

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**WORKLOAD, PERCEIVED STRESS, AND COPING  
STRATEGIES AMONG HEADTEACHERS IN ASSIN FOSO  
MUNICIPALITY**



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## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Isaiah Joe Quaigrain declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which all have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree in the university or elsewhere.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the School of Research and Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

**Name of Supervisor:** Prof. Hinneh Kusi

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my wife, Emelia and my children: Nana Aba, Abeiku and Paa Kwesi.



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The researcher is most grateful to God for His inspiration and sustenance in times of despair and for making my educational pursuit a reality. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Hinneh Kusi, my supervisor and lecturer at the Department of Educational Administration and Management for his guidance. His unreserved patience, useful suggestions, time and his devotedness in correcting the manuscript cannot be quantified. I also take the opportunity to thank Prof. Stephen Antwi-Danso and Dr. Alfred Kuranchie of University of Education, Winneba, for given me attention at certain stages of this work. My profound appreciation goes to my brother Dr. Kennedy A. Quaigrain for his numerous pieces of advice during my course work and the entire research work. I also appreciate the assistance received from headteachers of Assin Foso Municipality who worked tirelessly despite odds to fill my questionnaires and returned them. My gratitude also goes to my wife, Emelia, who endured my absence in the course of this work. I also acknowledge with thanks for the understanding, concern, and contribution given to me by my children when the study was in progress.

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## GLOSSARY

DTST	:	District Teacher Support Team
EMIS	:	Educational Management Information System
GAS	:	General Adaptation Syndrome
GES	:	Ghana Education service
HSE	:	Health and Safety Executive
JHS	:	Junior High School
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
OSS	:	Occupational Stress Scale
PTA	:	Parents Teachers Association
SHEP	:	School Health Education Programme
SHS	:	Senior High School
SISOs	:	School Improvement Support Officers
SMC	:	School Management Committee
SPAM	:	School Performance Appraisal Meeting
SPS	:	Social Provisions Scale
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRRS	:	Social Readjustment Rating Scale
TTSC	:	Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping

## ABSTRACT

It has become academically imperative to investigate how workload relates to headteachers job stress and how job stress relates to burnout among headteachers. The negative consequences of job stress on the work of headteachers call for research on the job and burnout linkage in order to increase our understanding on how to mitigate this problem among headteachers. The purpose of the study is to determine the relationship of workload and perceived stress among basic school headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality. It also examined coping strategies employed by both male and female headteachers to manage the negative effects of stress they might experience. There were fifty-three headteachers working in the public basic schools of Assin Foso Municipality and all constituted the population of the study. They were 41 male respondents which constituted 77.4% and 12 females constituted 22.6% of the sample. To achieve the purpose of the study, five specific objectives with corresponding research questions were posed, and two hypotheses postulated. The researcher employed a dual mode paradigm, thus, quantitative and qualitative paradigms which required the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and analyse them using a sequential explanatory multi- method design. The instruments for the study were questionnaire and interview guide for the focus group. Through correlational research, the researcher easily determined the statistical relationship between the variables, thus; workload, job stress and coping strategies of headteachers or behavioural trend with regards to the variables under consideration. It also helped the researcher to investigate how workload relates to headteachers job stress and how job stress relates to burnout among headteachers in Assin Foso Municipality. With regard to Headteachers Workload, the findings revealed that both male and female basic school heads were occupationally stressed with respect to workload, thus, admission of students, monitoring and setting of examination questions, teachers and students' disciplinary issues, vetting of teachers' lessons notes, administrative responsibilities constituting high level workload and they were perceived stressors. Regarding coping strategies, it became evident that participating in religious activities, watching movies/TV, getting adequate sleep, effective time management among others help. Studying stress and workload among school heads has implications for improving understanding of job-stress and its related effect on the working life of headteachers. We need to appreciate the environmental and personal factors that promote stress and early manifestation of stress. This knowledge helps to map out coping strategies and proactive prevention. The study recommends that: the Assin Foso municipal education office should implement the policy of detaching or exempting headteachers from teaching alongside their administrative work and other duties that interfere with their responsibilities as school managers; the guidance and counselling service departments at the municipal education offices should organise seminars and workshops on stress reduction and coping strategies for the headteachers on their day to day duties.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Education in Ghana before the arrival of the Europeans was mainly informal but after their arrival they built a formal system of education which has come to stay. Universal education thereafter became and still is a core component of Ghana's economic and social development hence the many attempts in eradicating illiteracy have been a constant objective of the Ghanaian education policies for several decades. Through all these there is also the frantic effort in ensuring equitable access to education by all citizens of Ghana.

The educational system in Ghana has gone through several reforms. Notable among them is that of 1987 Reform followed by the constitution of 1992 which gave a new phase to educational policies in the country. Among them is increasing the place of vocational education and training, and of information and technology within the education system. The education system in Ghana is divided into three phases, namely: Basic education (Kindergarten, Primary, and Junior High); Secondary education (Senior High school, Technical & Vocational Education); Tertiary education (Universities, and Colleges of Education). It is worth noting that education at the basic level (between the ages of four and fifteen years) is compulsory but the subsequent levels seem to be by choice. The state by this reform provides a free and compulsory education for all. The Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) provided an action plan for the period 1996-2005 which focus was to bridge the gap in primary school, improve teaching and learning materials and teacher's living conditions.

Stress is one of the most fundamental problems spanning through human endeavour. Nweze (2005) stated that for two and half decades, stress phenomenon has become a topical issue in management, development, seminars and workshops in Nigeria. He further stated that the popularity of stress stems from a number of obvious reasons. Firstly, nobody is immune to stress. We can be caught up in a situation that causes or induces stress in the individual. Thus as a part of human living the young, old, rich, poor, professionals and lay men alike are potential victims of stress. Secondly, because stress is viewed as the disease of growth and development, there is the search for the stress virtue in modern life. It is a commonly held belief that it is and that stress of various kinds is responsible for accidents, mental breakdowns, crime, unhappiness, and poor performance at work and at school. No matter how resourceful one maybe in coping with problems, the circumstances of life inevitably involve stress. People's motives are not always easily satisfied, obstacles must be overcome, choices made and delays tolerated. Every person develops a characteristic way of responding when his/her attempts to reach a goal are blocked. To a large extent one's responses to frustrating situations determine how adequately one adjusts to life.

Stress is a common feature that affects people's lives, especially as the pace of development increases. Suleyman (2012) argues that the past twenty-five years have seen researchers paying a great deal of interest to the phenomena of job satisfaction, stress and burnout. Jeyaraj (2013) also argues that the linkage among the type of job one does, job satisfaction and the job environment is critical to the study of work-related stress. Work is a common term, which is applied to all sorts of occupations. It is also an important component of human survival. Work is a major element of development of the individual as well as improving the economy of the nation. The word stress is defined by Friedman (2000) as a force or pressure caused by difficulties

in life. Jeyaraj (2013) further argues that occupational stress can be caused by too much or too little work, time pressure, deadlines and physical strain presented by the work environment. The researchers cited above define occupational stress as any force that pushes psychological or physical factors beyond its range of stability within an individual. Jeyaraj (2013) also argues that working in an organization not only provides individuals with life sustaining incomes but also exerts its pressures on them. Such pressures ultimately have negative consequences both for achieving the goals of the organization and meeting the needs of the individuals working in these organizations. It can be concluded that the working environment can be a source of social and psychological stress. Stress has harmful effects on the wellbeing of the employee. Stress in general and occupational stress in particular is universal and has frequently a disabling human phenomenon. Such stress arising at the work place has detrimental effects on the behavior of the employees. It ultimately results in personal and organizational inefficiency. Occupational stress results from occupationally related factors, which interact with the worker to change (disrupt/enhance) his/ her psychological or physical make up. Such conditions often cause an individual's mind and/ or body to deviate from its normal way of functioning. In educational settings, demands placed on supervisors often results in occupational stress (Suleyman 2012). Suleyman (2012) conducted a study on job related stress amongst supervisors working for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in North Cyprus. Twenty-nine out of thirty-four supervisors took part in the study. In this study, it was concluded that the levels of occupational stress among education supervisors was found to be moderate. Their emotional and burnout levels and personal accomplishments were found to be moderate. Also, their levels of depersonalization were found to be low amongst these supervisors. Although studies of job efficiency

and job satisfaction among teachers and principals provide meaningful data on job satisfaction, little is known about occupational stress among supervisors. In Madurai District of India, a study conducted by Jeyaraj (2013) showed that local council school teacher supervisors had more occupational stress levels than government schoolteacher supervisors. Jeyaraj (2013) conducted a study to determine the occupational stress levels of government schoolteacher supervisors and local authority higher secondary schoolteacher supervisors living in different sociocultural and economic situations. One hundred and eighty five local council school supervisors and one hundred and twenty government school teacher supervisors participated in the study. The results showed that teacher supervisors who reported greater stress levels were less satisfied with their work. They reported greater frequency of absences. Such supervisors showed low commitment to their work and had intentions to leave the teaching field for other private sectors. Jeyaraj (2013) argues that the teacher supervisors' occupational stress is a real international phenomenon and that high levels of this stress are readily associated with a range of factors. These factors include individual vulnerability and systematic influences. This research by Jeyaraj (2013) also revealed that teacher supervisors often hang on to a wrong job for the sole reason of making a living. One can only conclude that such a situation only adds to occupational stress. In South Africa, studies by Barkhuizen and Rothman (2011) show that discussions on occupational stress among educational supervisors have been a topical issue over the past four decades dating back to the early 1970s. Their argument is that supervisory work is a highly stressful occupation. Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2011) concluded that thirty percent of the teacher supervisors indicated that their workloads had increased significantly in the recent years resulting in evidence of stress among them. In addition, many teacher supervisors complain that



the escalation in the demands of the job made it difficult for them to maintain firm boundaries between the workplace and their homes. Such a situation often becomes sources of occupational/work related stress. Sixty-seven percent of the teacher supervisors in the Barkhuizen and Rothman (2011) study agreed that work now encroached more on their homes lives than in the recent past. Seventy-two percent of the participants in the above-cited study believed that their families suffered as a direct result of their stressful jobs. Barkhuizen and Rothman (2011) argue that teacher supervisors experience high levels of occupational stress relating to pay, work overload and work life imbalance. In Zimbabwe, Nhundu (1999) revealed that the last two decades have witnessed a proliferation of research studies on occupational stress among educational personnel. Nhundu (1999) involved a sample of ninety-five head teachers in his study who showed that they experienced relatively high levels of administrative stress. Also the study revealed several demographic characteristics and school variables, which influence the perceptions of situations, which cause stress. Some among them include unsupportive communities, unethical professional conduct by teachers and poor academic performance by students. It therefore follows that occupational stress amongst school supervisors is an international phenomenon, which comes about as a result of various work stressors. There is a need for the Ghana government to improve the provision of resources. There is also the need for the governments to address the issues of large classes and the concomitant heavy workloads. For the teachers in Special Needs Education the issue of providing them with support staff to carry some of the workload is vital (Mapfumo et al., 2015).

Recently, in September, 2019, there was the introduction of a new curriculum reform in Ghana that imposes great responsibility and additional workload on head teachers and teachers. The successful implementation of the national curriculum depends on

many interrelated and dependent factors and major of it is leadership and quality of management. Effective curriculum leadership and quality of management focuses heavily on head teacher who is the immediate supervisor of the implementation. The curriculum encourages the creation of teacher – centred schools where learning progress are evident because teachers have opportunity to:

- i. Develop their subject knowledge and associated pedagogy;
- ii. Engage with the latest research;
- iii. Absorb information about their learners’ learning needs and prior attainment, while recognizing the complexity of synthesizing all of this into knowledge-based that informs the delivery of effective lessons.

The creation of learning – centred classrooms and teacher – centred schools is only possible when the leadership of the school has the appetite, the motivation, the resources and the know-how to make it happen. Quality management in Ghana’s schools, in this context, requires that the professional practices of teachers are adequately supported by the school head teacher through such management practices as regular monitoring and evaluation of learning episode. The primary role of school head teacher therefore involves and demands that he creates conducive and favourable conditions for learning- an enabling environment. The right structure and appropriate resources, including the number of staff needed to successfully implement the curriculum, should be provided.

Statistical records showed that since 2008, enrolment has continually increased at all levels of education (Primary, JHS, SHS, and Tertiary), (MOE, 2015). Almost every parent wants his or her child to access education, which is good because we are now in a technological age that is being driven by education of which ever form. First

cycle education, and by this, I mean the basic level has core functions such as teaching, administrative work, and community service to perform in order to realise its core mandate. The human resource responsible for the discharge of these duties is the head teacher or teacher. In the wake of carrying out these duties the head teacher may come face-to-face with work-related issues owing to workloads that have the potential of disorienting his or her psychological and physical well-being.

In this globalisation era, time distribution between workload and family balance is an important concern. In basic education, the head teacher is the pillar of excellence of an institution and whose role can have a high impact on the quality of teaching and learning. This is because the head teacher is the closest individual to the teachers and the students in the basic school in achieving various levels of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) in Bloom Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001). The head teacher may likely experience occupational stress which is as a result of overwhelming psychological and physical state that results when the resources of an individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands of pressure of the situation.

Stress has the capability of undermining the achievement of goals, both for individuals and organisations. For instance, if basic school headteachers experience work-related stress with its implications such as ill-health, prolonged or intense, with negative effects including heart diseases, back pains, gastrointestinal disturbances, anxiety and depression, they would be ineffective as a result. From the institutional point of view, stress can be associated with the classroom overcrowding and inadequate resources to achieve academic work (Awino & Agolli, 2008). It is worthy of note that stress has become an integral part of occupational demands on head teachers and teachers. It is obvious that with the increased enrolment and multiple

roles offered to students and education office all year round, the demand of teaching job has increased the level of stress among head teachers and teachers in Ghanaian schools. The workload of a head teacher could be divided into four groups namely, teaching, serving education office, civil obligation and administration (Makinde & Alao, 1987). It is no gainsaying that head teachers experience emotional and cognitive reactions to stress, especially due to external pressures and self-imposed expectations (Misra & McKean, 2000).

Occupational stress within the academic sector can be managed for good physical and emotional well-being of basic school head teachers by prevention, reduction, or by helping them to cope with it. Employers (Management) have the duty to ensure that employees are not taken ill. Headteachers themselves must be mindful of their own health as in good health they can always be on top of their job, all things being equal. It is also in the economic interest of any organisation to prevent stress because according to Blonna (2005), stress is likely to lead to high staff turnover, increase in sickness, absenteeism, early retirement, increased stress in those staff still at work, reduced work performance and reduced job satisfaction. Basic school head teachers themselves must be able to manage stress in the wake of high student intake with substantial deficit in human resource and infrastructure expansion. They should access support services such as guidance and counselling to help them reduce, cope or prevent work-related stress they might be experiencing in order to be effective and productive in the discharge of their duties as teachers, administrators, and community service givers.

Work stress is a serious concern and a major impediment to organisational success because it contributes to number of outcomes which are critical to organisational

success including absenteeism, labour turnover and poor job performance. A critical look at the human and economic cost of job stress strongly suggests that it should be in the interest of all employees, employers and community at large to take steps to build healthier and less stressful working environments. Besides, the reduction of stress and strain is not only essential to the promotion of the workers' health and well-being of those to whom services are rendered. Work related stress is also recognised as a huge occupational health problem and human suffering.

Stress related variables such as psychological or emotional well-being, physical health and job satisfaction are cogent to the survival of the head teacher in the academic field, hence, at all cost head teachers must manage stress. Stress management has no single definition as individuals respond to stress differently. All the same, stress management is all about taking charge about one's lifestyle, thoughts, emotions and the way one deals with problems. Thus, no matter how stressful one's life seems, there are steps one can take to relieve the pressure and regain control. The headteacher must learn healthier ways to manage stress. Good human resource management practices must also be put in place by employers to mitigate employees' work related stress. The management strategies will be beneficial to headteachers in basic schools. The day to day school's administration is entrusted in their hands. The entire business of the school is dependent upon the decision of the headteacher. They are as, such faced with top administrative decisions, plans and policies alongside their personal burden. This of course is quite burdensome and stressful since they are busy at all times. This makes the study of workload, perceived stress and coping strategies by headteachers necessary. In the course of performing the above functions by headteachers stress ensues.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Stress could be considered as one of the irritating administrative problems that continue to pose threat to the goal attainment of headteachers of basic schools. Stress phenomenon has become an important area of research in medicine, psychology, and in management, development, seminars and workshops in Ghana and elsewhere.

Research evidence has shown that there is high stress and burnout among heads and staff in academic institutions. For example, Kusi, Mensah and Gyaki (2014) found stress to be high among academic staff of University of Education, Winneba. Omoniyi (2013) reported high stress among Nigerian academic staff; and Jarret (as cited in Omoniyi, 2013) also found psychological strain to be higher in academic staff than general staff. Jarvis (2002) asserted that school heads in United Kingdom experience significant amount of stress in the wake of discharging their duties. If there has been an appreciable level of stress that exists among high technologically developed West, one would imagine what would be the case for this country (Ghana) where everything we embark on is a stressor. In some cases, stress experienced by some professionals can be life threatening, harmful and challenging as well as become inimical to people's existence and well-being which the headteachers are among. There is a clear indication from literature that stress related disorders are quickly becoming the most prevalent reason for workers disability. A study conducted by Kusi, Codjoe, and Bampo, (2018), revealed that the female lecturers sometimes experience health-related problems including headaches, back pains, and sleepless nights owing to stress. Among others, the study concluded that these health-related problems could lead to a deterioration of passion and drive on the part of the lecturers for work, which ultimately would affect productivity. This is of particular concern as the leading cause

of sickness and can be reduced by the adoption of practices that will help alleviate stress for headteachers of basic schools.

The pre-tertiary institutions in Ghana, specifically basic levels, are experiencing challenges that relate to increase in student enrolments, inadequate infrastructural expansion and overstretching of school capacity to cope with these challenges. Inevitably, these challenges will have significant impact on headteachers' workload and quality of educational delivery. Learning environment in many public Ghanaian basic schools is seriously compromised by over-congested classrooms or over crowded laboratories, poor and dilapidated classrooms. Also, population growth, technological development and Free Compulsory Basic Education have resulted into many individual parents enrolling their wards in basic education in order to enhance their social mobility. This inevitably causes increased enrolment and work overload of headteachers in those basic schools.

Headteachers of public basic schools are faced with complex and multiple tasks in the management of their institutions (Kusi et al, 2014). Headteachers in Assin Foso Municipal handle both teaching, instructional programmes and administrative tasks which include: curriculum and instructional programmes, finance, staff, students, physical resources and public relations. This forces them to work for long hours, encounter new problems and less free time for resting and leisure because their social and emotional times are spent working in school environments that determine their survival.

The study was intended to investigate workload, stress and coping strategies among headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality. It has become academically imperative to investigate how workload relates to headteachers job stress and how job stress

relates to burnout among headteachers. Furthermore, the negative consequences of job stress on the work of headteachers call for research on the job and burnout linkage in order to increase our understanding on how to mitigate this problem among headteachers. The ultimate losers in this phenomenon are students who are at the receiving end of the equation. Headteachers attempt to manage their stress conditions and their strategies differ from person to person and situation to situation. What we may not know is how headteachers of basic schools in Assin Foso Municipality adopt theirs hence, the study. Again, In Ghana, workload, stress and coping strategies among headteachers is largely under-explored by researchers. Consequently, evidence on the important sources of workload, job stress among headteachers in Ghana is scarce.

In higher education, research among academic staff and administrators seem to gain more attention on work stress study at the neglect of basic schools staff and more especially headteachers. Basic schools in Ghana have also become more of a high stress environment for both staff members and more especially headteachers who are under a lot of performance and competitive pressure to meet the demands of 21st century basic education standards globally. The work lives of headteachers in the Ghanaian public basic schools are not easy. This situation is arising from different factors. They include, the pressure for improved results by signing performance contract, curriculum changes, data demands, supervision and monitoring challenges. Again, child and teachers disciplinary issues, lack of funds, inadequate infrastructure, and increased workload are not- so suitable work environment. Most studies conducted by both local and foreign academic researchers, (for example; Kusi, et al (2014; 2018); Omoniyi (2013); Safaria, et al (2012) & Kumari, (2016) etc.) were on

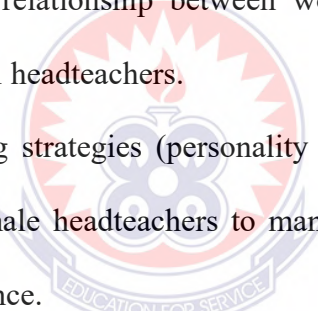


work stress experienced by lecturers at the Universities and heads of secondary schools.

Studies on work stress experienced by heads of basic schools are equally important as that of higher institutions, however, little is known about occupational stress on basic heads, especially those in Assin Foso Municipality. The researcher finds this gap and therefore conducted this study to investigate the workload, perceived stress and coping strategies among headteachers in basic schools of Assin Foso Municipality.

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

The study had two- fold purposes:

1. To determine the relationship between workload and perceived job stress among basic school headteachers.
  2. To examine coping strategies (personality and social support) employed by both male and female headteachers to manage the negative effects of stress they might experience.
- 

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

The study sought to:

1. Determine the nature of the headteachers' workload in the Assin Foso Municipality
2. Determine the level of perceived stress among the headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality.
3. Determine the effects of stress experienced by headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality on their job performance.

4. Explore the relationship between perceived workload and stress levels among the headteachers.
5. Find out the coping strategies adopted by headteachers to manage and cope with perceived stress.

### 1.5 Research Questions

To guide the thrust of the study, the following research questions and hypotheses were formulated.

1. What is the nature of the headteachers' workload in the Assin Foso Municipality?
2. What is the level of perceived stress among the headteachers in Assin Foso Municipality?
3. What are the effects of stress experienced by headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality on the job performance?
4. What are the strategies used by the headteachers to cope with the stress they experience?

### 1.6 Hypotheses

**$H_0$ :** There is no statistically significant relationship between job workload and perceived level of stress among headteachers.

**$H_1$ :** There is a significant relationship between job workload and perceived level of stress among headteachers.

**$H_{01}$ :** There is no statistically significant difference in perceived stress levels among male and female headteachers.

**$H_2$ :** There is a significant difference in perceived stress levels among male and female headteachers.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study is considered significant in many ways. For example, the study would provide information on the sources of stress to headteachers of basic schools in the Assin Foso Municipality. It should be noted that understanding and appreciating environmental and personal influences of workload and stress may hold benefits for schools and headteachers. Appreciating the environmental and personal factors that influence stress and burnout can help specialists and career counsellors to predict occupational stress and burnout among headteachers. The information will be useful to the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and Education offices, human resource managers who may use the information to address the areas where stress emanates as this will help improve headteachers, teachers and other administrative staff performance. Cascio (1989) stated that in any organization aimed at production of goods and services, an effective management of people becomes pertinent to circumvent some costly lapses that are bound to accrue to the institution sequel to stress.

The study will provide information on the perceive stress coping strategies adopted by the senior administrative staff. The information will be useful to the District Health Department in alliance with the District Education office and Physical Education Department as the information will help them plan worthwhile health promotion programmes which headteachers might use to their own advantage. Again, it can help School Health Education Programme (SHEP) Coordinators to plan programme for school administrators. Improved health status will help headteachers in the execution of their job, while a deteriorated health status will detract them from their performance rate and lead to loss of work days due to ill-health.

The study will also generate information on the different perceived stress coping strategies used by gender. This will reveal the attitudes that do not agree with stress management strategies employed by different sex. The health educator will use the result to counsel whichever sex that is affected by any undesirable stress management strategies.

The study will provide information on the different perceived stress coping strategies adopted by young and old headteachers. This information will reveal the strategies that are effective and ineffective practised on one group. The revelation may be useful to voluntary organizations in organising programmes that will focus on different age group on stress management strategies. Although considerable research has studied stress and burnout, further research is warranted to identify new factors that might mediate workload - job stress link.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

The study was delimited to only headteachers (both males and females) of the basic schools in the Assin Foso Municipality in the Central Region. The study covered the headteachers in this study area because of personal observation and the complaints made by them on things bothering their work, workload, and stress they go through, influenced the study on headteachers. Again, the researcher was also once a headteacher in the same Municipality and therefore familiar with the challenges and the stressful nature of being a headteacher in the area. Most public basic schools in Foso Municipality are situated in rural areas. Therefore, most of the headteachers work in schools where workplace conditions and staffing strengths are mostly bad.

The study revolved around workloads, perceived stress, and coping strategies of basic school Headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality who provided data for the study.

There were fifty- three (53) basic schools in the Assin Foso Municipality. The total headteacher population in the Municipality is fifty – three (53), consisting of forty-one (41) males and twelve (12) females who provided data for the study.

### **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

**Job stress:** This is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when workers' capabilities, resources, needs do not much the job demands.

**Workload:** This is defined as the totality of all the activities engaged in by the headteacher both in and outside the school.

**Perceived stress:** This is a state of tension experienced by persons facing an intense demand which they perceive as threatening. It is the demands, constraints and pressures of everyday life that leads to emotional imbalances which are collectively termed as stress.

**Coping strategies:** This refers to a number of different approaches an individual employs which is aimed at reducing and or managing the stressful event or situation one finds him or herself.

**Head teachers:** This refers to school heads in both primary and Junior High Schools. The headteacher performs both teaching and non-teaching duties which makes up his workload.

### **1.10 Organisation of the Study**

This study is divided into five Chapters. Chapter One brings to light the background information of the study. Chapter Two deals with literature review which focused on theoretical review, conceptual review as well as empirical review. Chapter Three focused on methodology. It examines research design, approach, population and sampling, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. Chapter

Four covers the presentation, analysis and discussion of results. Finally, Chapter Five focuses on the summary of the thesis, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations made.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of workload and job stress among headteachers. It also examined coping strategies (personality and social support) used by headteachers to manage negative effects of stress they might experience. The literature review of this study is presented under the following headings: theoretical framework, empirical framework, and conceptual review, and they revolved around workload, stress, and coping strategies.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is based on Person-Environment (PE) Fit theory and the Transactional theory of related stress and burnout. These frameworks are broadly accepted for conducting research on job-stress and burnout (Brewer & McMahan, 2004; Kokkinos, 2007). The Person- Environmental Fit theory is one of the earliest interactional theories of work – related psychological distress, suggesting that work – related stress arises due to a lack of fit between the individual's skills, resources, abilities and the demands of the work environment (Caplan, 1987). The theory argues that stress can occur when there is a lack of fit between either the degree to which an employee's attitudes and abilities meet the demands of the job or the extent to which the job environment meets the workers' needs. Person-in-environment is a social work theoretical and practice perspective that suggests that we cannot understand persons fully without considering the various interactive aspects of their environmental contexts (Gray & Webb, 2013). The person-in-environment concept is a main feature of pragmatism and can be traced back to

Dewey's organism-in-environment perspective, which views humans as organism and knowledge as arising from an active adaptation of organism to their various environments-geographical, biological, social, political, and cultural. The focus of pragmatism is on the human capacity to learn, reason, and make choices in our environments; to respond to, and interact with, our environments; and to adapt to it, modify it, and shape it in various ways.

Person-environment fit is the degree to which individual characteristics harmonised with those of his or her environment (Meyer & Dale, 2010). Person -Environment Fit theory and transactional model of burnout assert that the interaction between an individual and his or her environment determines whether or not a situation is stressful for that person. The underlying assumption is that 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 (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004; Kokkinos, 2007; Salami, 2006). In work situations, higher degrees of fit predict positive work outcomes (Hoffman & Woehr 2006).

According to Clark- Murphy, (2010), the person-environment approaches suggest that for optimal productivity, individuals should be compatible with their environments. Jacques (1989) also opined that for optimal productivity organisations should be designed on the person-environment fit based on individual cognitive capacity at every level of the organisation. According to the Person-Environment Fit researchers (Jacques, 1989; Meijer, Muijtens & Vleuten, 1999), individual, decision-making performance reaches an optimal level when the decision-makers' cognitive capability matches the complexity of their environment. In the workplace context, 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 includes 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, stress occurs. In a similar vein, lack of fit between the demands placed on individuals and their abilities to meet those demands can result in stress. Sisk (1977) defined stress as a state of strain, tension or pressure and it is a normal reaction resulting from interaction between the individual and the environment. Strain means to make great demand on something; tension is a mental or emotional strain that makes natural relaxed behaviour impossible; and pressure is a powerful demand on somebody's time, attention or energy. Perceived stress in an occupational setting to mean a condition wherein job- related factors interact with workers, to change their psychological and physiological conditions such that the person's mind and body are forced to deviate from normal functioning. The similarity in the foregoing definitions reveals that there must be an interaction between the environment and the individual before stress can occur. The interaction arises when man is trying to deal with the problems that his environment produced. It could be in his place of work or marriage which makes it impossible for man to relax his nervous system.

The theory is relevant to the study because it illustrates the stress reaction chain among humans. The performance of administrative tasks subjects to headteachers variety of work load and depending on the nature and weight of the work, the brain registers, interprets and evaluates the load causing the body to react accordingly. If

the work is manageable (positive), the body maintains normalcy but if the work is beyond the scope of the headteacher, the body reacts negatively triggering stress.

Again, this study was guided by Cognitive Theory of Stress and Coping proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The theory describes stress as a condition experienced when an individual perceives that the “demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 63). The experience of stress, according to Lazarus, results from perception of threat, vulnerability and ability to cope than on the stressful event itself. Furthermore, the theory defines stress in terms of relationship that exists between an individual and environment. Using Lazarus words, stress is particular relationship between the person and environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her wellbeing.

A situation is perceived as stressful if interpreted by the individual as challenging or threatening and at the same time exceeding the individual’s perceived coping resources. In its turn, stress perception and induced stress responses can largely differ between individuals depending on a variety of modulating trait and state influences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The theory distinguishes two basic forms of appraisal, primary and secondary appraisals (Lazarus 1990). These two forms of appraisals rely on different sources of information. Primary appraisal concerns whether something of relevance to the individual's well-being occurs, whereas secondary appraisal concerns coping options. Future expectations refer to the appraisal of the further course of an encounter depending on whether an individual’s goal is achieved or not. Specific patterns of primary and secondary appraisal lead to different kinds of stress. Three types are distinguished: harm, threat, and challenge

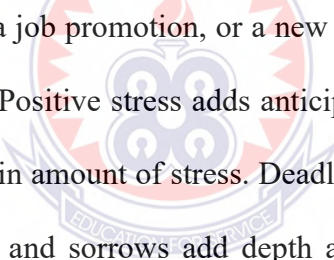
(Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Harm refers to the psychological damage or loss that has already happened. Threat is the anticipation of harm that may be imminent. Challenge results from demands that a person feels confident about mastering. For example, when a student teacher sees the financial difficulty as a threat, they view it as causing psychological harm or even failure in exams. But when they look at it as a challenge, they develop a positive stress response because they expect the stressor to lead them to a higher class ranking, or a better employment.

## **2.2 Conceptual Review**

Conceptual review is a research tool intended to assist a researcher develop awareness and understanding of the situation under scrutiny and to communicate it (Guba et al, 1989). If conceptual review is clearly articulated, it bears potential usefulness as a tool for enabling the researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings. Therefore, it is pointed out that conceptual review is an abstract indication of how the basic concepts and constructs are expected to interact in the actual setting and the experiences that form foundation of the research. This study required a model focused on the essential components on which data collection and analysis would be based. The study assumes that there are various aspects in headteachers' workload. These include, teaching aspect, number of students taught and its related sub-roles (internal tests, marking load etc.), administrative work (school headship and education office, serving on committees) and community service.

The study also assumes that there are factors that impact on job motivation. The existence of, or lack of these factors, may influence the quality of the head teachers' performance and these will have value for money implications as well as appropriate management and administration and good execution of roles. Again, relation between

male and female head teachers' workload and on any perceived stress is also key underpinning principle of this study. Stress is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something. This worry in your mind can make your body feel bad. One may also feel angry, frustrated, scared, or afraid which can give you a stomach ache or a headache. When you are stressed you may not feel like sleeping or eating. It has physical and emotional effects and can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can help compel us to action; it can result in a new awareness and an exciting new perspective. As a new influence, it can result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger and depression, which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.



With the birth of a child, a job promotion, or a new relationship, we experience stress as we readjust our lives. Positive stress adds anticipation and excitement to life, and we all thrive under a certain amount of stress. Deadlines, competitions, confrontations and even our frustrations and sorrows add depth and enrichment to our lives. One must aim to manage stress and use it to help them. Insufficient stress acts as a depression and may leave as feeling bored or dejected; on the other hand, excess stress may leave us feeling tied up in knots. What we need to do is find the optimal level of stress which will individually motivate but not overwhelm each of us.

There is no single level of stress that is optimal for all people. We are all individual creatures with unique requirements. As such, what is distressing to one may be a joy to another. And even we agree that a particular event is distressing, we are likely to differ in our physiological responses to it. The person who loves to arbitrate and moves from job site to job site would be stressed in a job which was stable and

routine, whereas the person who thrives under stable conditions would very likely be stressed on a job where duties were highly varied.

It has been found that much of illness is related to unrelieved stress. If you are experiencing stress symptoms, you have gone beyond your optimal stress level; you need to reduce the stress in your life and/ or to improve your ability to manage it. Identifying unrelieved stress and being aware of its effect on our lives is not sufficient for reducing its harmful effects. Just as there are many sources of stress, there are many possibilities for its management. However, all require work toward change. One is advised to take note of one's distress. This must not be ignored, neither is it advisable to gloss over one's problems. One must determine what causes distress and try to find out how one can respond to the stress. One should determine how to cope with the stress by avoiding or eliminating them completely if possible. One can shorten one's exposure to stress such as taking a break or leaving the physical premises. Medications, when prescribed by a physician, can help in the short term in moderating one's physical reactions. One is advised to do exercises such as walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging. Eating well balanced nutritious meals also helps and people are advised to maintain an ideal weight.

Nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulant must be avoided and one is advised to take breaks and get away when one can. It is also advisable to get enough sleep and be consistent with one's sleep schedule as much as possible. Stress is a process that builds. It is more effective to intervene early in the process rather than later. Try to become aware of the signs that suggest the process has begun. We may feel that situations are "stressful" because we don't feel fully prepared to deal with them. Stress is a natural part of life. The expressions are familiar to us, "I'm stressed out,"

I'm under too much stress," or "Work is one big stress." Stress is hard to define because it means different things to different people; however, it's clear that most stress is a negative feeling rather than a positive feeling. Stress can be both physical and mental. You may feel physical stress, which is the result of too much to do, not enough sleep, a poor diet or the effect of an illness. Stress can also be mental: when you worry about money, a loved one's illness, and retirement or experience an emotionally devastating event such as the death of a spouse or being fired from work.

However, much of our stress comes from less dramatic everyday responsibilities. Obligations and pressures, which are both physical and mental, are not always obvious to us. In response to these daily strains your body automatically increases blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and blood flow to your muscles. This response is intended to help your body react quickly and effectively to a high pressure situation. When you are constantly reacting to stressful situations without making adjustments to counter the effects, you will feel stress, which can threaten your health and well-being. It is essential to understand that external events, no matter how you perceive those events, may cause stress. Stress often accompanies the feeling of "being out of control."

### **2.3 Academic Workload**

In assigning and evaluating school workload, we need to consider all factors and aspects of school work. There is some degree of controversy that eclipses the issue of workload. Issue of equity needs to be advocated. It is argued that in the determination of head teachers workload flexibility of purpose is paramount. This is because heads have different strengths and interests and the job has different demands and

requirements. Many heads are dissatisfied with the traditional means of measuring and evaluating the work (Boyer 1990).

There is an uneasy calm among headteachers as regards the lack of predictability of their job requirements as new educational policies and reforms may impose unrealistic workload on them and an evaluation system that may not take adequate cognisance of the enormity of work that engulfs school heads. In determining head teachers workload I will apply the operational definition developed by Yuker (1984, p.5) which says, “.....workload refers to all activities that are related to professional duties and responsibilities, teaching, research, interacting with students, institutional service, service to community and professional development.” From this definition it should be noted that “teaching or supervision load” is not synonymous to “workload”. Workload goes beyond supervising teachers and teaching, involves preparation, consultation with students, and evaluation of their work (Winkler, 1992). What this implies is that workload goes beyond the nominal hours of contact.

The basic school headteacher does other things in addition to the teaching and supervision, and it is also clear that supervising teachers load is an aspect of the headteachers’s workload hence there is the need to cogently define and demonstrate what headteachers’ workload entails (Chipman-Johnson, 2008). According to her the traditional evaluation of workload based on the number of contact or teaching hours taught is inadequate.

There are many factors that need to be considered when it comes to the issue of what constitutes school workload. For instance, some researchers like Winkler, Hauck and Hill are of the view that factors such as class size, number of sessions taught, contact hours taught, instructional methods, new courses, duplicate preparation, office hours,

preparation time and others also need to be taken into consideration when evaluating workload. To this end, an ideal workload should be the totality of all duties performed by the school, in this regard the head teacher (Chipman-Johnson, 2008). In addition to the factors mentioned above, there are other elements that make up workload duties and even variation in workload assignments. For example, faculty in institutions of education and other professional institutions could have a wide range of non-teaching responsibilities such as, supervision of teacher trainees, supervision of fieldwork students, thus, mentees, writing and coordinating grants and so forth.

#### **2.4 Perceived Stress**

Torres and Nowson (2007) defined stress as body responses that either overwhelms or threatens to overwhelm it and its ability to maintain homeostasis. Homeostasis here could be understood as a system in our body that focusing to maintain stability while adjusting to surrounding according and mostly to ensure our survival. Stress is what happens to one's mind or body as a result of an individual's evaluation of an event or situation in the mind or psyche and the behaviour in response to the circumstances labelled as stressful. Stress can be positive (eustress) or negative (distress). This study however is referring to negative stress which has the capacity to affect an individual's physical and emotional health. How an event or situation is looked at and perceived as stress-inducing event and one's reaction to it eventually causes stress. In accordance with Lazarus's (1990) definition, perceived stress is a condition subjectively experienced by an individual who identifies an imbalance between demands addressed to him or her and the resources available to encounter these demands. Lazarus sees the term stress as being complex and multidimensional negative emotion. Selye (1983) refers to stress as an unpleasant psychological process that may happen as a response to environmental pressures. Furthermore, Selye looks at stress to



be the outcomes of demands on the body during experiences of fight or flight. It is the body's attempt to maintain homeostasis/ physical equilibrium (Selye, 1983).

Anything that causes stress is termed as a stressor. These stressors are all over the environment and they can have substantial damaging effect on mental and physical health. Stress is unavoidable in a person's life whether this is associated with their personal or work life. It is also worth noting that stress is not always in the negative; implying that there is also positive stress. In its entirety therefore, stress is defined as an emotional reaction occurring in the presence of certain stimuli (stressors or stressing situations) that usually trigger the body's coping mechanisms to face the new circumstance. Selye further noted however that stress is not necessarily always a negative phenomenon as it is generally the body's normal reaction to certain stressors such as when one senses imminent danger or even hearing a good news.

Stress could be put in the category of being chronic stress and simply being under pressure. Chronic stress can lead to physical health problems such as high blood pressure, headaches and exhaustion; and psychological problems anxiety, low self-esteem and depression. Cohen et al (2007) assert that experiencing chronic stress can result in people having difficulties with cognition (thinking) and behaviour. For instance, The Health and Safety Executive (2001), also outlines how stress can lead to other behaviours such as more tobacco smoking, excessive alcohol or caffeine consumption and skipping meals, which can also lead to health problems. This implies that stress has the capability of undermining the achievement of goals, both for individuals and organisations. The fact is that prolonged or acute stress according to Cooper et al. (2001) can have a negative impact on an individual's mental and physical health. It is therefore in the economic interest of any organization to prevent

stress, because, stress according to Blonna (2005) is likely to lead to high staff turnover. Increase in sickness, absenteeism, early retirement, increased stress in those staff still at work, reduced work performance and reduced job satisfaction are potential circumstances that have the potential to culminate into recipe for low productivity and loss of manpower.



Perceived stress arises when perceived requirements and demands to an individual exceed the behavioural and emotional resources of the personality. Stress-reaction actually emerges when the person realizes inability to cope with a problem. Stress is the result of intuitive and even unconscious feeling (rather than on cognitive processing) that coping is impossible. Emerging fear, anxiety and depressive thoughts may add to the existing level of internal feeling of danger becoming the basis of perceived stress, i.e. feeling and understanding of how much stress we are experiencing (Rozanov, 2017).

Perceived stress is measured not by the accumulation of stressors (for instance, negative life events), but by summarizing uncontrollability and unpredictability of one's life, one's ability to deal with problems and difficulties. It is based on a general perception of the stressfulness of one's life and ability to cope, and in such form, it is represented in the most popular Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983).

#### **2.4.1 Stressors**

Stressor is any event or stimulus that causes stress. People may feel stressed when they have workload, have important deadlines to meet, or have too little time to finish all of their tasks. Often some people may be particularly vulnerable to stress in situations involving the threat of failure or personal embarrassment. Studies show that work-related stress is increasingly becoming a source of concern among organizations and employees around the world. The demands of headship may cause increasing level of stress among headteachers. The job-related stress sources include; role conflict, relationship with others, work pressure, home-work interface, role ambiguity and performance pressure. On the other hand, Amina and Raymond (2014) reported different symptoms related to occupational stress. These symptoms included

depression, social withdrawal, and constant tiredness, anger, hostility, increase smoking, alcohol or drug use.

Employees are generally satisfied with their tasks if they are related to their job descriptions. However, if tasks are given outside of the ranges of the job descriptions, they may feel stressed. This further confirms that headteachers go through a lot of stress because they are made to perform a lot of work outside their job descriptions.

#### **2.4.2 Categories of Stressors Origins**

Gunney (2005) points out that there are three categories of stressors origins and that if we know how the stress began, we have a better opportunity to help effectively.

These categories are

1. Developmental/Transitional stress
2. Situational stress
3. Cultural/Social stress. He explains each category as follows:

**i. Developmental /Transitional Stress:** These occur in every person's life. They are the traditional stages of human development that include infancy, childhood, puberty, adolescence, adulthood, middle age, and old age. During each stage, the individual may experience stress, pain, anxiety, and tension. Each stage also presents new challenges and changes in expectation, love, self-image, and relationship with others. One can use these examples to make the point: transition from Junior High School to Senior High, from students to worker, from classroom teacher to Headteacher, and from being single to being married.

- Point out that these developmental stages are anticipated.

- Emphasize that these developmental stages often bring on stress particularly when a person is not able to successfully make a transition from one phase of life to the next.

**ii. Situational Stress:** These include events that are normally unexpected or unplanned that can disrupt a person's life. Examples are natural disasters; fire or flood, death of a loved one, loss of a job, divorce, and illness.

- Solicit from teachers and head teachers their personal experiences of situational stress.
- Point out that, since the event is not expected, one cannot do anything directly to prevent it.

**iii. Cultural / Social Stress:** "These include stress resulting from deviant acts or behaviour that violate accepted social norms. Examples of such behaviours are robbery, physical abuse, rape, incest, sexual harassment, absenteeism, lateness, marital infidelity. Very often government, community organisational authorities or education officers have to take action on behalf of the person in stress.

- Encourage Head teachers to share their experiences with all three categories of stress.
- Point out that it is assumed that all individuals have a balance in their environment and strive to maintain this balance or equilibrium in their daily life. Stressors may occur which may disrupt the balance and /or equilibrium in the individual life.

## **2.5 Models of Stress**

This model gives an overview of how changes in the nature of many work environments have led to increases in stressful job characteristics, and how these characteristics may be implicated in many stress-related physical and psychological problems. The economic and human consequences of these issues are outlined, and the nature of 'work stress' is defined. Many of the major theoretical models that depict the stress process are described, with particular attention paid to the most influential. It is proposed that while current stress models present fruitful frameworks for stress research, many existing models suffer from being either too narrow in scope and lacking a role for individual differences, or too broad and complex, and lacking in predictive validity. A new approach that combines many of the features of existing models is proposed, which includes strong roles for psychosocial stressors, individual differences, and subjective perceptions. Some research based on this new approach is briefly described, and it is suggested that the proposed model could be a useful new direction for stress research.

### **2.5.1 Response model of stress**

Stress as a response model, initially introduced by Selye (1983), describes stress as a physiological response pattern and was captured within his general adaptation syndrome (GAS) model. This model describes stress as a dependent variable and includes three concepts:

1. Stress is a defensive mechanism.
2. Stress follows the three stages of alarm, resistance, and exhaustion.
3. If the stress is prolonged or severe, it could result in diseases of adaptation or even death.

Later, in *The Stress Concept: Past, Present and Future* Selye (1983), introduced the idea that the stress response could result in positive or negative outcomes based on cognitive interpretations of the physical symptoms or physiological experience. In this way, stress could be experienced as eustress (positive) or distress (negative). However, Selye always considered stress to be a physiologically based construct or response. Gradually, other researchers expanded the thinking on stress to include and involve psychological concepts earlier in the stress model.

The response model of stress incorporates coping within the model itself. The idea of adaptation or coping is inherent to the GAS model at both the alarm and resistance stages. When confronted with a negative stimulus, the alarm response initiates the sympathetic nervous system to combat or avoid the stressor (i.e., increased heart rate, temperature, adrenaline, and glucose levels). The resistance response then initiates physiological systems with a fight or flight reaction to the stressor, returning the system to homeostasis, reducing harm, or more generally accommodating the stressor, which can lead to adaptive diseases such as sleep deprivation, mental illness, hypertension, or heart disease. Thus, along with the early conceptualization of stress as a physiological response, early research on coping was also born.

### **2.5.2 Stimulus model of stress**

The theory of stress as a stimulus was introduced in the 1960s, and viewed stress as a significant life event or changes that demands response, adjustment, or adaptation. Holmes and Rahe (1967) created the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) consisting of 42 life events scored according to the estimated degree of adjustment they would each demand of the person experiencing them (e.g., marriage, divorce, relocation, change or loss of job, loss of loved one). Holmes and Rahe theorized that

stress was an independent variable in the health-stress-coping equation — the cause of an experience rather than the experience itself. While some correlations emerged between SRRS scores and illness (Johnson & Sarason, 1979), there were problems with the stress as stimulus theory. The stress as stimulus theory assumes:

1. Change is inherently stressful.
2. Life events demand the same levels of adjustment across the population.
3. There is a common threshold of adjustment beyond which illness will result.

Holmes and Rahe initially viewed the human subject as a passive recipient of stress, one who played no role in determining the degree, intensity, or valence of the stressor. Later, Rahe introduced the concept of interpretation into his research (Rahe, 1967), suggesting that a change or life event could be interpreted as a positive or negative experience based on cognitive and emotional factors. However, the stress as stimulus model still ignored important variables such as prior learning, environment, support networks, personality, and life experience.

### **2.5.3 Transaction model of stress**

In attempting to explain stress as more of a dynamic process, Richard Lazarus developed the transactional theory of stress and coping (TTSC) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which presents stress as a product of a transaction between a person (including multiple systems: cognitive, physiological, affective, psychological, neurological) and his or her complex environment. Stress as a transaction was introduced with the most impact when Dr. Susan Kobasa first used the concept of hardiness (Kobasa, 1979). Hardiness refers to a pattern of personality characteristics that distinguishes people who remain healthy under life stress compared with those who develop health problems. In the late 1970s, the concept of hardiness was further developed by



Salvatore Maddi, Kobasa, and their graduate students at the University of Chicago. Hardiness has some notable similarities with other personality constructs in psychology, including locus of control, sense of coherence, self-efficacy, and dispositional optimism. Researchers introduced multiple variables to the stress-as-transaction model, expanding and categorizing various factors to account for the complex systems involved in experiencing a stressor (Werner, 1993). The nature of stress was described in multiple ways: acute, episodic or intermittent, and chronic. Different types of stressors emerged, such as event, situation, cue, and condition, which then fell into categories based on locus of control, predictability, tone, impact, and duration. In brief, theories of stress are conceived as response, stimulus, and transaction.

In order to understand how people learn to cope with stress, it is important to first reflect on the different conceptualizations of stress and how the coping research has emerged alongside distinct approaches to stress. Stress has been viewed as a response, a stimulus, and a transaction. How an individual conceptualizes stress determines his or her response, adaptation, or coping strategies.

#### **2.5.4 Cooper and Palmer's model of stress**

This is another model of work stress developed in response to the Health and Safety Executive's advice for tackling work related stress and risk assessment (Cousins et al., 2004; HSE, 2001). This model was developed by Cooper and Palmer and it was used to explore the stress – related 'hazards' of sources of stress facing employees in the work place. The acute symptoms of stress are also set out, and these symptoms relate to the organisation, as well as the individual. The negative outcomes are outlined for both an individual's physical and mental health, however, beyond this losses for both the individual and the organisation.

### **2.5.5 Conservation of resources model**

This is another work-related stress model developed by Cooper and Marshall. The above model affirms that work-related stressors cannot always remain separate from general life stressors. According to this theory, stress occurs when there is a loss or threat of loss of resources. This is because individuals ultimately seek to obtain and maintain their resources, loosely described by the authors as objects, states, conditions, and things that people value. Some of these stressors may relate to resources such as one's home, self-esteem, relationship status, time and finance.

### **2.5.6 Allostatic load model of stress process**

This model describes how environmental events generate stressful appraisals for individuals. This Allostatic model of the stress process builds on earlier cognitive appraisal models of stress of the work of Seyle (1983). Allostasis is the process of adjustment for an individual's bodily systems that serve to cope with real, illusory or anticipated challenges to homeostatic (stable) bodily system.

## **2.6 Effects of the Changing Work Environment**

It is a common perception that working life is changing in Britain and across the world, and these changes have led to new challenges and problems for organisations and employees. In recent years this has been characterised by the decline of manufacturing and many forms of industry in the UK, the advance of IT and the service sector, more short-term contracts, outsourcing, mergers, trade union declines, globalisation and more international competition (Cox & Griffiths, 1995; Cooper, 2001). The majority of these changes mean that workers are under growing pressure to compete, adapt, and learn new skills in order to meet the demands of their work. Cooper (2001) states that the combination of new technology, globalised economies,

new organisational products and processes have caused unprecedented changes and increasing stakes.

These shifts in the nature of organisations may result in increasingly “stressful” working environments, which can be manifested in many forms. These include a lack of control at work, shorter holidays, longer hours, insufficient rewards, job insecurity, poor promotion prospects, increased time pressure, lack of support, poor feedback, isolation, harassment, role conflict, and work-life balance issues (Griffiths, 1998). The UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2007) has attempted to categorise the key work design factors which may relate to stress-related health issues. These are presented as part of a “Management Standards” framework and include: Demands; Control; Support; Relationships; Role; and Organisational change.

All of the pressures listed above are known as “psychosocial stressors”, and these have been implicated as risk factors for many physical and psychological problems, including increased risks of heart disease, gastrointestinal problems, anxiety, depression, burnout, absence, fatigue, accidents, substance misuse, musculoskeletal disorders, work-family conflict, and many other problems (Cox & Griffiths, 1995; HSE, 2007). These outcomes can also have serious consequences for employers, potentially leading to high turnover, absence, strikes, decreased productivity, low morale, etc. A large body of literature also suggests that work stress is closely related to anxiety and depression. Depression is the most likely adverse psychological outcome of exposure to work stress.

## **2.7 The Nature of Work Stress**

Cox and Griffiths (1995) suggest that many believe that there is no consensus as to the definition of the term stress, and Dewe and Trenberth (2004) claim that it is

almost a tradition in work stress research to point out the difficulties surrounding the various definitions of stress. Cox and Griffiths (1995) state that there are really only three different types of conceptions of the nature of stress. First is the “engineering” approach, where stress is seen as a stimulus or characteristic of the environment in the form of level of demand. Second is the physiological approach, where the definition of stress is based upon the physiological or biological changes that occur in the person when they are in a stress state, e.g. as a dependent variable based on neuroendocrine activation. The third view is termed the psychological approach by Cox and Griffiths (1995) where stress is not conceived of as a mere stimulus or response, but is itself the dynamic process that occurs as an individual.

## **2.8 Causes of Stress among Basic School Headteachers**

Stress has been defined in different ways over the years. Originally, it was conceived of as pressure from the environment, then as strain within the person. The generally accepted definition is one of interaction between the situation and the individual. It is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Thus, stress is more likely in some situations than others and in some individuals than others. Stress can undermine the achievement of goals, both for individuals and for organizations (Michie, 2002).

Headteacher stress may be defined as the experiences by the teacher of unpleasant negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, and depression relating to his or her work as a teacher. Different writers defined stress differently. Originally, according to Kazmi, Amjad and Khan (2008), it was conceived as a pressure from the environment than the strain within the person. They give a generally accepted

definition today as an interaction between a situation and the individual. In addition, they say that it is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Kazmi et al, again say that stress is non-specific response of the body to any demand positive or negative. They indicate that education is one of the stressful professions and point out the necessity of considering and investigating occupational stress, since performance declines under stressful situation and quality of productivity is essential for organizational survival.

Also, Melgosa (1999) defines stress as being subjected to external forces or pressure either positive or negative depending upon the effects of the external forces. Many different things can cause stress from physical (such as fear of something dangerous) to emotional (such as worry over your job). Identifying what may be causing stress is often the first step in learning how to better deal stress. Some of the most common sources of stress include survival stress where the body naturally responds with a burst of energy so that he /she will survive a dangerous situation or escape, internal stress and fatigue stress. Several causes of stress among headteacher have been identified and some of them are discussed below. To begin with, large school with class sizes is one of the major causes of stress among headteacher in Ghana especially in the major towns and cities. When a headteacher is in charge of a large school, where Pupils Teacher Ratio is high (1:75), it brings a lot of stress on the headteacher and not only the class teacher. Here the workload of the headteacher also increases. For instance, discipline and supervision of both teachers and students activities, monitoring the teaching and learning processes class control, paying attention to individual difference and other class related issues become too much for the headteacher.

Another notable cause of stress among basic school headteachers in Ghana is pressure on professional skills. When new teaching methods or techniques are introduced into the school curriculum the headteacher would have to get him/herself acquainted to this new method which might not be easy for most of the headteachers and many may end up stressed up. With the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the basic school curriculum, headteachers have to go through a lot of stress in adjusting to the teaching of the new subject.

In addition to the above, is autocratic leadership style of some officers which may put a lot of pressure on the headteachers leading to stress among members of staff. When the teachers also do not support the head in the administration of the school but rather tends to reporting him his superior officers, it makes the school environment and the work situation very unfriendly. In this case the headteachers lose control and disgruntled as a result of this toxic school climate and the headteacher end up being stressed up.

Furthermore, poor remuneration is another cause of stress among basic school headteachers in Ghana. Headeachers' salaries are nothing to write home about and as a result of that most headteachers are always in financial crisis. They cannot meet their financial obligations and make ends meet. They resort contracting loans from financial institutions and also engaged in other income generating activities which put a lot of stress on them. Closely linked to financial pressure are family and social pressures. The headteacher in Ghana finds himself in a socio- cultural milieu where he or she is expected to find appropriate means of combining professional duties with family and societal demands. The headteacher is expected to attend all social activities in his/her community be it funeral, wedding, naming ceremony among

others. Apart from the financial burden this may bring to the headteacher, it may also cause conflict at the workplace due to frequent absenteeism, lateness and low performance.

From the discussion, it is evidently clear that stress has a negative impact on the basic school headteacher and his/her performance on the job. These negative effects of stress include poor health, absenteeism, high labour turnover and impaired teaching and learning.

In conclusion, individual headteachers could deal with stress by managing time effectively, delegating responsibilities, taking time off work, going for counselling, thinking positively, exercising, eating healthily and making time for leisure activities.

## **2.9 Issue of Workloads and Headteacher Stress**

The issue of workloads and Headteachers' stress is one that needs to be given attention in Ghanaian public schools at district level, regionally, and nationally. The release of Dr. Lynda Younghusband's grounded theory study in early winter highlights the issue for school teachers in Newfoundland confirms the ongoing prevalence and consistency of teachers' concerns related to classroom conditions and their link to stress.

Younghusband used a constant comparative method of analysis to generate three theoretical constructs: The struggle to balance multiple demands (feeling burdened by work pressures and demands, barriers to teacher effectiveness). The importance of supportive work environments (feeling unsupported by administration, value of a collegial community, importance of having adequate resources). The realities of stress (participants' understanding of stress, self-concept, the taboo of stress, feeling consumed by the job: interference with personal life). Everyone knows and

understands what stress is and the experience of stress but an explicit definition is elusive. In the context of health, stress is a mentally or emotionally disruptive or upsetting condition occurring in response to adverse external influences and capable of affecting physical health ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).

The National Union of Teachers (UK) indicates the ways in which stress manifests itself: The effects of stress can be manifested in many different ways, including physical effects such as raised heart rate, headache, dizziness, palpitations, skin rashes, aching neck and shoulders and lowering of resistance to infection. Over a long period stress may contribute to chronic health problems such as heart disease and stomach ulcers. Various psychological and behavioural changes affecting work performance and interpersonal relationships may also be noticed by stressed individuals' colleagues, including inability to concentrate, overworking, irritability or aggression, becoming withdrawn or unsociable, or reluctance to accept constructive criticism and advice.

Defining headteacher stress, Younghusband indicates that workload and increasing time pressures have a negative impact on headteachers. Common stressors related to workload and therefore, to headteachers and teacher stress include time pressures, problems associated with class size, inclusive classrooms, the implications of a heavy workload on family life and the repercussions of on-going change. Time Pressures not surprisingly, lack of time and long working hours are often cited as significant sources of stress for headteachers. More time spent on preparation and discipline rather than relating to individual students or using innovative instructional approaches is problems frequently identified with large classes. Inclusive Classrooms Integrating students with a host of diverse needs and challenges (intellectual, physical, emotional, social) has increased headteachers' stress markedly. Completing individual learning



plans, meeting with parents, feeling ineffective and unprepared and having inadequate resources are all noted stressors originating from inclusive classrooms. Ontario study found that headteachers were personally and professionally overwhelmed and that changes occurred too often and too quickly with little input from the headteachers. The preceding highlights stress associated with workload.

## **2.10 Gender and Occupational Stress Levels**

A number of research studies have investigated various reasons for occupational stress in various organizations such as; work over-burden, clashes amongst colleagues and administration, role ambiguity, troublesome interpersonal relationships, lack of social support, and locus of control (Suleyman, 2012). Occupational stress has numerous adverse effects on employees' mental, physical and behavioural responses. Occupational stress is a noteworthy issue with organizational management and leadership. Stress contributes to problems like unsatisfactory performance, family issues, poor social relationships, health problems and unproductive organization. The outcomes of stress are different depending upon the circumstances and attributes of the people involved. Extensive research has been carried out to compare the occupational stress of male and female individuals in different scenarios. Researches revealed different outcomes where in some research studies, it was found that gender differences have no effect on occupational stress (Hasan, 2014) while in some researches it was revealed that males were more occupationally stressed as compared to females (Sackey & Sanda, 2011). On the other hand, some research studies exposed that females are more occupationally stressed as compared to male counterpart (Suandi, Ismail & Othman, 2014). Conversely, Similarly, Rosasa, Blevinsb, Gaoc, Tengb, and White (2011) confirmed that women were facing more stress than men because of various environmental and organizational factors. Moreover, they

concluded that depression, irritability and sleeping problems were the main issues caused by stress. Chaturvedi (2011) concluded that women employees were more stressed than male counterparts. Likewise, Kumar, Wani, and Parrey (2013) found that female teachers have higher level of occupational stress than their male counterparts.

Gender plays a role in handling of stress. Sukhadeepak (2006) stated that women are more adept at handling stress because of coping mechanisms. Men seem to be more stress prone since they are more likely to get into other things that add to stress such as alcoholism, smoking and so on. He added that while women are better equipped to deal with emotional issues, men find it difficult to express anxiety and sorrow.

### **2.11 Coping Strategies**

Stress has a major impact on mental and physical health and this makes it imperative to put in strategies to help reduce or cope with stress. Coping strategies are different depending on the situation and the person who is experiencing the stress. They provide tools for people who struggle with stressors or stressful situations to have an improved positive outlook. Coping is seen as a process of “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). The theory proposes two forms of coping: *Problem-focused* coping and emotion focused coping. Problem-focused coping is used when we feel we have control over the situation, thus can manage the source of the problem. Emotion focused coping used when an individual feels as if they cannot manage the source of the problem. It involves gaining strategies for regulating stress.

Coping also refers to the thoughts and actions we use to deal with a threatening situation. Since we all become stressed for various reasons, we all would need to choose different coping strategies that best suit our situations. The strategy could be Problem-focused strategy, where one uses active ways to directly tackle the situation that caused the stress and or Emotion-focused coping strategies which involve handling feelings of distress, rather than the actual problem situation (<https://humanstress.ca/stress/trick-your-stress/steps-to-instant-stress-management/>).

Coping with stress could also be explained as a process by which an individual consciously attempts to master, minimise, or tolerate stressors and challenges in life. Mechanisms used to cope with stress attempt to overcome or diminish the amount of stress experienced. Coping mechanisms can be categorised into three broad types. The categories are appraisal -focused, problem-focused, and emotion –focused. Appraisal-focused strategies attempt to modify thought processes associated with stress. People alter the way they think about a problem by approaching it differently or altering their goals and values. Problem-Focused Strategies aim to deal with the cause of the problem or stressor. People try to change or eliminate the source of stress by researching the problem and learning management skills to solve it. Emotion-focused strategies address the feelings associated with the stressor. People modify the emotions that accompany stress perception by releasing, distracting, or managing their mental state. A typical person will employ a mixture of all of these strategies when attempting to cope with stress. Skill or prowess at employing these strategies changes over time.

Coping strategies can be either positive or negative. Positive or adaptive strategies decrease the amount of stress perceived and experienced, while negative or

maladaptive strategies diminish symptoms of stress without addressing the real problem or disorder. All coping strategies have the adaptive goal of reducing or dealing with stress, but some strategies can actually be maladaptive (unhealthy) or merely ineffective and can lead to dysfunctional and non-productive results. Coping-strategy selection varies among people and populations based on situational, sexual, personal, and cultural differences. For this reason, it is important to develop different strategies in order to adapt to different situations. Social support is also a vital system to help manage stress. The perception or reality of care or assistance from others is vital to successful stress management.

Through all these one needs to have efficient coping strategies to reduce or cope with perceived stress. Coping with stress involves the cognitive and behavioural efforts that one puts in place with the aim to reduce, tolerate or manage the demands that exceed and overwhelm his or her resources. Stress is human specific. What one person might find stressful is not necessarily stressful for another. Additionally, the response of several persons in the same stressful situation may be different. The individual is the key player in stress management strategies. Individuals therefore need to recognise and analyse for themselves the signs and causes of stress at work. Understanding one's own personal sense of stress is a necessary part of the process that will enable coping mechanisms or strategies to impact one's health.

There are many ways that people strive to cope with stressors and feelings of stress in their lives. A host of literature, both popular and academic, extols the practice of stress management and whole industries are devoted to it. Many techniques are available to help individuals cope with the stresses that life brings. Some of the techniques listed in Figure 16.6, "Stress Management Techniques," induce a lower

than usual stress level temporarily to compensate the biological tissues involved; others face the stressor at a higher level of abstraction. Stress management techniques are more general and range from cognitive (mindfulness, cognitive therapy, meditation) to physical (yoga, art, natural medicine, deep breathing) to environmental (spa visits, music, pets, nature). Gunney (2005) explains everyday methods and resources that help people resist and cope with stress.

1. Solicit from head teachers their understanding of stress.
2. Explain that stress may simply mean situations that trigger emotional and physical reactions.
3. Explain that stress is part of our daily lives.
4. Point out that the individual's responses to the situation or circumstances are also stressors that threaten them and tax their coping abilities. Some examples are a pounding heart, sweaty palms, trembling, and feeling flushed.
5. Explain that each individual's experience of stress may be different. It depends on many factors including the nature of the stressor and how the stressor is perceived. For example, the act of taking test, promotion interview, or having an argument with a subordinate or boss may have a strong negative effect on the nervous systems of some people, while these experiences may not bother others.
6. Explain that the two basic type of stress are positive and negative.

Positive stress is stress that helps you to accomplish and reach goals. When you feel excited or challenged by an activity, you are experiencing positive stress. Positive stress can make you alert and focused on a task. This helps you get the task done.

Negative stress can cause distress or suffering. It may be so intense that it may hinder your ability to function. In our daily usage of the word stress, we tend to refer to this

negative aspect. Too much negative stress can be unhealthy. Doctors Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe developed a scale for life changes (see the table below). The experts have determined that a person who accumulates between 200 and 299 stress points in one year has a 50 percent chance of getting sick. Though these items are relative according to culture and individuals, many people have benefited from the scale.

### **2.11.1 Stress Factors and coping strategies**

Some of the most important factors that determine whether a person will experience stress are physical factors (such as the body's response to stress), environmental factors (such as overload, conflict, and frustration, as well as negative life events and daily hassles), emotional and personality factors (such as anger and hostile tendencies) and socio-cultural factors (such as poverty). When we come into contact with a stressor, our bodies quickly prepare to protect themselves from harm. The body produces a chemical called adrenaline which makes our hearts beat faster and speeds up blood flow to the brain and muscles. Adrenaline gives the body extra strength to protect itself from harm. There is a sudden burst of energy which is called the fight or flight response. When stress continues for a long period, the body becomes exhausted, which cause fatigue or extreme tiredness of the whole body explains by Gunney (2005).

Gunney (2005) emphasizes the following as ways to cope or manage stress effectively.

- a) Social support: People need people. It is important to maintain a network or social support system to turn to. In times of stress, turn to a nurturing figure for reassurance. Discuss your problems with a friend, teacher, and your

supervisor or family member. Their physical touch, patting, or verbal reassurance may relieve stress.

- b) **Mental Control:** Plan your activities without becoming a slave to them. Focus primarily upon possible solutions rather than on the problems itself.
- c) **Be assertive:** Express your feelings in a sincere open manner without hurting the feelings of the other person. Fight irrational beliefs about yourself, others, and the stressful event by thinking positively. Communicate your thoughts and feelings honestly and appropriately, as you expect the same respect you give to others.
- d) **Cultivate a Sense of Humour:** Spend time with people who make you laugh. Cultivate the habit to laugh at yourself.
- e) **Relax:** Lie down or sit down and try to empty your mind of troubling thoughts.
- f) **Exercise:** Plan for a fixed amount of time every day to exercise. Choose an activity that you enjoy, for example, aerobics, tennis, running, cycling, and swimming. Do not exercise in solitude. You may tend to abandon the exercise. Find partners for your exercise.
- g) **Time Management:** Time management is an effective coping technique for stress. Learn how to budget your time. Do not take too many tasks to work on at a time. Learn not to procrastinate (putting something off until later). Set priorities and realistic goals.
- h) **Counter – Productive coping strategies.** Many people develop habits in response to stress that are counter-productive and unhealthy. These include the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs that does nothing to address the actual causes of stress in your life. Their use may place you at risk with problems associated with them. Try to use some of the coping strategies listed above.

- i) Coping Spiritually: This helps in living a balanced life through Bible study, listening to gospel music for enhancement of mental and spiritual improvement. This is a biased coping strategy for Christians only. Furthermore, the matter of faith differs from one community to another.

### **2.11.2 Coping and health**

The capacity for thriving, resilience, or stress-related growth has been associated with improved health outcomes. For example, building on Carver's work on dispositional optimism and thriving, Shepperd, Maroto and Pbert (1996) found, in their longitudinal study of cardiac patients, that optimism predicts success in making health changes associated with lower risk of cardiac disease. Optimism was significantly and directly correlated with improved health outcomes, including lower levels of saturated fat, body fat, and global coronary risk, and positively associated with success in increasing aerobic capacity. Billings and colleagues (2000) showed that coping affected positive and negative affect among men who were caregiving for AIDS patients. Social support coping predicted increases in positive affect, which in turn were related to fewer physical symptoms. Avoidant coping, however, was related to increases in negative affect, which were related to more physical symptoms.

### **2.11.3 Stress and coping behaviour among headteachers**

Headteacher stress is caused by environmental factors as well as individual characteristics. Major environmental factors include poor working conditions, scarcity of resources, heavy workloads and headteachers behaviour. Individual characteristics can include gender, age, personality, and the ability to cope. These factors lead to high percent of all novice headteachers leaving the headship position, and if given the opportunity, most of these headteachers would not choose the position to head again.



Headteachers are expected to fill many roles in their daily tasks. These roles may include assessor, planner, curriculum developer, information provider, role model, facilitator, and resource developer. As a result of balancing these many roles, stress will always be a part of the teaching profession. Knowing that stress will always be present, there is a need to assess stress and the different coping behaviours used by basic school head teachers. Becoming aware of possible causes of stress for basic school head teachers and the coping behaviours they utilize is significant for many reasons. Headship as a position is progressively becoming a stressful one. Headship is more stressful today because head teachers have many deadlines to meet (More Technological in ICT) as well as more responsibilities to shoulder. These responsibilities include vetting of lesson plan, teaching, accountability for students and teachers' performance, school and classroom management and discipline, supervisory role, and extracurricular activity conducting and monitoring. Identifying possible stressors can help headteachers choose positive coping strategies rather than negative strategies that may be unhealthy towards other aspects of life. If they can identify possible stressful situations, headteachers can actively use coping strategies to deal with it, or even be able to avoid the situation altogether. Coping with stress is important for headteachers so that their stress does not interfere with the achievement of their educational goals (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Understanding why these strategies are used would provide headteachers with the opportunity to better understand how to cope with stress and provide the tools and resources for effective stress management programs designed to alleviate attrition.

#### **2.11.4 Stress management and techniques**

Management has been defined in various ways. In the view of Esiekpe (2003), management simply implies the skill in dealing with something or to be in perfect

control of a situation. Stress management as defined by Cohen et al. (1983) is problem-solving effort made by an individual faced with demands that are highly relevant to his welfare but taxing his adaptive resources. Adaptive resources involve coping methods that people exhibit in order to be habituated with stress. Okafor and Okafor (1998) stated that stress management entails setting up roadblocks so that the progression to the illness or disease level does not occur. They concluded that if we could eliminate or block all potentially distressing life situations, the journey towards illness or disease levels would never begin. However, Greenberg and Dintiman (1992) opined that eliminating or blocking all potentially distressing life situations is not only impossible, but also undesirable, because life would be extremely dull if we did not have changes which require adaptation or adjustment. For Cooper (1988), stress management strategies comprise measures taken to cope with trying periods, so that a state of psychological and physiological equilibrium is re-established and subsequently maintained. The truth of the matter is that in stress management, no one technique or strategy would be deemed to be successful for all individuals in all situations. Stress management is conceptualised in this work as the process of managing demands that are appraised as tasking or exceeding the resource of the person (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress management strategies are referred to as the methods we employ to deal with stressful or disturbing situations. They categorised these methods into effective and ineffective strategies. Such ineffective strategies are overeating, drug abuse, aggression which may make us feel better shortly, while effective strategies are thought substitution and relaxation. Akubue (2000) identified other management strategies like exercise, discussion, relaxation, meditation and holiday. Also in stress management, individuals use coping strategies

and resources that help them to adapt to environmental demands. These strategies play a key role in determining the nature and extent of the stress impact.

**Table 1: Stress management techniques**

<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Others</b>
Therapy	Artistic expression	Music	Conflict resolution
Hobbies	Deep Breathing	Nature	Prayer
Meditation	Natural medicine	Pets	Learn to forgive self and others
Mindfulness	Physical exercise	Spa visit	Humour
Planning	Relaxation		
Reading			
Time Management			

**Source: Selye Hans (1983)**

Stress Management Techniques are everyday methods and resources that help people resist and manage stress. These management techniques according to Selye (1983) are appraisal model that hinges on multiple human, social and environmental factors. How people appraise a stressor determines how they will attempt to manage the stressor. What we think about affects our ability to manage stress and stress response itself. Cognitive, physical, environmental and other management techniques are helpful in combating stress symptoms.

### **2.11.5 Educational leadership and stress management**

According to Mankoe (2002), "leaders appointed to administer educational institutions appear to be so committed to the practical day –to-day concerns that they lose sight of the theories, which could guide them to success." The essence of effective stress management is to organize and execute around balanced priorities. It is about educational leaders managing themselves around all education institutional priorities and managing our stresses for advancing the educational goal. The

educational leaders, to be specific headteachers, may be concerned with six major areas of operation by Mankoe:

1. Curriculum, instruction, its supervision, measurement and evaluation.
2. Student or pupil personnel
3. Staff personnel (teaching and non- teaching).
4. Physical facilities (the school plant and educational materials)
5. Finance and business management.
6. School-community relations.

Afful-Broni and Ziggah (2006) are of strong view that educational leadership and administration is quite unique, unlike most other types of administrative activity, though it may be true that certain principles in leadership can be applied across different settings. It should be admitted that the shift in emphasis away from what is truly educational is sometimes the school leaders' own doing. Some leaders seem more comfortable busying themselves with other matters rather than taking on the more quality time of improving the teaching and learning environment.

#### **2.11.6 Time and stress management in school system**

This section plans to review how stress management can be made effective in the school considering the roles of head teachers, teachers, pupils and other stakeholders while school calendar and time table should be planned to aid effective stress management.

School time management must be planned to aid effective stress management of the entire learning community. Education tasks require much more consistency in the time management rather than 'timetabling'. Skilfully managed time and stress contributes tremendously to successful teaching and learning. Whilst the teacher's

task- management aims at ensuring he/she is doing the right things, he/ she ease himself from stress. Time management ensures the teacher and the pupils are busy doing the right thing. Teachers are to ensure they are using time economically and to maximum advantage, promoting self-help in children and making it possible for learning to go in unsupervised practice time in less or stress free environment.

### **2.11.7 Time management tool for headteachers to combat job stress**

In the research carried out by Ikogho (2002), she found out that the use of Time Management could contribute in great measures to the effectiveness of headmasters in Delta State public schools. The study was carried out to identify the relationship between the school head's allocation of time in their various administrative and managerial and their effectiveness. The analysis of the data revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' time usage, perceived stress and effectiveness by their staffs. She found out that length of years of services, gender, school location, staff strength, and student enrolment, had no significant influence on headmasters' time usage. The study revealed that many heads lack the discipline of time management. Many of them spend more time on one task than on the other. This implies that many school heads do not allocate their different tasks in appropriate portion. Furthermore, the time allocation by the heads to the various tasks varied based on their interest and present level of effectiveness. The author proposed the following recommendations:

1. The school heads need to improve the areas of time deficiencies. Deliberate efforts should be made to ensure appropriate allocation of time of different tasks.
2. That the schools heads should spend more time on instructional supervision and improve with effectiveness in the use of time management principles.

3. That there is a need for educational management to take interest in the pursuit of more research which will elicit the importance of time- management to education as a whole, all to reduce their stressors.

Schlenger and Roesch (1989), proposed certain work – management styles which school managers or heads could consider the need to evaluate their work pattern. These are the Hopper, Perfectionist Plus, Allergic to Detail, Fence Sitter, and Cliff Hanger.

The hopper handles many tasks simultaneously, hopping from one thing to another. Managers who operate as hoppers have many interruptions. Hoppers lack the power to delegate, which limit their performances and increase their stress. The Perfectionist Plus plans to do many things in a day with less interruption. They keep appointments and arrange routine tasks for the day. Managers who operate this pattern feel irritated by those who are not organised.

The allergic to detail, these are heads that formulate plans but allow subordinates to implement the plans. The secretary does the most of the data gathering and reporting. However, these heads are always busy reading newspapers and aware of global affairs. The Fence Sitter seeks options and advices when faced with lots of choices. These heads avoid risks and instead, use ideas and programmes that have worked for other. They waste much time making right and appropriate decision. The Cliff Hangers are the heads who wait until the last minutes and are under pressure from outside before they complete tasks. They often not organised, they get late to meetings and are not easily enticed until they are motivated. They work to meet deadlines and are often faced with lots of frustrations.

The heads who want to be more effective, they need to identify where they belong and work out patterns that can contribute to their effectiveness. The suggestion might be the need to take time to work out strategies that will enhance their work effectiveness. The period of evaluation and personal adjustment will be enhanced by the use time and stress management principles (Tracy, 2007).

Managing relationship for effectiveness and productivity among teachers and principals take more time and energy. The thrust of the research is to help effective teachers recognise this function of building relationship with their head teachers as a legitimate part of their jobs. With time and outlined strategies, teachers can build their relationship with their head teacher with the main goal to enhance their teaching effectiveness which will contribute to students' academic performances and the overall school outcomes. Keen observation with time assist teachers understand the behaviours of their head teachers which can serve as ladder to build relationships. Everything done in life happens within a time frame which means there is the need to recognise the best time to perform certain activities in order to free yourself from stress. Teachers' actions must be to contribute to the head teachers' peace of mind, effectiveness and overall school performances. Researches have revealed that more headteachers appreciate those who support their work with tangible suggestions. This finding is in line with Tracy (2007), who described people who identifies and solve problems as 'pathfinders' who make impact on their environment and the world. From this study, it is suggested that teachers must help their headteachers achieve their goals. Teachers must help their headteachers that they are part of the team; they must build relationship of trust and mutual respect to advance the headteachers' work.

### **2.11.8 Stress management enhanced by other stakeholders in education**

This section reviews how stakeholders in education would enhance the effectiveness of stress management of headteachers. It attempts to examine in brief the roles of parents, the government and other educators towards effective stress management.

#### **a) Parents' role in stress management**

Under the theme: “Stress management enhanced by other stakeholders in education; The Role of parents”, this brings together Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Committees and individual parents whose wards are in basic schools their support to argument headteachers efforts on stress management for peak academic performance. It is necessary building the capacities of these stakeholders on how to identify some of the negative stress factors or practices confronting quality education delivery in their various communities and schools and find lasting solutions to those challenges. This stakeholders are encouraged to play effective collaborative roles by ensuring that community members including parents and chiefs monitor the work of students, teachers by visiting schools and giving them support as and when it is necessary while headteachers and teachers too, could visit homes of pupils who do not turn up for school. Schaps (2003), revealed that “school wide community building activities link students, parents, school heads and teachers have the tendency to conform to school norms and practices and they often improve in their academic performances.

Again, a child that is provided with major social amenities will conserve more time and interest for school work than children who would need to fend for many of these things before they get it. On the other hand, where parents participate in children's education by training them with adequate monitoring, providing guidance in school



work and their assignments, they contribute to children's performance and head teacher and teachers become less burdened.

#### **b) Government's role in stress management**

The output of the educational process (the achievement of individual students) is directly related to inputs that:

1. Are directly controlled by policy makers (example, the characteristics of schools, teachers, curricula, supply of materials and so forth) and
2. While achievement may be measured at discrete points in time, the educational process is cumulative; (inputs applied sometimes in the part affect headteachers' current levels of achievement).

A study argued that it not enough to focus on quantitative development of the education system and that the government and the donor community should pay more attention to improving school quality. There are schools in a bad state with dilapidated roofs and buildings, water logged field, which keep the head teachers and pupils away from school anytime it rains. Most of the classrooms are without windows, with roofs removed or blown away by winds. Apart from this, most classrooms do not have enough furniture. "For instance, in some of the classrooms, three to four pupils share a desk while some pupils sit and lie on the floor to write". Messick and Kramer (2004), argue that the degree to which the individual exhibits leadership traits depends not only on his characteristics and personal abilities, but also on the characteristics of the situation and the environment in which he finds himself.

Headteachers can do better and be less stressful as well when they are comfortable in their schools. The government therefore has unique role to play to contribute to

headteachers' good health and less stress for achievements through provisions of needed amenities. Some issues of curriculum, materials, infrastructure and instruction form the basis for stress among headteachers. The available literature and open ended responses received resulted in exhaustive factors that cause stress regarding curriculum and instruction aspect of job stress.

## **2.12 Family-Work Life Balance and Job Stress of Headteachers**

There is interrelationship of family- work life and job stress. According to Christian Chelariu and Rodney Stump (2011) work –Family Conflict is strongly related to job stress, and that job stress fully mediates the effect on turnover intentions. The authors' evidenced that Family- work life is more strongly related to job stress. Family needs and increasing income when not comparable, often leads to stress within the family member. Stress in the family often carried over into the workplace, thereby is a potentially stress factor affecting the performance of the person in the work.

Family – work life could also affects the perceived increasingly heavy workload, this can lead to job stress, and thus indirectly family stress potentially affects the performance of employees through job stress. This review is aimed to study and investigate the effect of family work life and job stress on employee performance. According to the article by Chelariu and Stump on work- family conflict, it is found that the family – work conflict has positive significant effect on the performance of employees; family conflict has positive significant effect on the job stress; and job stress has positive significant effect on the performance. Women reported higher levels of stress over Family- Work life than men. Family- work conflicts occur when an individual experiences incompatible demands between family and work roles, causing participation in both roles to become more difficult. This imbalance creates

stress at work-life interface. Again, Family-work conflict occurs when an unhealthy balance exists which forces a person to place family demands above and beyond the needs of work, or alternatively place work demands above those of family, thus, Family-Work Conflict, Chelariu and Stump (2011).

### **2.13 Interpersonal Relationships**

Interpersonal relationship at work serves a critical role in development and maintenance of trust and positive feeling in an organization. Although quality of interpersonal relationship alone is not enough to produce worker productivity, it can significantly contribute to it. While poor interpersonal relationship may lead to stress, stress can also cause poor workplace relation and loss of productivity. Bullying in the work place can also contribute to stress. Stress is also caused by bullying and harassment among other factors. Being invited at workplace or not being invited to social events may be humiliating and may lead to interpersonal relationship problem. According to Baker, Israel and Schurman (1996), social support from supervisor has more influence on employee satisfaction and mental health than support from co-workers. Social support is an important resource that enables an individual to cope with stress and prevent burnout. When relationship is poor, attrition is increased. Bland (1999) noted that stressors that seemed to be common among employees in workplace include relationship problems with partners, bosses and colleagues.

Antwi – Danso (2012) also believes that power struggle where co- workers or groups of employees form political alliances and compete for position cause stress in the work place. To him power struggles between peers or co- workers are stressful enough. Poor social environment, lack of support from co-workers and supervisors,

discrimination based on gender, race, tribe, religion, political affiliation, and age are frightening.

## **2.14 Curriculum and Instructional Related Stressors**

Curriculum and instruction form the basis for the academic activity. Any institution or any course cannot fulfil the academic requirements without the predetermined curriculum and structured instruction. Each course has a minimum requirement of instruction hours of the specified curriculum. Hence class work is an integral part of any academic endeavour. There is no substitute for class work in academics. Moreover, class work forms the main body of the course. Students have to participate in the curriculum and instruction process by attending the regular class work and fulfil the class work requirements in the form of completion of assignments, reading and understanding the specified topics, complying with the minimum attendance requirements, completing the group tasks compulsory for assessment and so on. Any student of academics, at whatever level of study he/she may be, must fulfil these requirements to complete the course. Naturally, such well-structured academic activity results in stress among a major portion of the headteachers.

### **2.14.1 Headteachers assessment related stressors**

Assessment is a central element in the overall quality of teaching and learning in curriculum. Well-designed assessment sets clear expectations, establishes a reasonable workload and provides opportunities for students to self-monitor, rehearse, practice and receive feedback. Assessment is an integral component of a coherent educational experience. The components of curriculum are instruction, team work, assessment and placement. The study could list out some issues related to curriculum

and instruction component of academic stress ranging from regular attendance and achieving academic goals.

Headteachers face unprecedented stress levels as diverse initiatives are rained down on them by government and the pressure to perform grows by the day. Performance targets, performance agreements, licensure exams and quality demands, professional learning Community are just some of the new measures which are putting the onus firmly on head teachers to reorganise departments, think innovatively, and set the wheels of change in motion. According to anonymous senior headteacher... Policy makers of education fail to realise the extent to which school managers' hands are tied by the ring –fenced funding and the imperative of performance indicators. Another signs of stress are how headteachers are single out for blame, alienated the very people at the grassroots of policy implementation who could deliver the improvements they wants.

#### **2.14.2 Headteachers and stress**

Headteachers, and other school leaders present a positive view to the public, but all of them work in situations that place great demands on their professional and personal priorities. It is not that the job takes time . . . it is that it takes time doing things you don't want to be doing.

With the daunting projection of teachers needed in the next decade, policymakers have focused on our country's future need for qualified teachers; however, an equally important issue that must be addressed is that of school leadership. While the debate continues about quality management in Ghana's basic schools in the context of school leadership and quality management of headteachers, (National Pre- tertiary Education Curriculum Framework, MoE, 2018), it is obvious that there is growing concern that

time and stress management problems for heads have increased to the point that many qualified individuals do not want to become school leaders. Ferrandino (2001) cites a plethora of reasons for the shortage of new principals: inadequate compensation, job-related stress, and time commitment issues. Of major concern also is the tremendous pressure on heads to meet state-mandated standards, with accountability pressures continuing to increase as a result of the 'No Child Left Behind' Act. Facing "numerous evenings and weekends at schools, watching extracurricular activities and attending meetings . . . the long hours, the difficulty of meeting underfunded mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act," heads keep retiring on schedule, many schools are left without heads, and school systems are having difficulty replacing "a greying corps of heads at a time when the pressure to raise test scores and other new demands have made an already difficult job an increasingly thankless one". It is enshrined clearly in the Mission Statement of Ghana Education Service (GES) to ensure that Ghanaian Children of school – going age are provided with quality formal education and training through effective and efficient management of resources to make education delivery relevant to the manpower needs of the nation. The Mission Statement of GES tells us what the Service seeks to achieve as far as the education of Ghanaian child is concerned. States are required to create strong standards for what every student should know and learn in grades 3–8, with No Child Left Behind, further requiring school Municipals or Districts to close the achievement gap between students and improve school safety, character education, and teacher preparation. Thus the head's role now requires instructional leadership, community leadership, and systems management to ensure the success of all students. One characteristic evident in high-performing schools is a dedicated and dynamic heads. Strong leadership is

essential for effective school reform. That means we must address the factors causing qualified headteachers to turn away from the headship.

### **2.14.3 Stress and district education office personnel**

The culture of stress is not limited to the heads in individual school buildings. Often the entire school system can be a culture of stress, and sometimes the stress starts at the central office level. Officers, including, front-line Deputy Directors, Directors, and Supervisors, all work in situations that place great demands on their professional and personal priorities. As with headteachers, supervisors and central office personnel do well in presenting a positive view to the public, and, in fact, most are positive about what they are trying to accomplish. However, in personnel meetings and in private meetings, often the anger, frustration, and related stress can become obvious. In research presented at the annual meeting of the University Council for Education Administration, Robson (2002) reported that the superintendents she studied identified the following as their major sources of stress: relationship with the school board, heavy workload demands, public demands and politics, state and federal mandates, and personnel issues. Robson further elaborated that these major sources of stress have “significant impact on superintendents’ personal and professional lives and engender a range of negative feelings” (p. 14), including feeling isolated and, often, powerless.

As with headteachers, stress has an impact on whether other educational leaders remain in their jobs. In a 2001 study conducted with over 250 headteachers in Texas, Lowery et al. reported that job expectations have become unrealistic and that educators are less interested in the top role. While there are positive reasons for becoming and remaining a headteacher, negative factors include politics, high

demands, and stress (Lowery, Harris, Hopson & Marshall, 2001). From the abundant literature and from direct observations, we can therefore conclude that although responsibilities and demands may vary from the central office to the individual school level, deputy directors, assistant directors, directors, and supervisors all experience high levels of stress, much as we find with headteachers and assistant headteachers.

#### **2.14.4 Life events and workplace stress of headteachers**

Headteachers have to deal with life event stressors and “social baggage” that teachers and pupils bring to school. Heads cannot and should not be required to deal with family problems, street life, or community problems, but often the head—especially the basic school head—has to serve in multiple roles, from nurse to counsellor. The head’s personal stressors are also at work during the day: car accident, illness of a family member, divorce, debt, trouble with in-laws, changes in living conditions, financial situations, and others. One study of stressful life events focused on events that occurred to more than half the students in each school studied. When students are stressed and upset, their behaviour usually deteriorates, with a headteacher stress levels increasing proportionally. Heads also have to deal with the life event stressors that teachers bring to school. Even though personal stressors were not created in school, each stressor still may affect a head’s overall performance.

#### **2.14.5 Non-instructional responsibilities**

Handling discipline problems; dealing with gangs and school violence; completing excessive paperwork; attending too many meetings in and away from school; and implementing constantly changing national, state, and local mandates are viewed as detriments to instructional leadership by most school heads. Also on this list: dealing with irate parents and trying to survive in a high-stakes testing environment. These are



managerial tasks, but when they occupy most of the time the head needs to spend on instructional leadership, they can and do trigger stress. Other stressors come from feeling harassed by superiors, from fielding too many complaints from teachers about additional assignments or lack of support, or from fears of increasing teacher absenteeism and a dwindling pool of capable substitutes. Each of these stressors not only affects the head's health but can also flow negatively toward staff, and even students.

#### **2.14.6 Finding and keeping qualified teachers**

Many heads struggle, work hard, walk to district offices several times during the term trying to find teachers to fill vacant classrooms and positions. Still, many schools in the Ghana start September with vacant positions and classrooms. Heads are stressed when teachers are stressed. Most new headteachers accept the position with enthusiasm, but many of them leave the profession and the position with no joy. It is also our experience that a much greater number of today's teacher education graduates awarded teaching licensure or credentials do not go into teaching. Many teachers are lured by businesses and industries promising higher salaries and better benefits, a healthier work environment, and lower levels of job stress. This phenomenon, in combination with the demographic of more than one half of practicing teachers reaching retirement age within the next five to ten years, means that schools are experiencing growing teacher shortages at just about every level and in every subject area. Heads who accept nonqualified teachers—those who are changing careers or rebounding from corporate and government downsizing, National Youth Employment, National Service—often find stress levels increasing once those teachers reach the classroom and discover the stigma that “anybody can teach” is a false and frightening claim.

High levels of anxiety may be created by increased demands or a greater degree of role uncertainty. A Head's ability to make decisions may be impaired when ability to concentrate is reduced. Heads may experience a feeling of panic or a sharp loss of confidence in leadership ability. With prolonged exposure to the anxiety of role uncertainty, heads may reach an exhaustion threshold, commonly described as feeling "drained."

Finding and keeping qualified teachers according to the 2003 Kappan Gallup Poll, the public believes that getting (75%) and keeping (87%) good teachers are both problems for the schools. The researchers compared these findings to 1969 when respondents rated getting (52%) and keeping (42%) good teachers as problems. In a related question, 45% of parents with children in schools gave the local schools where their children attended a grade of C or lower, compared to 55% of individuals without children. A large percentage (70%) of the public who responded to the survey knew "from a fair amount to nothing at all" about the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This is a stressful point for heads in that it is becoming more difficult to get and keep good teachers, and it will become even a greater problem because 1992 Constitution of Ghana defines Basic Education as the minimal formal education to which every child is entitled to as a right. Specifically, Article 25 states among others that "all boys and girls should have access to quality early childhood development care and primary and secondary education". United Sustainable Development Goal 4 also focuses on ensuring inclusive quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning. Therefore, in Ghana, No Child Left Behind requires that every classroom be staffed with a teacher who is certified or licensed according to Act 778, The Education Act, 2008.

## **2.15 Stress and the Immune System**

What happens in a culture of stress? A culture may be defined as a pattern of beliefs, values, and practices, shared by a group or organization. Culture basically defines how things are done. Stress, clinically defined, is the sum of the biological reactions to any adverse stimulus, mental or emotional, internal or external, that tends to disturb the organism's balance or homeostasis. And leadership burnout, whether it affects heads, supervisors, or other leaders, can be viewed as a state of chronic stress—physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion resulting from an inability to cope effectively with the daily stresses of leadership over an extended period of time. Generally, people under stress can be irritable, anxious, angry, or sad, but chronic stress may lead to immune responses that cause severe problems throughout the body.

### **2.15.1 Immune response**

When it works correctly, the immune system controls our defences against infectious disease by attacking foreign substances that are not naturally part of the body. Not confined to one organ or one site in the body, the immune system is everywhere, providing an assortment of specialized cells that occupy the skin, eyes, nostrils, lungs, and the lining of internal organs. When a part of the body gives a “distress” call, the immune cells charge to the problem area by route of the lymphatic system. Thus acute stress activates the immune system. Many health professionals use the term “distress” to identify stress that is considered negative and to differentiate it from stress that is considered positive. But even positive stress can cause problems if not balanced. Think of the holiday season, a wedding, or the birth of a child. The body really does not know the difference and attempts to return to a state of balance and homeostasis as quickly as possible.

### 2.15.2 Acute stress

The body reacts each time it encounters a stressor. There are three basic stages in the stress response:

- Stage 1, Alarm, refers to the body mobilizing for “fight or flight.”
- Stage 2, Resistance, in which the individual combats the stressor. Through purposeful action, the individual attempts to reduce the stressor by using coping tactics.
- Stage 3, Exhaustion, in which unrelieved stress can turn into burnout. The immune system’s connection to bodily systems results in a significant correlation between stress and health, with negative stress linked to psychological, cardiovascular, respiratory, and physical trauma. Psychological and somatic complaints by principals include fatigue and weakness, blurred vision, irritability, sensitivity to weather, dizziness, malaise, and depression. Dysfunctional cardiovascular systems may cause palpitations, hypertension, arteriosclerosis, and coronary artery disease. Stress on the musculoskeletal system can cause back difficulties, cervical tension, and headaches. Respiratory system dysfunctions include repeated upper respiratory infections, bronchial asthma, and hyperventilation. Lastly, physical trauma may include lacerations, bruises, head injuries, seizures, and deafness.

The immune response causes changes within the body. Adrenaline starts to flow throughout the body. The heart rate begins to accelerate. An increase in blood pressure and blood clotting occurs. And while these other body functions are speeding up, the digestion system slows down. Aspects of immune function may be bolstered by bursts of short-term stress. But when stressful situations become chronic, the immune system may falter and health problems may follow. Chronic and prolonged stress according to researchers in psychoneuroimmunology (PNI), prolonged stress

can lead to a decrease in immune function, and excessive immune system activity can lead to autoimmune disease, whereby immune system antibodies mistakenly identify the body's healthy cells as foreign invaders and attack. Life-threatening organ damage and chronic inflammation can then cause psychological, cardiovascular, respiratory, and physical traumas. Stress even reduces our resistance to bacteria and viruses, making us more susceptible to the common cold. Psychological and somatic symptoms of chronic stress may include fatigue and weakness, blurred vision, irritability, sensitivity to weather, dizziness, headaches, insomnia, upset stomach, chronic back pain, skin rash, menstrual problems, malaise, and depression. Autoimmune disorders linked to chronic stress include rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), and type 1 diabetes. If exhaustion levels are not relieved once acute stress has transformed to chronic stress, burnout follows. Heads who reach the burnout stage usually are completely drained emotionally, physically, behaviourally, mentally, sexually, and spiritually.

Viral Infections Studies have shown that individuals who tend to be unhappy, measured by psychological testing, were more likely to have recurrent cold sores. Higher levels of antibodies to herpes viruses were common in people under various kinds of stress. High antibodies to herpes indicate a sign of low immune function. Consistent and convincing evidence shows that stress can affect the body's control over herpes virus infections.

While all educational leaders are subject to high levels of stress and burnout, we believe that leaders in the headship are major candidates for burnout. With today's abundance of chronic stressors—dealing with teachers over national versus local curriculum standards, controlling inappropriate student behaviour, reinforcing the

importance of reaching school test goals, calming irate parents, attending numerous meetings, working with budget issues, and writing reports—it does not take long for today's head to reach the state of exhaustion known as burnout. There are conflicting reports, but something like 50% to 75% of heads view educational leadership at the school level as the most stressful job in education. In other words, as an educational leader you can become sick in a school building or district office that is stressful. And all school buildings and central offices are stressful. Therefore, heads have two choices:

- Use precautions or plan activities to prevent or eliminate the adverse stimuli, or
- If unpreventable, you must counteract the adversity to reach life balance or return to a state of homeostasis.

### **2.16 Redefining the Culture of Stress from a Healthier Perspective**

High demands in a changing society will continue to cause great stress for headteachers as educational leaders. It is imperative that all basic school headteachers begin to examine the effects of the culture of stress so they can begin the process of reclaiming their time, priorities, and good health. Educational leaders should not work alone when managing stress in a school or district. From the central office to the school office, each leader can and should specify and clarify prescribed roles and expectations so that subordinates can operate within those roles most effectively. This also means that the school board, School Management Committee (SMC) can and should ensure that the workload is appropriate for assistants.

In the school building, we have found two main strategies whereby headteachers can help change the culture of stress. The first is by helping to manage reactions to stress, both for themselves and their colleagues and staff. Headteachers can bring stress

activities to their school, including group meditation. Other activities include relaxation training, opportunities for physical exercise, health and wellness programs, and time management seminars to their schools, and all of these are activities that the heads should attend. Second, headteachers need to think about how their administrative actions may be creating unnecessary sources of stress. Setting unrealistic deadlines for the completion of tasks and failing to communicate adequately give rise to unavoidable problems. Instead headteachers should aim to establish clear guidelines and responsibilities; seek input in goal setting and decision making; provide social support time for the school and staff; and develop settings that promote superior mentor/mentee relationships. Headteachers can make great partners and can learn with teachers as they provide these services. Headteachers and teachers can work together to reduce stress at school and in the classroom. Systems of social support are essential for managing stress. Even something as simple as sharing problems, exchanging solutions, or engaging in social activity with colleagues can help dissipate feelings of stress and turn them into the feeling that “We are in this together”.

### **2.17 Summary**

In summary, I have reviewed literature and relevant concepts that are related to my topic, thus, workload, stress and coping strategies among headteachers. I have also identified and discussed theories that relate to the study and could be used to guide the topic. Although not exhaustive, I hope that I have raised issues that would stimulate some further discussions as we look forward to strengthening our stress coping strategies and management skills. I look forward to hearing what headteachers in Assin Foso Municipality have to contribute to it, the findings that may erupt, or

challenges they may have regarding their workloads, their stress nature and their coping strategies.

With those reviewed literature, preliminary observations out of the way, I now proceed to chapter three to reflect on methodology - mainly relating to research paradigm and approach, research design, population and sample , data collection instruments, data collection procedures and ethical considerations.





## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology part of the study. Methodology is an important aspect of a research work. It deals with the procedures that are to be followed in carrying out the study. It includes; research paradigm, research approach, research design, study population, sample size, data collection instruments used, methods of data collection, data analysis procedures used for the study, ethical consideration and summary.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

In social research, the term “paradigm” is used to refer to the philosophical assumptions or the basic set of beliefs that guide the actions and define the world view of the researcher (Lincoln, 2011). Paradigms are conceptual and practical “tools” that are used to solve specific research problems. In other words, paradigms function as heuristics in social research (Abbott, 2004). In this work, what the researcher used was the pragmatist “paradigm” or approach which allows the possibility of choosing the appropriate research methods from the wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Although there are several paradigms or worldviews that structure and organize modern social work research (e.g., post positivism, constructivism, participatory action frameworks, or pragmatism), they are all essentially philosophical in nature. Each paradigm has a different perspective on the axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric of research.

As a research paradigm, pragmatism allows the flexibility to choose various combinations of methods and to inquire from a variety of perspectives. Thus, in pragmatist research, observations, experience, and experiments are all useful ways to understand people and their world. A pragmatist approach fits closely with this work as it allows the researcher to gather evidence from a range of sources and to critically evaluate them in terms of their strengths, limitations, and applicability to the practice setting.

In this research, researcher's intention was to determine the relationship of workload and perceived job stress among basic school headteachers. It also examined coping strategies (personality and social support) employed by headteachers to manage the negative effects of stress they might experience. The use of Pragmatism helped the researcher to focus on meaningful research, find what variables or factors of the job environment do they feel are diminishing headteachers' wellbeing overall. The early pragmatists desire for a better world, so headship as an office need to be built and improved.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

This study employed a multi-method which requires the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and analyse them sequentially. Using the multi-method approach ensures that the researcher could complement one set of results with another, to expand a set of results, or to discover something that could have been missed if only a quantitative or a qualitative approach had been used. Creswell (2012) views multi-methods research approach as a procedure for collecting, analysing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon or a research problem.

When the multi-method is employed the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods will complement each other.

The quantitative data can reveal generalizable information for a large group of people but these data often fail to provide specific answers, reasons, explanations or examples. On the contrary, qualitative research although provides data about meaning and context regarding the people and environments of the study, the findings from qualitative are often not generalizable because of the small numbers and narrow range of participants. This is in agreement with views of Onwuegbuzi and Johnson (2004) when they stated that multi methodology's first strength is that it is a "workable solution" to the seemingly unending debates between qualitative and quantitative purists.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The researcher used a sequential explanatory multi-method design for the study to determine the relationship between job workload and perceived level of stress among headteachers, effects and their coping strategies. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were also employed because the study sought to explore the experiences and thoughts of headteachers in Foso Municipality as far as workload, perceived stress and their coping strategies were concerned. Employing the sequential explanatory mixed method design, the researcher was able collect data on consecutive phases for the quantitative and qualitative. The researcher wanted to get the headteachers interpretation, experiences and their perspectives in order to gain clear insight into the phenomenon. Quaigrain (2001) corroborates Denzin (1994) view when he asserted that the goal of mixed method is to build checks and balances into the designs through multiple collection strategies. A sequential explanatory design

was used to allow for the use of mixed sources of data, thus, questionnaire and interview.

### **3.4 Study Area**

Study was conducted in Assin Foso Municipality in the Central Region, Ghana. The Assin Foso Municipal is among the Twenty-two (22) Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies of the Central Region of Ghana. It lies within longitudes 1.05' East and 1.25 West and latitudes 6. 05' North and 6.4 South. The Municipality is situated in the northern part of the Central Region. It shares common boundaries with Assin North District on the North, Upper Denkyira district on the North-West, Assin South district on the South, Twifo Atti Morkwaa district on the West and Birim South (in the Eastern Region) on the East. The Municipality covers a total land area of about 1.150sq.km and comprises about 500 settlements including Assin Foso (the Municipal Capital), Assin Akropong, Assin Brofoyedur, Assin Awisem. Assin Foso Municipal Education comprises of four (4) Circuits with 45KGs; 45Primary and 40JHS as the number of public schools; with pupils' enrolment of 15,903; 606 Teachers; and 53 Headteachers at the period of data collection. The working environment is typical of a deprived in two Circuits where infrastructural expansion took place in piecemeal over time; leading to structures that are poorly adapted for well- coordinated work. The schools in the deprived Circuits never had the full complement of trained teachers and qualified headteachers. Most headteachers doubled as classroom teachers. As a result, headteachers often step in to perform tasks outside their job descriptions and it was one of the reasons the researcher decided to conduct the study in the area.

The municipal was chosen based on the work experience of the researcher in the area. The researcher was an officer at the municipal education office as a human resource

manager and therefore his personal observation and the complaints made by headteachers on things bothering their work, workload, and stress they go through, also influenced the choice of the study area.

### 3.5 Population

The population for the study consisted of all basic school headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality who were available during the data collection period. The headteachers were selected because they were at the helm of affairs in the various schools and would be able to give enough information and better picture on the workload and perceived job stress as well as the coping strategies. This study intended to ascertain the workload and stress level of basic school headteachers in the area and the strategies they used to cope with stress. All public basic school headteachers were used in the study. According to the Annual School Census Statistical Report of schools conducted by the Foso Municipal Education Directorate, EMIS Department (EMIS, 2019) academic year, there were a total of fifty three (53) public basic schools in the Municipality. The total headteacher population working in these schools was 53 comprising 41(77.4%) males, and 12(22.6%) females. Data was collected from all headteachers in the Foso Municipality because they were of small in number. (See Table 2)

**Table 2: Population**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Headteachers	41	12	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>53</b>

Source: EMIS data (2019) academic year; Foso Municipal Education Directorate

### 3.6 Sample Sizes

The researcher sampled the entire population for the study. A total of Fifty three (53) headteachers were sampled for the quantitative phase. A sample size of ten (10) headteachers was used for the study at the qualitative phase. The respondents were ten (10), comprising seven (7) males and three (3) females.

**Table 3: Table on the sample sizes**

	Sample Size(Census)			Sample Size (IG)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Headteachers	41	12	<b>53</b>	7	3	<b>10</b>

**Source: EMIS data (2019) academic year; and Field work**

The Table 3 above indicated the sample size of all 53 headteachers used for the quantitative phase and the 10 headteachers used for the qualitative phase.

### 3.7 Sampling Techniques

The researcher applied census frame, meaning he studied the whole population. A census method refers to a complete enumeration of a universe. The justification here was that the population was relatively small (Fifty three (53) headteachers), and the researcher could access and collect responses from all the respondents in that population for the quantitative phase. Both population and number of variables on which data were sought were small so it was worth and appropriate to consider the entire population for the study.

Taherdoost (2016) claims that if the population is less than 55 participants, you have to go for a census or the entire population instead of selecting a sample and the use of census gives a higher degree of accuracy. A researcher can opt to study the entire population when the population is well defined (Complete sampling frame) and small.

It could eliminate any potential bias occurring through sampling technique. Findings can be generalized beyond the fifty three (53) participants and provide reliable direction for planning programmes and messages.

Convenient sampling technique was used to select the 10 headteachers for the qualitative phase and the selection based on their interest and willingness to participate in the interview. This was to capture detailed information that might have been missed by the questionnaire or the quantitative phase. It was also to ensure that data was in-depth and for the researcher to have further explanations.

### **3.8 Research Instruments**

The researcher used questionnaires and interview guide as the main data collection instruments for the study. The questions were based on the research questions raised.

The questionnaire was administered to headteachers to solicit their opinion with regard to the extent to which their workload generated stress, the effects and the coping strategies they adopted.

It sought information on;

- Demographic profile of headteachers.
- The nature of workload of the headteachers.
- Levels and effects of stress on job performance.
- The coping strategies used to manage stress.
- Suggestions and recommendations to the municipal education office and headteachers on stress management interventions.

The questionnaire was used because it was an appropriate tool for the study which was quantitative in nature. It also allowed all the headteachers to answer the same questions, making the data more reliable. In writing out the questionnaire items, the

researcher sought expert advice from his supervisor, specialists in the field of study and other researchers to check for content and validities of the instrument. There was one set of questionnaire which consisted of five (5) sub-sections:

First section was demographic information to capture the bio-data of the respondents. The questionnaire items 1-9 were for the Demographic Information of the respondents.

The second section dealt with the Nature of Workload of the headteachers. This section had a list of statements, the questionnaire items 10-20, on some work activities that measured the job description of headteachers that tend to create and trigger stress. Respondents rated the Nature of Workload on a 4- Point Likert Scale ranging from 4= Very True, 3=True, 2=Untrue, to 1= Very Untrue.

The third section was about Perceived Job Stressors: Job stress was measured by means of an adapted Occupational Stress Scale (OSS, Salami, 2006). Occupational Stress Scale is a 50-item questionnaire that measures occupational stress factors viz: workload, interpersonal problems, time pressure, working conditions, leadership problems, inadequate facilities and personal problems. Respondents rated the Perceived Stressors on a 5- Point Likert Scale ranging from 5= Extremely Stressful to 1= Not At All Stressful. Fifteen questionnaire items were used for this section, items 21-35.

The section four was on stress effects experienced by headteachers based on their line of duty in their schools and others. The respondents were to answer

Yes [ ] or No [ ] whether stress factors affects their job performance? If yes, they were to briefly outline how. Again, on individual characteristics, headteachers were asked to rate the stress effects of age, gender, administrative experience and their denomination on their performance as headteachers. Stress effect sub-scale of



questionnaire on 4- Point Likert scale ranging from Not at All; Somewhat; Moderately; Very Much was used to assess this. This section covered item 36 to 38 of the questionnaire.

The final section was on Coping Strategies (Social Support). This section was made up of a list of statements each of which may or may not be true about how headteachers try to reduce, cope with or manage stress. The types of social support received by the headteachers were assessed by the Social Provisions Scale (SPS) developed by Cutrona and Russell (1987). The respondents were to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement if they felt the statements were true of their current relationships with friends, family members, colleagues, college organization, and community members. There were seventeen (17) questionnaire items used in this section (items 39-55). For each item for statement on Coping Strategies, the respondents rated by ticking on applicable score as follows: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3= Neutral; 2= Disagree; and 1= Strongly Disagree. The scores derived from each subscale were compared directly to obtain information on the relative importance of each subscale as a source of job stress to headteachers.

There was one interview guide for the headteachers. The participants were ten (10) comprising seven (7) males and three (3) females. Selection was done based on headteachers' interest and willingness to participate, thus, convenient sampling technique was used in their selection. The researcher designed semi- structured interview questions for these ten (10) participants. This helped the researcher to know what to ask, the sequence of questions and the follow up questions having in mind the research questions.

The main questions for the interview guide for the respondents were developed according to the research questions in order to gather much information as possible. The interview guide offered the researcher the chance to ask more questions concerning the research objectives that needed more clarification that the questionnaire could not provide. It also allowed the respondents to further explain questions and expressed their feelings. There was one set of interview guide which also consisted of eight (8) items all based on the research objectives. Finally, the researcher had the opportunity to observe non- verbal behaviours.

### **3.9 Validity of the Instruments**

Validity refers to the ability of an instrument to measure what it purports to measure truly and accurately. Two forms of validity were established in this study and these were face and content validity.

The face validity was determined by giving the instruments to colleague students who were into similar research topic areas to assess and make inputs. Face validity is a judgment made to tell if a test is well constructed and useful.

The content validity was determined by the researcher's supervisor. The researcher gave the instruments to the supervisor to assess and make inputs. He examined and scrutinized the items and ensured that their suitability in measuring the attributes being assessed. Content validity focuses on how much a measure represents every single element of a construct and asks whether a specific element enhances or detracts from a test or the research question. In this study, content validity was again checked by other lecturers who are experts in job stress management. Based on their comments and suggestions, changes were effected in the instruments before administering them in the main study. Stangor (2004) noted that content validity is one of the most

powerful techniques available to a researcher through which questionnaire can be validated.

### **3.10 Reliability of the Instruments**

Reliability means the extent to which results obtained from a test can be relied upon as the true score. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by using the Cronbach Alpha to measure the quality of the items and test-retest to determine the stability of the item over time. This is most appropriate since the questionnaire is extensively Likert in nature. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients or internal consistency covered mostly the three subscales of nature of workload of headteachers, perceived stressors and coping strategies and the coefficient was 0.89.

The developed questionnaire was pretested before being used to collect data at the study area. The pretesting was conducted using 15 headteachers from a neighbouring district. The pretesting was necessary to find out about the clarity and meaningfulness of the instruments, to measure what it was supposed to measure and to test the construct and content validity before being used for the main study. The pretesting helped to eliminate ambiguous questions, establish the feasibility of the study, test the data collection instruments, establish if there were problems in the administration of the questionnaires and allow preliminary data analysis to establish whether there were difficulties in the main data and ensure that the collected data answer the research questions.

### **3.11 Pre-Testing of the Instruments**

The developed questionnaire was pretested before being used to collect data at the study area. The pre-testing study was conducted in 15 public basic schools in Assin North District, a neighbouring district which were not included in the sample but has

similar characteristics as the study area. The pretest was conducted using 15 headteachers from the neighboring district. All the 15 participants were current basic school headteachers who had at least one year experience. All the effort was to address the following questions:

- What is the nature of headteachers' workload in the Assin North District?
- What is the level of perceived stress among the headteachers in Assin North District?
- What are the effects of stress experienced by headteachers in the District?
- What are the strategies used by the headteachers to cope with the stress they experienced?

:

After analysis, it was found highly validated in the respective population area. The pre-testing was necessary to find out about the clarity and meaningfulness of the instruments, to measure what it was supposed to measure and to test the construct and content validity before being used for the main study. Where there were inconsistencies, the instrument was modified before the main study was carried out. This pretesting helped to eliminate ambiguous questions, established the feasibility of the study, and tested the data collection instruments, established if there were problems in the administration of the questionnaires and allowed preliminary data analysis to establish whether there are difficulties in the main data and ensure that the collected data answered the research questions. The data provided a rich description of the meaning and lived experiences of headteachers stress from the perspective of current basic school headteachers. Since the questionnaire mainly used the Likert scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to establish the reliability index. The reliability index was 0.89.

### 3.12 Data Collection Procedures

In order to gain access to the respondents, the researcher collected a letter of introduction from his Head of Department, Educational Administration and Management, University of Education, Winneba, to the GES Director of the project district which was presented to Heads of schools under study. A set of questionnaires were administered to the headteachers, to some at their schools and others through their E-mails and Whatsapps after discussion and agreement. The respondents who were able to complete the questionnaire on the spot were allowed to do so. Those who were unable to do so were allowed one week which the researcher collected the completed form. Data collection process was started on 15th October, 2020 and completed on 20th November, 2020. Data was also collected through Whatsapp and Email due to Covid 19 protocols and close down of schools; however, 100% responses were received.

With regard to the interview, ten (10) headteachers were selected randomly and based on their willingness to participate in the study. The instrument for the ten headteachers selected for the interview guide was administered personally by the researcher. The researcher asked someone verbal questions and the participants responded. Questions asked during the interview did not follow any chronological order because the researcher frequently asked probing questions for further explanation and more information before proceeding to the next question. An average time of 40 minutes was spent during the interview with each respondent on different days at the respondents own convenience.

### **3.13 Data Analysis**

The analysis of the data, the search for meaning and the interpretation of data needed to be carefully undertaken in the light of the research questions. The analysis of data was guided by the aims and objectives of the research. The data was obtained and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The questionnaires were coded and fed in SPSS software and analysed descriptively. The interpretation was done using tables, frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics was applied to test the two research hypotheses formulated for the study.

The interview data were analysed using step -by-step guide based on the key questions for the qualitative phase. The interview questions were structured consisting of 8 items all based on the research objectives. The interview discussions mostly centred on their views on headteachers workload-stress phenomenon and their experiences, knowledge, perceptions and as to how they cope or manage the problem.

### **3.14 Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted with permission from District Director of Education for the data collection from both the office and the schools in the Foso Municipality. It was aimed at improving headteachers performance that would result in quality educational delivery for pupils. The researcher sought the consent of the headteachers and they understood that the study was for academic purpose and participation in the study did not come with personal gains, financial or otherwise and they could withdraw without any sanctions. To maintain confidentiality, respondents understood and complied with the instructions that personal identifiers were not accepted on the questionnaire sheet. In conducting research, it is important that ethical considerations be given due attention. Bassey (1999) contends that in any piece of research in the social sciences,

ethical considerations are necessary in conducting and reporting the research in respect of democracy, respect for truth and respect for persons. In agreement with Bassey, the researcher was aware that in conducting research, researchers must be ethically responsible.

This research observed all the ethical concerns as the researcher adhered to all ethical guidelines and avoided any acts of misconduct in research. The researcher observed confidentiality, plagiarism, honesty, objectivity, respect of intellectual property, dissemination of findings, anonymity, non-discrimination, voluntary and informed consent, academic freedom, social responsibility and respect for colleagues. Information collected was handled with confidentiality. The researcher was ethically responsible in the collection, analysis of data and reporting of information.

### **3.15 Summary**

Job stress and its relationship to coping strategies and management have undergone few studies especially in the context of school leadership. The study intended to examine the relationship between workload, perceived job stress and coping strategies among headteachers in basic schools in Assin Foso Municipality in the Central Region. The chapter three has dealt with the procedures that are to be followed in carrying out the study. It included research design, the population and sample size that would be used for the study. It focused on the research instruments used, method of data collection and data analysis procedures. Going forward, in the next chapter, the researcher deals with the presentation and discussion of findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the presentation and analysis of results as well as discussion of the results of the study. This study was conducted to determine what constituted academic workload or the nature of the headteachers' workload and whether headteachers were overwhelmed by the workload. It also determined the level of perceived stress among the headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality, explored any perceived workload effect on the stress level of female and male headteachers. Finally, the study assessed coping strategies that were used by headteachers to manage and cope with perceived stress. The instruments used for the study were a questionnaire and interview guide. There was one set of questionnaire which consisted of five (5) sub-sections and one interview guide which also consisted of eight (8) items all based on the research objectives.

#### 4.1 Bio Data of Respondents

The total number of respondents was 53 as per the study's intended population sample size giving a response rate of 100%. Data on the Headteachers that were sampled for the study on gender were presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Sample size for questionnaire administration**

	Population			Sample Size		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Headteachers	41	12	<b>53</b>	41	12	<b>53(Census)</b>
				7	3	<b>10(IG)</b>

**Source: EMIS data (2019), Foso Municipal Education Directorate**



Table 4: shows that majority of the respondents 41 (77.4%) were males as against 12 (22.6%) minority females. The differences in number of males over females would not affect the results of the study since they both have common characteristics. Besides, their mean scores were used hence the size of the sample does not matter whether larger or small.

Data on the ages of the respondents are presented in Table 5

**Table 5: Respondents age group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
30-40	16	30.2
41-50	14	26.4
51-60	23	43.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

The highest age group in the sample was between 51-60 representing 43.4% of the all respondents. The youngest age group of the respondents 30-40, represented 30.2% while fourteen (14) respondents representing 26.4% fell within the ages of 41-50. It is evident from the above that majority of the headteachers are above 40 years and may have varied needs, expectations in life and may have the desired work experience.

Data on rank status or position of headship covered the work of the headteachers in schools as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Position or Rank**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Senior Supt.	4	7.5
Principal Supt.	12	22.6
Assistant Director II	24	45.3
Assistant Director I	10	18.9
Deputy Director	3	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

Majority of the respondents were in the Assistant Director II position making up of frequency of 24 (45.3%) while the Deputy Director position had the lowest frequency with only 3 (5.7%). The statistics shows that some headteachers, in the rank of Senior Superintendent, 4(7.5%) in the district did not have the minimum professional qualifications to be heads in the basic schools. The national minimum qualification to head a basic school is the rank of Principal Superintendent with degree.

Table 7 seeks to find the headship experience of the respondents with regard to the number of years in position.

**Table 7: Number of years in position**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Years in headship position	53	27	1	28	8.92

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

An examination of the Table 7 reveals that the lowest number of years served in the position as headteacher was 1 year and the highest at 28 years with the mean of 8.92.

From the presentation of Table 7, it is observed that the respondents have wide variation of Headship experience. This would also account in the differential and intensity of challenges faced and stress levels accumulated over the years.

The study sought to find out from the respondents the headteachers who teach alongside their headship duties as indicated in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Teaching alongside headship position**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	22	41.5
No	31	58.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

It was observed that there was only a slight difference in the number of respondents who taught alongside being school heads compared to the ones that were detached or did not teach at all. For those who were teaching, the average contact hours of teaching was 21.2 hours per week.

**Table 9: Class size taught**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Largest class size	53	80	5	80	20.15

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

The maximum class size of the respondents who were teaching was 80 students with an overall mean of 20.15.

**Table 10: Other related work**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	27	50.9
No	26	49.1
Total	53	100.0

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

A slightly higher proportion of the respondents have other work-related duties aside their respective headship duties. This constituted 50.9%.

#### 4.2 Headteachers Workload

The study sought to determine the nature of workload experienced by headteachers. Respondents were given a list of statements on some work activities that could create some level of stress. The statements were categorized under Very True (VT=4); True (T=3); Untrue (UT=2); Very Untrue (VUT=1). The collated responses are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11: Nature of workload of the headteachers**

Statement on Workload	VT	T	UT	VUT	Total
Admission of students	11(20.8%)	20(37.7%)	18(34.0%)	4(7.5%)	53(100%)
Teachers and students' disciplinary issues	13(24.5%)	29(54.7%)	9(17.0%)	2(3.8%)	53(100%)
Administrative responsibilities	21(39.6%)	23(43.4%)	9(17.0%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Dealing with school finances	9(17.0%)	28(52.8%)	16(30.2%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Actual teaching load	5(9.4%)	21(39.6%)	20(37.7%)	7(13.2%)	53(99.9%)
Coming to school early in the morning	16(30.2%)	19(35.8%)	11(20.8%)	7(13.2%)	53(100%)
Monitoring setting of examination questions	18(34.0%)	28(52.8%)	7(13.2%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Vetting teachers' lessons notes	29(54.7%)	14(26.4%)	10(18.9%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Supervising classroom teaching	20(37.7%)	18(34.0%)	14(26.4%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
Unplanned visit/invite to Education office	13(24.5%)	25(47.2%)	11(20.8%)	4(7.5%)	53(100%)
Attending in-service training	3(5.7%)	29(54.7%)	14(26.4%)	7(13.2%)	53(100%)

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

Table 11 reveals that a greater number of the respondents (31: 58.5%), were of the view that admission of students was deemed either a Very True or True workload. Also, teachers and students' disciplinary issues were perceived as constituting True

workload 42 (79.2%). Again, the respondents rated administrative responsibilities as either Very True or True workload (44: 83 %).

Dealing with school finances which is highly inadequate, 37(69.8%) respondents considered as very true or true workload.

It is evident from Table 11 that another significant workload captured in the study as reported by the respondents was monitoring and setting of examination questions. This had a total of 46 respondents (86.8%) responding to it as either True or Very True workload.

Majority of the respondents, 43 (81.1%), perceived the vetting of teachers' lessons notes as either True or Very True workload. A higher number and percentage 38(71.7%) of the respondents rated the supervision of classroom teaching either very true or true workload against 15(28.3%).

### **Interview**

As regards workload, an interview item was posed to find out from the respondents about how busy the life of a headteacher was towards pupils? The following administrative workloads were stated by the respondents.

- i. Pupils overall academic attainment rest on heads so long as we have signed performance contract.
- ii. The quality of pupils learning behaviour;
- iii. Progress of pupils with Special educational needs and disabilities.
- iv. Checking pupils' behaviour.
- v. Helping pupils to adopt healthy lifestyle
- vi. Checking pupils' attendance
- vii. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; all on the headteacher.

In the interview, the respondents were asked to state the administrative demands towards teachers that they deemed as their sources of stress.

The responses listed below were what were significantly reported as administrative responsibilities towards teachers that they see it as critical workload:

- i. Checking the quality of teaching of teachers
- ii. Vetting of their lesson notes and scheme of work
- iii. Checking of teacher attendance
- iv. Checking of the use of assessment to support learning
- v. Appraising teachers for promotion and confirmation or doing it at the end of every year as a demand.
- vi. Ensure that curriculum meets pupils' needs
- vii. Heads ensure welfare, care, guidance and financial supports are available
- viii. Work matters; worries about teaching and performance of some recalcitrant teachers
- ix. Ensure effective leadership and management
- x. Engage governing body (SMC, PTA and Community) in supporting the school
- xi. Heads also work hard to promote school – community cohesion

***One headteacher*** said,

“As a headteacher, my responsibilities are unending; time spent on commuting to and from district education office, unscheduled or short notice meetings and data collection at the district or regional levels”.

It was noted from the interview that, additional tasks that overwhelmed headteachers included those related to meetings, outstations, short-notice tasks, and events, which could cause planned activities in schools to be cancelled. Meetings are usually held during office hours, which clash with class or schools programmes. This situation did

make headteachers unhappy and caused them to lose motivation. Throwing more light on the daunting levels of their workload, two out of the ten (10) headteachers interviewed had the following to say:

*‘Having large student population or enrolment and troublesome students and with some children with special needs, I have ended up becoming the school counsellor and resource person. I have to do multi-tasking to ensure students’ academic, personal and social developments are not compromised. My teachers’ problems and welfare issues are referred to me and if you are a dutiful school head you have to take everything on board’.* **Headteacher**

*‘Sometimes office or directorate calls on us heads to do an impromptu activity like submission of data, or uninformed visits or attend an unplanned meeting. Taking into account the remoteness of some of our schools and lack of easy mobility, these were a big challenge’.* **Headteacher**

It should be noted that high levels workload affect headteachers stress level.

Again, some comments made by some of the headteachers confirm the views of Terry et al, 1995; Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987 that:

*“High levels of stress among academic staffs have been found to undermine the quality, performance and creativity of employees’ work, in addition to employees’ health, well- being, and morale”.* pp 92

#### **4.3 Perceived Stressors**

In establishing perceived stress among headteachers, the study sought to find out activities which were “perceived stressors” as far as workload that impact on the stress level of headteachers was concerned. Perceived Stressors subscale of the questionnaire on a 5- Point Likert Scale ranging from 5= (ES) Extremely Stressful; 4= (VS) Very Stressful; 3= (S) Stressful; 2= (NS) Not Stressful, to 1= (NAAS) Not At All Stressful was used to assess this.

**Table 12: Estimated perceived stressors among the headteachers**

<b>Statement on Perceived Stressors</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>VS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>NAAS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Time constraints	4(7.5%)	16(30.2%)	27(50.9%)	6(11.3%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Teachers and students' disciplinary issues	3(5.7%)	27(50.9%)	15(28.3%)	8(15.1%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Unclear work appraisal system	18(34.0%)	18(34.0%)	11(20.8%)	5(9.4%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
Administrative responsibilities	10(18.9%)	25(47.2%)	11(20.8%)	6(11.3%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
Dealing with school finances	13(24.5%)	18(34.0%)	13(24.5%)	9(17.0%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Inadequate instructional facilities	23(43.4%)	21(39.6%)	8(15.1%)	1(1.9%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Inadequate annual leave	5(9.4%)	13(24.5%)	18(34.0%)	13(24.5%)	4(7.5%)	53(100%)
Criteria used for promotion	20(37.7%)	16(30.2%)	12(22.6%)	3(5.7%)	2(3.8%)	53(100%)
State of headteachers' office	15(28.3%)	19(35.8%)	9(17.0%)	8(15.1%)	2(3.8%)	53(100%)
Delays in payment of remuneration/salary	5(9.4%)	17(32.1%)	19(35.8%)	6(11.3%)	6(11.3%)	53(100%)
General working conditions	12(22.6%)	14(26.4%)	19(35.8%)	8(15.1%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
Education Office's attitude toward teachers' concerns/needs	1(1.9%)	7(13.2%)	28(52.8%)	14(26.4%)	3(5.7%)	53(100%)
Family and work-life balance	10(18.9%)	15(28.3%)	23(43.4%)	4(7.5%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
Relationship with parents and school community	4(7.5%)	16(30.2%)	14(26.4%)	16(30.2%)	3(5.7%)	53(100%)
Issues faced because of your gender	1(1.9%)	8(15.1%)	8(15.1%)	21(39.6%)	15(28.3%)	53(100%)

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

The respondents perceived time constraints in the discharge of their duties as stressful. That is, either extremely stressful, very stressful or stressful. Majority of the respondents 47 (88.6%) perceived it as stressful. A critical look at Table 12 reveals that a greater number of the respondents (45: 84.9%) indicated that dealing with teachers and students' disciplinary issues was stressful. In like manner, administrative responsibilities carried out by the respondents were deemed stressful. This perception was supported by 46 (86.8%) of the respondents. It is worthy of note that administrative responsibility was similarly seen as a major workload for the respondents (See Table 11).



Smith (2007) indicated that work-related stress is usually greatly linked to demands concerning meetings, changing targets and deadlines; longer working hours; workloads that kept on increasing; and regular changes in timetables or courses. To him, these dislocations create anxiety and stress. Headteachers do face these challenges. Table 12 presents that majority of the respondents (44: 83%) reported that their handling of their schools' finances made them stressful. Dealing with finances is a delicate task especially when it is cash base. Non-banking rural settings can overwhelm schools heads.

It is evidently clear from Table 12 that a greater number of the respondents (47: 88.7%) were of the view that unclear work appraisal systems stimulate stress. This may be due to the uncertainties as regards performance targets and promotions. It is generally upheld that employees are normally satisfied with their tasks if they are related to their job descriptions. In this wise, they are aware of their performance targets. However, if tasks are given outside of the ranges of their job descriptions, they tend to feel stressed due to being very busy and having too little time to finish all of their tasks (Amina & Raymond, 2014). This further confirms that as long as headteachers do their work according to their job descriptions, they may be able to manage their stress.

It is also abundantly clear from Table 12 that majority of the respondents (45:84%) were conclusive with the affirmation that unfavourable general working conditions create stress in the performance of their duties. This may also relate to lack of adequate resources to discharge their duties.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984), further defined stress as “a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his

or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (p. 19). This may be triggered by imbalance between demand and response capacity under circumstances in which failure to meet the demand has significant consequences. This is what headteachers may face.

### **Interview on perceived stress**

During the Interview, some issues became more apparent.

A headteacher explained stress as:

*A feeling of tension, anxiety and pressure. It is a personal response to situations that create pressure in our lives. It is a normal physical response, and it comes from within ourselves rather than from an outside source. Your muscles become tense and you breathe faster or your heart beats faster. The flight syndrome occurs during times of intense, alarming stress. It is the body’s response to fight.*

**Headteacher #1**

When asked if there is any relationship between their jobs as headteachers and stress manifestation, two heads had these to say:

**Headteacher (#2):**

*“Interplay of several factors at the workplace contributes to job stress among headteachers. Key among these factors are the need for constant monitoring and supervision of teachers and pupils, dealing with both physical and emotional exhausting situations, low levels of cooperation from teachers, pupils and their relatives and the lack of adequate autonomy for decision making”*

**Headteacher (#3):**

*“Compared to our counterparts in developed countries, Ghanaian headteachers are disadvantaged in the working conditions. This includes low salaries, high workloads with unpaid responsibility allowance, poor school infrastructure, and inadequate resources to perform duties, and fewer opportunities for professional development”.*

When the respondents were asked how their bodies react when they are under lots of stress, the following responses were given by two headteachers:

**Headteacher (#4)**

*“You can become totally confuse; one feels distress; experience sweaty palms and the face feels hot.”*

**Headteacher (#5)**

*“The knees become weak, one can feel nervous; headache, upset stomach, heart pounding, and breathing speed up”.*

School heads recognized that stress is something that causes tension and anxiety. If there is too much stress, it can have a negative effect on the body and their performance as headteachers is impaired. However, the respondents indicated that stress can have a positive effect on a person. These are some few points they articulated;

- i. It can help a person deal with a potentially dangerous situation.
- ii. One becomes awake and alert, takes action swiftly, feels as if everything happened in slow motion, make life- saving decisions in a split second, quickly assess the situation around you.
- iii. Often, in emergency situations, people not only act more quickly, but also have more strength than normal. To some people stress help their bodies deal with danger.

While stress situations can be daunting, a study by Kaplan and Sadock (2000) reveal that little level of stress is required to pep up performance.

Their results indicated that work stress was associated with several aspects of the work environment such as overload, clarity of responsibilities and physical working conditions.

Akbar and Akhter (2011) investigated the factors that significantly contribute to stress among educators in both public and private business schools of Punjab in Pakistan. It was

observed in the study that workload, student-related issues and role conflicts were significant factors that contribute to stress in members. It is possible that inadequate organizational resources and organizational structure also contribute significantly to stress.

#### **4.4 Effects of Stress Experienced by Headteachers**

The study sought to determine the effects of stress experienced by the headteachers on their job performance. When asked if stress affected their job performance as headteachers, majority 44 (83%) said yes while few 9(17%) said no. Those who said yes listed the following as effects of stress on their performance:

- Difficult in decision making,
- Fatigue,
- Loss of appetite,
- Irritability, headache,
- Indiscipline,
- low esteem,
- loneliness,
- sickness,
- mood swings,
- forgetfulness,
- poor service delivery
- Constant absenteeism due to sickness and hospitalization hence inefficiency on performance.
- Aggressive behaviour towards staff and students.
- Lack of concentration on the most crucial duties.



- Inability to meet deadlines.
- Harshness to staff leading to rebellion or negative attitude.

On individual characteristics, headteachers were asked to rate the stress effects of age, gender, administrative experience and their denomination on their performance as headteachers. Stress effect sub-scale of questionnaire on 4- Point Likert scale ranging from Not at All; Somewhat; Moderately; Very Much was used to assess this.

**Table 13: Effects of demographic factors to Headteachers' stress**

<b>Demographic Factors</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Moderately</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Total</b>
Age	20(37.7%)	9(17%)	15(28.3%)	9(17%)	53(100%)
Gender	38(31.7%)	9(17%)	6(11.3%)	00	53(100%)
Administrative Experience	15(28.3%)	12(22.6%)	6(11.3%)	20(37.7%)	53(100%)
Denomination	29(54.7%)	9(17%)	9(17%)	6(11.3%)	53(100%)

**Source: Field Data (2020)**

On age, 20 (37.7%) stated age did not affect their performance, 15 (28.3%) moderately affected them, 9(17%) somewhat affected them, and 9 (17%) affected them very much.

On gender, 38 (31.7%) stated it did not affect their performance, 9 (17%) somewhat affected them and 6 (11.3%) moderately affected them.

The big discrepancy was also identified on religious denominations where 29 (54.7%) stated as not affecting them, 9(17%) somehow and another 3 (17%) moderately affected them and 6(11.3%) were affected very much.

Administrative experience had a different output. Twenty (20: 37.7%) accepted as very much stressful, 15(28.3%) not at all stressful, 12 (22.6%) somewhat stressful and 6 (11.3%) as moderately stressful.

The findings generally revealed that the headteachers stress affects their job performance, other teachers' performance and the school performance in general. Out of 53 headteachers respondents, 44 (83%) said stress affected their performance as headteachers, while 9 (17%) said it did not.

According to Willis (2005), stress is linked to a wide range of illnesses that affect the physical, behavioural and emotional states of an individual. In line with this, headteachers listed several physical, behavioural and emotional ways in which stress affected their performance which included: difficult in decision making, fatigue, loss of appetite, irritability, headache, indiscipline, low esteem, loneliness, sickness, mood swings, forgetfulness, poor judgement and poor service delivery.

On their bio data, headteachers stated age, gender, and religious denominations did not affect their stress levels. However, administrative experience was ranked as very much stressful though with a lower percentage. Out of 53 respondents: twenty 20(37.7%) respondents accepted as very much stressful, fifteen 15 (28.3%) not at all stressful, twelve 12(22.6%) somewhat stressful and six 6(11.3%) as moderately stressful. This is a reflection of Isidor, (2002) work which shows that the variance of stress effect is based on individual, biological, psychological and social systems.

#### **4.5 Coping Strategies**

The study also sought to elicit the coping strategies adopted by the respondents to mitigate stress. A list of statements each of which may or may not be true about how they try to reduce, cope with or manage stress were provided for the respondents to

subscribe to. The responses were: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Neutral (N); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD). The responses to the statements are presented in Table 14

**Table 14: Coping strategies of respondents**

Statement on Coping Strategies	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
I practice relaxation techniques.	8(15.1%)	28(52.8%)	10(18.9%)	5(9.4%)	2(3.8%)	53(100%)
I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.	5(9.4%)	27(50.9%)	15(28.3%)	5(9.4%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
I consult a counsellor for professional help.	8(15.1%)	14(26.4%)	10(18.9%)	13(24.5)	8(15.1%)	53(100%)
I think more on the positives/benefits of what my work has to offer me.	19(35.8%)	21(39.6%)	5(9.4%)	4(7.5%)	4(7.5%)	53(100%)
I participate in religious activities.	23(43.4%)	19(35.8)	7(13.2%)	3(5.7%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
I watch movies/TV to take my mind off work pressure.	3(5.7%)	36(67.9%)	10(18.9%)	3(5.7%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
I try to get adequate sleep.	15(28.3%)	29(54.7%)	8(15.1%)	1(1.9%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
I engage in a hobby or other personal activities.	4(7.5%)	38(71.7%)	9(17.0%)	2(3.8%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
I make time to exercise regularly.	5(9.4%)	21(39.6%)	17(32.1%)	8(15.1%)	2(3.8%)	53(100%)
I eat lots of my favorite food.	4(7.5%)	26(49.1%)	11(20.8%)	9(17.0%)	3(5.7%)	53(100%)
I take direct actions to get around the stressful situation.	2(3.8%)	28(52.8%)	15(28.3%)	7(13.2%)	1(1.9%)	53(100%)
I discuss how I feel about the pressure of work with colleagues.	6(11.3%)	23(43.4%)	13(24.5%)	11(20.8%)	0(0%)	53(100%)
I accept the fact that my line of work is stressful and nothing can be done about it.	7(13.2%)	11(20.8%)	6(11.3%)	23(43.4%)	6(11.3%)	53(100%)
I drink alcohol/stress reducing drugs to relax.	1(1.9%)	2(3.8%)	1(1.9%)	13(24.5%)	36(67.9%)	53(100%)
I manage my time effectively to reduce stress.	12(22.6%)	32(60.4%)	8(15.1%)	1(1.9%)		53(100%)
I refuse to accept that my work puts a lot of pressure on me.	1(1.9%)	20(37.7%)	12(22.6%)	13(24.5%)	7(13.2%)	53(100%)
I force myself to contain the pressure in the teaching work.	9(17.0%)	25(47.2%)	8(15.1%)	7(13.2%)	4(7.5%)	53(100%)

**Source: Fieldwork Data (2020)**

When asked if they practice relaxation techniques as stress coping strategies, 10 (18.9%) chose neutral, 7 (13.2%) disagreed but 36 (67.9%) headteachers responded either strongly agreed or agreed as shown in Table 14.

Thirty-two (32:60.4%) agreed (strongly agree or agree) that they get emotional support from friends and relatives in coping with stress, 15 (28.3%) chose neutral while 6 (11.3%) disagreed.

Out of 53 headteachers, 40 (75.5%) agreed (either agreed or strongly agree) that they think more on the positives and benefits of what the work offer them, while 5 (9.4%) answered neutral and 8 (15.1%) disagreed (either strongly disagree or disagree)

Table 14 reveals that majority of the respondents 42 representing 79.2% agreed (either strongly agree or agree) that participating in religious activities could help them cope with stress as compared to only 4 respondents constituting 7.6% who stated that religious activities could not be beneficial to them in terms of reducing the stress levels. Seven (7) respondents (13.2%) were not sure whether religious activities could improve their stress levels or not.

An examination of Table 14 shows that most of the respondents (39) being 73.6% were of the view that watching movies/TV could assist them reduce stress. On the contrary, a fewer number of the respondents (4: 7.5%) observed that watching movies/TV did very little to reduce their stress. Ten respondents (10) representing 18.9% could not take a decision as to whether watching movies/TV could help in stress reduction or not.

It is clear from Table 14 that a greater number of the respondents (44) representing 83% stated that getting adequate sleep could be helpful to them in mitigating stress. On the other hand, fewer respondents (1: 1.9%) said adequate sleep could not help them improve their stress levels. Also, eight respondents with the percentage of



15.1% could not indicate their opinion as to whether adequate sleep was a stress reliever or not.

Table, 14 reveals that a greater number of the respondents (44) constituting 83% were of the opinion that managing their time effectively tended to reduce stress as compared to one respondent (1.9%) who opined that time management insignificantly reduced stress. Only 8 respondents (15.1%) could not decide whether time management was a useful tool to mitigate stress.

It is instructive to note from Table 14 that only 22 respondents constituting 41.5% accepted that consulting a counsellor for professional help could assist them in the mitigation of stress as against 31 respondents constituting 58.5%, who either disagreed or were uncertain about the use of professional counsellors.

On the use of alcohol or stress reducing drugs as a stress coping strategy, most of respondents (49) representing 92.4% disagreed to that alcohol or stress reducing drugs is useful. Rather the use of hobby or other personal activities was subscribed by 42 (79.2%) of the respondents as a useful coping strategy.

## **Interview**

Exploring coping strategies to mitigate stress, one female headteacher said:

*“When I notice any signs of stress, I play soft and soothing music and that make me feel more relaxed. The music diverts negative thoughts and I feel the tension in me evaporates”.* **Headteacher**

Two male headteachers also stated:

*“The use of exercise helps me to relieve tension and anxiety. Exercise makes me feel better; it helps me relieve tension and anxiety. It is a holistic approach for my wellbeing when I feel the weight of stress”.* **Headteacher (#1)**

*“Sometimes, stress becomes so overwhelming in me that I feel the need to turn to harmful substances to relieve the tension. Those substances*

*might include illegal drugs or alcohol. Of course, drugs and alcohol only make a problem worse. Those substances harm the body and affect a person's mental wellbeing.”* **Headteacher (#2)**

Other school heads indicated that they sometimes could talk to their fellow headteachers, circuit supervisors or friends about the stress they are going through or feeling. Others set aside time to do something enjoyable and relaxing each day. When exploring how the district directorate helps headteachers to cope with stress, these were a summary of some of the responses from some headteachers;

- District Teacher Support Team (DTST): The District through this structure offers support to teachers and headteachers of schools that have challenges in teaching of certain subjects and topics.
- Monitoring and Supervision exercises undertaken by district officers is great relief to us as heads. It helps us to control the difficult teachers under us. Again, this served as reinforcement as to what to tell our teachers and our administration as a whole.
- The directorate supports all heads to organize the activities such as School Base SPAM, Sports and Culture and PTAs and SMCs meetings. Again, the directorate sometimes organizes training for us heads and our assistants; Example is recent training on “How to Appraise a Staff” using the Appraisal Form.

According to Edwards (2011), an optimal level of stress to a large extent is a source of positive motivation to succeed. However, it must be noted that if the stress becomes over bearing, routine activities may not run smoothly and thus affect the organization. If stress is not managed well, it may cause organizational damage.

Amina and Raymond (2014) opined that if stress is not managed appropriately, it can lead to collateral damage.

#### 4.6 Research Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** It is hypothesised that:

*There is no statistically significant relationship between job workload and perceived stress among headteachers*

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Statistically, significant relationship do not exist between job workload and perceived stress among headteachers

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Statistically, significant relationships do exist between job workload and perceived stress among headteachers.

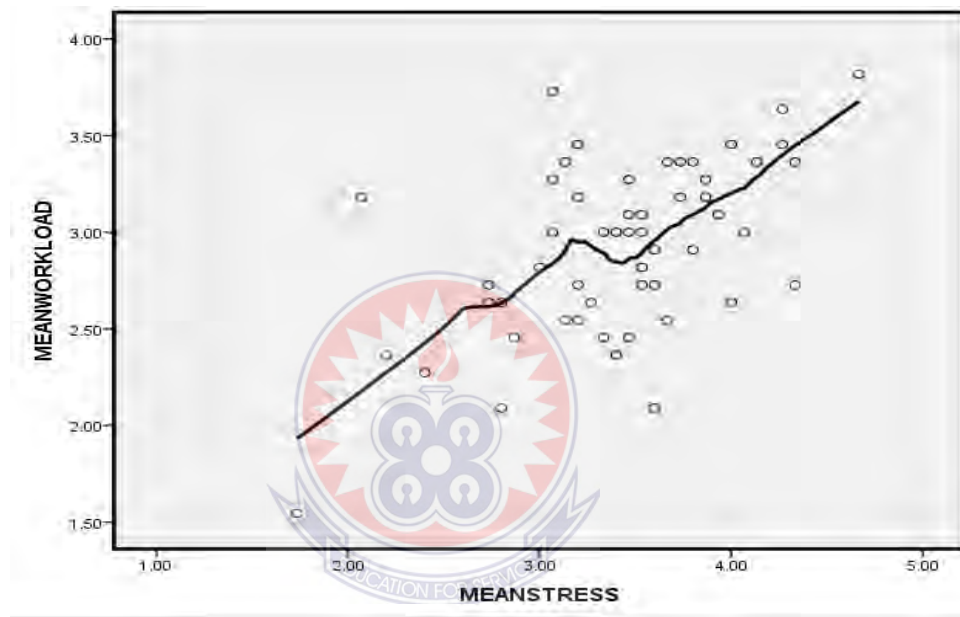
In analyzing the hypothesis, the Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient (Spearman's correlation, for short), a nonparametric measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least an ordinal scale was applied. This was used to find the correlation between workload and stress using the mean of the ordinal variables. This is presented in Table 15.

**Table: 15: Group statistics and spearman rank-order correlation between academic job workload and perceived stress among headteachers**

			MEANWORK LOAD	MEANSTRESS
Spearman's rho	MEANWORKLOAD	Ta	1.000	.475**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	53	53
	MEANSTRESS	Correlation Coefficient	.475**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	53	53

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In testing hypothesis 1, the  $H_0$  (null hypothesis) assumes that there is no statistically significant relationship between academic job workload and perceived stress among headteachers. The results of the hypothesis tested indicated that there is a moderate positive relationship between the perceived level of stress and the workload of 0.475. However, the relationship was statistically significant at a margin of error, or an alpha level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.01.



**Figure 4.1: Spearman rank-order correlation between job workload and perceived stress among headteachers**

The scatterplot shows a positive relationship, so as workload of an individual increases, the stress will increase likewise.

In a study by Kahn and Long (1988), they demonstrated a positive linear relation between workload and stress. Workload and stress have shown similar relationship as time pressure, educational change, management styles, restructuring, and inadequate resources are some of the stressors identified among educational heads (Alabi et al., 2012). Again, a number of studies have found a positive relationship between work overload and stress (Slišković and Maslić, Seršić 2011; Smith 2007).

**Hypothesis 2:** It is hypothesised that: *There is no statistically significant difference in perceived stress levels among male and female headteachers.*

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Statistically, significant relationship difference does not exist between perceived stress levels among male and female headteachers

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Statistically, significant relationship difference does exist between perceived stress levels among male and female headteachers

The Mann-Whitney U test was applied in testing this hypothesis. The Mann-Whitney test is used to compare differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed. The Mann Whitney U test is a non-parametric test that is useful for determining if the means of two groups are different from each other.

**Table 16: Group statistics and independent samples Mann Whitney U test of stress levels among male and female headteachers**

		Ranks		
	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
MEANSTRESS	Male	41	26.37	1081.00
	Female	12	29.17	350.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>		

The mean stress level for males was 26.37 which were lower than the mean stress level of females which was 29.17.

	Test Statistics
	<b>MEANSTRESS</b>
Mann-Whitney U	220.000
Wilcoxon W	1081.000
Z	-.553
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.580
a. Grouping Variable: Gender	

The mean stress level for males was 26.37 which was lower than the mean stress level of females which was 29.17. From this data, since  $p=0.580$  which is greater than the significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. We can conclude that the data does not provide statistically significant evidence of a difference between perceived stress between men and women.

It must be noted that with regard to gender, the study of Kumari (2016) reveals that, the occupational stress level of female teachers is higher compared to their male counterparts. Again, whilst Liu and Zhu (2009) observed that the stress prevalence was lower among female staff compared to male staff. On the contrary, Devi and Saikia (2015) found no significant differences in occupational stress between male and female staffs.

Other studies show that stress and gender are related (Safaria, Othman & Wahab, 2012). While some studies found significant relationship between stress and gender, others however failed to establish any relationship between them. For instance, studies by Blix *et al.* (2004), Boyd and Wylie (1994) found that female teachers experienced more stress on the job than their male counterparts. In contrast, Aftab and Khatoon (2012) found that male teachers reported more stress than their female counterparts.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of workload and perceived job stress among basic school headteachers. It also examined coping strategies (personality and social support) employed by headteachers to manage the negative effects of stress they might experience.

The study sought to:

1. Determine the nature of the headteachers' workload in the Assin Foso Municipality.
2. Determine the level of perceived stress among the headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality.
3. Determine the effects of stress experienced by the headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality on their job performance.
4. Explore the relationship between perceived workload and stress levels among headteachers.
5. Find out the coping strategies adopted by headteachers to manage and cope with perceived stress.

To guide the thrust of the study, the following research questions and hypotheses were formulated.

1. What is the nature of the headteachers' workload in the Assin Foso Municipality?

2. What is the level of perceived stress among the headteachers in Assin Foso Municipality?
3. What are the effects of stress experienced by headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality on their academic job performance?
4. What are the strategies used by the headteachers to cope with the stress they experience?

### **Hypotheses**

**$H_0$** : There is no statistically significant relationship between job workload and perceived level of stress among headteachers.

**$H_1$** : There is a significant relationship between job workload and perceived level of stress among headteachers.

**$H_{01}$** : There is no statistically significant difference in perceived stress levels among male and female headteachers.

**$H_2$** : There is a significant difference in perceived stress levels among male and female headteachers.

The population for the study consisted of all basic school headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality in the Central Region, Ghana. The headteachers were selected because they were at the helm of affairs in the various schools and would be able to give enough information and better picture on the workload and job stress as well as the coping strategies. This study intended to ascertain the workloads and stress level of basic school headteachers in the area, stress effects and the strategies they used to cope with stress. All basic school headteachers working in public basic schools of Assin Foso Municipality constituted the population for the study. According to the Annual School Census Statistical Report of schools conducted by the Foso Municipal Education Directorate, EMIS Department (EMIS, 2019), there were a total of fifty-



three (53) public basic schools in the Municipality. The total headteacher population working in these schools was 53 comprising 41(77.4%) male, and 12(22.6%) female. Data was collected from all headteachers in the Assin Foso Municipality because they were small in number. This means that the study used 100 percent sampling.

Assin Foso Municipality was selected as the study area because majority of schools are in deprived communities and never had the full complement of trained teachers and qualified headteachers. Most headteachers doubled as classroom teachers. As a result, headteachers often step in to perform tasks outside their job descriptions. The researcher was an officer at the Municipal Education Office as a Human Resource Manager and therefore his personal observation and the complaints made by headteachers on things bothering their work, workload, and the stress they go through, also influenced the choice of the study area. Finally, the researcher was also once a headteacher in the same Municipality and therefore familiar with the challenges and the stressful nature of being a headteacher in the area.

### **Key findings:**

Some key findings emerged from the study: On the part of the Headteachers Workload, the study sought to determine the nature and level of workload experienced by headteachers. It was revealed that a greater number of the respondents (42: 58.5%) were of the view that admission of students was deemed either a Very-True or True workload. Also, teachers and students' disciplinary issues were perceived as constituting True workload. Again, the respondents rated administrative responsibilities as either Very-True or True workload.

It was evident that another significant workload was monitoring and setting of examination questions. This had a total of 86.8% respondents deemed it as either True

or Very-True workload. Majority of the respondents perceived the vetting of teachers' lessons notes as either true or very true workload.

With regard to perceived stressors, the respondents perceived time constraints in the discharge of their duties as stressful. That is, either extremely stressful, very stressful or stressful. Majority of the respondents perceived it as stressful.

It was revealed that a greater number of the respondents indicated that dealing with teachers and students' disciplinary issues was stressful. In like manner, administrative responsibilities carried out by the respondents were deemed stressful. This perception was supported by 86.9% of the respondents. It is worthy of note that administrative responsibility was similarly seen as a major workload for the headteachers.

The study portrayed that majority of the respondents reported that their handling of their schools' finances made them stressful. It is evidently clear also that a greater number of the respondents were of the view that unclear work, appraisal systems stimulates stress. It is also abundantly clear that majority of the respondents affirmed that unfavourable general working conditions creates stress in the performance of their duties. On the contrary, gender related issues were perceived by only 17 (32.1%) as a stress inducer.

The study sought to determine the effects of stress experienced by the headteachers on their job performance. When asked if stress affected their job performance as headteachers, majority 44 (83%) said yes while few 9(17%) said no. Those who said yes listed number effects of stress on their performance. The findings generally revealed that the headteachers stress affects their job performance, other teachers' performance and the school performance in general. Out of 53 headteachers

respondents, 44 (83%) said stress affected their performance as headteachers, while 9 (17%) said it did not.

Regarding coping strategies, it became evident that majority of the respondents agreed (either strongly agree or agree) that participating in religious activities could help them cope with stress. It was also revealed that most of the respondents were of the view that watching movies/TV could assist them reduce stress. Again, it is clear from results that a greater number of the respondents representing 83% stated that getting adequate sleep could be helpful to them in mitigating stress. It was observed from the results that a greater number of the respondents were of the opinion that managing their time effectively tended to reduce stress.

It is important to note that only 22 respondents constituting 41.5% accepted that consulting a counsellor for professional help could assist them in the mitigation of stress as against 31 respondents constituting 58.5%, who either disagreed or were uncertain about the use of professional counsellors. On the use of alcohol or stress reducing drugs as a stress coping strategy, most of the respondents (49) representing 92.4% disagreed that alcohol or stress reducing drugs is useful. Rather the use of hobby or other personal activities were subscribed by 42 (79.2%) of the respondents as a useful coping strategy.

**Hypothesis 1** reported that there is a moderate positive relationship between the perceived level of stress and the workload of 0.475. However, the relationship will be statistically significant at a margin of error, or an alpha level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.01. The scatterplot showed a positive relationship, so as workload of an individual increases, the stress increases likewise.

Again, **hypothesis 2** revealed that the mean stress level for males were 26.37 which was lower than the mean stress level of females which was 29.17. From this data, since  $p=0.580$  which is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the researcher fail to reject the null hypothesis and he can conclude that the data does not provide statistically significant evidence of a difference between perceived stress between men and women.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Some key findings emerged from the study as to the workload, stress, and coping strategies of the headteachers which conclusions can be drawn.

From the study, it was observed that the most common cause of stress to headteachers is unbearable work overload. The basic school headteachers became overwhelmed by a large number of tasks and were at a loss as to where to start. When one is faced with a daunting task, there is the tendency to feel more stressed. There are many reasons why work can generate stress including uncondusive work environment.

Again, it must be noted that stress within the workplace can be a mental health issue which can lead to anxiety or depression and this may result in low work performance, absenteeism and low self-esteem. When headteachers are unable to focus on school management, it may have detrimental effect on teacher and student performance. This shows that it is important for headteachers not to be stressed by having workloads that are too heavy and that are not related to teaching and learning activities or administrative issues.

It was observed that headteachers workload covers multi factors besides management duties. This includes working with committees, community service, administrative

hours, student and teacher's evaluation and implementing government education policies. It needs to be noted that headteachers may have a total workload of between 40 to 45 hours per week. In this wise, it can be argued that headteachers may not have the freedom to choose their own method of work, their level of responsibility, and the amount of variety in their job.

There is a general view that excessive workload with its attendant stress may lead to headteacher burnout. This may have negative impact on the headteachers' physical, emotional and psychological well-being and impair the quality of school management. It is conclusive to say that job stress can be an impediment to the headteacher's performance and zeal.

Research has shown that, work-related stress is increasingly becoming a source of concern among organizations and employees all over (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2005). It is worthy of note that stress is not only detrimental to the individual's immediate emotional stability and behaviour, but also for his or her long-term psychological wellbeing. Excessive stress at work could result in increased human errors and accidents, as well as negatively affecting employees' productivity and their overall effectiveness on the job (Armstrong, 2006).

It emerged from the study that workload, student-related issues and administrative-related issues contribute significantly to the level of stress experienced by headteachers. The results also show that headteachers do not differ significantly with respect to gender and that their work stress was associated with several aspects of the work environment such as overload, clarity of responsibilities and physical working conditions.

The cardinal questions related to stress are: Why should stress need to be managed? What happens if stress becomes unbearable? How does one reduce stress?

We will need to keep in mind that there are significant individual differences as to how one reacts to stress. Individual characteristics such as experience, coping style and stress management strategies, motivation and personality dispositions will determine how one copes with stress. Stress management approaches can be used to help headteachers filter out some of the stress they have been encountering through behaviour modification. Effective coping with daily stressors is important to ensure that employees stay focus in the discharge of their work.

Studying stress and workload among school heads has implications for improving understanding of job-stress and its related effect on the working life of headteachers. We need to appreciate the environmental and personal factors that promote stress and early manifestation of stress. This knowledge therefore helps to map out coping strategies and proactive interventions. Through these appropriate intervention strategies, stress can be managed and consequently enhance employee and organizational wellness.

We must understand that, headteachers may continue to experience significant level of stress from the identified sources if appropriate actions are not taken to address this problem. It has been noted that social support is essential. Social support is the physical and emotional comfort given to an individual by his/her family, co-workers and others in times of need.

In coping with stress, the study found that appropriate intervention strategies must be explored to improve the skills of headteachers in school management. This can be a sure way of combating stress. Since stress could also emanate from students and

teachers' behaviour dynamics and work overload, headteachers should be taught principles of handling group behaviour and time management. This will assist the headteachers in having a more balanced distribution of time for their work. This will be predicated on the assumption that headteachers themselves need to know their personality characteristics so that they will be aware of their own personal dispositions that may reduce or aggravate stress.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

Though all the headteachers in public basic schools in the Foso Municipality participated, sample size was still small. The generalizability of the findings of this study was limited to public basic schools in Assin Foso Municipality that most of them are situated in rural areas. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to include headteachers who work in both public and private schools in urban areas where workplace conditions and staffing strengths are mostly better.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

It is evident that headteachers workload and job stress is a real phenomenon. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made for educational authorities, headteachers and other stakeholders for consideration:

1. It is recommended for the Foso municipal educational directorate to emphasize the implementation of the policy to detach or exempt headteachers from teaching. It was revealed by the study that some head teachers teach alongside their administrative work. When the respondents were asked to state their administrative responsibilities towards the teachers, pupils, the school and the district office as to how busy the life of a headteacher was? It was noted that the headteachers were already overwhelmed by their administrative demands about the daunting level of workload. Upon this basis

it is recommended that headteachers be exempted from teaching alongside their headship position to allow them more time for their administrative work. Headteachers should equally be exempted from other responsibilities that might interfere with their responsibilities as school managers. The organization's success as indicated by this study is also influenced by daily workload. The headteachers' workload needs to be considered in order to achieve a reasonable satisfaction as a mean to enhance employee loyalty and a promising organizational performance.

2. During the interview, one headteacher raised a concern by saying that Ghanaian headteachers are disadvantaged in the working conditions... compared to their counterparts in developed countries. The respondents said this on the basis of low salaries, high workloads with unpaid responsibility allowances, poor school infrastructure and inadequate resources to perform their duties. Headteachers are affected by all these because they are not involved in the policy making process. It is therefore recommended that basic and secondary education departments should collaborate with policy makers to formulate comprehensive strategies for stress reduction management of basic school heads so that they may perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Basic school heads should be taken into consideration while formulating educational policies. They may be provided with basic facilities and for this purpose, special budget should be reserved to improve the working conditions and pay the headteachers' responsibility allowance regularly.

3. It is strongly recommended that GES, all levels, should intensify efforts to provide a more conducive, work friendly environment, as well ensure that all facilities needed by headteachers to carry out their tasks in the most efficient and effective ways are adequately provided for. In this respect, Community leaders, Government, Non-



Governmental Organizations, Parent/ Teacher Associations should collaborate to provide support mechanism for headteachers to combat stress. It is also recommended that an enabling environment be created for schools so that headteachers could proceed on their annual leave as and when due.

4. Furthermore, it is recommended that Guidance and Counselling services departments at the district education office and school levels should be revived. Trainings, seminars and workshops on stress reduction management should be arranged for basic-school-heads. From the study, a headteacher said he has ended up becoming the school counsellor and resource person. Career counsellors should work with school and district management to conduct stress audits that assess the levels of stress in different levels of the GES structure, the particular stressor of concern and ways to enhance employee and institutional wellness. In this respect, career counsellors need to teach the school heads appropriate coping strategies in order to reduce the use of maladaptive coping strategies. It is important to note that, seminars, workshops and in-service trainings could be adopted by the GES to promote the effective and efficient delivery of counselling services to headteachers. This would help headteachers acquire the requisite skills and techniques to keep pace with developments in the profession. Also, this will provide a platform of opportunities for headteachers to share their experiences with colleagues or acquire new knowledge from colleagues on avoidance of stress and stress management strategies. These stress management seminars and programmes should be organized regularly and should be geared towards continually updating headteachers on the most recent preventive measures and coping strategies that they could adopt to reduce work stress.

5. District Level Support Initiatives: District-level leaders should acknowledge that a problem exists; headteachers are stressed and burned out. Headteacher stress affects teachers and student achievement because of headteacher absenteeism due to stress. Interpersonal relationships at workplace serve as a critical factor in the development and maintenance of trust and positive feelings among workers. The relationship between headteachers and District level support staff, especially SISOs, needs to be enhanced since it influences job satisfaction and reduces stress.

In conclusion, it is recommended that with regard to reducing the level of stress among headteachers in Ghana, there is the need to ensure innovative, consistency, comprehensiveness and effective ways of reducing stressful workplace situation to achieve satisfaction and optimal level of performance.

### **5.5 Recommendation for Further Research**

Based on the findings of the study, the following areas have been suggested for further research.

1. The research was carried out in the Assin Foso Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. Findings of the research may therefore not be generalizable for the whole country. For further research, the researcher recommends that the topic be investigated in a wider scope with a wider sample.
2. Alternatively, a comparative and triangulated study of students, teachers and headteachers towards stress triggers in the Central Region could be studied.
3. While this discussion is not intended to be exhaustive, it does bring together the critical literature that speaks about stress, workload and coping strategies among headteachers. Future writers can continue to synthesize research on this

topic, stress and workload, typically on the supporting systems and processes that promote the wellbeing of social workers.



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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Questionnaire for Basic school Headteachers**

#### **Workload, Stress and Coping Strategies among Headteachers**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND  
MANAGEMENT**

I am a MPHIL student of the University of Education, Winneba currently undertaking a research on workload, perceived stress and coping strategies among headteachers of public basic schools in the Assin Foso Municipality in the Central Region. The purpose of this data collection using this questionnaire is to obtain information for my thesis, which is a requirement of the Master of Philosophy Degree (MPHIL) in Educational Administration and Management. I assure you, any information you provide is solely for this research and your confidentiality and anonymity is fully assured. Thank you.

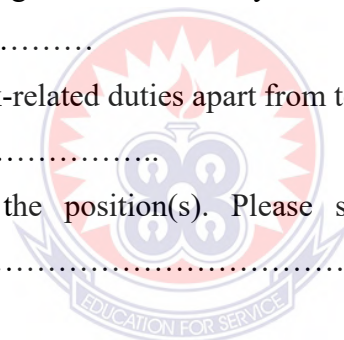
**VERY REV. ISAIAH JOE QUAIGRAIN**

## SECTION A

### Demographic information

**INSTRUCTION: Please tick or indicate where applicable the appropriate responses to the following statements.**

1. Your gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Your Age: 30-40 [ ] 41-50 [ ] 51-60 [ ]
3. Rank Status: Senior Supt 1 [ ] Principal Supt [ ] Assistant Director 11 [ ]  
Assistant Director 1 [ ] Deputy Director [ ]
4. Number of years in headship position. Please indicate.....
5. Do you teach alongside your headship position? Yes [ ] No [ ]
6. If Yes, how many contact hours of teaching do you have every week for the last term? Please indicate.....
7. What is the largest class size you are teaching this term? Please indicate.....
8. Which other work-related duties apart from teaching and headship are you involved? .....
9. Kindly indicate the position(s). Please specify all positions applicable.  
.....



**SECTION B****Estimated Nature of Workload**

**INSTRUCTION: This section has a list of statements on some work activities that may create some level of stress. Please tick as appropriate:**

**Very True (VT=4); True (T=3); Untrue (UT=2); Very Untrue (VUT=1)**

Item	Statement on Workload	VT	T	UT	VUT
10	Admission of students				
11	Teachers and students' disciplinary issues				
12	Administrative responsibilities				
13	Dealing with school finances				
14	Actual teaching load				
15	Coming to school early in the morning				
16	Monitoring setting of examination questions				
17	Marking teachers' lessons notes				
18	Supervising classroom teaching				
19	Unplanned visit/invite to Education office				
20	Attending in-service training				



## SECTION C

## Perceived stressors

**INSTRUCTION:** This section is about what you perceive as stressors in your work. Use the following options to respond to the statements. Please tick as appropriate:

**Extremely Stressful (ES=5); Very Stressful (VS=4); Stressful (S=3); Not Stressful (NS=2) Not At All Stressful (NAAS=1)**

Item	Statement on Perceived Stressors	ES	VS	S	NS	NAAS
21	Time constraints					
22	Teachers and students' disciplinary issues					
23	Unclear work appraisal system					
24	Administrative responsibilities					
25	Dealing with school finances					
26	Inadequate instructional facilities					
27	Inadequate annual leave					
28	Criteria used for promotion					
29	State of headteachers' office					
30	Delays in payment of remuneration/salary					
31	General working conditions					
32	Education Office's attitude toward teachers' concerns/needs					
33	Family and work-life balance					
34	Relationship with parents and school community					
35	Issues faced because of your gender					



## SECTION D

### Effects of Stress Experienced by Headteachers

**Instruction: Tick (√) in the appropriate cell**

36. Does Stress affects your performance as the headteacher? Yes [  ] No [  ]

If yes, answer Q 37.

37. In your opinion, what are the effects of stress to your performance as the Headteacher?

.....

.....

.....

38. To what extent do you find the following factors affecting your administrative job performance as the headteacher?

Demographic Factors	Not at All	Somewhat	Moderately	Very Much	Excessively	
Age						
Gender						
Professional Qualification						
Administrative Experience						
Denomination						

**SECTION E****Coping Strategies**

**INSTRUCTION:** The scale in this section is made up of a list of statements each of which may or may not be true about how you try to reduce, cope with or manage stress. Please tick as appropriate using the following responses:

**Strongly Agree (SA=5); Agree (A=4); Neutral (N=3); Disagree (D=2); Strongly Disagree (SD=1)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Statement on Coping Strategies</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
39	I practice relaxation techniques.					
40	I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.					
41	I consult a counsellor for professional help.					
42	I think more on the positives/benefits of what my work has to offer me.					
43	I participate in religious activities.					
44	I watch movies/TV to take my mind off work pressure.					
45	I try to get adequate sleep.					
46	I engage in a hobby or other personal activities.					
47	I make time to exercise regularly.					
48	I eat lots of my favourite food.					
49	I take direct actions to get around the stressful situation.					
50	I discuss how I feel about the pressure of work with colleagues.					
51	I accept the fact that my line of work is stressful and nothing can be done about it.					
52	I drink alcohol/stress reducing drugs to relax.					
53	I manage my time effectively to reduce stress.					
54	I refuse to accept that my work puts a lot of pressure on me.					
55	I force myself to contain the pressure in the teaching work.					

**THANK YOU**

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Guide for Headteachers

Research objective	
<p><b>To determine the nature of Headteachers' workload</b></p>	<p>1. How busy is your life as headteacher towards students and teachers?</p> <p><i>(Probe for high administrative demands and relationship with stressful life)</i></p> <p>2. Do you think there is any relationship between your job as a headteachers and stress manifestation?</p> <p><i>(Probe for the general picture on the bases of what is going on in teaching profession)</i></p>
<p><b>To determine the stress level of headteachers</b></p>	<p>3. How do you explain stress?</p> <p><i>(Probe for headteachers' understanding of stress)</i></p> <p>4. How do you know that you are stressed?</p> <p><i>(Probe for common specific manifestations or symptoms of stress provided by headteachers)</i></p>
<p><b>To explore the impacts or effect of stress on headteachers</b></p>	<p>5. In what ways can stress affect your wellbeing as a headteacher? <i>(Probe for impacts of stress)</i></p> <p>6. Does stress impact differently on male and female headteachers?</p>
<p><b>Exploring coping strategies to mitigate stress</b></p>	<p>7. What are the coping strategies used by headteachers to mitigate stress?</p> <p>8. How does the District Directorate help headteachers to cope with stress?</p> <p><i>(Probe for strategies used to cope with stress)</i></p>

## APPENDIX C

### Introductory Letter



Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We write to introduce **Isaiah Joe Quaigrain (Rev)** a student on the M.Phil. Educational Administration and Management programme of the Department of Educational Administration and Management.

**Isaiah Joe Quaigrain (Rev)** is currently working on a research project titled:

***“WORKLOADS, PERCEIVED STRESS, AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG HEADTEACHERS IN ASSIN FOSO MUNICIPALITY”.***

Please, give him the necessary assistance and co-operation.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



**Salome O. Essuman (Prof.)**  
**Head of Department**

cc: Dean, School of Graduate Studies