertaking it.

Stress is considered an important human resource management issue because of its relationship with various diseases and interaction with job resources. In addition, it is seen as a process in which job characteristics have harmful effects on the individual's health and wellbeing. The findings of a study conducted by Keinan and Maslach-Pines (2007) revealed a great necessity of identifying and eliminating as well as monitoring health risks associated with work place stress. As a common phenomenon which is experienced by

workers of every organisation in both developed and developing countries, stress needs to be given all the necessary attention it deserves.

### **1.1.1 Study setting**

The University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and University of Cape Coast (UCC) have been the three old public universities in Ghana. In 1992, the University of Development Studies (UDS) and University of Education, Winneba (UEW) were added, other public and private universities have also started springing up. This study concentrated on the three oldest university libraries in Ghana, leaving out the new generation universities that are still in formation. Ghana's first university, the University of Ghana was founded in 1948 as the University College of Gold Coast on the recommendation of the "Asquith Committee on Higher Education in the Commonwealth". It attained full university status on October 1, 1961. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology came into existence in 1951 as the Kumasi College of Technology and became a full fledged university in 1961. The University of Cape Coast became an autonomous institution in 1971 even though it started as University College of Cape Coast in 1962.

These three public universities of Ghana were established together with their libraries, they all started in temporary structures. The library of the University College of Gold Coast started in Achimota and occupied one large room with no space for expansion. Later, a "beautiful" library with facilities for future expansion was designed and built. The new building had a capacity for

250,000 books and could sit 300 readers. The library moved into its new and permanent building on legon campus in 1959. Having out-grown its capacity, an extension was made to it in the year 2000. Balme library, as it is called (named after David Mowbray Balme, first Principal of UCGC) is a real architectural beauty. Its central position and imposing edifice, no doubt, makes it the “nerve centre” of academic work in the University of Ghana. It is now the single most important and best equipped library in Ghana (Bani, 2003).

The Library of the Kwame Nkrumah University of science and Technology came into being in 1951 when the institution was established. The library holding of the Teacher Training Department of Achimota School which was transferred to Kumasi with the College to start the Kumasi College of technology formed the initial stock. The library of KNUST initially was housed in one of the temporary prefabricated buildings from which the University was started and had a seating capacity for 135 readers. In April 1961, it moved into its present permanent building with a capacity for 100,000 volumes and 250 readers. However, by 1992, the stock had grown to 150, 000 and the seating capacity far exceeded, thus putting much strain and stress on staff. An extension has, therefore, been made to the existing building increasing space for books to 350,000 and 1,200 seats for readers. The KNUST Library has grown into what is referred to as the University Library System, consisting of the Main Library, Faculty, School, Institute and Centre Libraries. The KNUST Library is the best stocked science and technology library in Ghana today.

University of Cape Coast Library started in 1962 with a nucleus collection of books from the erstwhile Department of Education at KNUST and Legon. The Library started like the others, in a temporary prefabricated building; the science collection was housed in the Science Faculty, separate from the others. The inadequacy of the temporary building of UCC Library became quite evident as early as the 1970s when the problem of space, both for readers and the stock started showing. A new library building was then started in 1976. As at 1999 when the library was being moved into the new building, the project had not been fully completed. Sam Jonah library, as it is called now (named after Sam Esson Jonah, Chancellor of UCC) is a product of planning, designing and constructing. The new library is ultra modern and magnificent, it can sit 2000 clients and stock over 250,000 books. The UCC Library has grown into what is referred to as the University Library System, consisting of the Main Library as well as the College, Faculty, School, Institute and Centre Libraries (Gaba, 1995).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Ilo (2016) describes job stress as a 20<sup>th</sup> century disease and also observed in a survey report that almost 80% of employees describe their jobs as stressful. The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2005 predicted that by 2020, stress would be a major cause of workplace ill health (Regan, Howard & Oyebode, 2009). Unmanaged stress gives rise to emotional breakdown and poor health of library staff. This invariably results in reduced work output as well as poor working conditions, leading to frustration. Observations and library statistics

reveal high usage rate of these university libraries (Duze, 2011). However, many libraries do not have enough manpower to compare with the quantum of work and the large number of users that visit the library daily (Ranjna, 2015). This situation generates stress to the library staff. Furthermore, with the upsurge of different universities in the country, there is bound to be differences in the level of stress among library staff in Ghana.

Preliminary investigations suggest that pressure from management, poor work environment, excess workload, inadequate support system, challenges in coping with new technology and lack of supervision are causes of job stress among university library staff in Ghana. Research has shown that there is high level of stress among library staff (Ilo, 2016). Kinman and Wray (2013) state that unlike advanced countries such as United States of America, Britain and France where library staff stress has received reasonable attention because of the relationship between occupational stress and work effectiveness, the issue of stress associated with the profession has not received the required attention in Ghana and therefore very little literature exists on this topic. The argument is that most of the findings of the studies on stress among library staff conducted in the Western educational context cannot be applied in Ghana due to contextual and environmental differences. Again, most of the findings of the studies on stress conducted in Ghana were conducted in other fields either than the library field. To the best of my knowledge, this has not been given enough attention in literature. This study, therefore, sought to examine the various causes and management of stress among library staff from public universities in Ghana.



### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the management of stress among public university library staff in Ghana. Again, the study sought to unearth the causes and effects of stress encountered by public university library staff in Ghana.

### **1.4 The Objectives of the Study**

The study sought to;

1. Ascertain the categories of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana.
2. Examine the causes of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana.
3. Determine the level of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana.
4. Determine the effects of job stress on effectiveness of public university library staff in Ghana.
5. Identify strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

These research questions are delineated as follows:

1. What are the categories of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana?
2. What are the causes of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana?

3. What level of job stress do public university library staff experience in Ghana?
4. What are the effects of job stress on library staff in public university libraries in Ghana?
5. What are the strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience?

### **1.6 Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference between the three universities (UCC, UG and KNUST) with regards to their stress management.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the three universities (UCC, UG and KNUST) with regards to their stress management.

### **1.7 Scope of Study**

1. The study was limited to only public university libraries that have been in existence for more than (thirty) 30 years in Ghana as their library systems are more organized with more staff and resources.
2. The study was also limited to library staff; from the position of Library Assistant to Librarian by a way of gathering data for the study.
3. The study also considered the categories, causes, levels and effects of job stress as well as strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience.

### **1.7.1 Library staff**

They include all professional staff with at least a degree certificate (bachelor) in library science and/or library and information science from an institution of higher learning; especially the universities; paraprofessional staff who are staff with diploma certificate in librarianship; and non-professional staff, that is, those staff who are without any certificate in librarianship but work in the libraries (Education for Librarianship, 2007). This is to say that library staff are information professionals often regarded as the “custodian of knowledge”; those who are saddled with the organization, acquisition, storage and dissemination of information in university libraries.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

### **1.8.1 Person-Environment Fit Theory**

A theoretical framework offers a “map” of the research process that directs the researcher in investigating the nature and scope of the study in relation to the research questions, objectives, and the purposes of the study. The theoretical framework for this study anchors on the Person-Environment Fit Theory which was initially proposed by French, Rodgers and Cobb (1974). This is the most commonly accepted framework for conducting research on job stress (Brewer & McMahan, 2004; Kusi, Danso Mensah & Gyaki, 2014; Kokkinos, 2007). Person-Environment Fit is the degree to which individual characteristics harmonise with those of his or her environment (Meyer & Dale, 2010). Person-Environment Fit Theory asserts that the interaction between an individual and his or her environment determines whether or not the condition

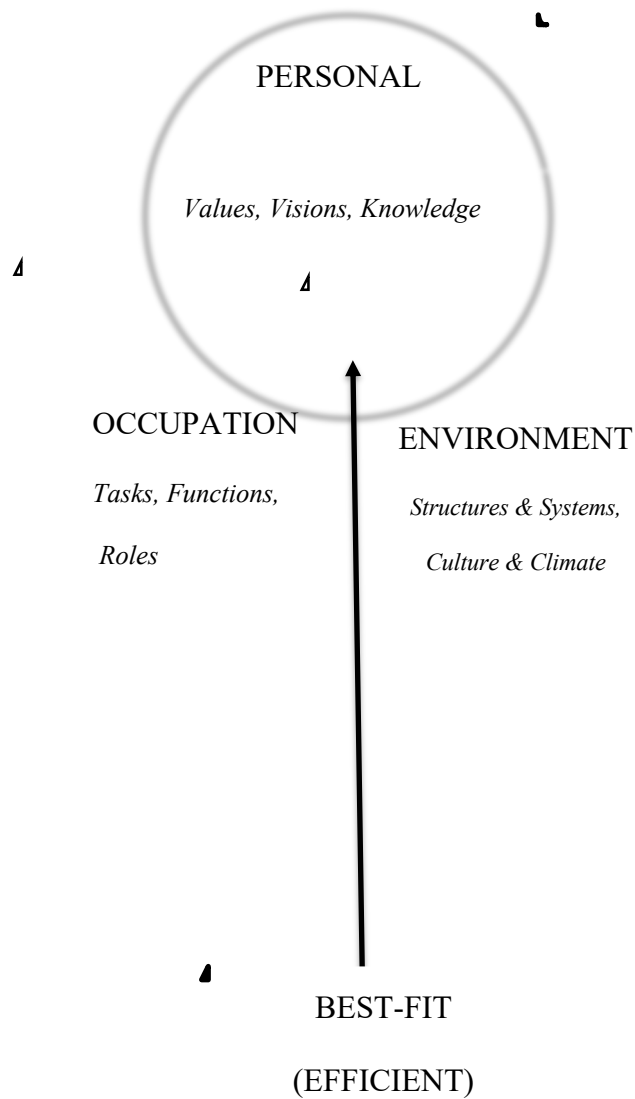
is stressful for that person. It assumes that human behaviour is a function of the person and the environment, and that a person's career satisfaction, stability and achievement depend on the congruence or fit between the person's personality and the environment in which the person works (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004; Kokkinos, 2007; Salami, 2011).

The match between individuals and the environment, or Person-Environment Fit, has long been a research topic of interest to industrial and organizational psychologists (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Person-Environment Fit has attracted the attention of recruiters, job seekers, and present workers in the business world (Kristof-Brown, 2000). Over the decades of Person-Environment Fit research, four types of fit have emerged as the most studied phenomena (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011): person job fit (PJ fit), person organization fit (PO fit), person group fit (PG fit), and person supervisor fit (PS fit). These dimensions of PE fit have added to the literature on work attitudes, turnover, performance, job search, and managerial selection decisions (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

The concept of Person-Environment Fit is grounded in the Interactionist Theory of Behaviour. Early works such as Pervin (1968) cited in Chuang, Shen & Judge (2016) rested upon the assumption that certain environments correspond to each individual, mostly matching the characteristics of the individual's personality, and that this correspondence, in turn, results in higher performance, higher satisfaction, and less stress for the individual. Since Pervin, research using diverse representations of fit has increased in support of

the validity of PE fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In the work situations, greater degrees of fit predict positive work results (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). According to Clark-Murphy (2010), the Person-Environment approach suggests that for optimal productivity, individuals should be compatible with their environments. Hochman and Yechiam (2011) concluded that, decision-making performance reaches an optimal level when an individual's cognitive capability matches the complexity of their environment. Arridge and Schotland (2009) also argued that for optimal productivity, organisations should be designed on the Person-Environment Fit based on individual's cognitive capacity at every level of the organisation.

In the context of the workplace, the individual's attributes are interests, transferable skills, career motives and values, personality preferences, career orientations, self-concepts and sense of self-efficacy. The work environment include individual's expectations and perceptions regarding workload, control over one's work, tangible and intrinsic rewards of work, the relationship and sense of community among co-workers, perceptions of fairness in the workplace and the role of personal and organizational values (Herr et al., 2004). If the fit between an individual and his environment is incompatible, that results in stress. Similarly, lack of fit between the demands placed on individuals and their abilities to meet those demands can result in stress. The framework of the Person Environment Fit based on a diagram by Law et. al. as presented in Figure 1.



Based on diagram by Law et al.

- PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT THEORY DIAGRAM

### **1.8.2 Summary**

The use of the Person-Environment Fit Theory to underpin the study was dictated by the nature of the topic and the literature reviewed. The basic principle of the Person-Environment Fit Theory asserts that the interaction between an individual and his or her environment determines whether or not the situation is stressful for that person. Human behaviour is a function of the person and the environment, and that a person's vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement depend on the congruence or fit between the person's personality and the environment in which the person works. An understanding of theoretical framework was relevant to the study as it was the main lens for the study and assisted in the preparations of data collection, data analysis and presentation

### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

Whereas the research questions are aimed at guiding this study, it is important to show practitioners the contribution of this study to policies and practices. Marshall and Rossman (2006) argue that "The researcher must show that practitioners needed information that the research will provide". It is envisaged that the study will benefit university authorities and policy makers. University authorities will have a set of criteria to manage the stress library staff experience in their working duties in Ghana.

Again, University authorities would be able to identify causes of stress that arise when librarians are doing their work so that they could help prevent the occurrence of stress. It could help government and corporate bodies to

formulate policies that will reduce stress among library staff and people in other organisations in Ghana. The study will also contribute to existing knowledge on stress management among library staff in Ghana and the world. Lastly, the results of the study will be useful to researchers who are interested in examining the issue further. The findings and the approach to the study can be useful for future studies in a different context.

### **1.10 Organisation of Study**

The study is organised as below:

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Literature review

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Four: Data analysis and findings of the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion of findings of the study.

Chapter Six: Summary, conclusions and recommendations.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The primary goal of this chapter is to provide a critical review of the existing literature on stress management and some adverse consequences of stress among library staff in public universities in Ghana. For easy referencing, the literature was reviewed under the following topics; an overview and definition of stress, general sources of stress, causes of stress among library staff, effects of stress among library staff, coping strategies of library staff stress and relevant empirical work on stress.

#### **2.1 Overview and Definition of Stress**

The word used to describe feelings of tensions or exhaustion usually linked with work overload or excessively demanding work is regularly termed as stress (Iqbal & Kokash, 2011). Stress is very natural and an important part of human life, but many people fail to realize this. Moreover, stress can serve to enhance a person's motivation, fulfilment, performance, and personal attainment in the workplace (Akpene, 2014; Matthewman, Rose, & Hetherington, 2009). The concept of job stress has been a great concern for the past decades among employees and employers in different governmental organizations, but little attention has been paid to it by these organizations.

Experience has shown that stress has done more harm than good to organizational staff. Work related stress refers to stress caused by or made worse by work. It occurs when a person perceives the work environment in such a way that his or her reaction involves feelings of an inability to cope (Health and Safety Authority, 2006).

Work related stress occurs when there is a mismatch between the demands of job and the resources, as well as the capabilities of the individual's work to meet those demands (Babatunde, 2011; Blaud, Kenyon & Lekhi, 2007). On the contrary, Lazarus et al. (2014) believe that stress is a state of mental or emotional strain exerted upon an individual through demanding or difficult circumstances. It is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize". Kinman and Wray (2013) observed that a recently published European research indicates that British academic employees are by a large margin, the least satisfied in Europe and the most likely to regret the choice of career. Several studies conducted in the higher education sector have associated work-related stress with low levels of jobs satisfaction (Oghenetega, Ejedafiru & Rabi, 2014; McClenahan, Giles & Mallet, 2007, Byrne, Chughtai, Flood, & Willis, 2012). In addition to these findings, the European study also reported that 61% of senior academics and 56% of junior academics from the UK described their job as a considerable source of strain. In Malaysia, a study involving 300 members of academic staff in one university reported that job stress was one of the significant factors reducing job satisfaction among staff (Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie & Alam, 2009).

The situation in Ghana is not different because a study conducted by Kusi, Danso-Mensah and Gyaki (2014) found that the level of stress among academics was high.

Selye (1936) as stated in Shah (2015) defined stress as any internal drive or an external event that threatens to trouble the organismic balance. Stress is an experience that arises from a transaction between a person and the environment and observes that over scheduling, procrastination or failing to plan ahead are behaviours that can lead to stress (Aldwin, 2007; Ilo, 2016). Similarly, Akpene, (2014) McEwen and Wingfield (2010) defined stress as “any condition or characteristic of the work environment which threatens the individual’s psychological and physiological homeostasis”. According to Stein and Cutler (2002) stress is defined as a complete reaction to one’s environmental hassles and pressure and conceived that stress is an inevitable part of life that each person has to deal with. Furnham (2012) considered stress to be any pressure which exceeds a person’s capacity to keep physiological, psychological and emotional stability.

Stress can result from any situation or experience that makes an individual feel frustrated, angry, nervous or anxious, and can cause severe health problems (Lazarus et.al, 2014). The word stressor refers to anything that provokes a stress response. Stress is an experience that arises from a transaction between a person and the environment and observes that over scheduling, procrastination or failing to plan ahead are behaviours that can lead to stress (Aldwin, 2007; Ilo, 2016). The term stress has been categorized as a stimulus,

as a response or reaction and, as in this study, as a transition between the person and the environment (Ekwelem, 2015). Stress is a mental, physical or emotional strain or tension or it is a situation or factor that can cause this (Ekwelem, 2015). Stress is an inescapable part of life in our modern society since it is found in the home, school and the workplace (Hart, Pearce & Aguilar, 2007; Ilo, 2016). Undoubtedly, stress is a major problem. The quality of life of workers is determined by the occupational stress that stands as a real threat (Akpene, 2014; Dyck, 2001). According to Braaten (2000) job stress is defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers. It can be deduced from this that most of the stressful events are linked to the workplace.

## **2.2 Sources of Stress**

Work environment could be seen as the physical, social, psychological and technological conditions that are found in the work places and have an impact on the job performance of librarians. This impact could be direct or indirect, and environment could be internal or external. Environmental factors include social interaction, power supply, physical facilities, lighting level and motivation (Babalola, 2012; Cooper & Bramwell, 1992). The work place or environment can impede or enhance the productivity of librarians whose jobs require comfortable, conducive, and congenial environments.

Kampert (2008) claims that employers who pay attention to all the details that affect the welfare of their workers, including their work environment are likely

to retain the best people, save cost, and improve the productivity of their workers' psychological and emotional stability. According to Sahin (2009) and Sorenson (2007), stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he desires and for which the outcome is perceived as both uncertain and important. From this definition one can say that stress is not necessarily bad; it also has a positive value when it offers potential gain.

According to Sutherland and Cooper (2000), organizations are continually reinventing themselves and as a consequence, changes to job roles are common. The impact of changes in the workplace can alter the nature of job roles, causing role ambiguity or role conflict, or additional demands, resulting in role overload. Role ambiguity, role conflict and level of responsibility for others are often regarded as the major sources of stress relating to a person's role in the organization (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2002).

Role Overload and Responsibility is a source of stress among library staff in Ghana. Role overload, referring to the number of different roles an individual has to fulfill, can lead to excessive demands on the individual's time and may create uncertainty about the ability to perform these roles adequately (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2002). Sutherland and Cooper (2000) posit the view that being responsible for work and performance of others, demands more interaction with others, and is; thus, more stressful than being responsible for equipment, budgets and other issues.

Another source of stress relating to role in organization is role ambiguity. Role ambiguity refers to the extent to which employees lack clarity about their role or the task demands at work (Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000). It occurs when an employee does not understand or realize the expectations and demands of the job, or the scope of the role (Danna & Griffen, 1999; Harwell, 2013). Role ambiguity has been associated with tension and fatigue, intention to quit or actually leaving the job, and high levels of anxiety, physical and psychological strain, and absenteeism. The stress arising from unclear objectives or goals can lead to job dissatisfaction, a lack of self-confidence, a lowered sense of self-esteem, depression and low work motivation, increased blood pressure and pulse rate, and intentions to leave a job (Christian, 2015). According to O'Driscoll and Beehr (2000) research has demonstrated a consistent link between role ambiguity in a job and high levels of psychological strain and burnout. Role ambiguity involves a lack of clear and consistent information about duties, tasks, responsibilities and rights (Ekwelem, 2015; Govender, 2005).

Role conflict is also a source of stress among library staff. According to Ekwelem (2015), role conflict arises when an employee experiences incompatible demands or incompatible goals surrounding tasks connected with their job which can induce negative emotional reaction due to perceived inability to be effective on the job. Furthermore, having to do tasks that are not perceived to be part of one's job role can potentially lead to stress associated with role conflict (Cooper & Sutherland, 2000). O'Driscoll and Cooper (2002) maintain that people who have a more flexible orientation to life, suffer less

from role conflict than people with high anxiety levels. Lehnert, (2002) also explained that role conflict could cause stress because library and information professionals have various supervisors who do not agree on what the employee should be doing. Whereas stress is also caused by role ambiguity which is present when an employee does not know that for which he or she is responsible. She explained also that when employees do not use their skills, it can be as stressful as being overworked whereas librarians may experience stress in assisting patrons because they do not have time to become an expert on each and every system.

The other causes of stress as suggested by Ilo (2016) quoting Bunge (1989), budget cut and staff shortages have resulted in:

1. Lack of adequate knowledge of information sources or technology, interpersonal relationship, library support staff feel a lack of recognition, appreciation and respect from other staff, tension between professionals and non-professionals, negative co-workers and gossip.
2. Lack of effective feedback from supervisors, co-workers and patrons
3. Role conflict and role ambiguity.
4. Inadequate supervision and management in terms of feeling left out of decisions where one has important expertise.
5. Managers who will not risk advocating for their staff.
6. Inadequate office space, crowding and lack of privacy in offices.

### **2.2.1 Environmental factors**

McClellan (2011) in a study on stress and cataloguing paraprofessionals in academic and public libraries in Florida noticed some stress from the library

work environment. According to the study, environmental factors attracted a 40.5% response, while 10.5% respondents averred that they often experience stress from work overload. In the study, 61% of respondents experience stress because they are expected to know so many things while others said their stress emanates from fear of making mistakes. Kinman and Wray (2013) who revealed that the condition of work environment in Africa is worse than that of UK where the impact of work stress is not inherently bad. Aldwin (2007) observed that physical stressors can result from environmental conditions which include fumes from photocopying machines and cleaning compounds.

### **2.2.2 Organisational factors**

The parent institutions where librarians work also contribute in generating stress. Employees also undergo stress while trying to meet up with professional assignments, teaching and writing papers for promotion. The interface satisfying the need of users and meeting up with publications gives librarians real time stress (Ajalla, 2011; Ilo, 2016).

Ilo (2016) quoting Schneider (1991) carried out a research on stress and job satisfaction among librarians in which it was discovered that the major issues that bring stress to the employees include poor communication between staff and management as well as lack of opportunity for staff to lend their views on issues affecting them. Employees have family responsibilities outside the library workplace. These include caring for spouses, children and relatives. Homework interface may pose stress to a librarian depending on what is happening at home. Okonkwo (2014) observes that family strain interference



with work results in family conflict which in turn results to pressure, tension, anxiety, stress to the employee. Jha, Perlin, Kizer & Dudley (2003) identified juggling parent and work roles as one of the causes of stress.

### **2.2.3 Cultural factors**

Ajalla (2011) noticed that stress emanates from beliefs, life cycle transition, culture and the environment people work in. Cultural stress results from frictions between an employee's, social, ethnic, religious and family background and the environments in which persons are working. When cultures conflict with work expectations, they lead to problems in the workplace. Librarians suffering from deep conflicts between cultural issues and jobs are mistaken to be overreacting to their work environment. This negatively affects their work, behaviour and health. In Ghana, Akussah, Dzandu & Osei-Adu (2012) researched on stress and coping mechanisms among works of the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) headquarters. It was revealed that, out of 21 stress factors, the whole staff scored above the median of 3 on 20. Lack of performance based reward (promotion or recognition) scored 3.43, revealing the most stressful factor. According to the study this was evident in most Ghanaian public service organizations. This study used a case study design with a sample size of fifty nine (59) representing the whole population and the Work Stress Inventory (WSI) questionnaire was used for data collection.

### **2.3 Effects and Levels of Stress**

Stress has a lot of effects on the individual, the organisation and the society at large. The effects of stress to an organization are found in premature deaths of employee, higher rates of accidents, performance inefficiencies, increased turnover and increased disability payment among others (Adjei, 2009; Ofoegbu & Nwandiani, 2006). Griffin & Clarke (2011) say, although it is individuals who experience stress it has direct consequences for businesses. To him, stress may translate into poor quality of work and lower productivity. Withdrawal behaviours such as sick leave or excuse duty may also occur. A particular unsettling manifestation of stress on the job that has become all too prevalent in recent years is known as desk rage; a situation where office workers behave violently toward others when stressed out by long hours and difficult working conditions. It takes many forms such as yelling at people or verbal abuse. This situation can be compared to angered drivers who are known to express their negative reactions to others in dangerous ways (Greenberg, 2005).

Matteson and Miller (2012) also identified absenteeism at workplaces as a direct consequence of the stress phenomenon. To O'Driscoll and Cooper (2002), it has been estimated that at least half of all absenteeism from work are, in some manner, stress related. Besides, Pettinger (2000) also asserts that people tend to pursue their own objectives at the expense of, rather than in harmony with, those of the organization. Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2008) assert that in view of the devastating effects of stress, organizations are now beginning to realize that they should be involved in

helping employees cope with stress. One argument for this reason is that because the business is at least partially responsible for stress, it should help relieve it. Also, stress-related insurance claims by employees can cost the organization considerable sums of money hence there is the need to be concerned. According to Kyriacou (2001), symptoms of stress in library works are manifested in anxiety and frustration, impaired performance, and ruptured interpersonal relationships at work and at home.

From an organizational point of view, the consequence of stress results in a significant loss of skilled workers through resignation or premature retirement from all levels of workforce. The stressed librarian who remains within the profession, on the other hand, is likely to be less effective in key areas such as lesson organization, student behaviour management, responsiveness to students and self-confidence relationships with parents. In individual human terms, the cost of lecturer stress can be huge and include impaired health, reduced self-confidence and self-esteem and damaged personal relationships. If early retirement or resignation is taken, often the consequence is dramatically reduced economic status (Wells, 2000).

Researchers generally agree that a certain degree of stress is a normal part of life, but prolonged stressors could lead to symptoms that are physical, psychological or behavioural (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 2000). O'Driscoll and Cooper (2002) postulate that when an individual is confronted with a challenging situation, tension or pressure, the sympathetic nervous system can be triggered to activate a wide variety of hormonal secretions. The hypothalamus, when it identifies danger, triggers the pituitary gland to release

hormones that cause the adrenal glands to increase its secretion of several hormones, including cortisol which provides more energy to the body; epinephrine which increases both the rate and strength of the heart's contractions and raises blood pressure; and nor epinephrine, which is similar to the body's sympathetic nervous system, acts as the body's fight or flight system when faced with emergencies (Chrousos, 2009). The hormonal responses determine the severity of the individual's anxiety reactions, mind-set, energy level, level of depression, and physical state of health after experiencing a stressful event (Akintayo, 2012). Dollard (2002); however, maintains that when the challenge is short term the body's first reaction is adaptive, enabling the person to set in action energy resources to combat the stressor, however when these challenges are continuous, severe or repetitive the "normal physiological reaction may turn pathological" (Dollard, 2002).

Goetsch (1998) explains that the human response to stress may be linked to that of a rubber band being stretched. The rubber band stretches as the stress continues to be applied until a limit is reached when the rubber band eventually breaks. Similarly, for humans, various physical and psychological changes are observed with the repetitive stimuli of stress. Until the limit is reached, the harmful effects can be reserved. The effects on human; however, become pathological with an increase in duration of the stress beyond the individual's limit. To Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2008) and Ferrell and Cherne (2008), stress has been associated with a vast array of diseases which directly affects the endocrine system, the cardiovascular system, the muscular system and the emotions. Cole (2004) analyses the

symptoms in three categories namely, physiological, psychological and behavioural.

Cole (2004) discussed the symptoms under three main headings. Rather, they hold the view that most of the early interest in stress focused heavily on physiological concerns. According to him, historically, the majority of research on stress has explored its link with physical illness but works on psychological and cognitive outcomes are a more recent development. Increased heart and breathing rates, blood pressure, headaches and heart attacks are some of the physiological symptoms of stress. He adds that these symptoms usually require the skills of medical practitioners; hence managers are of less concern. It is the psychological and behavioural symptoms that are of great value to managers.

Cole (2004) explains that the physiological symptoms could be short term reactions (e.g. tensed muscle and extra adrenalin secretion) and long-term effects (such as coronary heart disease, indigestion, gastric ulcers, back pain or even cancer). Cole further states that the psychological signs tend to manifest in anxiety states and depression such as feeling anxious, worried, upset, bitter and boredom. As it is, both the physiological and psychological symptoms eventually lead to generalized changes in behaviour such as sleeplessness, loss of appetite, increased cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption. In the long run, there may be increased absenteeism, committing more errors than normal, aggression towards colleagues and procrastination.

## **2.4 Coping Strategies of Stress**

Coping, as a process, is a person's constant efforts in thought and deed to manage exact demands appraised as challenging or overpowering (Christian, 2015). In their study, Shuler and Morgan (2013) mention that coping strategies involved the cognitive or behavioural endeavours to achieve specific situational demands which are appraised as challenging or beyond one's ability to adapt. There are two types of coping strategies and this is affected by one's stress reaction. The effort of coping may be directed at themselves and this is referred to as problem-focused strategies on one hand and on the other hand, the emotional reactions which frequently escort those demands is known as emotion-focused strategies (Christian, 2015; Morgan, 2013).

Matteson and Miller (2012) in a research recommended that one's coping strategies are compensatory factors that help to sustain their health and also reported that problem solving and effective regulation as coping responses were associated with fewer and simple dysfunction, whereas coping responses directed towards emotional-discharge were connected to more dysfunction and were used more often by women. In reaction to stress problems, some employees have taken stress management training seriously and efforts have been made to separate occupation perceived to be causing the stress (Azumah, 2014). The increasing stress among the supporting staff in the university should be acknowledged and attempts should be made to alleviate it.

According to research done by Humbold, Leal, Laneiro, and Tavares (2013), which examined occupational stress, sources of stress and stress management

strategies through the eyes of management consultants: a multiple correspondence analysis for latent constructs. Besides, they used 39 respondents and found out that 'coaching' (19.0%) was the highest for stress management strategies and the differences between the two gender groups were not major. Stress management strategies were best clarified in a three-dimensional model as 'individual support strategies', 'group dynamics strategies' and 'organizational culture strategies'. Similarly, Fullerton and McWatters (2001) conducted a study in gender differences in posttraumatic stress disorder after a motor vehicle accident with a sample size of 122. It was revealed that, in meeting the standard for facing of diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder, male and female did not differ. However females were at greater risk of facing specific feelings in almost the same situations than men. Moreover the study stated that, females managed stress better than men.

#### **2.4.1 Social support**

There is consistent evidence that employees with more support from others experience lower stress (Aldwin, 2007; Roy, 2005), and where an employee is faced with potentially stressful demands, conflicts and problems in the work place, having support from others may reduce the impact of the pressures on the individual's well-being (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2002). Support from colleagues and supervisors had a significant buffering influence on librarian stress, and feelings of isolation exacerbated the stress experienced, and can also help to build positive self-efficacy in librarians (Ikonne, 2015).

Ware and Kitsantas (2007) defined a group's willingness to work and stay together in a group as "cohesiveness". The more a librarian believes in the group's capabilities and sees it aligned with one's own ideas of educating students, the more it correlates to a higher feeling of self-efficacy. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) further emphasized that, "Observing colleagues managing different aspects of work and seeking guidance may increase individual workers' self-efficacy, particularly when library staff work in teams and have ample opportunities to observe each other". The opposite would be true if a librarian did not believe in the abilities of others. The more positive experiences of collaboration a librarian has, the more likely it will boost intrinsic motivation (Rhodes, Nevill & Allan, 2004). Working together and believing in the abilities of the group as a whole can give an individual a higher feeling of self-efficacy and the ability to do the job. Other support systems include, reduced perfectionism, where individuals are taught to have more realistic expectations and social support, providing the necessary emotional, informational, appraisal and instrumental support that the individual needs (Quick & Quick, 2004). By understanding the stressors that prevail in the work place, the appropriate steps can be undertaken to assist in the reduction of stress levels. An organization could consider the provision of skilled support, by employing a full-time counsellor that could provide the needed counselling services or use Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs). Counselling involves a set of techniques, skills and attitudes to help people manage their own problems using their own resources. Other methods of stress prevention include: training individuals in stress management techniques, managing morale and utilizing teamwork (Sutherland & Cooper, 2002).



#### **2.4.2 Professional development**

Support also comes in the form of professional development. It offers more opportunity for library staff to strengthen their working skills and can result in stronger job satisfaction, thereby increasing retention in the profession (Rhodes et al., 2004). The Librarian needs to be given the chance to work on their craft and the training they attend must be relevant to the individual based on necessity. For example, if a Librarian is struggling with working duties, there should be opportunity for additional training to assist in the individual workings needs.

Brock and Grady (2000) emphasized that librarian development does not stop after a pre-service education is completed. Additionally, Kelchtermans and Strittmatter (1999) highlighted, “future librarian should be supported to develop attitudes and skills for lifelong professional learning”. Through continued staff development, teachers should acquire new knowledge, learn a new skill, and be intellectually stimulated and challenged (Brock & Grady, 2000). Continuing to expand one’s knowledge is an important key to lessening teacher stress and burnout.

Support of the new library staff is an important element not to be overlooked. New library staff need help in realizing the importance of their work and how to get the resources needed to be effective in their jobs (Inman & Marlow, 2004). Well-designed mentoring programs have been studied and are proven to raise retention rates of new library staff by improving their overall job

performance (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Furthermore, in order for new library staff to learn new ways of working and become more familiar with their duties, there needs to be regular, structured opportunities for staff development at the school site (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

## **2.5 Relevant Empirical Work on Stress**

Within the background of this study, “Managing stress among library staff in public university libraries in Ghana”; the researcher consciously reviewed works that are empirically related to the study. Siakwa (2014) studied “Sources of stress and coping strategies”. She examined the relationship between sources of stress and coping strategies adopted by academic senior members in the university of cape coast. The findings of the study were that senior members barely experienced stress related disorders.

Although senior members are endowed with knowledge on stress and its attending issues, the study revealed that they still go through stress. It is fascinating however, that they have defensive mechanisms or adaptive strategies thereby making the coping strategies adopted work for them. This explains why they scarcely experience stress related disorders. The most predominant stress related disorders faced by the senior members of the university were pains of any kind, sleeping problems, and feeling overwhelmed. It was also found out that respondents found interpersonal relationships, research work, teaching and professional development as stressful. Senior members adopted coping strategies such as confronting, distancing, self controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility,

escaping avoidance, planned problem solving and positive reappraisal.

However, Siakwa's (2014) study relates to the one under investigation because it was carried out in the same country and also the study adopted the descriptive survey research design where questionnaire method of data collection with the data analyzed using descriptive statistics; with the area of study and population as Ghana and public university libraries respectively.

Moreover Azila-Gbettor, Atatsi, Danku, and Soglo (2015) assessed stress sources and their effects on academic performance of business students in Ho Polytechnic, Ghana. The study among other things found the most dominant stress for each stressor category examined, the two most dominant stress categories are "TECATS" (Total Environmental, Campus, Administrative, transition Stressors) and "TACS" (Total Academic Stressors). The level of stress was found to be significant for all demographic variables evaluated. However, the causal factors for stress categories have been mixed. Finally, no significant effects were found between stress and academic performance. Even though there was a positive correlation between stress and performance, the relationship was found to be weak and no significant effects were found between the stress and academic performance.

Azila-Gbettor, Atatsi, Danku, and Soglo's (2015) study implied that irrespective of stress level, students could still achieve academic excellence. This demonstrated that students found a way of minimizing the effects of stress on their performances. Also, the study suggested that authorities undertake further study on the ways students manage to cope with stress,

develop a policy and use it in educating the larger students' population. On the contrary, this study was carried out in a Ghanaian Polytechnic while the present study is in public university libraries in Ghana.

Furthermore, Roberts (2014) studied stress coping strategies among Ghanaian women in managerial positions. The purpose of the study was to investigate occupational stressors, their effects and the coping mechanisms that women in managerial positions adopt. The results showed that stressors experienced by the women included role over-load, role insufficiency, role ambiguity, role conflict, role responsibility and physical environmental stressors. The effects of these occupational stressors included vocational, psychological, interpersonal and behavioural and physical strains. Consequently, the women employed various coping mechanisms to combat these effects and that the severity of these stressors often depended on their coping strategies. The findings of the study stipulate that, there was no evidence to suggest that these women employed popular stress reduction techniques such as autogenic or progressive muscular relaxation including yoga and formal structured physical education in coping with the stresses they experienced. The results have implications on appropriate work place environment, particularly with respect to provision of stress coping or management strategies.

Also, Esia-Donkoh, Yelkpieri, and Esia-Donkoh (2011) investigated if students of the Winneba Campus of UEW (University of Education, Winneba), have appropriate strategies to cope with stress. The results of the study showed that among the ten strategies used, "active coping" and "positive reinterpretation and growth" were the two most predominant for problem-

focused and emotion-focused styles of coping respectively. The study also indicated that students of the Winneba campus of UEW used more of emotion-focused strategies than problem-focused strategies in managing stress. This study differs from the one under study in that neither the title, the area of the study or the sampling technique relates but there is a relationship in the research design, method of data collection and analysis.

In addition, Akpene (2014) studied stress and coping strategies among supporting staff at the Central Administration in the University of Ghana. Results showed that the first three sources of stress ranked highest included dealing with several pressing problems at once; finding that rewards are not based on performance and having inadequate personnel or equipment to respond in an emergency. The supporting staff best coping strategies for stress were to increase effort to make things work, praying or finding faith in God or ones religion and to make a plan of action and follow it. The findings of this study revealed that 80.8% of the supporting staff perceived stress moderately and this is associated with their educational level. They face a wide range of sources of stress and they find coping strategies to overcome their issue concerning stress. However, this study partly relates to the one under investigation because it was carried out in the same university and country and also the study adopted a cross-sectional research design where questionnaire method of data collection with the data analyzed using descriptive statistic. Whereas the study under investigation adopt descriptive survey, questionnaire method of data collection and the data analyzed using descriptive statistics; with the area of study and population as Ghana and public university libraries

respectively.

## **2.6 Summary**

Workload among library staff, which can eventually lead to stress, does not have just one problem with an “easy-to-fix” solution. There are a number of reasons for which people feel stressed on the job (Brock & Grady, 2000). Also, there are workers who can handle stress better than others due to personality traits and learned techniques, which help handle stressful situations in a more positive way (Kokkinos, 2007). The literature has dealt extensively with issues that guided the study. In this review, the researcher discussed the view of varying scholars, authors, editors and authorities in different concepts that relate to the problem under study, “Managing stress among library staff in public university libraries in Ghana”.

In the same, these concepts, studies, researches are publications of varying individuals or authorities that are scattered in different textbooks, journals and numerous reference sources; were systematically put together to form the review of related literature for this study. Specifically, the review summarized: an overview and definition of stress, general sources of stress, causes of stress among library staff, effects of stress among library staff, coping strategies of library staff stress and relevant empirical work on stress.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

Methodology refers to the principles, procedures and practices that govern research. Kazdin (2003) pointed out that “methodology” should be thought of as encompassing the entire process of conducting a research. This chapter discusses philosophical perspective in the research and how they influenced methodological choices in this particular study. The methodology chapter is delineated as follows: research design, population, sample size and sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection procedure and data analysis.

#### 3.1 Research Design

A research design is a plan of study (Maxwell, 2012). Yin (2013) views a research design as, "a preconceived plan according to which data are to be collected and analysed to investigate research questions". This means a research design is a programme that guides the researcher as he or she collects, analyses and interprets data. Mixed method design is not, however, just the arbitrary collection of both qualitative and quantitative data to see what each tells us about a given social problem.

Mixed method design is an umbrella term that includes many research designs such as embedded, explanatory, triangulation and exploratory research designs. Each design has its own utility, procedures, strengths and weaknesses that are dependent upon the research context. However, given the objectives of

the study, the design employed was mixed method design (Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The quantitative data provides the initial picture of the research problem, and the additional qualitative analysis explains the larger picture of the research problem. The purpose of the quantitative data is to provide a numeric description that may be generalised to the specific population. Specifically, quantitative findings are important because they help generalise the current state of stress experienced by university library staff in Ghana. Qualitative findings is important to the study because the researcher will learn the state of job-related stress they encounter (i.e., breadth).

Since the study is mixed method, the researcher needed to show practitioners the approach that represents the quantitative and qualitative phase. The researcher adopted descriptive survey design for the study. Bowling (2014) describes descriptive survey as the study of existing condition, prevailing view points, attitudes, ongoing processes and developing trends in order to obtain information that can be analysed and interpreted to come up with a report of the present status of subject or phenomenon under study. According to Pappathi (2007), descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. This design was found suitable because it gave an in-depth description of the phenomena in their existing setting and economical in collecting data from a large sample with high data turn over (Kothari, 2004; Simons, 2009).



Descriptive surveys report just the way things are (Babbie, 2015). He further indicates that they are directed towards the determination of the nature of situation as they exist, as at the time of the study. Fraenkel and Wallen, (1990) stated that obtaining answers from a large group of people to a set of carefully designed and administered questions lies at the heart of survey research. Thus the researcher employed survey in his research because he is interested in the opinions of a large group of people on the topic of managing stress among university library staff in Ghana.

### **3.2 Selection of Cases**

This study concentrated on the three oldest universities and their libraries in Ghana. They have been in existence for more than 30 years and their library systems are more organized with more experienced staff and stocked with good materials. As at the early 1990s, there were only three public Universities in Ghana, but now the number of public universities have increased from three to ten.

1. The University of Ghana is the oldest and largest among the ten public universities. It was founded in 1948 and gained full university status in 1961. The original emphasis was on the liberal arts, social sciences, basic science, agriculture, and medicine, but (partly as the result of a national educational reform programme) the curriculum was expanded to provide more technology-based and vocational courses and postgraduate training. The Balme Library established in 1948 is located on the main campus of the University of Ghana. The Balme Library was named after David

Mowbray Balme the first Principal of University of Ghana. The Balme Library in addition to various libraries in Schools, Institutes, Faculties, Departments and Halls of Residence of the University, most of which are autonomous forms the University's Library System.

2. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) is a university in Kumasi, Ghana. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology is the public university established in the country, as well as the largest university in Kumasi Metropolis and Ashanti. The Kumasi College of Technology offered admission to its first students to the engineering faculty in 1951 (they entered in 1952), and an Act of Parliament gave the university its legal basis as the Kumasi College of Technology in 1952. The nucleus of the college was formed from 200 teacher training students transferred from Achimota in the Greater Accra Region. The college was affiliated to the University of London. In 1961, the college was granted full university status. KNUST Library was formed as a result of the transfer of the library collection of the Teacher Training Department Achimota College the Kumasi College of Technology, Science and Arts (now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) in January 1952.
3. The University of Cape Coast is a university in Ghana. The university was established in 1962 out of a dire need for highly qualified and skilled manpower in education and was affiliated to the University of Ghana. It was established to train graduate teachers for second cycle institutions such as teacher training colleges and technical institutions, a mission that

the two existing universities were unequipped to fulfill. Since its establishment, the university has added to its functions the training of education planners, administrators, agriculturalists and health care professionals. The University of Cape Coast Library forms an integral part of the University of Cape Coast. It was formed in 1962 with an initial collection of 650 books mainly on English Literature, Economics, History and Geography transferred from the erstwhile Kumasi College of Arts and Education, now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST 1963).

### **3.3 Selection of Subjects**

#### **3.3.1 Population**

Population refers to the aggregate of cases about which a researcher would like to make generalizations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Population is, thus, the group to which a researcher would like to make references. The population of the study constitutes the three premier public universities' (University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Cape Coast) library staff (from the library assistants to the librarian). The total number of library staff among the three premier universities is three hundred and forty-eight (348). The University of Cape Coast recorded the largest number of library staff while Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology had the least number of library staff. The total number of management staff among the three premier universities is twenty-eight (28) people with University of Ghana recording

the largest number of eleven (11) management staff while University of Cape Coast had the least number of eight (8) management staff.

The population is a homogeneous one because the researcher believes they are stakeholders when it comes to library duties and they share similar experiences when it comes to stress. The researcher's intent to use the three premier universities because they have been in existence for more than 30 years and their library system are more organized with staff and resources.

Table 1: *Population for the Study (Quantitative)*

Elements	Library Staff			Total
	Senior Member	Senior Staff	Junior Staff	
UG	14	44	52	110
KNUST	20	34	55	109
UCC	07	74	48	129
TOTAL	41	152	155	348

Table 2: *Population for the Study (Qualitative)*

Elements	Management staff
UG	11
KNUST	09
UCC	08
Total	28

### 3.3.2 Sample size and sampling technique

The sample is chosen from the study population that is commonly referred to as the ‘target population or accessible population’ (Burns & Grove, 2003).

Table 3: *Sample size for the Study*

Elements	Quantitative	Qualitative
	Library Staff	Management Staff
UG	46	3
KNUST	45	3
UCC	53	3
Total	144	9

In order to get a sample size of the population of the study area, the Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel and Townsend’s (1998) formula for determining sample size was adopted. The formula is stated as:

$$\eta_f = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n}{N}}$$

Where:

$\eta_f$  = the desired sample size (when population is less than 10,000),

$n$  = the desired sample size (when population is greater than 10,000),

$N$  = the estimate of the target population size.

In other to get  $n$ , Fisher et al. (1998) provided another formula, which is

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

$n$  = the desired sample size (when the population is greater than 10000)

$z$ = the standard normal deviation, usually set at 1.96 which corresponds to 95 percent confidence level;

$p$ = the proportion of the target population have particular characteristics;

$q$ =  $1.0-p$ ; and

$d$ = the degree of accuracy desired, this is usually set at 0.05

With ( $z$ ) statistic being 1.96, degree of accuracy ( $d$ ) set at 0.05 percent and the proportion of the target or study population with similar characteristic ( $p$ ) at 80 percent, which is equivalent to 0.80, then “ $n$ ” in this case is:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.80) (0.20)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{0.614656}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 245.8624$$

A calculated  $n$ , which is approximately 246, was obtained. Putting population size (348) into the calculated figure in the formula, should be as follows:

$$\eta_f = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n}{N}}$$

$$\eta_f = \frac{246}{1 + \frac{246}{348}}$$

$$\eta_f = \frac{246}{1.7067}$$

$$\eta_f = 144$$

Table 4 below shows a stratified sample size that reflects the position of the three universities.

Table 4: *Stratifying Sample Size*

Elements	Library staff	Sample size
UG	110	45.52=46
KNUST	109	45.10=45
UCC	129	53.38=53
Total	348(N)	144(n)

But for the qualitative phase, nine (9) members were chosen because it is manageable and in qualitative study it is necessary to select a sample size that would enable the phenomenon under study to be explored for a better understanding (Creswell, 2013; Kusi, 2012). Creswell further asserts that selecting a large number of interviewees will result in superficial perspectives and the ability of the researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual. Choose those who were able to give you what you want (Hartley, 2004).

To achieve the above stated sample size, the researcher employed purposive, stratified, simple random and convenience sampling techniques. The researcher used purposive sampling approach which is a non-probability sampling technique to select the three premier universities because the researcher needed universities that have been in existence for more than thirty (30) years.

Both quantitative and qualitative phases were used. Simple random sample technique was used to select library staff for the quantitative phase of the study. An individual is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, such that each individual has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process (Sclater, Jones, Price & Yates, 2008). Staff from each university library were selected for the purpose of this study. A sample size was allocated to get a proportional number for respondents from each university from the sample considered for the research. Proportional allocation is a way of dividing a sample among the strata in a stratified sample survey.

Further, a stratified sample selects separate samples from subgroups of the population which are called “strata” and can often increase the accuracy of survey results (Larsen, 2008). Out of the 144 sample size as calculated above, 46 was allocated to UG, 45 was allocated to KNUST and 53 allocated to UCC. After the respondents were informed on the research, 46 UG library staff were chosen by writing 46 “Yes” and 64 “No” on pieces of paper mixed in a bowl. Then the researcher allowed a UG library staff to choose from the bowl. When the UG library staff chose “Yes” he or she is allowed to participate in the research. This procedure was applied in selecting the 45 and 53 respondents from the KNUST and UCC respectively.

Secondly, simple random sampling procedure was employed because the researcher wanted to remove unbiased selection of individuals so that if a large number of samples are drawn, the average sample would accurately represent the population. Again, the simple random sampling was chosen because it



merely allowed one to draw externally valid conclusions about the entire population based on the sample.

At the qualitative phase, the convenience sampling was used. Convenience sampling is a statistical method of drawing representative data by selecting interviewee of their availability or easy access to data (Babbie, 2015; Babbie, 2001). Convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from the management staff of the three premier universities. This is one of the non-probability sampling strategies often employed in qualitative research (Kusi, 2012; Seidu, 2006). Kusi further posits that when using this strategy, the researcher normally has the research population in mind but involves whoever is available or convenient at the time. The researcher chose to sample the views of the management staff because the researcher believed that they have knowledge about how and why there is stress in various public university libraries.

### **3.4 Instrumentation**

After carefully examining the research questions, the type of information the researcher wants to obtain and purpose of the study, the researcher chose the Likert scale type of questionnaire for the quantitative phase and semi-structured interview for the qualitative phase. Semi-structured interview according to O'Leary (2005) cited in (Kusi, 2012) is neither fully fixed nor fully free and are perhaps best seen as flexible.

Interviews generally start with some defined questioning plan, but a more conversational style of interview may see questions answered in an order

natural to the flow of the conversation. The driving force of qualitative research is to dig deep, tell the story, and not hold back. The semi-structured interview process was used to solicit emotions, feelings, and expose honesty and truth. This open-ended interview allowed participants to feel comfortable and open-up (Creswell, 2013). Using open-ended questions as part of the interview made all participants to share some deep emotional information and provided the researcher with data that had immense value.

In designing the semi-structured interview guide, the researcher's prime aim was to collect data that would answer the research questions. Therefore, a set of questions relating to the central issue in each of the research questions were stated to elicit the desired responses and opinions of the participant. The interview guide contained questions pertaining to stress among library staff. It contained specifically asked questions on categories of stress, causes of stress, level of stress, effects of stress, and strategies for managing the stress. Kusi, (2012) stated that employing this approach enables the researcher to ensure that all his or her research questions are answered.

As noted earlier, the second instrument used to collect data in this study was a likert scale type questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to collect data in the quantitative phase. It had two sections. Section A contained questions on demographic information about the library staff. Section B specifically asked questions on categories of stress, causes of stress, level of stress, effects of stress and strategies for managing stress. The questions were close-ended and answers outlined, giving respondents the opportunity to respond to simple questions. Likert scale items (those that require response such as 'strongly

agree,' 'agree,' 'disagree,' or 'strongly disagree'), or rank some predetermined responses, concepts terms or phrases in an orderly fashion. Data collected through structured questionnaire are easily analysed compared to qualitative data gathered through instruments such as semi-structured interview.

### **3.5 Piloting the Instruments**

The instrument was piloted at the Winneba Campus of the University of Education, Central Region. The campus was chosen for the pilot exercise because it shares similar characteristics and the situation there was not different from that of the three premier universities. Again, the researcher has a professional relationship with many of the library staff, making it easier for me to contact the experienced and knowledgeable staff to critically comment on the instruments. The pilot study was conducted with twenty (20) and three (3) library staff for quantitative and qualitative study respectively. The comments of the participants were considered before the actual interview data collection began. In an attempt to ensure the validity of the instrument, the drafted interview schedule was given to two (2) senior members in the University of Cape Coast Library, to read and make relevant recommendations. The recommendations of the specialists were then used to improve the instrument. Pilot testing was carried out on the instruments to determine their appropriateness before they were used for the main study. The pilot study was done to identify questions on the questionnaire, and interview guide that respondents might have difficulty understanding or interpreting as intended. This was done to ensure that instructions and questions on the items were clear and also devoid of ambiguous and misleading items. Again, those

that were not related to the research questions were corrected before the final administration.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

Before stepping out for data collection, an introductory letter was obtained from the Head of Department of Information Studies. This was presented to the various Heads of libraries in the selected universities to seek permission to carry out the study in their universities. Also, on that same day, appointments were booked with the library staff as well as the management staff of the universities as to when they would be available for the researcher to contact them for the data. Positive feedbacks were given and the days and dates were fixed for the collection to commence, UG, 27th February to 3rd March; KNUST, 7th to 10th of March and UCC 13th to 17th of March 2017. When permission was granted, the questionnaires were administered to the library staff. Data were collected in phases, this section presents the step by step approach as to how data were collected for the study.

#### **3.6.1 Phase 1: Distribution and administration of questionnaire**

The researcher was present at each university during the questionnaire administration. Administering the questionnaires personally offered the researcher the opportunity to explain to the respondents in detail how to respond to the items on the questionnaire. Based on the approved dates for the data collection to begin, the researcher followed exactly the said dates for the data collection process to begin. Administering of the questionnaires was done

with the help of some colleagues already working at the various universities. This took a period of two (3) weeks. The first week was for UG, the second (2) week was for KNUST and the third (3) week was for UCC.

### **3.6.2. Phase 2: Collection of the administered questionnaire**

The researcher then left the questionnaires with the respondents for not more than three days, after which the filled questionnaires were collected from the respondents. This third phase was when the administered questionnaires were collected from all the respondents in the three (3) universities. The collection of the questionnaire was also done with the help of colleagues as the library staff were told to leave the questionnaires with them.

### **3.6.3. Phase 3: Conducting the interview**

The face-to-face interview were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. The interview was recorded using a phone and by writing the responses to the questions that were asked. The introductory part of the interview was the explanation of the objectives of the study. The interview was conducted in the offices of the management staff. The respondents for the interview were nine (9) management staff selected from the three universities. The qualitative data was collected after the quantitative data has been collected. The qualitative data was collected to check few cases that confirm or disconfirm the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

## **3.7 Data Analysis**

In mixed method, data analysis requires knowledge and strategies used in

analysing quantitative and qualitative data. This may involve the interpretation of meaning and functions that may be assigned to the data. The analysis was done based on the research questions and hypotheses set for the study. The quantitative data obtained was compiled and processed using descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviation) and inferential statistics (Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Regression), which were assisted by the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS version 22.0). Specifically, Tables 8 through 11 items were analysed using mean score; where decision making were based on the test value; which is 2.5. Consequently, the test value for this four point likert scale were rated from four (4) through to one (1) in that order and are calculated thus:

$$\text{Test Value } (\bar{x}) = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$$

Therefore a test value of 2.5 was the bench mark for acceptance or rejection of statements. Hence, any mean score (x) that were equal or greater than the test value was accepted or otherwise rejected. Finally, this formulae were used to obtain the individual mean score (x) of the variables.

$$\text{Mean Score } (\bar{x}) = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{F_i X_i}{f_1} \right)$$

Where:

PC = Population Concerned, TP = Total Population,  $F_i$  = frequency of variable,  $x_i$  = variable,  $n$  = number of variables,  $S$  = sigma (summation)

The qualitative data was analysed using content thematic analysis. Content thematic analysis is an analytical process which requires study to work with data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them and searching for pattern (Merriam & Associates, 2002;

Sheperis, Scott & Harry, 2010). For instance, the statement below represents interviewee from university of education on comment on causes of stress during the piloting of instrument.

Over the years, we have been under- staffed, and some employees are also on retirement and those who have resigned all contribute to this. These personnel is not immediately replaced so it takes time and thus making workload higher. I can make indications to the junior staff and senior staff where they are supposed to be many coming early morning to shelve, you find only a few doing the shelving. So the workload starts from the lower level and climbs. All these cope with other things causes stress for the library staff in the university.

Furthermore, to attribute comments to the interviewee from University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Cape Coast were assigned some serial codes. For example, UGRespondent-1, UGRespondent-2, UGRespondent-3 KNUSTRespondent-1, KNUSTRespondent-2, KNUSTRespondent-3, UCCRespondent-1, UCCRespondent-2 and UCCRespondent-3

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), “all subjects should be assured that any data collected from or about them would be held in confidence. Ethical issues which touch on the credibility of this research were considered. The researcher took appropriate steps or measures to protect stakeholders, the participants and the university from unethical issues to ensure that the study

meets up with internationally accepted standards. In the study, the participants' consents were sought before they were involved in the research. Again, the participants and university authorities were adequately aware of the type of information needed from them, why the information was being sought, what purpose it was put to, how the participants were expected to participate in the study and how it would directly and indirectly affect them prior to the study. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were given serious consideration so that whatever information were gotten from the participants would be used strictly for the benefit of the study.

### **3.9 Summary**

In this chapter, the methodology and design of the research were outlined, and situated within a mixed method design. The discussion of the approaches to data collection and analysis were also discussed. In addition to that, the discussion of the researcher's claims about the trustworthiness and data analysis of the study were discussed.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of stress management among public university library staff in Ghana by unearthing the causes and effects of stress encountered by public university library staff in Ghana. For these to materialise the descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviation), inferential statistics (Multiple Regression and ANOVA) were used for the quantitative analysis and content thematic analysis was used for the qualitative analysis.

This chapter has been divided into two parts, the first part is the quantitative analysis of data while the second part is the qualitative analysis. The analysis was done based on the research questions and hypotheses set for the study.

#### **4.1 Findings from Quantitative Analysis**

This part of the chapter is presented under the following sections:

1. The categories of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana.
2. The causes of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana.
3. The level of job stress public university library staff experience in Ghana.
4. The effects of job stress on library staff in public university libraries in Ghana.

5. The strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience.
6. The statistically significant difference between the three universities (UCC, UG and KNUST) with regard to their stress management

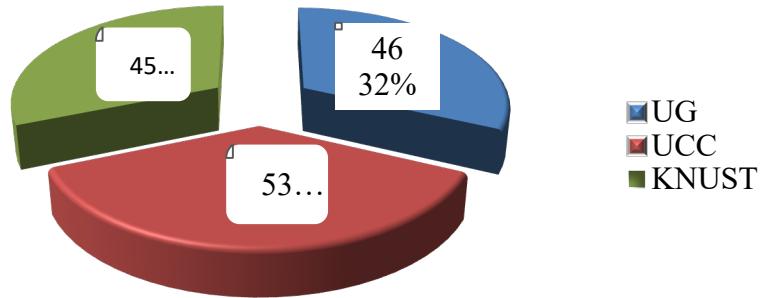
#### **4.1.1 Response rate**

The total number of library staff among the three universities is three hundred and forty-eight (348), one hundred and forty-four (144) were selected for the study. Specifically, out of the total number of one hundred and forty-four (144) respondents selected for the study, all one hundred and forty-four (144) library staff completed the questionnaires, given a response rate of 100%. The total number of respondents for the questionnaire was one hundred and forty-four (144).

#### **4.1.2 Statistical analysis of demographic data**

This section of the questionnaire was designed to elicit the personal information of the respondents (library staff). The demographic data includes the respondent's institution, job status, gender, age and number of children. The data is presented using pie charts and bar graphs, data on respondent's institutions is presented in figure 1.

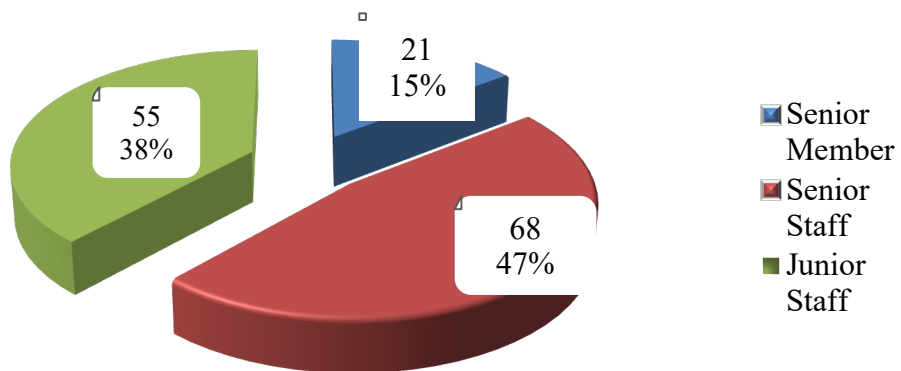
Institution of the Respondents (N)=144



**Figure 1: A pie chart showing the institutions of the respondents**

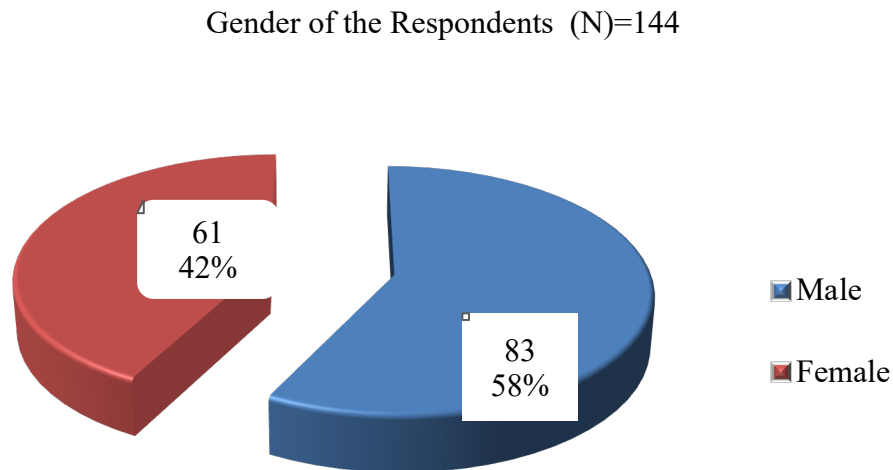
Figure 1 gives graphical representation of the institutions of the respondents. The figure shows that the majority of the respondents, 53 representing 37% were UCC staff; 46 of the respondents representing 32% were UG staff, and 45 representing 31% were KNUST staff. This implies that most of the staff were from UCC. Figure 2 below shows Job Status of the respondents.

Job Status of the Respondents (N)=144



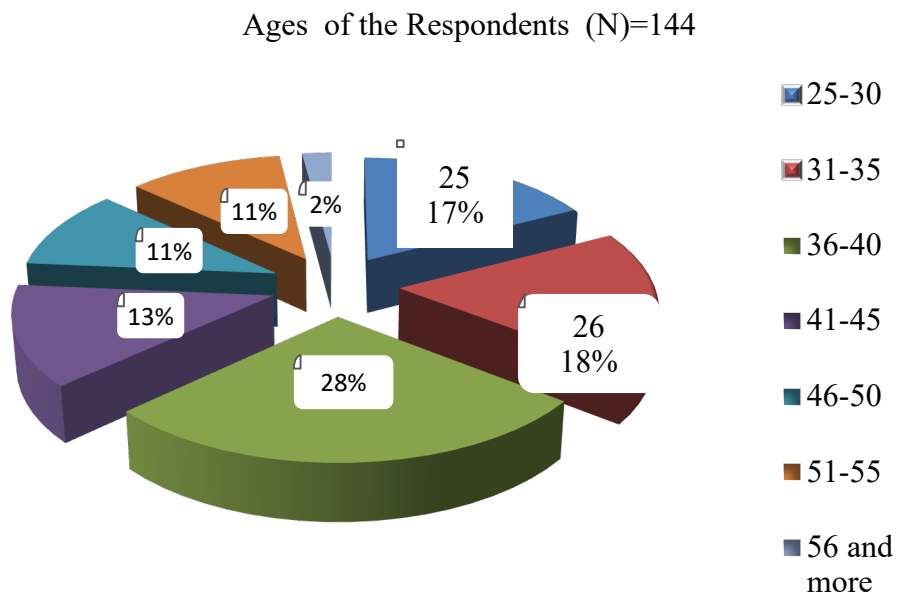
**Figure 2: A pie chart showing the job status of the respondents**

From Figure 2, 68 of the respondents representing 47% held the senior staff position, 55 representing 38% held junior staff position and 21 representing 15% held the senior member position. This therefore gives reasons to establish that the majority of the staff were senior staff. The Gender of the respondents was also considered as presented in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3: A pie chart showing the Gender of the respondents**

Figure 3 presents the gender of the respondents. The data in Figure 3 shows that male library staff was 83 representing 58% and 61 representing 42% were female library staff. This implies that there were more males than females in the study. Figure 4 below shows a pie chart with a presentation of the respondents respective Ages.

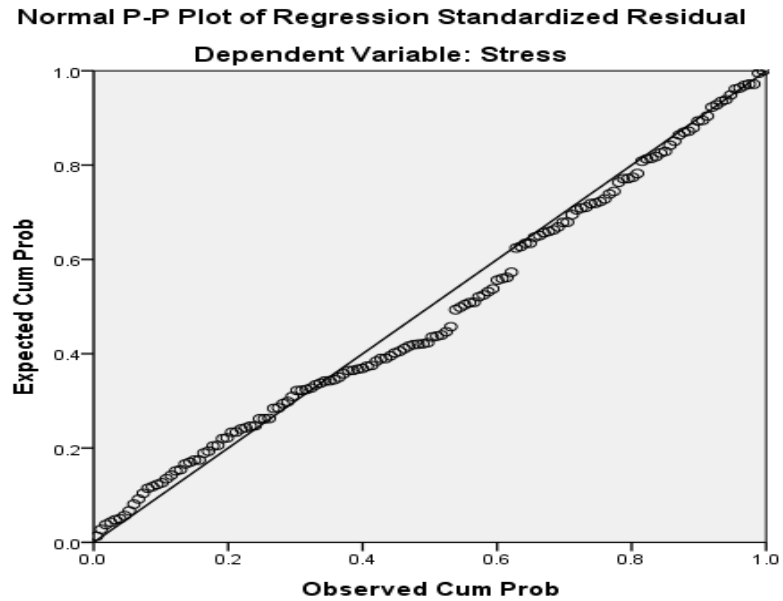


**Figure 4: A pie chart showing the Ages of the respondents**

Figure 4 presents the ages of the respondents. The Figure shows that respondents within the ages 36-40 were 28%, those within the ages 31-35 were 18%, 25-30 were 17%, 41-45 were 13%, 46-50 were 11%, 51-55 were 11% and 56 and more were 2%. The results, therefore, suggest that the majority of respondents were within the ages of 36-40.

**4.1.3 Research question 1: What are the categories of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana?**

The researcher sought to find which of the categories of job stress predict the library staff category of stress. To achieve this, Multiple Regression was deemed appropriate for the analysis.



**Figure 5: Normality plot**

Figure 5 above presents the normality of the study variables. The movement of the variables along the diagonal line shows that the data was normal and multiple regression could be preformed. Table 5 below shows Multicollinearity Dagnostic Test of the variables.



Table 5: *Multicollinearity Diagnostic Test of the Variables*

Study Variables	Psychological	Emotional	Technological	Physiological	Financial	Situational	Accidental
Physiological	1.00	.301	.062	.062	.086	.062	.076
Emotional	.301	1.00	.076	.076	.062	.076	.545
Technological	.062	.076	1.00	.062	.076	.062	.076
Psychological	.434	.545	.615	1.0	.067	.076	.545
Financial	.301	.076	.062	.301	1.0	.062	.076
Situational	1.00	.545	.076	.062	.062	1.0	.062
Accidental	.076	.076	.062	.434	.076	.545	.076

Source: Field Survey, Kodua-Ntim (2017)



The problem of multicollinearity is said to exist when independent variables used in the study are highly correlating each other. The study followed literature to test this assumption. It is assumed that correlation coefficient of 0.70 or more between independent variables is assumed to demonstrate evidence of multicollinearity problem. From Table 5 above, the highest correlation coefficient is .615 which is even less than 0.70. This gives evidence that there is no problem of multicollenearity. Having tested for the assumption, running multiple regression was deemed appropriate.

Table 6: *Multiple Regression Analysis of the Categories of the Job Stress Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	24.347	3.490		6.977	.000
	Physiological	1.693	1.036	.147	1.634	.000*
	Emotional	-.017	1.038	-.035	-.016	.003*
	Technological	-.417	.948	-.001	-.440	.660
	Psychological	2.934	.917	.266	3.200	.002*
	Financial	2.440	.976	.197	2.499	.014*
	Situational	.395	1.043	.032	.379	.706
	Accidental	.709	.832	.071	.853	.395

a. Dependent Variable: Stress

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017). \* Significant at  $p=0.05$  (2-tailed)

Table 6 above presents the SPSS coefficients model for the stress among the library staff. It also contains the correlations for the independent variables (Physiological, Emotional, Technological, Psychological, Financial, Situational and Accidental). Psychological, financial, physiological and emotional stress of the independent variables is statistically significant,

showing that they predict stress among the library staff: physiological (p-value = .000), emotional (p-value = .003), psychological (p-value = .002) and financial (p-value = .014). When evaluating the standardized beta values, the greatest influences upon the dependent variable (stress) are in the following order: psychological (beta = .266), financial (beta = .197), physiological (beta = .147) and emotional (beta = -.035).

Table 7: *Multiple Regression Analysis of Contribution of each of the Variables*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics
				R Square Change
Psychological	.602 <sup>a</sup>	.377	.365	.377 (37.7%)
Financial	.614 <sup>b</sup>	.705	.693	.328 (32.8%)
Physiological	.839 <sup>c</sup>	.874	.867	.170 (17.0%)
Emotional	.935 <sup>d</sup>	.886	.877	.022 (2.2%)

Source: Field Survey, Kodua-Ntim (2017)

Note:

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological, Financial, Physiological, Emotional.

b. Dependent Variable: Stress

Table 7 above reflects how each of the predictors contributed to stress among library staff. Using the R Square Change Statistics from Table 6, it is evident that Psychological stress contributed more than all the others. That is .377 representing 37.7%. Financial stress contributed R<sup>2</sup> Change results of .328 representing 32.8% indicating the second contributor.

Physiological stress contributed R2 Change Statistics = .170 representing 17% showing the third contributor. Finally, emotional stress was the least contributor with R2 Change value of= .022 representing 2.2%.

#### 4.1.4 Research question 2: What are the causes of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana?

Table 8: *Descriptive Analysis (Means and Standard Deviations) of Causes of Job Stress among Public University Library Staff in Ghana.*

Causes of Job Stress	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Staff relationship problem in the library	144	2.51	.819
Students being difficult to handle in library	144	2.68	.781
Insufficient preparation time for work	144	2.77	.747
Too many unproductive meetings	144	2.60	.879
Inability to adapt new forms of technology	144	2.04	.756
Poor working condition	144	2.74	.700
Poor administrative support	144	3.84	.763
Lack of adequate communication	144	1.94	.677
Post-retirement uncertainties	144	2.12	.873
Failure to share information	144	1.97	.742
Lack of support systems	144	3.82	.686
Interferences between work and home	144	2.40	.863
Lack of recognition for good efforts	144	2.67	.658
Poor leadership style	144	2.01	.865
Environmental hazard	144	2.77	.796
Lack of control and role ambiguity	144	2.17	.751
Lack of in-service training	144	2.95	.864
Inadequate resources	144	2.85	.810
Ill-health	144	2.68	.853
Mean of Means	144	2.60	.783

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017).

Table 8 above sought to find the causes of job stress among public university

library staff in Ghana. The general result shows that there are a number of causes of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana. The mean of means ( $M=2.60$ ,  $SD= .783$ ) which is greater than the test value of 2.5 gives evidence to that effect. Twelve items indicated causes of job stress, they had individual mean scores exceeding the test value of 2.5. To sample few of these causes, poor administrative support was a cause of stress among the library staff, the mean and standard deviation of ( $M=3.84$ ,  $SD= .763$ ) which gives strong indication that poor administrative support is one of the key causes of stress among the staff. Lack of support systems produced a strong mean and standard deviation of ( $M= 3.82$ ,  $SD= .686$ ) which shows that one of the causes of stress among library staff is the lack of support systems.

To find out whether “Lack of in-service training” could cause stress among the library staff, the mean and standard deviation of ( $M=2.95$ ,  $SD= .864$ ) gives strong indication that lack of in-service training is one of the key causes of stress among library staff. Two, inadequate resources among the three institutions gave a mean and standard deviation ( $M=2.85$ ,  $SD= .810$ ) which is greater than the test value of 2.5. This shows that inadequate resources in the three institutions leads to job stress. However, a rundown of the Table 8 shows that seven items could not cause stress among the library staff out of the nineteen items in the table. This is simply because their means were less than the test value. The mean and standard deviation of these items are lack of adequate communication ( $M=1.94$ ,  $SD= .667$ ), failure to share information ( $M=1.97$ ,  $SD= .742$ ), poor leadership style ( $M=2.01$ ,  $SD= .865$ ) and finally inability to adapt to new forms of technology ( $M=2.04$ ,  $SD= .756$ ) were the

least of seven items.

**4.1.5 Research question 3:** What level of job stress do public university library staff experience in Ghana?

Table 9: *Descriptive Analysis (Means and Standard Deviations) of Levels of Job Stress among Public University Library Staff in Ghana.*

Levels of Job Stress	N	Test Value= 2.5	
		Mean	Std. Deviation
It has brought them prolonged headache and pains	144	2.24	.750
It has made them prone to constant breakdown of rules and regulations	144	2.25	.780
It has affected their sight with intermittent impairment of vision	144	2.24	.769
It has exposed them to severe repetitive strain injury	144	2.31	.743
It has fuelled loss of attention among them	144	2.35	.620
It has also exposed them to heart diseases	144	2.60	.839
Muscles, bones and joint are affected	144	2.27	.741
With heavy workload their social status are adversely affected	144	2.22	.684
Occasionally, it has led to the untimely death of the staff	144	2.65	.858
It has in all its form lowered the productivity of staff	144	2.25	.824
Mean of Means	144	2.33	.760

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017)

Table 9 above presents the level of job stress that public university library staff experience in Ghana. The mean of means (M=2.33) which is less than

the test value of 2.5 indicates the library staff experience less stress levels in the three institutions. On the contrary, two of the factors proved to be significant showing that they have influence on job stress among library staff. For example on the statement whether “Occasionally, stress has led to the untimely death of the staff” The ( $M=2.65$ ,  $SD=.858$ ) which is greater than 2.5 shows that indeed one of the level of job stress is that it can occasionally leads to staff death. That notwithstanding the above, job stress exposure of library staff to heart diseases was identified to be one of the levels of job stress. The mean and standard deviation of ( $M=2.60$ ,  $SD=.839$ ) which is greater than 2.5 confirms that findings.

To sample few of these lower levels of stress, with heavy workload their social statuses are adversely affected was identified to be less experienced by library staff. The item produced a mean and standard deviation of ( $M=2.22$ ,  $SD=.684$ ) which is less than 2.5 confirming that fact. One of the issues was whether job stress has brought them prolonged headache and pains, it was revealed that the ( $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=.750$ ) which is less than the test value of 2.5 cannot lead to one of the levels of job stress among library staffs. Responses on the item whether “Job stress has affected their sight with intermittent impairment of vision”. The results gives ample with the mean and standard deviation ( $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=.769$ ) that job stress has not affected their sight with intermittent impairment of vision. Again, another issue was whether job stress has made library staff prone to constant breakdown of rules and regulations, it was revealed that the ( $M=2.25$ ,  $SD=.780$ ) which is less than the test value of 2.5 cannot lead to one of the levels of job stress among library staff.

**4.1.6 Research question 4:** What are the effects of job stress on library staff in public university libraries in Ghana?

Table 10: *Descriptive (Means and Standard Deviations) Analysis of Effects of Job Stress in Public University Libraries in Ghana.*

Effects of Job Stress	Test Value = 2.5		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Absenteeism	144	2.75	.738
Aggression	144	2.26	.755
Poor quality of work	144	2.96	.774
Anxiety and frustration	144	3.91	.699
Depression and tiredness	144	2.86	.696
Unfriendly attitude towards students and colleagues	144	2.98	.833
Forgetfulness	144	2.38	.718
Poor time management	144	2.13	.682
Procrastination	144	2.16	.716
Inability to meet deadline	144	2.55	.713
Higher rates of accidents	144	2.72	.799
Resignation and pre-mature retirement	144	2.69	.848
Staff conflict	144	3.31	.855
Ill-health	144	3.27	.795
Sleeplessness	144	2.28	.797
Functional inconsistency	144	2.29	.818
Excessive smoking and drinking	144	2.99	.811
Mean of Means	144	2.73	.767

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017)

The researcher again sought to investigate the effects of job stress on library staff in public university libraries in Ghana. The general result shows that there are numerous effects of stress on library staff in Ghana. The general

mean of means and standard deviation of ( $M=2.73$ ,  $SD= .767$ ) shows that the majority of the items elicited positive response from library staff. To confirm some of these responses with statistical evidence, anxiety and frustration produced a higher mean and standard deviation of ( $M=3.91$ ,  $SD= .699$ ) showing that anxiety and frustration highly affect job stress among library staff. Staff conflict proved significant with a high mean and standard deviation of ( $M=3.31$ ,  $SD= .855$ ) showing that staff conflict among the library staff can be attributed to job stress. Ill health was also significant with a mean and standard deviation of ( $M=3.27$ ,  $SD= .795$ ) showing that the enormity of stress among the library staff can be attributed to ill health. And lastly, excessive smoking and drinking with a mean and standard deviation of ( $M=2.99$ ,  $SD= .811$ ) is as a result of job stress among library staff in the three universities.

The data in table 5 further shows that poor time management was not an effect of stress among library staff. The mean and standard deviation ( $M=2.13$ ,  $SD= .682$ ) gives statistical evidence to those results. On the issue of “Procrastination” it was evident it did not affect stress among library staff in Ghana. The means and standard deviation ( $M=2.16$ ,  $SD= .716$ ) gives strong indication to that effect. Again, aggression was not as a result of stress among library staff, the mean and standard deviation ( $M=2.26$ ,  $SD= .755$ ) gives statistical evidence to that fact. The mean and standard deviation of sleeplessness was ( $M=2.13$ ,  $SD= .682$ ) gives statistical evidence to that results sleeplessness was not as a result of stress among library staff.



**4.1.7 Research question 5:** What are the strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience?

Table 11: *Descriptive (Means and Standard Deviations) Analysis of Strategies that are Employed by Public University Library Staff to Manage the Stress they Experience.*

Strategies for Managing Stress	Test Value =2.5		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Controlling personal contracts	144	2.61	.689
Take time off work and leave	144	3.76	.743
Making holidays compulsory	144	1.90	.778
Delegating responsibility	144	2.99	.753
Managing time effectively	144	2.71	.657
Going for counselling	144	2.99	.876
Taking medication	144	2.42	.897
Positive thinking	144	3.71	.747
Playing sport and exercise	144	1.90	.864
Good eating habits	144	1.63	.764
Listening to music	144	2.28	.850
Watching TV	144	2.57	.882
Conferences and seminars	144	1.97	.877
Education and training on new technology	144	1.53	.719
Talking with friends and family	144	2.62	.840
Balancing of work and home life	144	1.80	.695
Provision of equitable shifting system in the environment	144	2.85	.651
Strategic planning of job schedule	144	2.66	.628
Building strong human relationship	144	3.51	.648
Mean of Means	144	2.54	.766

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017)

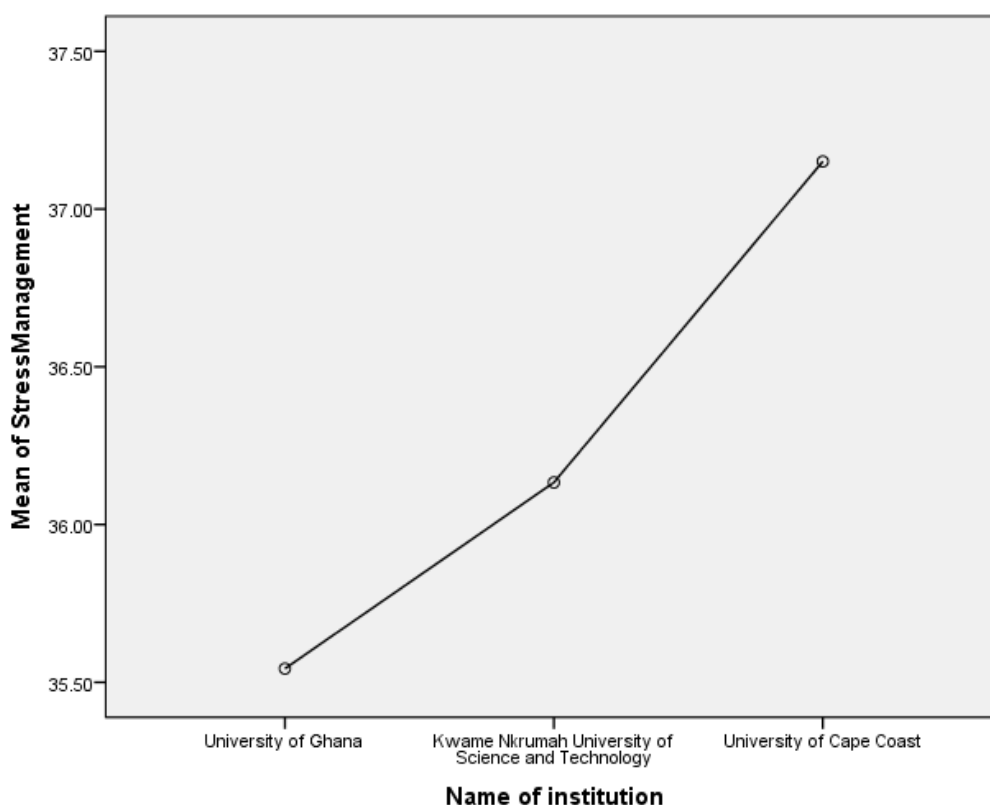
The researcher further looked into the strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience. Table 5 on

average revealed that eleven of the listed strategies were appropriate for managing job stress among public university library staff in Ghana. A mean of means and standard deviation of (M=2.54, SD= .766) was obtained. The individual mean score of these eleven items was also above the test value. Some of these strategies include; taking time off work and leave with the highest mean and standard deviation of (M=3.76, SD= .743), positive thinking (M=2.71, SD= .747), building strong human relationship (M=3.51, SD= .648) and going for counselling (M=2.99, SD= .876). All these factors gave a significant result that they are the major strategies that library workers used in managing their stress level. These strategies produced a mean and standard deviation greater than test value of 2.5. Moreover, eight strategies with their individual mean score was below the test value of 2.5 were not appropriate for the management of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana. Some of these strategies were education and training on new technology with the lowest mean and standard deviation of (M=1.53, SD= .719), eating healthily (M=1.63, SD= .764), balancing of work and home life (M=1.80, SD= .695) and making holidays compulsory with a mean and standard deviation of (M=1.90, SD= .778).

#### 4.1.8 Research hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>: There are no statistically significant differences among the three universities (UCC, UG and KNUST) with regard to their stress management.

The researcher sought to find out the differences among the three institutions (UCC, UG and KNUST) with regard to their stress management. To achieve this, One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results are presented in figure 6 below.



**Figure 6: Means plot**

Figure 6 provides an easy way to compare the mean scores for the institutions. It is obvious from the Figure that University of Cape Coast recorded the highest mean scores followed by Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Ghana recorded low mean score. This therefore

implies that University of Cape Coast was identified to be having more stress management strategies followed by Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, and University of Ghana was identified as an institution that adopted fewer stress management strategies. However, in order not jump into premature conclusions, ANOVA was conducted to give more statistical evidence.

Table 12: *Test of Homogeneity of Variances*

Institutions- Stress Management			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.616	3	141	.541

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017) \* Significant at  $p=0.05$  (2-tailed)

From Table 12 above, the Significance value (Sig) for Levene's test is 0.541 which is greater than the alpha or critical value of  $p= 0.05$  shows that the assumption of homogeneity has not been violated for this sample that is [ $F(3, 141) = .616, p= .541$  at the .05 alpha level] hence, the variance are assumed equal.

Table 13: *Summary of the ANOVA Results*

Institutions –Stress Management					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	65.900	2	32.950	.677	.001*
Within Groups	6867.405	141	48.705		
Total	6933.306	143			

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017) \* Significant at  $p=0.05$  (2-tailed)

Table 13 above presents the results of the ANOVA test. The overall *F* ratio for the One-way ANOVA is 0.677 which is significant at the Sig value of  $p=0.05$ . It is evident from the test that the F-ratio is significant  $F=0.677$ , ( $p=.001$ ) at the .05 alpha level. This implies that there was a significant difference among the mean scores of the institutions with regard to their stress management. This therefore implies that the Null hypotheses stated as “There are no statistically significant differences between the three universities (UCC, UG and KNUST) with regard to their stress management”, is rejected.

However, it is noted that the sig value of 0.001 did not indicate the differences between the three institutions. Therefore, Post Hoc test was conducted to find out the statistical significant differences between each pair of the institutions as presented in table 14.

Table 14: *Multiple Comparisons of the Institutions (UCC, UG and KNUST)*

Dependent Variable: Stress Management							
	(I) Name of institution	(J) Name of institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Games-Howell	UG	KNUST	-.58986	1.5057	.919	-4.1798	3.0001
		UCC	-1.60747	1.3517	.004*	-4.8263	1.6114
	KNUST	UG	.58986	1.5057	.919	-3.0001	4.1798
		UCC	-1.01761	1.4494	.003*	-4.4728	2.4375
	UCC	UG	1.60747	1.3517	.004*	-1.6114	4.8263
		KNUST	1.01761	1.4494	.003*	-2.4375	4.4728

Source: Field Data, Kodua-Ntim (2017) \* Significant at  $p=0.05$  (2-tailed)

Table 14 shows the result of Post-Hoc test (Games-Howell). The Post-Hoc test shows the differences among the institutions with regard to their stress management. From the Post-Hoc test, there are significant differences between UCC and KNUST, UCC and UG but KNUST and UG is not significant. For example, between UCC and UG, the Mean Difference and Standard Error of (MD-1.60747, SR= 1.3517) with a Sig value of 0.004 shows that there was a difference in UCC and UG and the results is statistically significant meaning that the UCC have high stress management level than UG. Between UCC and KNUST, the results show a significant difference of (p=0.003) showing that the UCC again has high stress management levels than KNUST, but no significant difference between UG and KNUST with regard to their stress management level.

## **4.2 Findings from Qualitative Analysis**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

The section presents result of data collected using the semi-structured interview guide to investigate stress management among public university library staff. The study sought to unearth the cause and effect of stress among public university library staff. The interview data were categorized into four (4) main sections. The time spent on each respondent was estimated between 30-45 minutes and the interviews took place at the convenience of the respondents. The researcher observed all ethical issues related to the conduct of interviews. The qualitative data was analysed using content thematic analysis under the following themes:

1. Categories of stress among public university library staff;
2. Causes of stress among public university library staff;
3. Effect of job stress among public university library staff and
4. Strategies employed by public university library staff to manage the stress.

#### **4.2.2 Population interviewed**

The total number of management staff among the three universities is twenty-eight (28); eleven (11) from UG, nine (9) from KNUST and eight (8) from UCC. Interviews were conducted with three (3) management staff from each university. Three (3) management staff were chosen from each university; in all, nine (9) management staff were interviewed. The total number of respondents for the interview was nine (9).

#### **4.2.3 Categories of stress among university library staff**

One of the items on the interview guide revealed whether the library staff were stressed at work or they find their work stressful. Their responses suggested that they all found their work as stressful. They emphasised that looking at the heavy workload on them, they were always stressed up. With regard to categories of stress, almost all the respondents highlighted that their categories of stress are more psychological, physiological and financial. When probed further, KNUST Respondent-1 and KNUST Respondent-3 share similar comment by saying supervisors who are very strict can put pressure on library staff and it will result in stress situation.

On the contrary, UGRespondent-1 commented:

Some workers get information from different sections of the library and from different universities make comparisons, especially with regard to the salary saying, “ I do this, I do that but the other party gets more pay than I do “such comparisons and comments can make the individual think and stress can be developed out of this.

KNUSTRespondent-2 supported the comment of UGRespondent-1 by saying, for him financial reward of the library staff, especially the junior and senior staff lead or contribute to the stressful situation they found themselves in. Respondents from UCC interviewees revealed that the stress the library staff goes through can be associated to job related stress, personal stress, financial, emotional or even psychological (UCCRespondent-1). In support of this, UCCRespondent-3 also maintained that the stress the library staff goes through can be associated to job related stress, personal stress, financial, emotional or even psychological. UCCRespondent-2 believed that 90% of the stress library staff goes are psychological.

#### **4.2.4 Causes of stress among university library staff**

When asked about their major causes of stress, most of the interviewees noted that excessive workload, the work conditions such as denied grievances and opportunities, uncomfortable stationary were not very appealing and potential stressor to the majority of the staff. They also commented on stressors relating to pace of change of general university atmosphere, inadequate resources,



insufficient preparation of time, lack of in-service training and bureaucracy. The majority of library staff believed that workload or demands made on them were high. They attributed it to university running various programmes without a break in the whole year. UCCRespondent-3 for example remarked: I experience my stress when there is excessive workload on me; teaching, research work. When it happens like this and you don't meet deadline, it sometimes creates tension for me which worsens the case.

UGRespondent-1 shared his view:

Over the years, we have been under staffed, so workload for individuals here have been so much compared to the times we had personnel. We can talk of those who have gone on retirement and those who have resigned all contribute to this. The personnel is not immediately replaced, thus making the workload heavier. I can make indications to the junior staff and senior staff where they are supposed to be many coming early morning to shelve, you find only a few doing the shelving. So the workload starts from the lower level and climbs.

Some interviewees experience severe stress when dealing with the university authorities, the data revealed that bureaucracy and favouritism in terms of appointments of senior positions at the library to head various departments or units and promotion of staff were the library staff source of worry leading to severe stress.

UCCRespondent-1 commented:

Sometimes there is some kind of favouritism when it comes to who should be at a particular place or who should head a

particular faculty or department or unit. I am stressed up when I feel that it should be my turn and I am not appointed. The university has flexible promotion policies but the authorities do not go by it; they are biased, not fair and consistent.

KNUSTRespondent-2 complained particularly about bureaucracy in dealing with problems, processing of documents and promoting staff members.

UGRespondent-3 also affirmed that:

It is very stressful when the authorities tend to favour some colleagues. At times processing of our documents and promotions are not attended to as expected while others get it easily. Meanwhile, they cannot give you the criteria they use to measure and even sometimes not ready to explain to you why the delay.

Most of the interviewees were particularly concerned about discrimination. This kind of discrimination made library staff stressed up. The data suggested that some positions were preferably given to only second degree holders but for now the authorities are discriminating against these second degrees.

We sometimes feel discriminatory against. For example, MA degree holders feel discriminatory against MPhil degree holders. Even, some positions are preferably given to only Professors or PhD holders because of that you are compelled to further your education when you are not prepared emotionally and financially which is very stressful (KNUSTRespondent-1).

Some of the interviewees, especially the low-ranked ones rather complained about colleagues at other universities advancing ahead of them both in academics and research. They felt that some of their colleagues looked down on them perhaps because they were not Professors or PhD holders, especially when they had not presented any paper or research. UCCRespondent-2, one of those library staff remarked:

Some colleagues at other sections or universities become more stressed when they get to know that others have gone on study leave whiles they do not pose the requisite for further studies or have not made any attempt. Again when others have been able to publish papers, but difficult for them to publish or do not even know how to publish. Sometimes those who have higher educational background such as PhD holders look down on them because they do not have the PhD or publications.

UCCRespondent-3 again added that self-adequacy was what he considered not good at the library. Though, he was not much concerned about some things that went on at the library, he felt that certain decisions that directly affected people were taken without their knowledge and that causes most library workers to be stressed.

If leaders go ahead and make their own decisions and do their own things to torment some people, then what they have decided may well affect the people that work right under them. Certain decisions that directly affected library staff are taken without their knowledge. As a leader I know some workers wish to be consulted well about some decisions before they are being implemented because it affects them, (KNUST Respondent-1).

Another cause of stress to the library staff that emerged from the data was that the university system did not pave the way for them to enjoy regular leaves neither was it part of the university's culture to encourage library staff to embark on regular holidays outside the country (change of some sort) to reduce stress. UCCRespondent-2, for example, commented:

Previously leave (taking time off work) was very common in our work places including universities but employers or heads of institutions do not want employees to go on leave. In this

university for instance, no day passes by without getting some work to do; when regular students are on holidays, sandwich students also come. How can a library staff rest? These cause stress.

KNUSTRespondent-1 complained that sitting at one place is very stressful. When probed further about his statement, he said, when school re-opens, students come in their numbers for registration process. There is a likelihood that the person registering the student, can sit for a long time that cause stress. Again, sharing books to all students and run many errands for the registration process. These activities also contribute to the stressful situations for library workers.

Interviewee from UCC made a divergent statement complaining bitterly:

In UCC library for the past two weeks, we had no light and people will come in and vent their anger on us the staff. It is not our fault for the light out, the university was working around the clock to see to it that the issue of light out was sorted. But people think we work here so we are to be blamed for the bad things that happen, this becomes stressful. Sometimes when exams are in session, the kind of pressure mounted here is so huge that some library staff refuses to go for break and therefore becoming stressful (UCCRespondent-1).

#### **4.2.5 Effects of job stress among university library staff**

This part of the chapter presents the findings from interview relating to how stress experienced by library staff affected library staff. The data suggested that the stress experienced by library staff affected them in four ways, their

general health, reduced work output, their administrative work and their home life. With regards to the first theme, eight (8) out of the nine (9) respondents said that stress experienced affected their general health. The Majority of the respondents complained of minor headaches. One of them remarked “in one instance a library staff went to hospital with a minor headache and was admitted as a result of stress” (UCCRespondent-1). Another said “we (library staff) have seen in this university where library workers only complained of minor headaches and were taken to hospital and never came back due to stress” (KNUSTRespondent-2). Others said they experienced high blood pressure, some severity of anxiety or frustration, depression, nervous stomach, weight problems and body weakness. However UGRespondent-3 said though he was always stressed up, he never encountered stress-related health problem. He commented “personally, I have been lucky I have never experienced stress-related sicknesses just that when I am tired I cannot work for long hours at the library.”

As pointed out earlier, the data suggested that stress experienced by library workers affected their work output. This problem had two (2) main dimensions; work preparation, delivery and relationship with colleagues. The interview data pointed out that when library staff was stressed they are unable to work and as a result it affected the quality of work delivery and working relationship with their colleagues and users or clients.

When I am stressed I cannot do proper reading and research and as such go to work place unprepared, so I don't deliver to my satisfaction. I sometimes portray some unfriendly attitude towards users (students) and colleagues; my time is not always managed well (KNUSTRespondent-3).

UCCRespondent-2 also confirmed this view:

I am always dull when stressed, which affects my teaching and working relation. Sometimes I cannot carry out effective research on the topic to be taught. In an attempt to use previous knowledge, I get to know that I am not fully prepared. Sometimes, the lesson is postponed which affects the next lesson.

When a further probing question was asked on how stress experienced affected their teaching work, the majority of the interviewees said they were not involved in any teaching work. Those involved in teaching work said combining teaching and that of management responsibility made their case worse, more especially when colleagues were not cooperative.

I was a Head of Reader and Reference Service for years now, though, my credit hours were not too much, and the little teaching coupled with the management work was a very stressful task for me. Seeing to the smooth running of the Department, attending meetings, attending to students, and the worse thing is when your colleagues doubt your efficiency (UCCRespondent-3)

The interviewees were asked whether their job affected their home life or not. The Majority of them claimed their job as library staff affected their home life. Their views pointed that it was so because bad mood at library translates itself to the home. They also commented that they spent all their time on library work so they missed out on personal responsibilities or activities in the home; their family concerns were not well attended to. Most of the interviewees felt their work as library staff affected their home life. UGRespondent-2, shared his experience:

My work as a library staff affects my home life because when I am stressed and in a bad mood the library, I go home with it. I

spend one day in a weekend working on library which makes me miss out personal activities. I don't get enough time to attend to my wife and children and extended family issues are not also properly attended to.

KNUSTRespondent-1 reported that stress is not something that is wide spread, it affects only few individuals at the library. To me stress at the library does not affect my work in the library because this is a public library and the workers here are in numbers but if it was to be a one man library, then it can affect the running of the library. The responses of the interviewees revealed that the stress they experienced as library staff affected their general health, teaching responsibilities, their management work and their home lives. However, the data suggested that they were prepared to remain in the profession.

#### **4.2.6 Strategies employed to manage stress**

The themes emerged to answer the above research question. The first one was the strategies library staff used to manage with stress in their work environment. The second one looked at library staff benefits on counselling services to manage with stress and the third one also talked about how a library staff manages the stress at home.

With the first item which demanded the library staff managing strategies in their work environment, the data suggested that all of them had their own ways of dealing with stress. Most of the interviewees talked about talking with friends and family (social interactions) during their leisure time, browsing for fun or visiting social networks, engaging in exercise or sports, maintaining

positive thinking and prayer for assistance as their managing strategies.

KNUSTRespondent-3, for instance, explained:

I walk up and down stairs to interact with colleagues, I crack jokes and we laugh over it. I interact with students who I consider to be matured and respectful. I also sit behind my computer to browse for fun or visit Facebook to chat with friends on campus sometimes I walk outside the office to exercise or stretch my legs. I also try to always think positively and pray constantly for assistance because the Lord knows better than human beings.

UCCRespondent-1 added that:

I walk a lot when I feel cramped in my office, I walk out and with my cell phone I call a friend or somebody to reduce stress. I have also pasted a lot of posters in my office to make the place friendlier and whoever comes to my office gets something to read to entertain him or herself to reduce stress. Sometimes, I sit behind my computer to browse.

Another KNUSTRespondent-1 commented:

I talk with my friends when I am stressed. I also like sports a lot so I always engage in sports. I think positively and try not to internalize or harbour issues and also not forgetting my prayers because in Psalm 131:1-2 the Bible says “Destructive fear (worry, panic, suspicion) is generated from anticipation of the unknown. We all like to be in control of our circumstances. But when I compared my minimal human capabilities to that of an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present God, I surrender myself. Suddenly my fears (and anger) diminished.

Another dimension of managing strategy suggested by the interview data was effective time management. The interviewees were of the view that the little time when managed appropriately relieves one from stress.



UGRespondent-3 shared this view commented that:

Managing the stress, deals with effective time management, so I plan my timetable very well and adjust to it. When there is a clash I look for convenient time to attend to that schedule and make sure that the time is effectively managed as the saying goes “time is money”

In a follow up question to examine interviewees typical approaches they use to deal or manage the stress they experience during teaching, supervision of research work and in their administrative work.

When I am teaching and I realize that I am stressed out because students are not getting the concept, I break for a while, tell a story or create a scenario to make the lesson lively. Sometimes, projector is used to make the lesson self-explanatory especially when it is audio visual. Those who are far and near enjoy the lesson and I move on (UGRespondent-1).

The data suggested that interviewee library staff did not go for formal counselling as a way of dealing with stress experienced, they rather enjoyed informal counselling from friends. The friends advised them to take rest when stressed. UCCRespondent-3, for example, commented: If it is geared towards the counselling centre, then no, because I have never been there, but at the friends' level, I have received some sort of guidance pertaining to life. Though, one may not know its importance, but it helps.

KNUSTRespondent-2 also said that:

I have never benefited from any formal counselling service before. Though, I have a counsellor friend, we interact, share ideas and sometimes when he sees me stressed, what he says is “take rest”. I am aware that such things exist for library staff, but I know students mostly use the centre.

It emerged from the data that library staff did not patronize the counselling centre meant to assist individuals in and outside the university to deal with their problems. They knew the centre could be patronised by both staff and students, but they did not see the need.

The interview data also highlighted how the library staff managed stress at home. It emerged that they avoided taking official work home and watched television with their family. UGRespondent-2, for instance commented, “Oh, at home I relax and just watch ‘comic’ programmes with my wife and children. I also avoid taking library work home”

The data suggested that library staff used a lot of strategies to manage the stress they experience but they still think that they need a lot of support to manage such situations. Another major issue that emerged from the interview data was related to the support services or strategies the library staff thinks can help them manage the stress they experience. All the interviewees were particularly concerned about their trusted colleagues in the university. They believed that their trusted colleagues can share their experiences with them and boost their morale because they know what they are going through.

Some trusted library staff and friends in the university can help me manage the stress; they can share a bit of joke with me and I think that helps, laugh it off a bit. They can walk to me and have a conversation with me when I am stressed and lonely. It can help make me feel better. I only have to avoid friends who are boastful and will complicate my problems (KNUST Respondent-3)

UCCRespondent-1 again added:

In the university, the support or the very best thing that I think can help us (library staff) manage the stress is developing fairly decent relationships among us, such that one could consult a colleague in times of need. So I always thought I could go to somebody and say 'hey this is happening' or this is what I want to do, how do you see it? I think that's the thing that will really get me through my stress.

Another source of support services that the interviewees suggested would help them is adequate resources to facilitate their library work. They also needed regular in-service training and mentorship programme. UGRespondent-1, for example, commented:

Library staff needs to be provided with the necessary resources that will enhance their work. They should be encouraged to network with their colleagues at other departments or universities, organize in-service training for library staff, mentorship programmes and providing office space for them to get their comfort.

The interview data also suggested that library staff needed a lot of support to enable them manage the work-related stress. Special counselling centres and stress management programmes will help them manage the stress; they needed a point of contact in times of personal stress and difficulty. The conflict resolution unit to resolve conflict among library staff must be revived, instituting regular leave for library staff and prepare them sufficiently towards retirement. UCCRespondent-3, for example remarked:

Whereas students can go to the counselling centre to seek for support, there is no specific place for university staff, so I think there should be a specific place for university staff. The university should prepare them for retirement to help them have sound mind when getting to retiring age. If university staff is

sick, the university system is very impatient with them. The university should have people to identify university staff who are suffering from serious stress and take them to hospital and make sure that they are granted regular leave.

The responses of the interviewees emphasized that the university among, its support systems, had a Club House where staff sometimes at their leisure time gather to interact. It came from the data that sometimes they organize social gatherings, end of year party, and receive encouragement from superiors. Though, these minor supports were offered to staff, the interviewees were of the view that the university ought to do a lot to support staff. They believed that putting up recreational centres and regular sporting activities for staff would help them manage the stress they experience.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research findings, highlights the major variables and themes to ‘make sense’ of the data. It analyses the data critically with reference to relevant literature in an attempt to explore deeper meanings of the responses, and to unravel the issues and understand the phenomenon. As noted earlier, the purpose of the study was to investigate the management of stress among public university library staff in Ghana. This study sought to unearth the causes and effects of stress encountered by public university library staff in Ghana.

In this chapter, the findings of the interview and the questionnaire are re-categorized, relating each to the themes in chapters four and filling in the details to explain the relationships. Each of these themes is linked to a separate research question; they have been detailed to ensure meaningful, coherent and clear discussion. The discussions are based on the following headings:

1. Categories of job stress among library staff.
2. Causes of job stress among library staff.
3. Level of job stress experience by library staff.
4. Effects of job stress on library staff.

5. Strategies employed by library staff to manage the stress they experience.

### **5.1 Categories of Job Stress among Public University Library Staff in Ghana**

Data were gathered and analysed on the categories of stress among public university library staff in Ghana. The findings revealed from the quantitative and qualitative data showed that psychological, financial, physiological and emotional stress were the most predominant categories of stress experienced by the library staff in Ghana. From literature, this finding agrees with the assertion of Akpene, (2014); Ekwelem, (2015); Furnham, ( 2012); Adejoh, (2016); Meyer & Dale, (2010) who emphasized that the afore stated categories of stress affect employees of varying organization of which library staff of public university libraries in Ghana were not excluded.

### **5.2 Causes of Stress among Public University Library Staff in Ghana**

The themes relating to the causes of stress among library staff were developed from the research question two. These are whether library staff feel stressed at work or they find their work stressful, and the main sources of stress they experienced. It is evident from both the questionnaire and interview findings that there was stress among library staff. No library staff denied the fact that stress was prevalent in the library. The interview data highlighted certain symptoms of stress felt by library staff. The responses of the interviewees

suggested that the library staff felt restless, tensed up, and experienced back pains, headache, low concentration and frustrations, among others, which were clear symptoms of stress. Studies conducted by Bennet (1994), Cooper and Quick (1999), Cole (2004) and Hunsaker (2005) revealed that recurring headaches, back pains and low concentration are clear symptoms of stress.

The interview findings showed that poor administrative support, lack of support system in the quantitative findings and excessive workload, inadequate resource, favouritism and bureaucracy emerged as most potential stressor among library staff. This confirmed by the questionnaire data showed that “poor administrative support” was frequently perceived to be most problematic cause of stress for the present sample of library staff as it recorded high mean=3.84, std. Deviation=.763. The qualitative findings show that workload was a cause of stress among library staff. This finding was consistent with the argument put forward by Simmonds & Andalreb (2001) that library workloads and performance expectations have increased in recent times. Similarly; authors such as Bennet (1994) and Eckelt (2006), have identified workload as potential stressor in organizations. The workload or demands made on library staff could be attributed to the large numbers of students; too many programmes introduced both at regular and sandwich sessions without employing more library staff.

The interview and the questionnaire findings suggested that poor working conditions were a potential stressor to the majority of the interviewees. They believed that their work conditions were not commensurate with the tedious

work they did. Rollinson (2005) identified that poor working conditions become potentially disturbing to individuals. It is expected that library staff working conditions must be looked at to motivate them to achieve high performance.

It emerged from the interview findings that pace of change of general universities atmosphere, inadequate resources, lack of in-service training, serving and supervision of students and continuous increase in the number of students were some of the potential stressors among library staff. Brown and Ralph (1998) argue that stressful situations occur within libraries because of the organization's culture, function, structure, the nature of the management procedures, insufficient training of staff and time pressure. Greenberg (2005) argued that a poorly designed office and cramped workspace and lack of resources can make it difficult for people to have privacy, work effectively or even having social interaction thereby leading to stress. Halbesleben & Buckley (2004) also emphasized that, human resource management practices such as lack of training, promotional opportunities and mid-career development can make people experience some amount of stress. These arguments therefore suggest that stress is a problem of the people themselves caused by the social environment in which they work. The findings of research support these views. Stress affects the organization, but the stress of a library staff is caused by the work surroundings.

The questionnaire data confirmed that 'lack of support system' mean=3.82 std. Deviation=.686 and 'lack of in-service training' mean=2.95, std.



Deviation=.864 were also considered as potential stressors among library staff. Library staff used a lot of time to assist students come out with a good research as such they experience stress. They even have to do a lot of consultations to understand a concept put up by students which in a way was a difficult task. The findings revealed that there was some level of stress at the department where interviewees worked. Most of them were particularly concerned about discrimination. It also came up that some positions were preferably given to only senior members. Some also felt that their colleagues looked down on them perhaps, they were not PhD or MPhil holders, especially when their promotions were not forthcoming, and when they had not been able to present any paper or research. According to Sutherland and Cooper (2000), the quality of interpersonal relationships at work is important in that supportive relationships are less likely to create pressures associated with rivalry, bickering and gossip mongering. In addition, the superior-subordinate relationship can be potentially stressful when the leadership style is authoritarian, feedback about performance and recognition and praise for effort are beneficial for boss-subordinate relationship.

The interview findings showed that bureaucracy and favouritism were problems that appeared to provide major causes of stress among library staff. The library staff believed that there were some kinds of favouritism when it came to who should head a particular unit, when one felt that it should have been him or her. The data suggest that the university had flexible promotion policies but the authorities did not go by it; they were biased, not fair and consistent. The interview data suggest that it took library staff time when they

wanted their problems to be addressed in the university because of bureaucracy and kept on struggling; delayed in processing of academic documents and promotions. This finding is in agreement with Kyriacou (2001) who contended that lack of control and decision-making powers due to the hierarchical nature of bureaucratic structures which concentrates on power in the hands of a few at the universities. Efficiency and fairness is needed in every human institution if high performance is to be achieved. It also came from the interview finding that preventing library staff from taking regular leave was a source of stress amongst them. The university system did not pave the way for library staff to enjoy regular leaves neither was it part of the university's culture to encourage library staff to embark on regular holidays outside the country (change of some sort) to reduce stress. It emerged that previously, leave (taking time off work) was very common in the work places including universities but employers or heads of institutions do not want employees to go on leave nowadays.

### **5.3 Level of Job Stress Experience by Public University Library Staff in Ghana**

Data were equally collected on the level of stress among public universities, library staff and analysed. The findings of the study revealed that two items out of ten items in Table four were responsible for stress and the other eight were identified to be less responsible for stress among the library staff of the public university libraries in the country. These findings of the study are in line with literature, as authorities like: Akintayo, 2012; Chrousos, 2009; and

Ferrell & Cherne (2008) posited that stress among employees; is accountable for prolonged headache and pains; prone to constant breakdown of rules and regulations; affected their sight with intermittent impairment of vision; exposed them to severe repetitive strain injury; fueled loss of attention among them; exposed them to heart diseases; muscles, bones and joints are affected with heavy workload, their social statuses are adversely affected; occasionally, it has led to the untimely death of the staff; it has in all its forms lowered the productivity of staff which this study forthrightly discovered to be the level of stress among library staff in the public university libraries of the country. Stress experienced by library staff affects them in so many ways. How the library staff think they are affected by stress is presented in the next section.

#### **5.4 Effects of Stress among Public University Library Staff in Ghana**

In answering the research question, the researcher discovered some major themes. These are how stress experienced by library staff affected them generally, how it affected their administrative work and their home life. It emerged from both the questionnaire and interview findings that stress experienced by library staff affected their general health. It was evident in the data that the majority of the interviewees experienced some minor headaches and high blood pressure. Others experienced some anxiety or frustration, depression, weight problems and body weakness. The data suggested that a lot of library staff admitted at the hospital were as a result of stress. The questionnaire data also showed that ‘anxiety and frustration’; ‘staff conflict’ and ‘ill-health, was recorded as the most manifested effect of stress amongst

library staff recording a significant mean=3.91, std. Deviation=.699, mean=3.31, std. Deviation=.855 and mean=3.27, std. Deviation=.595 . Studies conducted by Cole, (2004) and Hunsaker (2005) revealed that recurring headaches and back pains, low concentration are clear symptoms of stress. Kyriacou (2001) is also of the view that effects of stress on library staff are manifested in anxiety and frustration, impaired performance, and broken interpersonal relationships at work and at home. However, the comment made by KNUSTRespondent-2 revealed that, the stress experienced affected his general health and administrative duties. This was consistent with the argument put forward by Kyriacou (2001) that the symptoms of stress in library staff are manifested in impaired performance at work.

Data from the interviews revealed that the majority of them were involved in an administrative work. The majority said combining administrative work and the teaching responsibility made their situation worse. More especially when colleagues were not cooperative which eventually affected their work. Griffin & Clarke (2011) say that although it is individuals who experience stress, it has direct consequences for businesses. To him, stress may translate into poor quality work and lower productivity. Withdrawal behaviours such as sick leave or excuse duty may also occur. A particular unsettling manifestation of stress on the job that has become all too prevalent in recent years is known as desk rage; a situation where office workers behave violently toward others when stressed out by long hours and difficult working conditions. It takes many forms such as yelling at people or verbal abuse.

The interviewees expressed concern about how their job as library staff affected their home life. The majority of them claimed that their job as library staff affected their home life because bad mood at the library translated itself to the home. They also commented that they spent most of their time on library work and miss out on personal responsibilities or activities in the home; their family concerns were not well attended to as evident in the comment made by UGRespondent-2.

The responses of the interviewees revealed that the stress they experience as library staff affected their general wellbeing and their homes. However, the data suggested that they were prepared to remain in the profession.

### **5.5 Strategies Employed by Public University Library Staff to Manage the Stress**

With regard to the item that showed how library staff manage stress they experience, three main themes emerged, thus; strategies library staff used to manage the stress in their work environment, library staff benefits from counselling services to manage the stress and how library staff cope with stress at home.

It emerged from the interview finding that the majority of the respondents resorted to talking with family and friends and library users during their leisure time. They believed that walking, use of mobile phones, sitting behind their computers to visit social media network and discussing issues of common interest with friends and putting aside things that bother them helped them cope with stress. The questionnaire data also confirmed this claim as it

recorded a high mean=3.42, std. deviation=.648. This implies that talking with family and friends in building strong relationship helped library staff to cope with work stress. This finding is supported by Lemu (2007) who put forward that in terms of dealing with organizational change or efforts to modify or eliminate the source of stress by dealing with the situation, individual employees can seek information by talking to family, friends, superiors, co-workers or subordinates, by making plans of action, or through bargaining or reaching a compromise to seek a possible solution. Nagy (2006) also argued that joining others for lunch and sharing stories that do not relate to work helps keep individuals motivated and fresh. The data also suggested the posting of posters and pictures in the offices to make them look friendlier also helped library staff to reduce stress in their work environment.

It was discovered from both interview and questionnaire that quite a number of the respondents were good at seeking solutions to their struggles as such they engaged in sports and exercise, sticking to prayers, discipline, effective time management and made sure not to internalize or harbor issues.

Another dimension of coping strategy suggested by the interview data was effective time management. The interviewees were of the view that the little time managed appropriately relieves library staff from stress. They believed that planning their time table very well and adjusting to it helped them. When there was a clash, they looked for convenient time to attend to that schedule and made sure the time was effectively managed as the saying goes “time is money” as evident in the comment made by (UGRespondent-3). The questionnaire data also pointed out clearly that effective taking time off work

and leave was a mechanism the library staff adopted in alleviating work place stress with a significance mean=3.76, std. Deviation=.743.

The data suggested that interviewee library staff did not go for formal counselling as a way of dealing with stress experienced, they rather enjoyed informal counselling from friends. Their friends advised them to take rest when stressed. The responses to the questionnaire also confirm this as it recorded an insignificant mean=2.99, std. Deviation=.876. This finding is contrary to Cole (2004 cited in Adjei (2009) that to examine one's own attitudes towards personal strengths and weakness, one must take appropriate action by changing individual's job responsibilities, providing greater opportunity for personal autonomy in job by subjecting themselves to counselling. The comment made by UCCRespondent-3 and KNUSTRespondent-2 suggested that library staff did not patronize the counselling centre meant to assist every individual in and outside the university come out of his or her problems. They thought the centre belonged to only students.

The interview finding also highlighted how the library staff coped with stress at home. It emerged that they avoided taking official work home and watched television with their family as appeared in the comment of (UGRespondent-2). The findings suggested that library staff used a lot of strategies to cope with stress they experience but they still think that they need a lot of support to cope with the stress they experience. It came up from both the interview and questionnaire findings that their trusted colleagues in the university could help them cope with stress experienced. They believed that their trusted colleagues

can share their experiences with them and boost their morale because they know what they are going through. Callahan (1993) postulates that in an organization, individual employees can seek information by talking to family, friends, superiors, co-workers or subordinates, by making plans of action, or through bargaining or reaching a compromise to seek a possible solution. Library staff trusted colleagues and friends can share ideas, make jokes and laugh it off which will be a good way of managing stress. The responses of the interviewees emphasised that the university in its support system has a Club House where library staff sometimes at their leisure time gather to interact. Sometimes they organize social gatherings, end of year party, and received encouragement from Heads of departments. Though, these minor supports were offered to library staff, respondents were of the view that the university needs to offer a lot of support to library staff.

## **5.6 Summary**

The data provided by the interviewees and the questionnaire respondents contained in chapter four have been discussed in relation to the literature viewed in chapter two. The chapter firstly discussed the research findings on causes of stress among library staff, the effects of stress on library staff, the strategies library staff at Universities employed to cope with stress they experience.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter summaries the major findings of the study. It also gives conclusions and offers recommendations for further studies. The goal is to investigate the management of stress and to unearth the causes and effects of stress encountered by public university library staff in Ghana.

#### 6.1 Summary of the Study

This study basically investigated the management of stress and to unearth the causes and effects of stress encountered by public university library staff in Ghana. The major purpose was to ascertain the categories, examine the causes, determine the level, determine the effects of job stress and identify strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience.

One hundred and forty-four (144) respondents were sampled for the quantitative phase using the Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel and Townsend (1998) formula for determining sample size, but for the qualitative phase nine management staff were chosen. Purposive, simple random and convenience sampling techniques were employed. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as research instruments to gather relevant data for the study. Descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviation), inferential statistics (Multiple Regression and ANOVA) and content thematic analysis were used as statistical tools to analyse the data. The study showed that indeed the library

staff in public university libraries have a lot of job events that are stressful. These include poor administrative support, lack of support systems, lack of in-service training and inadequate resources, anxiety and frustration, staff conflict, ill-health and excessive smoking and drinking. However it was indicated that library staff also adopt numerous coping strategies such as taking time off work and leave, positive thinking, building strong human relationship and going for counseling in an attempt to manage their stress.

## **6.2 Key Findings of the Study**

The study revealed that psychological, financial, physiological and emotional stresses were the constituents of job stress among public university library staff in the country while technological, situational and accidental stress were not.

The study showed that staff relationship problems in the library, students being difficult to handle in library, insufficient preparation time for work, too many unproductive meetings, poor work conditions, poor administrative support, lack of support systems, lack of recognition for good efforts, environmental hazards, lack of in-service training; inadequate resources and ill-health were the major causes of job stress among public university library staff in the country.

The findings of the study also showed that the level to which job stress had affected the public university library staff in the country had not resulted in prolonged headache and pains; prone to constant breakdown of rules and regulations; affected their sight with intermittent impairment of vision;

exposed them to severe repetitive strain injury; fueled loss of attention among them; exposed them to heart diseases; muscles, bones and joints are affected with heavy workload, their social statuses are adversely affected occasionally, which has led to the untimely death of the staff.

The study equally showed that job stress had the following effects on the public university library staff in the country. Such effects are absenteeism, poor quality of work, anxiety and frustration, depression and tiredness, unfriendly attitude towards students and colleagues, inability to meet deadline, higher rates of accidents, resignation and pre-mature retirement, staff conflict, ill-health and excessive smoking and drinking. However, aggression, forgetfulness, poor time management, procrastination, sleeplessness and functional inconsistency were not associated with job stress as the study revealed.

The findings showed that strategies such as controlling personal contracts, taking time off work and leave, delegating responsibility, managing time effectively, going for counseling, positive thinking, watching TV, talking with friends and family, provision of equitable shift system in the environment, strategic planning of job schedules and building strong human relationships were to be put in place for the control of job stress among library staff; conversely, education and training on new technology with the lowest mean and standard deviation of, eating healthily, balancing of work and home life and making holidays compulsory were not.

### **6.3 Conclusions**

Every individual experiences some form of stress as one goes through the day-to-day activities of life. It is caused by both individual and environmental factors or home related or job related factors. However, what brings about stress varies from person to person. Often, people experience stress because of situations at the workplace or in social relationships, such as poor working conditions, environmental hazards, staff relationship problems and ill-health. Some people may be particularly vulnerable to stress in situations involving the threat of failure or recognition for good efforts. Stress also motivates individuals most, especially workers to achieve and fuel creativity.

Although stress may hinder performance on difficult tasks, moderate stress is needed to improve motivation and performance on less complex tasks. However, if stress is not properly managed, it can lead to serious problems. This makes stress coping strategies very essential. The goal of stress coping strategies is to manage one's stress level so that it does not result in serious problems. However library staff has defensive mechanisms and adaptive strategies, therefore, making the coping strategies adopted work for them. This explains why they have lower levels of stress related disorders.

Moreover, the findings of the study revealed that; four categories of job stress affect library staff of public university libraries in the country; twelve items cause job stress among them; two items were identified to have been the level of job stress among them; eleven items extensively affected their health, level of productivity and services in the libraries and eleven strategies were put in place to control job stress among them.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

The findings indicated that library staff at public university libraries go through a lot of activities that are stressful. For instance, lack of recognition for good efforts, students being difficult to handle in the library, insufficient preparation time for work, financial difficulties among others which need the attention of the university authorities. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

### **6.4.1 Counselling**

It is recommended that the various counselors assigned by the Guidance and Counseling units at the university should institute proactive measures to frequently identify and also encourage library staff to report some of these stressful life experiences that need counseling for necessary action to be taken. High levels of stress can result in a variety of physical and behavioural consequences. The quality life of library staff can be improved by identifying stressors affecting them so that the necessary changes can be made. Although stress and its related events cannot be eliminated, appropriate measures through counselling must be taken to improve the staff's reactions and negative perceptions to these events.

### **6.4.2 Social support**

As important as social support is, many people think they do not have access to this valuable resource. In fact, everyone benefits from social and emotional support. Having strong social support can actually make you more able to cope with problems on your own and by improving your self-esteem. You do

not need a larger network of friends and family to benefit from social support. Just a handful of people, be it co-workers, neighbours or friends from the church or religious institution. Yet social skills don't always come naturally. Some people have trouble making social connections; many others lose established connections due to life changes such as retirement, relocation or the death of a loved one. In any case, it is possible to forge new connections to reap the benefits of a healthy support network. Some steps for growing social support network include:

#### **6.4.2.1 Cast a wide net**

When it comes to your social supports, there is not only one way of doing things. Maybe you have a co-worker you can talk to about problems at work, look to different relationships for special kinds of support. But remember to look to people you can trust and count on, to avoid regret and prevent unhelpful interactions that can make you feel bad.

#### **6.4.2.2 Be proactive**

Often people expect others to reach out to them, and then feel rejected when people don't go out of their way to do so. To get the most out of your social relationships, you have to take the first step. Spend time with friends and family. If you are there for others, they will be more likely to be there for you. Research suggests that providing social support to friends and family may be even more important than receiving it.

#### **6.4.2.3 Take advantage of technology**

It is best to have a face-to-face conversation with a friend, but it isn't always possible. Happily, technology makes it easier than ever before to stay connected with loved ones no matter the distance. Writing an email, sending a text message or making a date for a video chat. However, one must not rely heavily on digital connections. Some research suggests that face-to-face interactions are most beneficial.

#### **6.4.2.4 Follow your interests**

Do you like to sing, make jewelry, play tennis, get involved in local politics? You are more likely to connect with people who like the things you like. Join a club or take on a volunteer position that will allow you to meet others who share your interests. Do not be discouraged if you do not make friends instantly, but try to enjoy the experience as you get to know others over time.

#### **6.4.2.5 Improve your social skills.**

If you feel uncomfortable in social situations and just do not know what to say, try asking simple questions about the other person to get started. If you are shy, it can be less intimidating to get to know others over shared events rather than just going out and talking. If you feel nervous in social situations, consider talking to a therapist with experience in social anxiety and social-skills training. Social support systems and resourceful working atmosphere must be provided in the libraries; management must be involved in combating

job stress in the libraries and total adherence to strategies for the control of job stress among staff of public university libraries in the country.

### **6.4.3 Compensation**

Compensation for additional work; work performed separately from or in addition to an employee's position must be well compensated under certain circumstances. Some of these circumstances are as follows:

#### **6.4.3.1 Awards**

The University should recognize library staff for scientific, educational, artistic, literary, and professional achievements that have a direct impact on the mission of the library and the university as whole in teaching, research, and service.

#### **6.4.3.2 Overload**

Overload payment for an activity conducted by a library staff which contributes to the mission of the university for which the individual is uniquely qualified to perform. Such work must be outside the scope of the individual's job description.

#### **6.4.3.3 Consultant agreements for work performed for another institution**

Payments must be effected for agreements involving consulting by a library staff for another institution that have received advanced approval by the institution seeking such services and approved by the university.



## **6.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

In view of the findings and based on the conclusion in this study, it is recommended that:

1. This study is limited to the library staff of University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Cape Coast. Further studies can be done in different universities to compare the results.
2. Studies can be done to compare managing stress of public and private university library staff.
3. This study's sample is public university library staff. Further studies can be done in different educational levels.
4. This study was in Ghana. Similar studies can be done in other countries or cross-cultural studies can be done.
5. Management influence on the control of job stress of library staff in public university libraries in Ghana.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**  
**SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**  
**QUESTIONNAIRES FOR LIBRARY STAFF**

I am a student of University of Ghana pursuing a Master of Philosophy degree in Information Studies. This questionnaire seeks your opinion on the topic: *Managing Stress among library Staff in Public University Libraries in Ghana*. The purpose of the study is to investigate the management of stress among public university library staff in Ghana. Again, the study seeks to unearth the causes and effects of stress encountered by public university library staff in Ghana. The study forms part of my academic research work in school. In order for my study to be successful, your participation will be highly appreciated.

**(Terms and conditions of the agreement)**

1. Your participation is voluntary.
2. The questionnaire will be filled with respect of your privacy.
3. Your information will be treated with confidentiality.
4. You will remain anonymous (i.e. your name will not be mentioned to anyone or in any part of the transcription of data)
5. You are free to withdraw from the study anytime you feel uncomfortable.

6. The information obtained will be used for academic research purposes only.

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick [×] as appropriate as possible.

**(1). Name of Institution:**

- A). University of Ghana ( )  
 B). Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology ( )  
 C). University of Cape Coast ( )

**(2). Status:**

- A). Senior Member ( )  
 B). Senior Staff ( )  
 C). Junior Staff ( )

**(3). Gender:** A). Male ( ) B). Female ( )

- (4). Age:** A) 25 - 30 ( ) B). 35 - 40 ( ) C). 41 - 45 ( )  
 D). 46 - 50 ( ) E). 51 - 55 ( ) F). 56 or more ( )

**SECTION B:** What are the categories of job stress existing among public university library staff in Ghana?

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick [×] as appropriate as possible. Strongly Disagree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	Categories of job stress	SA	A	D	SD
1	Psychological				
2	Emotional				
3	Technological				
4	Physiological				
5	Financial				
6	Situational				



7	Accidental				
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**SECTION C:** What are the causes of job stress among public university library staff in Ghana?

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick [×] as appropriate as possible. Strongly disagree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	Causes Of Job Stress	SA	A	D	SD
8	Staff relationship problem in library				
9	Students being difficult to handle in library				
10	Insufficient preparation time for work				
11	Too many unproductive meetings				
12	Inability to adapt new forms of technology				
13	Poor working condition				
14	Poor administrative support				
15	Lack of adequate communication				
16	Post-retirement uncertainties				
17	Failure to share information				
18	Lack of support systems				
19	Interferences between work and home				
20	Lack of recognition for good efforts				
21	Poor leadership style				
22	Environmental hazard				
23	Lack of control and role ambiguity				
24	Lack of in-service training				
25	Inadequate resources				
26	Ill-health				

**SECTION D:** What level of job stress do public university library staff experience in Ghana?

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick [×] as appropriate as possible. Strongly disagree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	Level of Stress	SA	A	D	SD
27	It has brought them prolonged headache and pains				
28	It has made them prone to constant breakdown of rules and regulations.				
29	It has affected their sight with intermittent impairment of vision.				
30	It has exposed them to severe repetitive strain injury				
31	It has fueled loss of attention among them.				
32	It has also exposed them to heart diseases.				
33	Muscles, bones and joints are affected.				
34	With heavy workload, their social statuses are adversely affected.				
35	Occasionally, it has led to the untimely death of the staff.				
36	It has in all its form lowered the productivity of staff.				

**SECTION E:** What are the effects of job stress on effectiveness of library staff in public university libraries?

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick [×] as appropriate as possible. Strongly disagree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	Effects of job stress	SA	A	D	SD
37	Absenteeism				
38	Aggression				
39	Poor quality of work				
40	Anxiety and frustration				
41	Depression and tiredness				
42	Unfriendly attitude towards students and colleagues				
43	Forgetfulness				
44	Poor time management				
45	Procrastination				
46	Inability to meet deadline				
47	Higher rates of accidents				
48	Resignation and pre-mature retirement				
49	Staff conflict				
50	Ill-health				
51	Sleeplessness				
52	Functional inconsistency				
53	Excessive smoking and drinking				

**Section F:** What are the strategies that are employed by public university library staff to manage the stress they experience?

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick [×] as appropriate as possible. Very Appropriate (VA), Appropriate (A), Fairly Appropriate (FA), and Inappropriate (I)

S/N	Coping of Job Stress	VA	A	FA	I
54	Controlling personal contracts				
55	Taking time off work and leave				
56	Making holidays compulsory				
57	Delegating responsibility				
58	Managing time effectively				
59	Going for counselling				
60	Taking medication				
61	Positive thinking				
62	Playing sport and exercise				
63	Good eating habits				
64	Listening to music				
65	Watching TV				
66	Conferences and seminars				
67	Education and training on new technology				
68	Talking with friends and family				
69	Balancing of work and home life				
70	Provision of equitable shifting system in the environment				
71	Strategic planning of job schedule				
72	Building strong human relationship				

**APPENDIX B**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

**Interview Guide for Management Staff in Public University Libraries in**

**Ghana on Stress Management.**

1. Does library staff experience stress in the university library?
2. What forms of stress does library staff face in the university library?
3. What are some of the stressful situation in the university library?
4. What are some of the situations that lead to stress among the university library staff?
5. What is the extent of job stress on library staff in university library?
6. What ways does stress affect the university library?
7. How does library staff manage their stress in the university library?
8. What strategies are employed by to reduce stress in the university library?