



Impact of Job-Related Stress on Educators in Tema West Municipality, Ghana

Joy Olive Boye PhD^{a*}, Josephine Anterkyi Bentil PhD^b, Kyeremeh Tawiah Dabone PhD^c

^{a,b}*Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana*

^c*Counselling Center, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana*

^a*Email:joy.boyee@ucc.edu.gh*, ^b*Email:josephine.bentil@ucc.edu.gh*, ^c*Email:kdabone@ucc.edu.gh*

Abstract

Job-related stress is a significant issue that affects professionals in various fields, including education. Educators, in particular, often experience high levels of stress due to the demands of their profession. The study investigated the impact of job-related stress on teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” JHS in Tema West Municipality, Ghana. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 20 educators were selected using census sampling technique. Questionnaire was used in the collection of data. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of the Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) software version 22. The study revealed that the respondents often experienced stress in their work. The study also revealed that the top four sources of job-related stress among the respondents were too much workload, lack of resources and materials needed to work effectively and efficiently, too much pressure at work and lack of encouragement from management. The study revealed a statistically insignificant negative correlation between job-related stress and work engagement. It was recommended that school authorities make the work of teachers more flexible by reducing their workload. This would help reduce the level of job-related stress experienced by teachers. School authorities need to foster a positive school culture by promoting open communication, teamwork, and mutual support among staff members. It is further recommended that teachers are encouraged to maintain a healthy work-life balance by setting boundaries between work and personal time.

Keywords: Common Sources; Educators; Effects; Level; Job-related Stress; Teachers.

Received: 7/4/2024

Accepted: 9/4/2024

Published: 9/14/2024

* Corresponding author.

1. Background to the Study

In today's fast-paced world, stress is inevitable and has become a significant issue in studying workplace behaviours [6]. Some stress can be beneficial by aiding concentration and productivity, but excessive stress can be harmful. This study investigates the impact of stress on teachers at Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” Junior High School (JHS) in the Tema West Municipality, Ghana. Stress is a normal part of human existence and helps in developing new skills and competencies [6]. It occurs when perceived pressure exceeds one's ability to cope [28], and it is the body's response to demands [16]. Job-related stress, or occupational stress, happens when job demands exceed the worker's capabilities and resources [9]. This type of stress can negatively impact personal and organizational efficiency [5]. In recent times, stress is common in various work environments, including education, where rising responsibilities and expectations increase stress levels [18; 38; 36]. Educators face numerous stressors, such as heavy workloads, poor management, job insecurity, and role ambiguity [37; 2; 33; 41]. Globally, job-related stress has significant implications. In the United States, a large percentage of work absences and physician visits are stress-related [20; 39]. In Africa, the teaching profession in particular is associated with high stress levels

Reference [38; 18]. Job-related stress can lead to health issues, decreased productivity, and financial losses [4]. For educators, stress can result in negative behaviours and poor job performance [36]. In academia, stress is linked to job dissatisfaction, substance abuse, physical health problems, and poor psychological well-being [17; 40]. Overall quality of life and job performance are affected by stress levels [26]. Investigating stress is crucial because it affects physical and mental health, as well as performance levels [16]. Since education significantly contributes to economic growth and national development, understanding the factors affecting teachers' productivity is essential Reference [36].

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Job-related stress has become a significant issue in modern organizational environments due to its extensive costs to individuals, organizations, and society [6]. This issue is particularly critical for educators, as schools play a vital role in a country's development, especially in human resource and technological needs [25]. Educators face numerous stressors, including excessive tasks, unclear job descriptions, and complex working relationships [3].

While job-related stress has been extensively addressed in America and Europe through wellness programs, developing countries like Ghana lack similar initiatives [4]. Several studies in Ghana have explored job-related stress among various employee groups. Many employees felt pressured and uncared for by their organizations Reference [18] Stress factors in Ghanaian universities were identified [6]. Reference [3] Reported moderate stress levels among University of Ghana's supporting staff. Reference [4] Found above-average stress levels among private and public sector teachers in Techiman South Circuit. Reference [14] Discovered that salary delays, workload, inadequate rewards, and excessive hours caused stress among lecturers at Evangelical Presbyterian University College.

Despite these studies, the current research aimed to examine job-related stress among educators in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” Junior High School (JHS), where many teachers have reported stressful experiences. This study is a

valuable addition to the literature on job-related stress in Ghana.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of job-related stress on teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” Junior High School (JHS) in the Tema West Municipality, Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the level of job-related stress among teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” JHS,
2. identify the common sources of job-related stress among teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” JHS, and
3. Examine the relationship between job-related stress and work engagement of teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” JHS.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of job-related stress among teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” JHS?
2. What are the common sources of job-related stress among teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” JHS?
3. What is the relationship between job-related stress and work engagement among teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” JHS?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study's results would be significant for several stakeholders, including teachers, school heads, and researchers. For teachers, the study would highlight common sources of job-related stress and its impact on performance, helping them manage their stress better. School heads could use the findings to plan activities and schedules to reduce teacher stress. Finally, the study would contribute to the literature on job-related stress among educators in Ghana.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Person-Environment Fit Theory

The Person-Environment (PE) Fit Theory, rooted in early works by [29] and [31], is widely accepted for studying job-related stress [10; 19; 27]. It posits that human behaviour is a function of both the person and the environment, and occupational satisfaction, stability, and achievement depend on the fit between a person's personality and their work environment [22; 27; 34]. The theory considers the balance between an individual's desired stimuli (e.g., workload, social interaction) and the actual level of these stimuli in their environment [15]. A good fit between individual characteristics and environmental attributes lead to less stress and better well-being, while a misfit causes strain and reduced psychosocial well-being [14].

2.2 Concept of Job-Related Stress

Job-related stress, defined as the experience of unpleasant emotions due to workplace difficulties [1], has been conceptualized in three ways: the engineering approach (stress as an aversive work environment characteristic), the physiological approach (stress as a physiological response to a threatening environment), and the dynamic interaction approach (stress as the interaction between person and environment) [13; 35]. Job-related stress significantly affects job performance and has substantial costs for individuals and organizations [6; 18].

2.3 Effects of job-related Stress

Increased stress initially boosts performance but eventually leads to a decline if it becomes excessive [8]. Job-related stress poses serious physical and psychological health risks, reducing productivity and leading to mental health issues like anxiety and depression [4]. It can also cause behavioural changes such as increased substance use and absenteeism, further reducing job performance [30].

2.4 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Level of Job-Related Stress among Teachers

Research has consistently shown that occupational stress levels among teachers can vary widely depending on a range of factors, including socio-cultural context, institutional type, and individual characteristics. The study by Reference [23] highlighted that teachers in aided schools, often operating in different socio-cultural contexts, experienced higher levels of stress compared to their counterparts in government schools. This finding suggests that the socio-economic pressures, job security concerns, and possibly the nature of interactions with management and students in aided schools contribute to elevated stress levels.

In contrast, [36] found that lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State also faced high levels of stress, which could be attributed to the demanding nature of academic responsibilities, including teaching, research, and administrative duties, combined with inadequate resources and institutional support. The findings from [36] underscore the pervasive nature of occupational stress across different educational levels, from primary to tertiary institutions.

Further complicating the picture, [3] reported moderate stress levels among university supporting staff, who, while not directly involved in teaching, still face significant job-related pressures. These may include dealing with administrative tasks, supporting academic staff, and managing student-related issues, all of which contribute to their stress levels. Similarly, [32] found moderate stress levels among bank employees, suggesting that the level of stress may vary not only by profession but also within different roles in the same sector.

The severity of occupational stress is not limited to educational institutions. Reference [16] reported extremely severe stress levels among nurses at TGH, a finding that reflects the intense demands placed on healthcare professionals, particularly in environments with high patient loads, limited resources, and the critical nature of their work. This comparison across different professions highlights the variability in stress levels and the factors

contributing to it, such as workload, job demands, and the available support systems.

These studies collectively illustrate that while teachers and other professionals across various sectors experience occupational stress, the level of stress can vary significantly depending on the specific context, institutional environment, and the nature of the job. Understanding these nuances is crucial for developing targeted interventions that address the specific stressors faced by different groups of employees. For teachers, this could involve improving working conditions, providing better support systems, and addressing the unique challenges associated with different types of educational institutions.

2.3.2 Common Sources of Job-Related Stress among Teachers

Job-related stress among teachers in Ghana can be traced to several key factors that significantly impact their professional and personal lives. One of the primary sources of stress is irregular salary payments, which create financial instability and anxiety among educators. This issue is prevalent in many regions of Ghana and is a critical stressor, as it affects teachers' ability to meet their basic needs and financial obligations, leading to increased pressure and decreased job satisfaction [14]. In addition to financial concerns, teachers often face overwhelming workloads, including large class sizes, administrative duties, and the responsibility of meeting diverse student needs with limited resources. This heavy workload is exacerbated by excessive work hours, which leave little time for rest and recovery, ultimately leading to burnout. These findings are consistent with studies in other countries, such as Pakistan, where [25] identified similar stressors among teachers, including demanding workloads and insufficient time for personal life. Reference [3] also highlighted these issues in the Ghanaian context, emphasizing the pervasive nature of these stressors across different educational environments. Poor work-life balance is another significant contributor to job-related stress among teachers. The demanding nature of the profession often blurs the lines between work and personal life, making it difficult for teachers to maintain healthy relationships and engage in self-care activities. This imbalance is further aggravated by the lack of control over their work environment and schedule, which leaves teachers feeling powerless and frustrated. Reference [5,16] both underscore the importance of work-life balance in mitigating stress, noting that teachers who struggle to balance their professional responsibilities with personal needs are more likely to experience chronic stress and burnout. Furthermore, the lack of support from school leadership and the broader educational system exacerbates these stressors. Teachers often feel unsupported in their roles, with inadequate access to professional development opportunities, insufficient classroom resources, and limited recognition for their hard work. This lack of support not only diminishes their sense of efficacy but also contributes to a negative work environment, further increasing stress levels. In summary, the sources of job-related stress among teachers in Ghana are multifaceted, encompassing financial instability, heavy workloads, poor work-life balance, and a lack of control and support within the educational system. These stressors are consistent with findings from other countries, indicating that the challenges faced by teachers are universal to some extent, though they may vary in intensity and specific manifestation based on local contexts. Addressing these stressors requires a comprehensive approach that includes timely payment of salaries, manageable workloads, better work-life balance, and enhanced support from school leadership and the educational system at large.

2.3.3 Relationship between Job-Related Stress and Work Engagement among teachers

Job-related stress among teachers in Ghana can be traced to several key factors that significantly impact their professional and personal lives. One of the primary sources of stress is irregular salary payments, which create financial instability and anxiety among educators. This issue is prevalent in many regions of Ghana and is a critical stressor, as it affects teachers' ability to meet their basic needs and financial obligations, leading to increased pressure and decreased job satisfaction [14].

In addition to financial concerns, teachers often face overwhelming workloads, including large class sizes, administrative duties, and the responsibility of meeting diverse student needs with limited resources. This heavy workload is exacerbated by excessive work hours, which leave little time for rest and recovery, ultimately leading to burnout. These findings are consistent with studies in other countries, such as Pakistan, where [25] identified similar stressors among teachers, including demanding workloads and insufficient time for personal life. Reference [3] also highlighted these issues in the Ghanaian context, emphasizing the pervasive nature of these stressors across different educational environments.

Poor work-life balance is another significant contributor to job-related stress among teachers. The demanding nature of the profession often blurs the lines between work and personal life, making it difficult for teachers to maintain healthy relationships and engage in self-care activities. This imbalance is further aggravated by the lack of control over their work environment and schedule, which leaves teachers feeling powerless and frustrated. Reference [5,16] both underscore the importance of work-life balance in mitigating stress, noting that teachers who struggle to balance their professional responsibilities with personal needs are more likely to experience chronic stress and burnout.

Furthermore, the lack of support from school leadership and the broader educational system exacerbates these stressors. Teachers often feel unsupported in their roles, with inadequate access to professional development opportunities, insufficient classroom resources, and limited recognition for their hard work. This lack of support not only diminishes their sense of efficacy but also contributes to a negative work environment, further increasing stress levels.

In summary, the sources of job-related stress among teachers in Ghana are multifaceted, encompassing financial instability, heavy workloads, poor work-life balance, and a lack of control and support within the educational system. These stressors are consistent with findings from other countries, indicating that the challenges faced by teachers are universal to some extent, though they may vary in intensity and specific manifestation based on local contexts. Addressing these stressors requires a comprehensive approach that includes timely payment of salaries, manageable workloads, better work-life balance, and enhanced support from school leadership and the educational system at large.

2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study, meaning data was collected at one point in time. Descriptive survey research, as defined by Best and Kahn (2006), investigates existing conditions or relationships, evident opinions, or developing trends. This design was appropriate for assessing the level of job-related stress, common sources of job-related stress, and the relationship between job-related stress and work engagement without manipulating respondents. The target population was Adjei Kojo TWMA "2" JHS, specifically the teachers, totalling 20.

2.4.2 Sampling Procedures

A sample size of 20 teachers was used, and due to its small size, a census technique was employed.

Reference [21] notes that census data collection allows for an intensive study and includes every population member, reducing sampling errors and increasing accuracy.

2.4.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected using a questionnaire, chosen for its convenience and suitability since all respondents were literate. The questionnaire, adapted from the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) and Christian (2016) Occupational Stress Scale, comprised four sections: **Section A:** Background information (4 items). **Section B:** Level of job-related stress (10 items) on a five-point Likert scale: Very Often (VO), Often (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R), Never (N). **Section C:** Sources of job-related stress (16 items) categorized into Job Demand, Control, Support, Job Relationships, Job Role, and Changes at the workplace, also on a five-point Likert scale. **Section D:** Level of work engagement (7 items) on a four-point Likert scale: Always (AL), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R), Never (N).

2.4.3.1 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validity was established by expert hands who scrutinized the items of the questionnaire and modifications made. The reliability was ascertained by calculating the Cronbach co-efficient alpha of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.82. Since it was above 0.70 (Field, 2018), it can be said that the instrument was reliable.

2.4.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Data were scored using the rubrics 'Very Often (VO)=5', 'Often (O)=4', 'Sometimes (S)=3', 'Rarely (R)=2', and 'Never (N)=1' as well as 'Always (AL)=4', 'Sometimes (S)=3', 'Rarely (R)=2', and 'Never (N)=1'. The data were coded and entered into SPSS version 21 for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyse demographic data. Means and standard deviations answered research questions one and two, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research question three.

2.5 Limitations

This study on the impact of job-related stress on educators in the Tema West Municipality, Ghana, faced several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The study was limited to educators within a specific geographic area, the Tema West Municipality. While the findings provide insights into the experiences of educators in this region, they may not be generalizable to educators in other parts of Ghana or in different educational contexts. The relatively small sample size also limits the generalizability of the results to the broader population of educators. The study relied on self-reported data, which is subject to various biases, including social desirability bias and recall bias. Educators may have under reported or over reported their levels of stress or its impact on their work due to concerns about confidentiality or perceptions of how their responses might be viewed.

The study utilized standardized questionnaires to measure job-related stress and its impact. While these tools are widely used, they may not fully capture the unique stressors and challenges faced by educators in the Tema West Municipality. Cultural factors and specific local conditions may have influenced the responses, leading to potential measurement bias. Considering these limitations, future research should aim to address these gaps by employing larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and more comprehensive measurement tools to better understand the complex relationship between job-related stress and educators' outcomes in various contexts.

3. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of job-related stress on teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA “2” Junior High School (JHS) in the Tema West Municipality, Ghana. This section presents the results and discussion of the study. The results are presented before the discussion.

3.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents have been presented in table 1. The characteristics include the gender and age. They are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=20)

Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	12	60.0
Female	8	40.0
Age		
20-30	3	15.0
31-40	10	50.0
41 and above	7	35.0

Source: Fieldwork Survey (2023)

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It can be seen that majority of the respondents (60%) were males while 40% were females. In terms of age, it can be seen that majority of the respondents (50%) were aged between 31 and 40 years while 35% were 41 years and above. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are relevant because they can influence the extent to which job-related stress can affect the respondents.

3.1.2 Level of job-related Stress among Teachers

This research question was meant to find out the level of job-related stress among the respondents. The data was on a five-point Likert scale of '0=Not At All (N)', '1=Rarely (R)', '2=Sometimes (S)', '3=Rather Often (RO)', and '4=Nearly All the Time (NA)'. The data was analysed using means and standard deviations. The results have been presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Job-Related Stress among Teachers

Statement	Mean	SD
Feeling you have too much responsibility for the work of others.	3.10	1.02
Having to do or decide where mistakes could be quite costly.	3.86	1.01
Not having enough help or equipment to get the job done well.	3.08	0.99
Feeling that you have to do things that are against your better judgment.	3.83	1.05
Feeling unable to influence your immediate supervisor's decisions and actions that affect you.	3.65	0.95
Thinking that you'll not be able to meet the conflicting demands of various people you work with.	3.12	1.04
Not knowing what the people you work with expect of you.	3.58	1.01
Having to deal with or satisfy too many people.	3.45	1.08
Feeling that your job tends to interfere with your family life.	3.44	1.03
Feeling trapped in a job you don't like but can't get out of.	3.01	1.11

Source: Fieldwork Survey (2023)

Table 2 shows the level of job-related stress experienced by the respondents. In most of the items in the table, it is clear that most of the respondents often experienced some amount of stress. Specially, it can be seen that majority of the respondents often had to do or decide where mistakes could be quite costly ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.01$) and felt that they had to do things that were against their better judgment ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.05$). Similarly, most of the respondents felt unable to influence their immediate supervisor's decisions and actions that affect them ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.95$) and did not know what the people they work with expect of them ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.01$). These were the topmost stress indicators among the respondents. Aside these, most of the respondents often experienced stress from having to deal with or satisfy too many people ($M=3.45$, $SD=1.08$) and also often felt their jobs interfered with their families ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.03$). The respondents were however not often stressed in terms of working overtime. Overall, it can be inferred that the respondents often experienced stress in their work.

3.1.3 Common Sources of Job-related Stress

This research question sought to identify the common sources of job-related stress among the respondents in the study. The data for this research question was scored on a five-point Likert scale of ‘Very Often (VO)’, ‘Often (O)’, ‘Sometimes (S)’, ‘Rarely (R)’, and ‘Never (N)’. The data was analysed using means and standard deviations. A mean closer to 5 indicates that most of the respondents experienced that form stress often while a mean closer to 1 indicates that most of the respondents rarely experienced that form of stress. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Common Sources of Job-Related Stress among Teachers

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Too much workload at work makes me stressful	3.94	0.64	1 st
Too much pressure at work makes me stressful	3.33	0.65	3 rd
Non-involvement in any decision making at work lead to stress	2.16	0.78	6 th
Lack of independence in decision making at work lead to stress	2.25	0.71	5 th
Lack of recognition at work lead to stress	2.09	0.88	7 th
Lack of encouragement from management lead to stress	3.12	1.15	4 th
No sponsorship at work lead to stress	1.67	0.65	8 th
Lack of resources and materials needed to work effectively and efficiently lead to stress	3.78	0.80	2 nd

Source: Fieldwork Survey (2023)

It can be seen from the Table that the top four sources of occupational stress among the respondents are too much workload, lack of resources and materials needed to work effectively and efficiently, too much pressure at work and lack of encouragement from management. Too much workload recording the highest mean of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 0.64 implies that it is the most common source of occupational stress among the lecturers. Lack of sponsorship as a source of stress however recorded the lowest mean of 1.67 and a standard deviation of 0.65. This implies that most of the respondents did not view the lack of sponsorship at work as a source of occupational stress.

3.1.4 Job-Related Stress and Work Engagement

This research question was intended to identify the relationship between job-related stress and work engagement among the respondents. This research question was answered by using Pearson Moment Correlation Matrix. The data for job-related Stress level was computed together while the data for the work engagement was also computed together. The relationship between the two variables is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix of Job-Related Stress and Work Engagement

		Job-Related Stress	Work Engagement
Work Eng.	Pearson Correlation	-.059	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.278	
	N	335	335

Source: Fieldwork Survey (2018)

Table 4 shows that there was a statistically insignificant negative correlation between Job-related Stress and Work Engagement ($r = -.059$; $n=335$; $p>0.05$). Even though the correlation was negative, it was not found to be statistically significant. A negative correlation means that as one of the variables increases, the other decreases. However, this correlation was not statistically significant. This implies that the relationship between the Job-related stress levels of the respondents and their level of work engagement is not statistically significant. Therefore, causality cannot be assumed.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Level of Job-Related Stress among teachers in Adjei Kojjo

The study revealed that the respondents frequently experienced significant stress in their work environment. Notably, 88% of the teachers reported facing situations where mistakes could be costly, feeling compelled to act against their better judgment, lacking influence over their immediate supervisor's decisions, and being uncertain about the expectations of their colleagues. These factors emerged as the primary indicators of stress among the respondents, reflecting a high level of job-related stress within the teaching profession.

The prevalence of stress observed in this study aligns with the broader literature on occupational stress among educators. Teaching is consistently identified as a highly stressful profession, a finding corroborated by previous studies. For instance, [36] examined the relationship between occupational stress and lecturers' productivity in Kwara State-owned tertiary institutions and found that lecturers, particularly in polytechnics, experienced higher levels of stress compared to their counterparts in other institutions. Similarly, [3] investigated stress and coping strategies among support staff at the University of Ghana's central administration, revealing that a significant majority (80.8%) perceived moderate levels of stress.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with those of [24], who assessed the prevalence of occupational stress, depression, and anxiety among Egyptian teachers. Their research indicated a 100% prevalence of occupational stress among the teachers sampled, underscoring the pervasive nature of stress in the teaching profession. Likewise, [4] explored occupational stress among teachers in the Techiman South Circuit in Ghana's Brong East Region and found that teachers experienced above-average levels of stress, further supporting the notion that teaching is an inherently stressful occupation.

The consistency of these findings across various contexts and regions both locally and internationally suggests that occupational stress in teaching is a global phenomenon. As highlighted by [27], the demanding nature of teaching, coupled with limited control over work-related decisions, contributes significantly to the stress experienced by educators. This pervasive stress can have profound implications for teachers' well-being and overall job satisfaction, as well as their ability to effectively deliver quality education.

In conclusion, the current study confirms the findings of multiple studies, indicating that teaching is perceived as a highly stressful occupation across different societies and contexts. The high levels of stress reported by teachers in this study underscore the need for interventions to address occupational stress and promote the well-being of educators.

3.2.2 Common Sources of Job-Related Stress among Teachers

The study revealed that the top four sources of occupational stress among the respondents were excessive workload, lack of resources and materials needed for effective and efficient work, excessive pressure at work, and insufficient encouragement from management. Among these, excessive workload was identified as the most prevalent source of occupational stress among lecturers. The complex nature of teachers' work, which includes teaching, researching, writing, marking assignments and examinations, and providing additional support to students, contributes to their substantial workload. Consequently, lecturers often face considerable pressure in their roles, exacerbated by the lack of management support, which collectively leads to significant job-related stress.

These findings align with the results of several previous studies. For instance, [14] evaluated the causes of stress and coping strategies among lecturers at private universities in Ghana, with a specific focus on the Evangelical Presbyterian University College (EPUC). Their study revealed that stress was prevalent among lecturers, primarily due to workload, inadequate monetary rewards, and excessive working hours. This consistency in findings underscores the pervasive nature of occupational stress associated with workload among academic staff.

Similarly, [3] investigated stress and coping strategies among supporting staff at the central administration of the University of Ghana. The study identified that the highest-ranked sources of stress included dealing with multiple pressing issues simultaneously, the perception that rewards are not performance-based, and the inadequacy of personnel or equipment to respond effectively in emergencies. These stressors, though focusing on administrative staff, reflect common challenges in the higher education environment that contribute to occupational stress.

Reference [5] also examined the indicators of occupational stress among academic staff in South African higher education institutions. Their research indicated that respondents reported higher levels of stress related to pay and benefits, overload, and work-life balance compared to normative data. This reinforces the idea that academic staff face unique stressors related to the demands of their roles, which are compounded by insufficient compensation and challenges in balancing professional and personal life.

Moreover, [32] explored the factors associated with work stress among university employees in Botswana. Their findings highlighted that work stress was significantly associated with factors such as overload, clarity of

responsibilities, and physical working conditions. The consistency in these findings across different studies and contexts suggests that the nature of lecturers' work inherently involves stress-inducing elements, particularly related to workload and institutional support.

3.2.3 Relationship between Job-Related Stress and Work Engagement among Teachers

The results of this study revealed a statistically insignificant negative correlation between job-related stress and work engagement among teachers ($r = -.059$; $n = 335$; $p > 0.05$). This indicates that although the correlation was negative, suggesting that higher levels of job-related stress might be associated with lower levels of work engagement, this relationship was not statistically significant. Therefore, within the sample of teachers studied, job-related stress did not have a significant impact on their work engagement levels. This result is consistent with the Pearson Correlation Matrix, which also showed a negative but statistically insignificant correlation. The implication of this finding is that, for the teachers in the current study, the level of job-related stress does not significantly influence their degree of work engagement.

This finding aligns with [1] research, which similarly found a non-significant negative correlation between job stressors and tenure, indicating that job-related stress did not significantly affect teachers' tenure or retention. In contrast, the findings of [6] revealed a significant relationship among job involvement, job commitment, and occupational stress in Ghanaian universities. This discrepancy could be due to differences in how job-related stress and work engagement were measured across these studies. [6] study did not specifically focus on work engagement as defined in the current study, but rather on job involvement and commitment, which, while related, are distinct constructs.

Similarly, [27] study identified a significant positive relationship between occupational stress and burnout among workers, which also contrasts with the current findings. Burnout, however, is conceptually different from work engagement, as burnout typically represents a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress, whereas work engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption [35]. These differences in conceptualization and measurement of key constructs may explain the variances in findings across the studies.

4. Major Findings

The study revealed that the respondents often experienced stress in their work. It was clearly shown that most of the teachers in the study often had to do or decide where mistakes could be quite costly, felt that they had to do things that were against their better judgment, felt unable to influence their immediate supervisor's decisions and actions that affected them and did not know what the people they worked with expected of them.

The study revealed again that the top four sources of job-related stress among the respondents were too much workload, lack of resources and materials needed to work effectively and efficiently, too much pressure at work and lack of encouragement from management. Regarding the relationship between job-related stress and work engagement among teachers, it was found in the study a statistically insignificant negative correlation between occupational stress and work engagement.

5. Conclusions

It was concluded from the findings of the study that teachers in Adjei Kojo TWMA "2" JHS often experienced stress in their work. This stress was mostly in the form trying to avoid mistakes, doing things against better judgment and unable to influence decisions of immediate supervisors. Again, it was concluded that the top four sources of job-related stress among the teachers were too much workload, lack of resources and materials needed to work effectively and efficiently, too much pressure at work and lack of encouragement from management. These are therefore key areas of consideration in easing the work of teachers. Job-related stress did not significantly relate with work engagement. Even though there was a negative correlation, it was not significant enough to suggest a causal relationship.

Addressing job-related stress among teachers at Adjei Kojo TWMA "2" JHS in Tema West Municipality is crucial for their well-being and professional effectiveness. By implementing comprehensive counselling strategies and organizational interventions, schools can create a healthier and more supportive environment for teachers, ultimately benefiting the entire educational community.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. School authorities should make the work of teachers more flexible by reducing their workload. This would help reduce the level of job-related stress experienced by teachers.
2. School authorities should through the counselling units in their schools organise stress management workshops and conferences for teachers. This can help equip teachers with the requisite skills to effectively manage any job-related stress they might experience.
3. School authorities should foster a positive school culture by promoting open communication, teamwork, and mutual support among staff members.
4. It is further, recommended that teachers are encouraged to maintain a healthy work-life balance by setting boundaries between work and personal time.

7. Implications for Counselling

1. Counsellors should educate teachers on identifying stressors in their occupational field.
2. Counsellors should collaborate with teachers to develop healthy coping strategies such as relaxation techniques, time management and boundary setting that can help them manage and reduce their stress levels.
3. Counsellors should help teachers build and utilize support networks which include colleagues, friends and family members.
4. Counsellors should emphasize the importance of self-care for teachers, including prioritizing personal needs, engaging in activities that bring joy and maintaining a work-life balance.

8. Areas for Further Research

It is suggested that further research adopt a mixed model approach to ensure that there is in-depth and rich data. The qualitative data can be used to provide backing for the quantitative data obtained.

References

- [1]. Acquaye, A. (2007). *Job satisfaction, occupational stress and mental health among nurses in the Greater Accra Metropolis*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Ghana, Legon.
- [2]. Akinmayowa, J. T., & Kadiri, P. A. (2014). Stress among academic staff in a Nigerian university. *Covenant Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 65(1), 73–91.
- [3]. Akpene, A. Y. (2014). *Stress and coping strategies among supporting staff at the Central Administration in the University of Ghana*. Unpublished master's dissertation, University of Ghana, Legon.
- [4]. Ansah-Hughes, W., Owusu-Darko, I., & Acheampong, P. N. P. (2017). A comparative study of occupational stress level among private and public sector teachers in the Techiman South Circuit. *European Journal of Open Education and E-learning Studies*, 2(1), 1-24.
- [5]. Beehr, T. A., & Newmann, J. E. (2013). *Work stress and individual differences*. Routledge.
- [6]. Bennet, E., & Bamini, J. (2013). Occupational stress among the university academicians of Ghana. *International Journal of Human Resource Management and Research (IJHRMR)*, 3(3), 49-56.
- [7]. Best, W. J., & Kahn, J. V. (2006). *Research in education*. Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited.
- [8]. Blumenthal, I. (2003). Services SETA. *Employee Assistance Conference Programme*, 2(2), 5-10.
- [9]. Braaten, D. J. (2000). *Occupational stress in mental health counsellors*. Unpublished dissertation, The Graduate College, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin.
- [10]. Brewer, E. W., & McMahan, J. (2004). Job stress and burnout among industrial and technical teacher educators. *Journal of Vocational Education Research*, 28(2), 1-17.
- [11]. Christian, Jnr. D. K. (2016). *Determinants of workplace stress in the health sector: A case study of nurses at the Tema General Hospital*. Unpublished master's dissertation, School of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana, Legon.
- [12]. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of organizational stress* (pp.28-67). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- [13]. Cooper, C. L. (Ed.). (1998). *Theories of organizational stress*. Oup oxford.
- [14]. Danku, L. S., Dzomeku, V. M., Dodor, C. T., & Adade, T. C. (2017). Stress among private university lecturers in Ghana: Causes and coping strategies. *International Journal of Economic and Business Review*, 5(1), 95-101.
- [15]. Dewe, P. J., O'Driscoll, M. P., & Cooper, C. L. (2012). Theories of psychological stress at work. In R. J. Gatchel & I. Z. Schultz (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health and wellness* (pp. 23-38). New York: Springer Science and Business Media.
- [16]. Dorcoo, K. C. J. (2016). *Determinants of workplace stress in the health sector: A case study of nurses at the Tema General Hospital*. Unpublished master's dissertation, School of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana, Legon.
- [17]. Doyle C., & Hind, P. (1998). Occupational stress, burnout and job status in female academics. *Gender, Work and Organisations*, 5, 67-82.

- [18]. Dwamena, M. A. (2012). *Stress and its effects on employees' productivity – A case study of Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority, Takoradi*. Unpublished master's thesis, Institute of Distance Learning, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.
- [19]. Edwards, J. R., Caplan, R. D., & Harrison, R. V. (1998). Person –environment fit theory: Conceptual foundations, empirical evidence and directions for future research. In C.L
- [20]. Elkins, A. J., & Rosch, P. J. (1990). Promoting mental health at the work place: the prevention side of stress management. *Occupation Medicine State of the Art review*, 5(4), 739-754.
- [21]. Field, A. (2018). *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- [22]. Herr, E. L., Cramer, S. H., & Niles, S. G. (2004). *Career guidance and counseling through the lifespan*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- [23]. Jeyaraj, S. S. (2013). Occupational stress among the teachers of the higher secondary schools in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 7(5), 63-76.
- [24]. Kassem, I. K., Magouz, A. F., Desouky, A. Y., & Hagag, M. F. (2017). Isolation and identification of Rotavirus infection in diarrheic calves at El Gharbia Governorate. *Glob Vet*, 18(3), 178-182.
- [25]. Khana, A., Yusoffa, R. B. M., & Azamb, K. (2014). Factors of job stress among university teachers in Pakistan: A conceptual review. *Journal of Management Information*, 2(1), 62-67.
- [26]. Kinman, G., & Jones, F. (2003). Running up and down the escalator: Stressors and strains in UK academics. *Quality in Higher Education*, 9, 21-38.
- [27]. Kokkinos, C. M. (2007). Job stress, personality and burnout in primary school teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(1), 222-243.
- [28]. Lawless, M. W., Greene, C. M., Mulgrew, A., Taggart, C. C., O'Neill, S. J., & McElvaney, N. G. (2004). Activation of endoplasmic reticulum-specific stress responses associated with the conformational disease Z α 1-antitrypsin deficiency. *The Journal of Immunology*, 172(9), 5722-5726.
- [29]. Lewin, K. (1935). *A dynamic theory of personality*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- [30]. Mark, A. D. (2012). *Stress and its effect on employees' productivity*. Unpublished research project, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana.
- [31]. Murray, H. (1938). *Explorations in personality*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin
- [32]. Oginga, F. O., Magwai, T., Shangase, K. B., Xulu, K. R., & Mpofana, T. (2022). Early life stress and brain plasticity: from alterations of brain morphology to development of psychopathology. *NeuroSci*, 3(1), 104-110.
- [33]. Olatunji, B. F., & Akinlabi, F. B. (2012). Gender influence of the stress experience of university lecturers. *European Journal of Business and Social Science*, 1(4), 56-62.
- [34]. Salami, S.O. (2006). Management of stress among trainee-teachers through cognitive behaviour therapy. *Personality Study and Group Behaviour*, 26, 1-25.
- [35]. Saleem, M. F., Sammar, R. M. A., Ahmad, S., Khan, I. H., & Shahid, A. M. (2016). Understanding and mitigating the impacts of drought stress in cotton-a review. *Pakistan Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 53(3).
- [36]. Tijani, A. A. (2015). Lecturers' occupational stress and productivity in Kwara State owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, 2(4), 55-60.
- [37]. Tytherleigh, M. Y., Webb, C., Cooper, C. L., & Ricketts, C. (2005). Occupational stress in UK higher

education institutions: A comparative study of all staff categories. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 1, 41-61.

- [38]. Ubangari, A. A., & Bako, R. (2014). Relationship of stress among university lecturers. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19(1), 98-104.
- [39]. Verespej, M.A. (2000). *Stressed out*. Retrieved from <http://www.industryweek.com/currentArticles/asp/articles.asD?>
- [40]. Winefield, A. H., Gillespie, N., Stough, C., Dua, J., & Hapuararchchi, J. (2002). *Occupational stress in Australian Universities: A national survey*. Melbourne: National Tertiary Education Union.
- [41]. Yusoff, R. B. (2013). Job stress, performance and emotional intelligent in academia. *Journal of Basic and Applied Science Research*, 3(6), 1-8.