

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES  
AMONG TEACHERS IN MAMPONG SENIOR HIGH  
TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**



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**OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG  
TEACHERS IN MAMPONG SENIOR HIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR  
THE DEAF, GHANA**



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## DECLARATION

### CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

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Duorinaah**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published and unpublished works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree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

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....



### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I, **Dr. Daniel Fobi**, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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## **DEDICATION**

To Comfort B. Papaa, my beloved wife for her support and to my children, Kingsford S, Favour N and Faith Duorinaah.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <b>Content</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>DECLARATION</b>   | iii         |
| <b>DEDICATION</b>  | iv          |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>  | v           |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>   | vi          |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>  | xii         |
| <b>OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS</b>                             | 21          |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>  | xiii        |
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>                                   | 14          |
| 1.1 Background of the study  | 14          |
| 1.2 Problem Statement  | 16          |
| 1.3 Purpose of the Study   | 18          |
| 1.4 Objectives of the study  | 18          |
| 1.5 Research Questions   | 18          |
| 1.6 Significance of the study                                      | 19          |
| 1.7 Delimitation of the study                                      | 19          |
| 1.8 Limitation   | 20          |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>                              | 23          |
| 2.0 Introduction   | 23          |
| 2.1 Theoretical framework (The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model) | 23          |
| 2.3 The Concept of Occupational Stress                             | 24          |
| 2.4 Sources of Occupational Stress                                 | 25          |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 2.4.1 Poor Working Conditions   | 25        |
| 2.4.5 Role Overload   | 26        |
| 2.4.6 Role in the Organization  | 27        |
| 2.4.7 Role Ambiguity  | 27        |
| 2.4.8 Role Conflict   | 29        |
| 2.4.9 Interpersonal Relationships at Workplace  | 30        |
| 2.4.10 Professional Development   | 31        |
| 2.4.11 Physical Environment   | 32        |
| 2.5 Sources of teacher Occupational Stress  | 33        |
| 2.6 Stress among Deaf Education Teachers  | 37        |
| 2.7 Factors influencing the perception of occupational stress among deaf education teachers | 46        |
| 2.8 Effects of occupational stress on teachers  | 48        |
| 2.9 Stress coping strategies among teachers   | 55        |
| 2.10 Summary of Literature Review   | 60        |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>   | <b>61</b> |
| 3.1 Introduction  | 61        |
| 3.2 Philosophical Underpinning of the study   | 61        |
| 3.3 Research Approach   | 62        |
| 3.5 Research Site   | 63        |
| 3.6 Population  | 63        |
| 3.7 Sample  | 64        |
| 3.8 Sampling Technique  | 66        |
| 3.9 Instrumentation   | 66        |

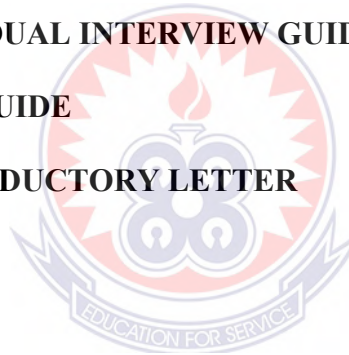
|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 3.10 Pre –Testing of Instrument  | 68                                  |
| 3.10.1 Trustworthiness of study findings   | 69                                  |
| 3.10.2 Credibility   | 69                                  |
| 3.10.3 Transferability   | 69                                  |
| 3.10.4 Confirmability  | 70                                  |
| 3.10.5 Dependability   | 70                                  |
| 3.11 Ethical consideration   | 70                                  |
| 3.12 Data Collection Procedure   | 72                                  |
| 3.13 Data Analysis   | 73                                  |
| ii   |                                     |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>  | <b>75</b>                           |
| 4.0 Introduction   | 75                                  |
| 4. 1 Demographic Data of Participants  | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| 4.2 Analysis of data by research questions   | 77                                  |
| 4.3 Research Question One: What are teachers’ perception of occupational stress?                                   | 77                                  |
| 4.3.1 Student negative behavior as a source of occupational stress to teachers                                     | 77                                  |
| 4.3.2 Communication as a source of occupational stress to teachers   | 79                                  |
| 4.3.3 The school environment as a source of occupational stress to teachers  | 81                                  |
| 4.3.4 Lack of support from colleagues as a source of occupational stress   | 83                                  |
| 4.3.5 Limited administrative support as a source of occupational stress to teachers                                | 84                                  |
| 4.3.6 Workload as a source of occupational stress to teachers  | 86                                  |
| 4.3.7 Inadequate professional development programs as a source of occupational stress to teachers of Sec Tech Deaf | 87                                  |



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 4.4 Research Question 2: What are some of the factors that influence teachers’ perception of occupational stress?           | 87  |
| 4.4.1 Academic specialization as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress among teachers of Sec Tech Deaf | 88  |
| 4.4.2 Subject of teaching as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress                                     | 89  |
| 4.5 Research Question 3: What are teachers’ views of the impacts of occupational stress on their job performance?           | 90  |
| 4.5.1 Occupational stress affects the health of teachers of Sec Tech Deaf   | 91  |
| 4.5.2 Occupational stress affects teachers’ personal and social life  | 91  |
| 4.5.3 Occupational stress affects teachers ability to perform their duties effectively                                      | 93  |
| 4.5.4 Occupational stress affects students’ performance   | 94  |
| 4.6 Research Question 4: How do Mampong Sec Tech Deaf teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?                 | 94  |
| 4.6.1 Ignoring cause of the stress  | 95  |
| 4.6.3 Seeking support from colleagues (social support)  | 97  |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS</b>  | 99  |
| 5.0 Introduction:   | 99  |
| 5.1 Research question one: What are teachers’ perception of sources of occupational stress?                                 | 99  |
| 5.1.1 Student Negative Behaviors  | 99  |
| 5.1.2 Challenge in communication using Ghanaian sign language   | 102 |
| 5.1.3 School physical environment   | 103 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 5.1.4 Limited support from colleagues   | 105 |
| 5.1.5 Limited administrative support  | 106 |
| 5.1.6 High Workload   | 107 |
| 5.1.7 Limited Professional Development Programs   | 108 |
| 5.2 Research Question Two: What are some of the factors that influence teachers' perception of occupational stress? | 110 |
| 5.2.1 Area of academic specialization (Course of study at the higher level)   | 110 |
| 5.2.2 Subject of current teaching   | 111 |
| 5.3 Research question 3: What are teachers' views of the effects of occupational stress on their job performance?   | 112 |
| 5.3.1 Occupational stress impacts on teachers health  | 112 |
| 5.3.2 Occupational stress impacts on the personal and social lives of teachers:                                     | 113 |
| 5.3.3 Occupational stress impacts on teachers' job performance  | 114 |
| 5.3.4 Occupational stress impacts on students' academic performance   | 115 |
| 5.4 Research Question 4: How do Sec Tech Deaf teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?                 | 117 |
| 5.4.1 Ignoring Sources of Occupational Stress   | 117 |
| 5.4.1 Improvisation of TLRs   | 118 |
| 5.4.2 Seeking support from colleagues (social support)  | 119 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND</b>  |     |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>                        | 121 |
| 6.0 Introduction                              | 121 |
| Summary of the study                          | 121 |
| 6.1 Summary of key findings                   | 122 |
| 6.2 Conclusion                                | 123 |
| 6.3 Recommendations                           | 124 |
| 6.4 Suggestion for further studies            | 124 |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>                             | 125 |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>                             | 137 |
| <b>APPENDIX A: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE</b> | 137 |
| <b>APPENDIX B: FGD GUIDE</b>                  | 139 |
| <b>APPENDIX C: INTRODUCTORY LETTER</b>        | 141 |



## LIST OF TABLES

| <b>Table</b>  | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| 1: Gender distribution of respondents                 | 63          |
| 2: Age Distribution of Respondents                    | 63          |
| 3: Highest Educational level of respondents           | 64          |
| 4: Distribution of categories of respondents          | 64          |
| 5: Years of teaching experience in Sec Tech Deaf      | 65          |
| 6: Number of classes being handled by the respondents | 66          |



## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the perception of occupational stress, its impact and coping strategies among teachers of Secondary Technical School for the Deaf in Mampong Akuapem Municipality of the Eastern Region. The study utilised a phenomenological design and collected data through interviews and focus group discussions with 16 teachers who had at least three years of teaching experience in the school. The data were analysed using themes generated from the responses. The findings revealed that the teachers perceived their source of occupational stress to emerge from the physical environment, social relationship between teachers and students and communication challenges. The stress experienced by the teachers affects their health and job performance. Coping strategies adopted by the teachers included seeking social support, ignoring the stressors and managing the stressful situation. The study recommended that there should be enough professional development programmes to build the capacity of teachers, these professional developments should include people management skills. The study further recommended that teachers should be given the opportunity to teach in subject areas in which they have specialised. This will go a long way to minimize stress among teachers of Secondary Technical School for the Deaf.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the study

Occupational stress has become a global concern for many people over the years (Mat Zain & Lee, 2022; Wilson, 2014). Stress is the physiological and psychological imbalance between the individual's situation and the capacity to meet the situational demands. Stress results from threats that individuals face as they strive to know their personality as well as the process of survival (Kayumba, 2017). According to (ILO, 2016), stress is the harmful physical and emotional pressures caused by an imbalance between the perceived demands and the perceived resources and abilities of an individual to cope with those demands. Occupational stress, therefore, is eminent in the day-to-day activities of individuals. The cost of occupational stress is very high in organizational functioning in recent times. For instance, the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2016) reports that inefficiencies arising from occupational stress may cost up to 10 percent of a country's gross national product (GNP).

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2000) also noted that occupational stress is a major public health issue around the world, affecting both the health and well-being of employees and the production of many organizations and, by extension, the teaching profession and the production of many organizations. This concern is heightened among teachers in schools for the deaf who are perceived to experience stress in high volumes as a result of the nature of their work. Extensive research has been conducted internationally in the area of deaf education teacher occupational stress,

with many findings pointing negatively to the effects on the teacher and the school management (Haseeb & Sattar, 2018; Richard & Effrim, 2016; Abiyou, 2017).

In Ghana, secondary education has experienced a sharp increase in enrolment in recent years attributable to the implementation of the free senior high school policy and other government policies (MoE, 2021) and by extension, an increase in enrolment in special schools with particular focus on Secondary Technical School for the Deaf (Sec Tech Deaf), (Perdison, 2020). This increased enrolment comes with many challenges to which stress is heightened. Teachers are often required to manage complex classroom environments, handle challenging behaviors and adapt to unique communication needs of diverse deaf students, manage learners with limited resources, heavy workload due to large class sizes, uncooperative colleagues and administration, challenges in working environment, and low motivation. These factors can create a challenging work environment that negatively impact the health and wellbeing of teachers. Research has shown that educating deaf students requires a great deal of time, patience and lesson modification (Gyebi, 2022; Perdison, 2020).

Research suggest that lack of preparation and in-service training in deaf education can be a major factor influencing deaf education teachers perception of occupational stress, (Klapproth, et al, 2020; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Most teachers of the deaf do not receive adequate preparation in areas such as deaf education and appropriate subject areas yet are placed to teach deaf students, this leads to increased perception of stress and burnout (Perdison, 2020). This can have negative consequences for both the teacher and the student who is deaf

The impact of stress can be significant and long-lasting. Teacher occupational stress can lead to physical and mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, hypertension and heart disease (Issakah, Nyame & Abu, 2021). Stress can also impact job performance resulting in decreased productivity, low job performance and low job satisfaction (Klapproth et al., 2020). Furthermore, stress can lead to higher rate of absenteeism and staff turnover which can have negative impact on the education system as a whole.

Coping strategies are an important tool for managing occupational stress. Coping strategies refer to efforts individuals make to manage stressors which include behavioural and cognitive responses (Klapproth et al., 2020). Coping strategies can either be problem-focused which involve efforts to change or address the stressor or emotion-focused which involved efforts to manage ones emotional response to the stressor (Klapproth et al., 2020; Oberle and Schonert-Reichl, 2016). To successfully meet the learning needs of deaf students, the educators must develop appropriate strategies.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

More deaf children are getting enrolled in the formal education system recently (MOE 2021). This has increased the job performance of teachers and educators in schools for the deaf as they prepare students academically, emotionally and socially (Agyire-Tettey et al., 2017; Ewur, 2020; Issakah, Nyame & Abu, 2021). Majority of teachers in schools for the deaf are regular trained teachers and by extension, are not adequately equipped with the requisite skills in educating deaf students (Oppong & Fobi, 2019).



Deaf education teachers are also mandated to meet the same requirements and expectations of general education teachers, they must be experts in the area of language, language development, linguistics of English, linguistics of sign language and other manual codes, and communication in general in order to teach effectively (Luckner & Dorn, 2017). They are also expected to carry out many roles in their daily tasks as demanded of teachers. In the quest to balancing these many roles and demands, stress usually set in. The average time the teacher in regular school will use to cover a given material, the teacher of the deaf with the additional communication needs will require more of that to cover the same lesson yet they are expected to be assessed on the standard curriculum through external examination at the same time. Teachers are unable to explain most concepts in sign language clearly because of challenge in the use of sign language thereby impeding smooth lesson delivery (Oppong et al., 2019). This impacts greatly on the well-being of the teacher and students' academic performance.

A casual conversation with a colleague student who is a teacher in secondary technical school for the deaf revealed that many of the teachers are seeking transfers out of the school due to challenges beyond their management strategies. It emerged from the conversation that teachers are burdened with challenges in adapting general curriculum to suit deaf students' needs. Teachers' reported issues of health as a result of constant straining of the arms during teaching. This puts pressure on teachers as they make extra effort in carrying out their daily activities of teaching and learning.

Despite these increased pressures on these teachers to meet student's educational goals, there is little knowledge of the specific stress that teachers go through as well as its effects on them. Little documentary evidence is available on the coping

strategies that are adopted to manage the situation in which find themselves (stress). This study therefore seeks to explore the specific stress, influencers and effects of these stress on the teachers of Sec Tech Deaf. The study also sought to fill the literature gap which has been created by the non-existence in the area of stress and coping strategies among deaf education teachers at the secondary level of education in the Ghanaian context.

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

The purpose of the study was to investigate the occupational stress and coping strategies among teachers in Sec Tech Deaf, Mampong, Ghana.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The following objectives were raised to guide the study:

1. Investigate the perception of sources of occupational stress among teachers in school
2. To investigate the factors that influence the perception of occupational stress among teachers in the school.
3. To also examine the impact of occupational stress on teachers of the school
4. Ascertain the coping strategies employed by teachers in the school to manage their occupational stress.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress?

2. What are some of the factors that influence teachers' perception of occupational stress?
3. What are teachers' views of the impact of occupational stress on their job performance?
4. How do teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study is significant in the following ways, by identifying the sources that pose stress to teachers, they would be in a better place to avoid the setting of some forms of avoidable stress in their workplace.

The findings would inform the school management to make effort in allocating courses to teachers in their area of expertise. Positive stress coping strategies from respondents would serve as a reference information for newly recruited and other teachers to refer to in coping with when in similar situation.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the study**

In research, one researcher cannot cover everything in a single study. It is therefore important to define the boundaries of the study so as to put the study in scope. This study was delimited to perception of teacher occupational stress as it has been a constant source of concern over decades which impacts on the output of teachers and students. Again, the study was delimited to teaching staff of Sec Tech Deaf, Mampong Akuapem as the only public segregated Senior High School for the Deaf in Ghana that prepares young deaf students for the country's tertiary institutions. Teaching staff in the school who served 3 years and more were the focus to enable the study build deeper appreciation of the stress that teachers encounter in general in the school setting (both in lesson delivery and general school and student management). The study was also

delimited to only teachers who have served three (3) years and more in the school. The researcher had a firm believe that this category have adequately developed on the job knowledge of teaching in a school for the Deaf and also adequate experience of occupational stress of teachers.

The study was further delimited to examine the area of specialization (course of study) of teachers in Sec Tech Deaf, their current subject they teach and how that influence their perception of occupational stress. This is because most reviewed literature point to the fact that there is positive relationship of area of specialization and stress levels among teachers. In the face of this, the study sought to find out how this applies or otherwise among teachers of Sec Tech Deaf. Finally, since stress goes with coping, to ensure that there are effective teachers, the study was also focused on coping strategies to enable the study document the anecdotes from teachers on the best ways they cope and manage with their stress.

### **1.8 Limitation**

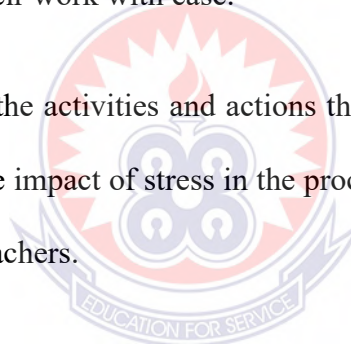
One major limitation of this study was that, the setting (Sec Tech Deaf) might affect the generalization of the findings since they may not be applicable to other schools for the deaf and regular schools due to differences in the management approaches and geographical areas. Thus, using results from this school may not give fair representation of the issues in other settings as such, making inferences from such a study may be limited to an extent. For these findings to be generalised in other settings, a detailed information on the setting of Secondary Technical School for the Deaf has been provided. Any setting in which these findings wished to be generalized must have similar settings of that of Secondary Technical School for the Deaf. Another limitation was the use of primary data collected through interviews presents its own

weakness that can affect the results of the study. Respondents may give responses based on their own perspectives and mood. Beliefs and judgements which may not be accurate and entirely the truth and thus affect the study findings. This was addressed by quoting respondents as much as possible and also the use of triangulation of individual interviews and focus group discussion. This ensured that responses which were similar are reported as such and those with contrary views are also reported.

### **1.9 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Occupational Stress:** Any challenge that teacher's encounter in relation to carrying out their duties which affects their ability to effectively carry out their work with ease.

**Coping Strategies:** All the activities and actions that teachers use in order to reduce the impact of stress in the process of carrying out their duties as teachers.



### **1.10 Organization of the study**

This study was organised into six chapters

Chapter one contained the introduction of the study which included background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance, delimitation, limitations, organization of the study and operational definition of terms. Chapter two dealt with the review of related literature. This consisted of theoretical framework and empirical reviews relating to the topic under study. Chapter three consisted of the research methodology. This consisted of research approach, design, population, sample size and sampling technique,

instrumentation, data collection procedure data analysis procedure and ethical consideration. Chapter four contained the presentation and analysis of data. Chapter five also contained the discussion of the findings. Finally, chapter six consisted of the conclusion, summary of findings, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of works done by others relating to this study. The review has been organized under the following sub-headings:

1. Theoretical framework
2. The concept of occupational stress and sources of occupational stress among deaf education teachers
3. Factors influencing teacher occupational stress among deaf education teachers
4. Impact of occupational stress on teachers
5. Stress coping strategies among teachers

#### 2.1 Theoretical framework

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model proposed by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti (2007) explains the relationship between job characteristics, employee well-being, and job performance. The model suggests that job demands and job resources are key factors that influence occupational stress and motivation among employees. It emphasizes that high job demands coupled with low job resources can lead to burnout and negative outcomes, while high job resources can lead to engagement and positive outcomes. The JD-R Model has been widely studied and applied in various occupational settings, including the field of education.

Teachers of Sec Tech Deaf may experience stress if they perceive high job demands, such as heavy workload, time pressure, and student behavior problems, and

low job resources, such as inadequate support from colleagues, lack of autonomy, or insufficient training and resources. Coping strategies in this model may involve improving job resources, such as seeking social support, improving communication, and providing more resources.

### **2.3 The Concept of Occupational Stress**

Studies have shown that there is no single best explanation for the concept occupational stress (Gyamfi et al., 2017). Occupational stress is a special term with negative connotations that alludes to a reaction to and arises from a person's capacity to manage both mental and physical demands that their line of work places on them, whether those demands are actual or perceived (Beh & Loo, 2012). It is the response individuals make when faced with job demands that are incompatible with their knowledge and capabilities (WHO, 2014). Behaviourally, Beh and Loo (2012) posited that stress involves a mild but progressive change of behaviour and attitude that ultimately inhibit an individual's ability to function effectively at work. Work stress is reported by (Kusi et al., 2018) as the negative physiological and psychological reactions that take place when a worker's abilities, resources, or needs are not met by the demands of the job. Stress is also viewed as a warning from the brain which forewarns about an impending situation or a real time situation which potentially make an individual anxious and tensed (WHO, 2014). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) also intimate that, occupational stress is any issue emerging from mismatch between internal and external job demands. Humans have many biological, psychological and social needs. When these needs are not attained, stress occurs (Beh & Loo, 2012). Ravichandran and Rajendran, (2007) explained stress as an imbalance in organic equilibrium due to an internal or external urge. Ravichandran & Rajendran (2007) further added that when an



individual sense something dangerous intending to happen, the individual get tensed. That perceived tension becomes a stressor which ignites physiological responses. Stress exposes labourers to danger of feeling downgraded and not having the capacity to achieve targets set.

## **2.4 Sources of Occupational Stress**

There are several sources of occupational stress as documented by authors. These sources present challenging situations which affect employees and their productivity. Some of the identified sources of occupational stress in the literature reviewed include: poor working conditions, role overload, roles in the organization, role ambiguity.

### ***2.4.1 Poor Working Conditions***

This applies to the physical surrounding of the job which may include high level of noise, high or low lighting, fumes, heat, poor ventilation systems, smells and all the stimuli which barrage a worker's senses and can affect their moods and overall mental state. A poorly designed office, physically unappealing can be a poor working condition, because this may hinder communication which might lead to poor working relationships and leads to stress (Gyamfi et al., 2016). Ritchie and Martin (2013) also stated that people with a high score on the need for good working conditions would probably suffer stress if they worked in a draughty, dingy office with a lot of noisy machinery and telephones. A study conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2016) found that poor working conditions were responsible for 2.3 million deaths worldwide in 2013. The study also found that poor working conditions can lead to a range of health problems, including musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory diseases, and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety (Schaufeli & Taris,

2014). In addition to the physical health impacts, poor working conditions can also lead to stress and burnout. A study published in the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* found that employees who reported poor working conditions, such as high job demands and low job control, were more likely to experience job stress and burnout (Beh & Loo, 2012). Another study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* found that employees who perceived their work environment as being low in psychological safety (i.e., not feeling comfortable speaking up or expressing their opinions) were more likely to experience stress and related health problems. Excellent working condition in turn maximizes staff optimum capacity (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004).

#### ***2.4.5 Role Overload***

Workload is a common source of occupational stress that can have negative impacts on employees' mental and physical health, job satisfaction, and performance. According to a study by the American Psychological Association, workload was identified as the most significant stressor among employees in the United States (APA, 2017). Research has shown that high workload levels can lead to increased fatigue, burnout, and reduced work engagement (Shimazu et al., 2016). In addition, an excessive workload can affect the quality of work, increase the risk of errors, and lead to reduced productivity (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004). Moreover, a study conducted by Karatepe and Kilic (2007) found that employees who experienced high workload levels had a lower level of job satisfaction and were more likely to leave their job. Similarly, a study by Shrestha and Jones (2016) found that workload was one of the key factors contributing to employee turnover. Dunne, Stouffer and John (2013); Siegrist, (1996) emphasized that role overload becomes a most common stressor for managers especially in today's

downsized organizations. In Ekiabor (2016) study on impact of job stress on employee's productivity and commitment in Kenyan schools, role overload was significantly associated with unsafe behaviors. Similarly, other researchers have suggested that as work overload increases, workers are likely to adopt more risky work methods (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007; Demorouti & Verbeke, 2004). Also, role underutilization or under-load would occur when employees are allowed to use only a few of their skills and abilities (Grawitch, Ballard & Erb, 2017). The most prevalent characteristic of role underutilization is monotony, where the worker performed the same routine task over and over. Workload is a significant source of occupational stress that can have negative impacts on employees' well-being, job satisfaction, and performance (Grawitch, Ballard & Erb, 2017). Employers should take proactive measures to manage workload levels and support employees in coping with stress to promote a healthy work environment.

#### ***2.4.6 Role in the Organization***

When the role and expectations of an individual in an organization are defined clearly and understood it minimizes stress. However, role in the organization when unclear can bring about stress. Some of these roles may include: role ambiguity, and role conflict.

#### ***2.4.7 Role Ambiguity***

Yongkang et al. (2014) defined role ambiguity as the degree to which clear and specific information is lacking with role requirements. Role ambiguity is a condition where employees are uncertain about their job duties, responsibilities, or expectations. It is a common source of stress in the workplace and can have negative effects on employees' job satisfaction, performance, and well-being. Numerous studies have

identified role ambiguity as a significant source of stress for employees. For example, a study conducted by Jackson (1985) found that role ambiguity was a significant predictor of job stress, which in turn led to reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. Similarly, a study by Khamisa, Peltzer and Oldenburg (2015) found that role ambiguity was a significant predictor of job strain, which in turn led to increased job dissatisfaction and intention to leave.

Furthermore, research has shown that role ambiguity can negatively affect employees' mental and physical health. For instance, a study by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) found that role ambiguity was positively related to burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Another study by Heponiemi et al., (2014) found that role ambiguity was associated with increased psychological distress, such as symptoms of anxiety and depression. In other words, the main employee perceived that he or she is in a difficult situation which the job obligation is unclear and not stated in straightforward manner (Greenberg, 1995).

According to Johns (1996) there is substantial evidence that role ambiguity can provoke stress. Lack of direction can prove stressful, especially for people who are low in their tolerance for such ambiguity. (Yongkang et al., 2014) added that role ambiguity has been established to be an aspect of job dissatisfaction, influence employee creativity and tendency to quit in the organization. Role ambiguity is a significant source of occupational stress that can have negative impacts on employees' well-being, job satisfaction, and performance. Employers should take proactive measures to clarify job

roles and expectations and support employees in coping with stress to promote a healthy work environment.

#### ***2.4.8 Role Conflict***

Jahanzeb (2010) reports that role conflict occurs when employee is confronted with incompatible role expectations in the various social statuses they occupy. It can also be connected either a short period or a long period and to situational experiences. Luthans (2002) differentiates three major types of role conflict. One type is the conflict between the person and the role. He is of the opinion that although all the roles that staff bring into the organizations though relevant to their behavior, the organizational role is the most important.

Roles such as digital equipment operator, clerk team leader, sales person engineer, systems analyst, departmental head, vice president and chairperson of the board often carry conflicting demands and expectations. This author further stated that recent research evidence showed that such conflict could have a negative impact on performance and also be affected by cultural differences. (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995) expound that where competing role expectations, for example, those that take part in determining an individual's intra-organizational and extra-organizational roles cannot be fulfilled that is known as role conflict. Such conflicts may originate in role over-load or under-load, where the demands of a role are greater or lesser than expected.

Dunne et al., (2013) and Ekienabor (2016) also added that role conflicts generally may exist between differing expectations from the various parts of a person's role set- those persons and groups who expect things of people and are inevitable with the level of pressure that most people are exposed to in or out of work since a person

cannot always fulfil the demands of all their roles. In addition, people may experience role conflicts between external role demands and personal values and beliefs.

#### ***2.4.9 Interpersonal Relationships at Workplace***

How people relate at the workplace affects them and their work greatly, working in a stable environment where employees get to know one another very well helps to facilitate work and reduces pressure (Gyamfi et al., 2016). When employees are able to deal with their bosses, peers, and subordinates very well, it affects how they feel but when an employee experiences poor working relationship with superiors, colleagues, and subordinates his stress level increases. People who are in high need of relationships, work best in solid work teams and may suffer stress in unstable work teams and probably may not be able to give out their best. (Stoetzer, 2010) argued that poor interpersonal relationships stress employees because most employees spend so much time at the workplace and thereby poor working relationship can affect them adversely. Ritchie and Martin (2003) are of the opinion that a stressful situation for someone high on need for contact with others is where they are forced to work alone for long periods. Where satisfaction is gained from the presence and approval of others, isolation would become a form of sensory deprivation. Conversely, people with very low need for contact with others would suffer stress if placed in working circumstances which require extensive social interaction (Gyamfi et al., 2016; AlMuammar, Shahadah & Shahadah, 2022). The mere presence of others would not pose a problem and a low score on this factor will not indicate that the person is a recluse or is suitable only for isolated working. It is the behavior of others that may be a crucial issue.

#### ***2.4.10 Professional Development***

Organizations have become flatter, meaning that power and responsibility now radiate throughout the organization. The work force has become more diversified. Jobs and careers get scarcer. Several studies have found that career development can be a significant source of occupational stress. For example, a study by Chang and Edwards (2015) found that career development was a significant predictor of work-related stress. In their study, they found that when employees perceived that their career development was being hindered, they reported higher levels of stress and reduced job satisfaction. Similarly, a study by Tims, Bakker and Derks (2011) found that career development expectations were positively related to work-related stress and burnout. The stress associated with career development can manifest in various ways. For instance, employees may experience anxiety and pressure when working towards career goals, particularly if they perceive that their progress is slow or if they face obstacles or setbacks (Parks-Leduc et al., 2015).

Additionally, employees may experience stress if they perceive that their skills or qualifications are not aligned with their career goals or if they feel uncertain about their career path (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002). For the person who had been determined to rise through an organization, the challenge had recently become greater. Opportunities to learn new skills are now becoming requirements. Career development causes a lot of stress to employees through their working lives (Alsalhe et al., 2021; Bartels, 2020; Beltman et al., 2011). Staying the same is quickly becoming an inadequate approach to work, which means that one would have to learn new ways of working through the upgrading of one's knowledge. Shortage of job security, fear of redundancy, obsolescence and many performance appraisals causes pressure and strain.

Also, the frustration of having reached one's career ceiling, or have been over promoted can result in stress (Capps et al., 2012).

#### ***2.4.11 Physical Environment***

Working conditions of jobs have been linked to physical and mental health (APA, 2013). Physical environment that can be a source of stress which includes exposure to hot room temperatures, frequent light outs, and dangerous poisonous substances (Bowin D., 2001). Osipow (1998), found that poor mental health related directly to unpleasant work conditions (GNAD, 2022), physical effort and speed in job performance and excessive, inconvenient hours (e.g. shifts). Also, researchers have found increasing evidence that repetitive and dehumanizing environment adversely affect physical health of employees (Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 2009; Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999).

Work settings are normally highly stressful environments. However, the degree of stress varies with the kind of job and the organization. Some jobs and organizations expose individuals to high levels of stress on a regular basis (Greenberg, 1995). In contrast, others involve much lower levels of stress. Greenberg (1995) states that hospital staff and other jobs such as fire-fighting, piloting, office management; bankers among others expose those who hold them to high levels of stress as against positions such as maid and craft workers. However, within the hospitals, the level of stress may differ from one department to the other. For instance, all things being equal, the stress that emergency room physicians experience would be of a greater degree than that of consulting room doctors.



This section described the concept occupational stress in general. It also looked at some of the causes of occupational stress and its effects. These cut across all sectors of the working society. It can be inferred that the working life of employees is bedevilled with a lot of stress. This stress ranges from the organizational environment, resources, technology through to interpersonal relationships. It is however noted from the above that what may seem to be a source of stress to one employee may not be a source of stress to another employee hence the concept stress is seen as transactional and subjected to individual interpretation. This in the researcher's opinion suits and worthy of a qualitative study since individuals would have the opportunity to express in detail their thoughts about stress and what causes them stress. The next section of this literature review took a look into empirical studies on stress among teachers in general.

## **2.5 Sources of teacher Occupational Stress**

Teaching is a challenging and demanding profession that requires a great deal of energy and effort. Teachers are responsible for educating and shaping the minds of the next generation, which can be both rewarding and stressful. Unfortunately, stress is a common experience among teachers, and it can have a significant impact on their well-being, job satisfaction, and performance. In this context, it is important to understand the nature of stress among teachers, its causes, and its consequences, in order to develop effective strategies to manage and reduce its impact. The teaching profession has been confirmed by various scholars and researchers to be one of the most challenging and stressful professions in the world (Hepburn & Brown, 2001; Kusi, Cudjoe and Bampo, 2018; Hyde and Power, 1996; Issakah et al., 2021; John and Akos, 2014; Jones et al., 2013). Researchers have investigated these sources of occupational

stress in the teaching profession and have documented their findings in various forms. Teachers' stress as explained by Demjaha et al., (2015), an uncomfortable feelings, negative emotion such relating to anger, anxiety, pressure and disappointment extending from their work aspects. In general, teaching has recently been considered among the most stressful professions. A study conducted by German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) in Germany in 2013, has showed that teachers, are more stressed than other professionals (GTUC, 2013). According to the study, 66% of interviewed teachers suffer from varying levels of work-related stress. Further research by Aftab (2012) on demographic differences and occupational stress of secondary school teachers found that 40.95% of secondary school teachers in India perceived their work as stressful. Their study was corroborated by Demjaha et al., (2015) in their study of stress among elementary school teachers in Macedonia. They found that elementary school teachers considered their work very stressful. The study further found that though teaching as a profession is stressful, certain groups of people are mostly stressed. They considered working environment, socio-economic background of students, paper work, inadequate administrative support, uncooperative colleagues and students misbehaviours as contributors to stress among teachers (Demjaha et al. 2015). The study took a quantitative approach of cross-sectional survey and employed statistical design to analyse collected data. The study involved 625 teachers.

Hepburn and Brown (2001) in their study on stress among teachers at the primary school level found that apathy, student disruption and indiscipline, poor student attendance, high student to teacher ratios (large classes), paperwork, prep work, irresponsible colleagues, obtrusive supervisors, lack of effective leadership such as assistant principals and principals, and seemingly non-supportive parents pose stress to

teachers. According to Nair (2013), teacher stress comes from factors intrinsic to the job such as working conditions, nature of working environment, working for long hours (work overload) and excessive job demands. This finding was in line with studies by Paille (2011) and (Prasanna, 2016) who also found working conditions and working hours to be a source of stress to teachers. Paille (2011) and Pransanna (2016) reported that teachers work more hours compared to other professions. Despite their working conditions, they are minimally compensated to match their work and effort.

Nyamubarwa (2013) in a quantitative study among secondary school teachers in Zimbabwe found that occupational stress in the teaching profession was high. These stress among teachers include role ambiguity (lack of clarity about work objectives, expectations and job responsibilities), role conflict, poor organisational culture and climate. The study employed descriptive statistics and involved 520 teachers as the sample for the study and adopted a quantitative approach to inquiry. Qureshi et al., (2013) equally conducted a quantitative study to find the relationship between job stress, workload, environment and employee intentions among teachers in Pakistan. The study used a sample of 109 teachers. Structural modelling was used for the empirical analysis of data using AMOS 18 software. The results revealed that poor interrelationships among co-workers or management contribute immensely to occupational stress. Similarly, mistrust among co-workers and inadequate communication or poor information transfer could in turn lead to psychological strain symptoms such as low job satisfaction and job-related threat to wellbeing. Other occupational stress emerged from poor employee development programmes, work life conflict (work-life imbalance), unclear job description and job insecurity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Ramli et al., 2014). Khairuddin and Makhbul (2011) similarly

revealed that, job insecurity, work-life conflict, mode of information transfer and unclear job descriptions could lead to occupational stress.

Studies in the Ghanaian context also found similar stressors for teachers in Ghanaian schools. Schroeder, Akotia and Apekey (2001) reported in their study on stress among Ghanaian school teachers that lack of accommodation for teachers, lack of free education for teachers' children, and low salaries mostly stress teachers in Ghana. Addison and Yankyera (2015) also conducted a study into the stress and coping strategies of female teachers in Asamankese Circuit II of the West Akim Municipality of Ghana Education Service in the Eastern region and found increased enrolment, combination of family care and work as a teacher, uncondusive work environment, lack of appreciation from administration and parents and increased load of assessment through supervision as sources of occupational stress to teachers. In a similar study by Kusi et al., (2018) among female lecturers at the University of Education, the study found that occupational stress among female lecturers emerge from too much work, student behaviour, limited space to participate in professional development opportunities, too much project works to supervise and research works for promotion (Kusi et al., 2018). The findings further averts that limited technological knowledge poses a great deal of stress to lecturers. As indicated by a respondent, “the technology is provided but there are limited training in the use of the technology hence lecturers are sometimes unable to access them to ease their work stress” (p.102).

Owusu et al. (2021) further sought to test whether there was any statistically significant difference in occupational stress among teachers based on their teaching experience. The study found that there was a statistically significant difference in occupational stress among teachers who have 1-10 and 21-30 years of teaching

experience. Also, it was discovered that there was a statistically significant difference in occupational stress between teachers who have 11-20 and 21-20 years of teaching experience. This denotes that differences in job stress could be as a result of the teaching experience of teachers (Owusu et al., 2021).

## **2.6 Stress among Deaf Education Teachers**

Stress among teachers of the deaf is a significant issue, as these professionals often face unique challenges and responsibilities in their work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing (Barnett, 2016). Teachers in deaf education have identified a number of contributing factors to their stress such as emotional demands, lack of autonomy, and inadequate training and support (Berman, 2018). Hindley (2000) explored the experiences of stress among teachers who work with deaf students. The study utilized a qualitative approach, with 24 teachers who worked in schools for the deaf in the United Kingdom participating in semi-structured interviews. The study found that teachers who work with deaf students experience a range of stressors, including communication difficulties with students and colleagues, lack of support from administration, and challenges related to workload and time management. Additionally, the study found that teachers in this population may experience unique stressors related to the emotional demands of the work, such as working with students who have experienced trauma or have complex emotional needs.

Despite these challenges, the study found that teachers who work with deaf students also experience a sense of reward and fulfilment from their work. Additionally, the study identified several coping strategies that teachers use to manage stress, including seeking social support, taking breaks, and engaging in activities outside of

work. Their findings have been supported by Eskay and Nwefuru (2019); Richards and Marschark, (2015) in their study who documented similar findings.

McDonald and Filiatrault (2016) examined the sources of stress experienced by teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students and the coping strategies that they employed to manage their stress. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, with 138 teachers from across the United States completing an online survey and 20 teachers participating in follow-up interviews. The study found that teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students experience high levels of stress, with workload and communication difficulties identified as major sources of stress. In particular, the study found that teachers struggled with time management and the demands of meeting the individual needs of their students. Similarly, Richards and Marschark (2015) in a qualitative study among teachers of the deaf in Zimbabwe identified challenges faced by the teachers and enumerated them including limited access to professional development and mentorship programs and lack of support from parents, colleagues and administration.

Kennon and Patterson (2016) added to Richards and Marschark (2015) found that the working conditions of teachers of the deaf are constantly changing due to factors such as changes in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and other governmental policies thereby increasing societal pressures on teachers of the deaf. Other pressures on teachers of the deaf include changing needs of deaf students, expectations from parents and educational stakeholders in the industry. Ntinda, Thwala and Tfusi (2019), in their qualitative study on the experiences of teachers of the deaf in Swaziland found that 9 out of 11 participants reported lack of professional competencies to teach the mainstream curriculum to the deaf child for which their tertiary training institutions did

not adequately prepare them. The study further reported that adoption of general curriculum to suit the need of the deaf is a daunting task. The curriculum is designed with the general students in perspective without recourse to deaf students. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher of the deaf to adopt the curriculum and adjust to suit the needs of the deaf students bearing in mind state assessment guidelines. Ntinda et al., (2019) further avers that the variations in sign language use hindered free flow of communication between teacher-student and student-student. More than half of the participants, 7 out of 11 participants in Ntinda et al., study reported that sign language used in the school setting was not universal. Different students use different sign language systems concurrently. The integration of this different sign systems delays the teaching and learning process hence delay in the completion of curriculum, Ntinda et al., (2019).

Ayasse, Gruenewald and Wilcox (2018) investigated teacher stress and coping strategies in deaf education in Botswana schools for the deaf. The study used an online survey to collect data from 148 teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The findings indicated that teachers of DHH students experience high levels of stress, with communication barriers being the most significant source of stress. The findings further reported limited parental support and attitudes of education management authorities towards teachers of the deaf as a stressful experience to teachers of the deaf in the study area. The study by O'Sullivan (2017) explored stress and coping among early career teachers of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students. The study used an online survey to collect data from 87 early career teachers of DHH students. The key findings indicate that early career teachers of DHH students experience high levels of stress such as communication barriers, workload demands, deadlines for assessments, personal

conflicts and a lack of resources being the most significant sources of stress. The study also found that early career teachers of deaf students reported using a range of coping strategies, including seeking social support, engaging in self-care activities, and engaging in problem-focused coping. However, some teachers also reported using negative coping strategies, such as avoidance and substance use. The article highlights the need for targeted interventions to support early career teachers of DHH students, including the provision of resources and support for communication strategies, workload management, and coping strategies.

Anderson (2016) found in his study that teachers of the deaf are often saddled with responsibilities for a wide range of administrative tasks, including paperwork, IEP meetings, and planning. These tasks are time-consuming and stressful, taking away from valuable teaching time. Lack of specialized resources needed to work effectively also poses a challenge to teachers of the deaf as they largely improvise which slows and sometimes misrepresent the ideal issue. This was reported as frustrating the effort and capabilities of teachers in schools for the deaf (Anderson, 2016). The article by Crowe and McKay (2017) reviewed the existing literature on teacher stress in the context of educating deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) students. The authors identified several factors that contribute to teacher stress, including communication barriers, inadequate professional preparation, lack of support, and challenging behaviors of DHH students. The review also highlights the impact of stress on DHH teacher job satisfaction, retention, and overall mental health. Working with students who are deaf is emotionally demanding, especially teachers that are trying to help deaf students with other challenges like learning disabilities or behavioural issues. Teachers of the deaf often face high workloads and job demands, which contribute to feelings of stress and



burnout. This include demands related to lesson planning, teaching, and supporting students with a range of needs (Bohaty, 2013). Robertson and Johnes (2013) conducted an exploratory study on deaf education teacher stress and job satisfaction. The study used an online survey to collect data from 109 deaf education teachers. The findings suggest that deaf education teachers experience high levels of stress, with communication barriers, heavy workloads, and a lack of resources being the most significant sources of stress. The study also found that deaf education teachers reported low levels of job satisfaction, with a lack of support and resources being significant contributing factors. The article highlights the need for targeted interventions to support deaf education teachers and improve job satisfaction. The study suggests that interventions should focus on providing resources and support for communication strategies, workload management, and professional development. Shields and Cichetti (2001) found that organizational culture also pose great stress to teachers of the deaf. They further expound that the culture of the organization in which teachers of the deaf work influences their perception of stress. For example, a culture that prioritizes work-life balance and offers support for professional development may be less stressful than the one that does not. Hence deaf education teachers may experience high levels of stress when the needed environment not provided.

A study conducted by Ghani, Ahmad and Ibrahim (2013) also revealed that responsibility for pupils to be successful in examination and able to behave like hearing students were the main workload that contributed to teacher stress. This followed by administrative work, attending workshops, stock and inventory, and too much work in one time. Difficulty in completing syllabus in the time available and lack of material resources in meeting new educational basis are reported as some of the stressors of deaf

education teachers profession (Ghani et al., 2013). Another significant cause of stress among teachers of students who are deaf was pupils' reluctance to follow instructions, followed by pupils' impolite behavior (Batten & Corcoran, 2019), and handling problematic pupils such as attention deficit hyperactive disorder who refuse to follow instruction and unable to sit still is very challenging and stressful (Anderson, 2016). Kritzer and Zehner (2018) conducted a comprehensive systematic literature review to examine the current state of research on teacher stress and burnout in deaf education. The review identified several factors that contribute to teacher stress and burnout, including communication difficulties, a lack of resources and support, and challenging student behavior. The review also highlights the impact of stress and burnout on DHH teachers' job satisfaction, mental health, and teacher retention.

Finkelstein and White (2016) explored the stress and coping strategies among early childhood educators of deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) children using a quantitative approach. The study used an online survey to collect data from 58 early childhood educators of DHH children in Australia. The findings suggest that early childhood educators of DHH children experience high levels of stress such as heavy workload, communication barriers, lack of parental support children misbehaviours. The article by Van and Boer (2017) investigated the emotional demands and resources of teachers working with deaf or hard-of-hearing (DHH) students. The study used an online survey to collect data from 183 teachers working in DHH education. The findings indicate that DHH teachers experience high emotional demands in their work, with communication barriers, challenging student behavior, and a lack of resources being the most significant sources of emotional demand. However, the study also found that DHH teachers reported having a range of emotional resources, such as social

support and self-efficacy, to help them manage emotional demands. The article highlights the importance of recognizing the unique emotional demands and resources of DHH teachers and addressing them through targeted interventions and support. The study suggests that interventions should focus on providing resources and support for communication strategies, behavior management, and emotional well-being.

In the Ghanaian context, stress among deaf education teachers has received little investigation. The few identified studies conducted focused on general experiences of teachers in basic schools for the deaf. Findings from these studies indicate that limited resources for teachers and schools greatly affects teachers work (Agyire-Tettey et al., 2017; Issakah et al., 2021). Inadequate facilities and limited access to technology, textbooks and teaching aids have being reported to be challenges and frustration for teachers who are passionate about providing the best education possible for their students who are deaf.

Asante and Baafi (2016); Ewur (2020) also conducted a quantitative study on experiences of teachers in a primary school for the deaf in the Ashanti region of Ghana and reported concerns around challenges in communication using the Ghanaian sign language, students poor performance, social stigma, challenges in classroom management and limited support from parents and relatives. The study added that the field of deaf education have no side benefits which makes it unattractive and stressful to work in. the study also reported that Deafness is often stigmatized in Ghana and deaf individuals face discrimination in education and employment. Teachers of the deaf faces similar challenge of discrimination and frustration as they work to advocate for their students and promote inclusive education. In a quantitative study by Issakah et al., (2021) on stress among teachers in 3 –basic schools in the northern parts of Ghana, the

study found various factors to account for the stress among teachers in special schools. factors such as increased pupil enrolment, lack of pupils' progress, individualised needs of pupils with special needs, pupils' challenging behaviours, management of multiple disabilities, lack of administrative support, inadequate teaching and learning resources, lack of parental involvement, desire to change job, low remuneration, limited professional training and stressful professional interactions pose stress to teachers in special schools, Issakah et al., (2021). Specifically, teachers feel so stressed when students are not progressing as much effort is put in. In the view of, teachers found satisfaction in the progress of their students. The study used a self-constructed questionnaire and the sample was 80 teachers. The study involved teachers in a school for deaf, school for the mentally challenged and school for the blind all at the basic level. The aim of the study was to find out perceived stress and coping mechanisms among teachers in special schools in the northern part of Ghana.

Kumedzro (2018) also conducted a quantitative study on Teachers' perception of job satisfaction and retention in Ghana: Perspectives from special needs educators. Data were collected from a sample of 150 teachers in selected special schools. The study aimed at examining special education teachers' perception of job satisfaction and retention in Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to find out if teachers' perception of their job has any impact on their retention in special schools. The study found that teachers in the study special schools felt quitting their jobs due to low salary. The statistical figures represented an affirmation that majority of the teachers, 62(63.0%) and 20(87.0%) of the teachers of the Deaf and intellectually Challenged respectively were ready to quit their jobs at the least opportunity. The participants further indicated their willingness to quit the special school into a regular school where they would still

receive the same salary. The study explained that teaching in a special school was very stressful hence their readiness to move to a regular school or to quit and join different sector of employment. Poor conditions of service was found to be a major source of teacher's intension of quitting their service with the special schools. Majority of the teachers of the Deaf (73, 74%) and Intellectually Challenged (17, 74%) agreed that their conditions of service were poor in the schools for the deaf and mentally challenged schools. However, less than half of the teachers of the Blind (8, 44%) believe that their conditions of service were poor, Kumedzro (2018).

Another key source of concern and troubling to teacher's job dissatisfaction as reported in the study was the kind of leadership practices exhibited by school heads. As much as 14 participants representing about 78.0% of the teachers of the Blind and 11 representing 48.0% of the teachers for the intellectually challenged affirmed that their school head teachers practices was a source of stress to them and they would seek transfer to different schools if the opportunity was presented to them. Little above half, 53 constituting about 54.0% of teachers of the Deaf also disagreed and rather had different opinion. To them, the head teacher management practices did not pose a challenge to them and they had no major issue in terms of the leadership practices exhibited by their head teachers, Kumedzro (2018).

The study also has showed that there is a significant difference in the perception of experienced and less experienced special education teachers regarding job satisfaction and retention. The finding further suggest that teachers with more years of teaching in the special schools were more satisfied with their jobs than the less experienced teachers.

In conclusion, there are research works on stress among deaf education teachers conducted worldwide in different countries. The findings point negatively of stress to

teachers. A careful study of the literature reviewed above points that much of the work is done using quantitative approaches. This presents a methodological gap as it did not provide opportunity for teachers to express their feelings and knowledge of stress they encounter. In the Ghanaian context, there was no readily identifiable study on stress among deaf education teachers. This therefore pose a literature gap which this study will contribute to fill using qualitative approach.

## **2.7 Factors influencing the perception of occupational stress among deaf education teachers**

Many teachers of deaf students report feeling unprepared and lacking the necessary skills and knowledge to work effectively with deaf students (Sprenger, 2011; Steinberg, 2010; Zaidman-Zait & Dotan, 2017). The lack of orientation and training in deaf education is a significant factor that contributes to the stress experienced by deaf educators. Teachers who do not have a background in deaf education may not be familiar with the communication methods used by deaf students, such as sign language, lip-reading, and written communication. They may also lack knowledge of deaf culture and the unique challenges faced by deaf students, such as social isolation and limited access to resources (McKee & Scherer, 2012). The lack of orientation and training in deaf education can lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and stress among teachers. Teachers who lack the necessary skills and knowledge may feel overwhelmed by the demands of their work, leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction. Additionally, the lack of orientation can also affect the quality of education received by deaf students, as teachers may struggle to adapt to the needs of individual students and provide effective instruction (Cawthon, 2015).

A study conducted by Kritzinger and Louw (2011) found that deaf educators who received adequate training reported lower levels of stress and greater job satisfaction. In contrast, deaf educators who lacked orientation reported feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and stressed, which negatively impacted their job satisfaction and performance. To address the issue of lack of orientation in deaf education, several recommendations can be made. First, it is essential to ensure that all deaf educators receive proper orientation and training in the field. This can be achieved through professional development programs, mentorship, and coaching from experienced deaf educators. Additionally, deaf educators can benefit from ongoing support and resources to enhance their skills and knowledge, such as access to technology and specialized equipment, ongoing training on communication strategies, and regular feedback on their performance. Lack of orientation in deaf education can have a significant impact on the perception of occupational stress among deaf educators. Adequate training and support are essential to reducing stress levels and enhancing job satisfaction among deaf educators. Addressing the issue of lack of orientation can lead to improved teaching practices, increased confidence, and enhanced outcomes for deaf students. Deaf culture is a unique culture and distinct cultural group that includes individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who use sign language as their primary mode of communication. Deaf educators are professionals who work in educational settings with students who are deaf or hard of hearing and may themselves be members of the deaf community. Limited knowledge of deaf culture can have a significant impact on the perception of occupational stress among deaf educators. Deaf educators who have limited knowledge of deaf culture may experience stress related to communication barriers with their students and colleagues, as well as difficulties in understanding and navigating the social and cultural norms of the deaf community (Kritzinger & Louw,

2011). In contrast, deaf educators who have a strong understanding and appreciation of deaf culture may experience less stress in their work environment. They may be better equipped to communicate effectively with their students and colleagues, and may have a greater understanding of the cultural nuances and expectations of the deaf community.

## **2.8 Effects of occupational stress on teachers**

Stress has been reported to have significant impact on the individual largely in the negative side. Various studies have been conducted and findings documented in the area of stress effects. Cider et al., (2013) are of the view that the impact of stress in terms of human suffering, social and occupational impairment, and illness are enormous. There is a reported link between stress and illness (Adetayo et al., 2014; Mohd Zuri Ghani et al., 2013; Shkëmbi, Melonashi & Fanaj, 2015). According to Brown (2002), long-term stress affects teachers' physical and mental health, producing physiological, psychological, and attributional responses. They indicated that physiological effects of stress include increased blood pressure and headaches, psychologically, the effects of stress include depression and anxiety (Chaplain, 2018), and attributional effects of stress maybe evident in teachers' reports of feelings of inferiority, resignation and helplessness (Prather-Jones et al., 2011).

In in a study on teacher stress and the deaf and hard of hearing student population by Crowe and McKay (2017), the researcher highlighted the impact of stress on DHH teacher job satisfaction, retention, and overall mental health. The study indicated that teachers become unproductive when heavily stressed. In addition, the authors identified the need for further research and support for DHH teachers to manage stress and maintain their well-being. Teachers occupational stress may also impact on physical ailment, voluntary retirement (Chaplain, 2018), heart attacks, poor



relationships with colleagues, anxiety, general feeling of inadequacy (Prather-Jones et al., 2011), lingering fatigue, depression and burn-out symptoms (Luckner & Dorn, 2017). Effects of teacher stress may have various dimensions including physical (high blood pressure, headaches, migraine), psychological (depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, low self-esteem (Cohen, 2017), behavioural (absenteeism, fatigue, resignation), and social (interpersonal conflicts, hostility with pupils and colleague teachers) among others (Kusi et al., 2018; Kumedzro, 2018; Zaidman-Zait & Dotan, 2017). This means that teacher stress can have serious negative impacts not only on his health but also his relation with others and attitude towards work which combine to affect his overall output with consequential effects on the students' performance. Brown (2002) indicated that there are two major classifications of the effects of stress on teachers which are environmental and emotional. The environmental or external ones are related to the teacher's work as well as the teaching process. The emotional or internal effects concerns the inner feelings resulting in anger, anxiety, low motivation and distress experienced by teachers in their quest to handle job stress. The two influences are extremely interlinked (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009) and affect how teachers perform their jobs.

Teacher stress can severely and negatively affect both the education quality and relationships with learners, deteriorating learners' academic and interpersonal results (Liu 2012). The physiological and biological changes due to stress leads to ulcers, coronary heart disease and even affect the mental status of teachers (Owusu, Nkyi & Adasi, 2021; Panatik, 2012). Teacher occupational stress contributes to reduced immunity, hypertension, diabetes, faulty lipoprotein metabolism, and atherosclerosis hence inserts so much of danger to the teacher (Richard & Effrim, 2016).

Younghusband (2005) specified that as the teachers experienced pressure and demands without satisfactory resources and backings, they had physical, and mental/emotional impacts of stress. Teachers have conduct issues because of occupational stress, for example, poor appetite, over use of liquor, cigarettes, coffee etc. resting issues, having bad dreams, restlessness and being excessively particular. A few cases of physiological impacts of teachers' activity stress are medical issue (Saravanan, 2017; Schroeder et al., 2001; Shkëmbi et al., 2015), sore throat, feeling chest torment and spinal pain, hypertension, loss of voice, acid reflux, ulcers, headache, stomach related disarranges, cerebral pain, weariness, psychosomatic ailment, strong strain, and skin infection; mental impacts are uneasiness, pressure, disappointment, outrage, antagonistic vibe, work disappointment, diminishments in spirit, burnout, passionate and mental fatigue, poor individual relations, failure to think, crabbiness, low inspiration, absent mindedness, cynicism, unwillingness, dejection, poor participation, and feelings of incompetence.

According to a quantitative study conducted among teachers in Sweden by Van Gent, Goedhart and Treffers( 2011) stress causes physiological issues, for example, heart sicknesses, psychosomatic disease, weakness, muscular strain, heartburn; mental and passionate issues, for example, tension, disappointment, despondency, wretchedness, dread and dissatisfaction, burnout, defencelessness, frailty, powerlessness and insufficiency, general uneasiness, fractiousness, enthusiastic weariness, disdain towards organization, negative self-idea and low confidence, apprehension, forcefulness, fixation challenges, and detachment; social issues, for example, hunger issue, exorbitant smoking and drinking liquor, tranquilize manhandle, savagery, and failure to rest (Pelit, Öztürk & Arslantürk, 2011). Pelit et al., study used

the quantitative approach and involved 650 teachers. The study employed the survey design. The tool for the study was a prefabricated closed ended questionnaire administered online to solicit the views of teachers on their perceived stress and effects. Eskay and Nwefuru, (2019) asserts that job in the teaching profession is very stressful and this stress in the teaching profession has negative effect on teachers and the learning process and general school management. According to Eskay and Nwefuru, (2019), there is increased absenteeism as a result of stress being experienced by teachers. Teachers have less satisfaction with their work. Eskay and Nwefuru further added that some teachers develop health complications, tiredness, worry, unhappiness, weakness, headache and anger. The study found male teachers to experience higher stress levels than their female counterparts, Eskay and Nwefuru, (2019).

Brookes et al., (2012) found in their mixed methods study among teachers in the United Kingdom that an estimated 1.8million teachers suffered from job-related illness in the year 2011/2012. In many situations, these causes fatigue, anxiety and depression in their workplace. Labour survey also found that job-related stress was more prevalent among women than among men with highest proportion of occupational stress recorded by health practitioners, teachers and educational workers between the years 2009-2012. Stress is found the main cause of diseases and increased absenteeism at workplace (Brookes et al., 2013)

A study conducted by Ahmed (2019) in South Punjab, Pakistan found that the effects of stress on teacher's health included feeling of headache which results in teacher taking painkillers to cure. Teachers living with anxiety, anger and mentally absent from duty, general moody behaviours, increased in blood pressure and its culminating effects of frequent hospital visits for medical attention. Gardner (2010)

researched the relationship between perceived social support, stress levels and the general health of 104 black educators in the Pietersburg area in the Northern Province. He found that there is a direct relationship between the stress experienced by educators and their general health, Gardner (2010). Muthukrishnan, Saji Mon and Chaubey (2011) also argue that one of the growing health complications of workers that affect their work motivation, productivity and make them to become absent from their work areas is an occupational Stress that that they are confronted with.

Kusi et al., (2018) in a qualitative study of effects of stress on female university teachers at the University of Education found that most workers especially teachers experienced back pain, complained of feeling fatigued, and headaches as a result of stress. Kusi et al., (2018) further added that most female teachers had less time of sleep because they combine academic works with family care, a condition which has the possibility of affecting their performance (Gross, 2005). This is because when the human mind has received less rest, he or she has low capacity of working effectively (Adeoye, 2002). This was supported in a study by Van Horn et al., (2018) finding which reported teachers with reported high levels of job stress had poorer sleep quality and were more likely to experience insomnia. Adell (2009) added that stress leaves adverse effects on biological and psychological process in humans which in turn may disrupt the sleep of victims over a period of time if proper remedial methods are not applied. He further noted that during the period in which one is experiencing stress, the victim may be anxious, distressed, have somatic complaints, among others, which culminate to affect sleep.

Dyrbye et al., (2013) also published a paper in the International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health which reported that teachers who

reported high levels of stress had a higher prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders and respiratory problems. This affects the health and efficacy of the teachers thereby rendering them ineffective. Odwala (2009) found health effects of stress on teachers to include heart diseases, headaches, backaches, cancer, diabetes, cirrhosis, lung and skin diseases, disorders of the digestive system, increase in blood pressure, musculo-skeletal disorders (such as low back pain and upper limb disorders). Hepburn and Brown (2001) reported that teachers expressed somatic complaints such as trouble falling asleep, back pains, poor appetite, and a decrease in their overall health and energy levels. Chronic stress symptoms may also occur if stress continues to be present in the day to day activities of a teacher. These symptoms include fatigue, increased illness, and the inability to concentrate (Popov, Popov & Damjanović, 2015)

Kusi et al., (2018) reported in their study that when one's stress or arousal level increases, the level of performance in terms of quality and quantity also increases, but only to a point of 'optimal performance' beyond which performance diminishes. The authors added that continuous stress on the job further reduces the performance of persons involved because of negative things such as fatigue, exhaustion, and ill health.

According to a study published in the Journal of Educational Psychology, job stress was associated with higher levels of burnout among teachers (Li & Early, 2018). Similarly, another study found that teacher burnout was associated with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety. O'Connor and McCormack (2019) further avers that teachers who reported high levels of job stress had lower levels of immunoglobulin A (IgA), which plays a critical role in immune function. Kusi et al., (2018) reported that occupational stress among female teachers affects their concentration and job performance. Similarly, Chitty's (2005) study is a review of literature on occupational stress in further education lecturers. The study aimed to identify sources of occupational

stress, its effects, and coping strategies used by lecturers to deal with stress. Chitty (2005) found that occupational stress had significant negative effects on the lecturers' mental and physical health, job satisfaction, and work performance. Specifically, the study found that occupational stress led to emotional exhaustion, burnout, depression, anxiety, and increased sickness absence.

Hindley and Hill (2000) found that stress led to emotional exhaustion, physical symptoms, and a negative impact on job satisfaction among deaf education teachers. McDonald and Filiatrault (2016) also found in their qualitative study that stress led to burnout, fatigue, and a negative impact on job satisfaction among special education teachers, including those working with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. In furthering the discussion, Anderson (2016) reported that stress led to negative effects on job satisfaction and work performance among elementary school teachers, including those working with students with special needs, such as deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Bohaty and Shepherd (2013) corroborated the findings of other studies and also came out to report that stress led to emotional exhaustion and a negative impact on job satisfaction among special education teachers in rural communities, including those working with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Younghusband (2005) avers that stress affects teachers' emotions and physical symptoms among special education teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador, including those working with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Working with students with disabilities, including those who are deaf, poses emotional strain on teachers and leads to stress.

In conclusion, the literature on stress among deaf education teachers highlights the significant negative effects that stress can have on this population's mental and physical health, job satisfaction, and work performance. Several studies have found that

stress can lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, fatigue, and physical symptoms among deaf education teachers. Stress can also negatively impact job satisfaction, work performance, and the quality of education provided to deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Effective interventions and support are needed to manage stress among deaf education teachers and to promote their mental health and well-being. These may include stress-management programs, professional development opportunities, peer support networks, and access to mental health services. Further research is needed to better understand the causes and consequences of stress among deaf education teachers and to develop effective interventions to support this population.

## **2.9 Stress coping strategies among teachers**

Coping strategies are the conscious efforts that individuals make to manage stress effectively. Coping strategies are essential for teachers as they can help to reduce the negative impact of stress on their mental and physical health, job satisfaction, and work performance. This section reviews literature on the various coping strategies that teachers use to manage stress in their work. The physical, psychological, social and behavioural impacts of stress require strategies that are effective to make teachers stay healthy and do their work effectively since their coping techniques affect their health, quality of life, and eventually their commitment towards teaching. Abiyou (2017) reported that teachers who are exposed to coping resources may less likely experience serious stress relative to those with limited coping strategies. Thus, coping mechanisms reduce any effect of stress by altering one's emotional state, reducing or completely eliminating the cause of stress (Abiyou, 2017). Stress coping strategies involves modifying psychological and behavioural strategies to overcome specific strains that exceed the ability and personal coping skills (Ramli, Salahudin, Zainol and Suandi,

2014). With effective coping strategies, teachers may have the capacity to solve problems, access social support, and develop capacities for teaching in order to enhance their effectiveness in their work (Addison & Yankyera, 2015).

Jones et al., (2013) reported that teachers sharing useful teaching skills and behaviour management techniques is a critical way of coping with their stress. It has been suggested that colleagues can often render invaluable support, especially among special educators as they navigate their daily responsibilities. Direct and indirect support from lead teachers and colleagues may lead to increased commitment, especially for new special educators. Special educators who see themselves as members of a professional community are more likely to have access to important resources (Jones et al., 2013). Haseeb and Sattar (2018) study among university teachers found that teachers use varying strategies to cope with their daily stress. Some of the strategies as found in the study included training by self on voluntary basis, extra time to job place, behavioural study of students, listening to motivational speeches and accepting and performing responsibilities to avoid any conflict.

Robbins (2004) conducted a study on stress coping strategies among teachers and found that teachers used a variety of coping strategies to manage stress. The most frequently used strategies were problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping strategies included seeking social support from colleagues, seeking additional resources, and altering the work environment. Emotion-focused coping strategies included relaxation techniques, self-distraction, and positive reappraisal. Robbins also found that teachers who used problem-focused coping strategies had lower levels of stress and higher job satisfaction than those who used emotion-focused coping strategies. Additionally, teachers who had high levels of social



support had lower levels of stress and higher job satisfaction than those who had low levels of social support. Overall, the study suggests that coping strategies and social support can have a significant impact on teachers' ability to manage stress and maintain job satisfaction. Similarly, Gardner (2010) reported in a study that teachers adopting individual approach to stress managing was effective. The individual approach to managing stress consist of exercise which entails walking, riding bicycles, attending aerobic classes, practicing yoga, jogging, swimming and playing tennis.

Again, Gardner (2010) said individuals could control stress through relaxation. Individuals can decrease tension through relaxation techniques like meditation, hypnosis, and biofeedback. The objective is to reach a state of deep relaxation in which the employee feels physically relaxed, somewhat detached from the immediate environment and detached from body sensations. Relaxation exercises lessen employee's heart rates, blood pressure and other physiological signs of stress. Another way to decrease stress individually is opening up. A healthy response to this moment or period of personal crisis is to confide in others. Employees may not find it easy to discuss complex individual traumas with others, but self-disclosure can decrease the level of stress and give them more positive viewpoint on life. Gardener further explained that the organization approach to stress management which includes employees training programs, effective upward and downward communication in organization, improvement in personnel policies such as (good welfare packages, incentives, pension schemes), good job design, improvement in the physical work environment, and also management should provide technical support to employees.

Another dimension to the above was added by Saravanan et al., (2017), which he called defence mechanism. These are unconscious strategies used to protect oneself

from problems, difficulties, failures and other sources of stress. By using defence mechanism the individual tends to cope by concealing stress and adopting rationalization as alternative to actual management of problem. The methods used in managing stress include "repression (pushing stressful, anxiety producing thoughts or impulses out of conscious awareness); suppression (the individual voluntarily tries to forget and push off unpleasant events from consciousness, which is done to eliminate the stress, worries, and tension which such events cause); rationalization (this is used to distort reality in an effort at justifying thoughts, feelings, and events that make one uncomfortable. Rather than feeling guilty, unhappy and worried about the outcome of an event, people tend to rationalize to justify their behavior); fantasy (the individual rather than experiencing stress gratifies his desires by imagining satisfying events and achievements), displacement (the individual discharges negative feelings or thoughts regarding a more threatening powerful person onto a weaker one, and denial (complete refusal to accept or perceive reality. This temporarily protects us from painful and unpleasant circumstances, but it does not change reality)". These management strategies emphasize the important role of stress and its management and provide further support for the perception that stress does have an impact on performance.

Teachers adopt strategies to cope with classroom stress resulting from student indiscipline such as behavior modification, removing the student from class, scolding the child, isolation, inflicting fear, discussing the problem, active ignoring, paddling, and calling parents. Teachers confront classroom stress resulting from student discipline with strategies such as behavior modification, removing the student from class, scolding the child, isolation, inflicting fear, discussing the problem, active ignoring, paddling, and calling parents (Sprenger, 2011). Sprenger (2011) further added that other form of coping strategies include the development of adaptive strategies.

Adaptive strategies do not directly affect the source of stress, but do manage the consequences for the teacher. These include ignoring the student, not putting extra work in, and giving up. Studies reported that teachers adopt other approaches to manage their stress when adaptive behaviors fails to yield results. These include smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, unwanted outbursts of anger, sedentary lifestyle (Richard and Effrim, 2016; Rout and Rout, 2014; Sprenger, 2011)

John and Akos (2014) reported that teachers in the Adentan municipal adopt varying approaches to manage their stress. Teachers Schedule their time in order to have time for rest, avoided Work Overload and took breaks within sessions to relax, having enough sleep, sharing problem in school, teaching subject based not full class based, John and Akos (2014). Ayasse, Gruenewald, and Wilcox (2018) identified and reported coping strategies used by teachers of DHH, the study found that social support and problem-solving were the most commonly used strategies by DHH teachers in Botswana. However, the study also found that some teachers reported using negative coping strategies, such as avoidance and substance use. The article highlights the importance of providing adequate support and resources to DHH teachers to help them manage stress and cope effectively. Additionally, the study suggests that interventions aimed at promoting positive coping strategies may help improve DHH teacher well-being and job satisfaction.

Finkelstein and White (2016) found that social support and self-care were the most commonly used coping strategies by early childhood educators of DHH children. However, some educators reported adopt coping strategies, such as avoidance of stressful scenes and substance use. The article highlights the need for targeted interventions to support early childhood educators of DHH children, including the

provision of resources and support for communication strategies and coping strategies. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of recognizing the unique stressors faced by early childhood educators of DHH children and addressing them through targeted interventions and support.

## **2.10 Summary of Literature Review**

The literature on stress, effects, and coping strategies among teachers suggests that teaching is a highly stressful profession that can have negative effects on teachers' physical and mental health, job satisfaction, and retention rates. Teachers face a range of stressors, including heavy workloads, lack of resources, disruptive students, and administrative demands. The negative effects of stress on teachers include burnout, anxiety, depression, and physical health problems. These effects leads to reduced job performance, increased absenteeism, and a higher risk of leaving the profession. To manage stress, teachers use a variety of coping strategies, including problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping strategies involve taking action to address the source of the stress, such as seeking support from colleagues or adjusting workloads. Emotion-focused coping strategies involve managing the emotional response to stress, such as through relaxation techniques or positive thinking. The effectiveness of coping strategies can depend on individual factors, such as personality traits and coping styles, as well as external factors, such as social support and organizational support. Overall, the literature highlights the importance of addressing teacher stress and promoting effective coping strategies to improve teacher well-being and retention rates. It also suggests that organizational support and interventions can play a key role in reducing stress and promoting teacher resilience.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter present the methodological procedures that were used to carry out the study. These procedures included the philosophical underpinning, research approach, research design, population, sample size, sampling technique, instrumentation, trustworthiness, data collection procedure, ethical procedure and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Philosophical Underpinning of the study**

This study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. I employed this paradigm to explore the views of teachers on their perception and construction of sources of occupational stress and coping strategies in the line of their duties. In addition, my beliefs about knowledge construction influenced my option of paradigm. Interpretivist paradigm is of the firm belief that knowledge is everywhere and is socially constructed. Also, interpretivist paradigm belief that all kinds of information was valid and worthy of knowledge. Teachers of Sec Tech Deaf have their individual construction of issues that they term sources of stress and the researcher see such as knowledge which is worthy of learning. I side with Fobi (2023) that the social world cannot be understood from one standpoint and that realities are multiple and socially constructed. Moreover, I believe that context is vital for knowledge and knowing, therefore, contextual factors need to be taken into consideration in any systematic pursuit of understanding. I conducted the study in the natural setting of the participants and used qualitative research tools like interview guides that allowed me to collect data and

interpret them from the perspective of the research participants. Thus, I made the effort to understand and interpret the subjective viewpoints of the participants on the research topic.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

I employed a qualitative approach to investigate teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress and coping strategies because I focused on collecting and analysing in-depth expression of thoughts experiences and feelings on sources of occupational stress and coping strategies using interviews in participants natural settings. Findings of the study were arrived at through the exploration of participants' experiences using interviews but not by statistical procedures and quantification. As the interviews were going on, I observed and interacted effectively with the respondents to give in-depth information pertaining to the interview questions. Qualitative approach in research involves a naturalistic process which seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena on their natural context. It focuses on answering the question "why" and "how" things happen the manner they happen on the basis of human meaning making on their daily lives. It deals with people expressions of their feelings, experiences of the social world (Fobi 2023).

### **3.4 Research Design**

The study employed a phenomenological design to examine the lived experiences of sources of occupational stress and coping strategies of teachers of Sec Tech Deaf. This design focused on describing what most participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon such as teacher occupational stress. Participants in the study were allowed to freely express their personal and subjected views on the topic under study. The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a

phenomenon to a description of the universal essence. Affirming this, Creswell and Creswell (2018) described a phenomenological design as an inquiry from a philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description results in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have experienced the phenomenon.

### **3.5 Research Site**

The study was conducted in Senior High Technical School for the Deaf Mampong-Akuapem in Ghana. The school is situated in Mampong of the Akuapem North Municipality of the Eastern Region. The researcher chose the institution because it is the only public institution in Ghana that offers senior high education to learners who are deaf only. The institution was also chosen because it is easily accessible to me as the researcher. The choice of the institution was because no current study had been carried out in the institution on occupational stress and coping strategies at the time this study was been conducted (search on UEW graduate library, Special education department library, google scholar, pubmed, eric.com and also verification from the headmistress and the assistant headmaster who have both served in the school for the past 12 years now.

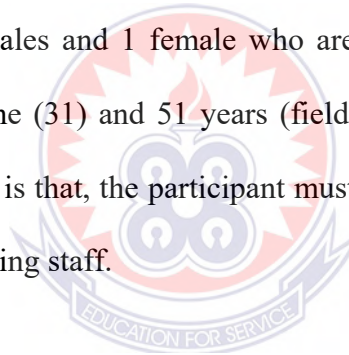
### **3.6 Population**

The population for the study consisted of all teaching staff who served in the school for 3 years and above. This was made up of 29 teachers; consisting of 20 males and 9 females, (Headmistress records, March, 2023). The population was further disaggregated into teachers who are deaf (9) and teachers who are hearing (20). This study targeted both teachers who are hearing and teachers who are deaf. The population comprised teachers in all the Departments (General Arts, Home Economics, Technical

and Vocational skills). These teachers shared similar characteristics in terms of communication modes, subject teaching and work in same environment. Supporting this with literature, Fobi (2023) explained that the term population consist of the entire members of a particular group who possess similar characteristics to which the researcher wished to generalise the findings of the study.

### **3.7 Sample Size**

The sample size for the study was 16 teachers. This sample met the criteria set out for this study; which was that a participant must be a teaching staff and must have served in the school for a minimum of 3years. They comprised of 5 males, 3 females, 1 male who is a deaf and 1 female who is also a deaf. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) consisted of 5 males and 1 female who are all hearing teachers. Their ages ranged between thirty-one (31) and 51 years (field level data, 2023). They also fell within the criteria which is that, the participant must have served 3years and above in the school and be a teaching staff.





| <b>Details of a sample of individual interviews</b> |                   |                   |                   |                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                    |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Status</b>                                       | Hearing Teacher 1 | Hearing Teacher 2 | Hearing Teacher 3 | Deaf Teacher 4     | Hearing Teacher 5 | Hearing Teacher 6 | Deaf Teacher 7    | Hearing Teacher 8 | Hearing Teacher 9 | Hearing Teacher 10 |
| <b>Age</b>  | 44                | 33                | 42                | 33                 | 51                | 46                | 37                | 36                | 39                | 31                 |
| <b>Gender</b>                                       | Male              | Male              | Female            | Male               | Male              | Female            | Female            | Male              | Female            | Female             |
| <b>Highest Edu</b>                                  | First Degree      | Masters           | First Degree      | First Degree       | Masters           | First Degree      | First Degree      | First Degree      | Post Diploma      | First Degree       |
| <b>Subject Handling</b>                             | Maths             | Social Studies    | History           | Integrated Science | Economics         | English Lang      | Social Studies    | Science           | Art               | Clothing           |
| <b>Yrs In Sch</b>                                   | 9                 | 5                 | 7                 | 5                  | 17                | 13                | 4                 | 5                 | 12                | 3                  |
| <b>Classes Teaching?</b>                            | 2                 | 2                 | 2                 | 1                  | 3                 | 2                 | 1                 | 3                 | 2                 | 5                  |
| <b>Details of Samples of Focus Group Discussion</b> |                   |                   |                   |                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                    |
| <b>Status</b>                                       | Hearing teacher 1 |                   |                   | Hearing teacher 2  | Hearing teacher 3 | Hearing teacher 4 | Hearing teacher 5 | Hearing teacher 6 |                   |                    |
| <b>Age</b>  | 42                |                   |                   | 36                 | 38                | 51                | 33                | 36                |                   |                    |
| <b>Gender</b>                                       | female            |                   |                   | Male               | male              | Male              | male              | male              |                   |                    |
| <b>Highest edu</b>                                  | First degree      |                   |                   | Mphil candidate    | First degree      | First degree      | First degree      | First degree      |                   |                    |
| <b>Subject handling</b>                             | Social studies    |                   |                   | economics          | CRS               | Geography         | CRS               | Maths             |                   |                    |
| <b>Years in sch</b>                                 | 7                 |                   |                   | 3                  | 6                 | 11                | 5                 | 8                 |                   |                    |
| <b>Classes teaching</b>                             | 2                 |                   |                   | 4                  | 2                 | 2                 | 2                 | 5                 |                   |                    |

### **3.8 Sampling Technique**

I employed homogeneous purposive sampling which ensures that the selected participants were directly relevant to the research objectives. By specifically targeting teachers who have served in the school for 3 years and above, this sample consisted of individuals who have accumulated a significant amount of experience in their occupation. This relevance increases the likelihood of obtaining valuable insights into occupational stress and coping strategies from teachers who have been exposed to the demands of their profession for a substantial period. Also, the purposive sampling technique allows me to select participants who represent different perspectives and variations within the target population. By selecting 16 teachers, I was able to capture a diverse range of experiences on sources of occupational stress and coping strategies. This diversity enhanced the richness of data and provided a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Given the specific criteria of selecting teachers who have served in the school for 3 years and above, the process of identifying and recruiting participants became more streamlined. I was able to directly approach potential participants who met the criteria, saving time and effort in reaching out to a broader population. According to Fobi, (2023), a purposeful sampling technique involves the researcher using their expertise to select a sample size that is most useful to the research objectives.

### **3.9 Instrumentation**

The study tool was semi-structured interview guide and focus group interviews to gather data for the study. The interview guide consisted of a number of questions each carefully crafted taking into consideration the research questions. Each question had probing items to ensure the best responses were attained. The tool had twelve (12)

question items in total. The entire guide was divided into 6 sections (A, B, C, D, E & F), *see appendix A*. section A is made up of the bio-data of the respondents and it had six items in total. Section B contained items soliciting responses to answer research question one. Section B also had two items with sub-items making the probes. Item one had eight probing items while Item two had one probing item. Section C consisted of questions aiming at answering research question two. This section had one item with three probing items. Section D was made of items soliciting information on the effects of stress on teachers. This section also had two items with each having a probing item. Section E consisted of items answering research question four. The section also had probing items supporting the full realisation of the question. Finally, section F consisted of items asking for recommendations and suggestions for improvement. This section is made up of three items. This section had no probing items supporting it. The questions are direct and needs direct responses. According to Fobi (2023), in an interview, the researcher asked and listens to what people say about their opinion on the question posed by the interviewer. People expressed their opinions about their feelings, school, and work. Fobi (2023) further added that qualitative interview seeks to understand the world from a subjective point of view to unravel meanings. In interview, respondents are free and have the luxury to express themselves without limitation. With this, I was able to gather as much data as needed.

I also organised focus group discussion (FGD) for six respondents (see page 51) using the same interview tool. The FGD on the other hand consist of a group of people who the researcher poses a single question and they take turns to express their opinions (Maxwel, 2005). The FGD gives opportunity for respondents to either reconsider some

aspects of some responses provided after listening to other people views. FGD provided opportunity for a researcher to gather data from diverse people in one interview session.

*The research instruments are attached as appendix A and appendix B*

### **3.10 Piloting of Instrument**

I piloted the instrument in Bechem Technical Institute in the Bono Region on their SHS teachers. This school had similar facilities as Sec Tech Deaf. I interviewed three (3) teachers to see their views on the tool developed. The comments of the participants were considered in the finalisation of the tool for the actual data collection. I only piloted the individual interview guide because the FGD contained same questions. After the piloting, I noticed that the participants used more time to complete one interview session. I was able to complete the first pre-test within 45mins. The second pilot lasted for 1hr 5mins. The third lasted 52mins to complete. Few items were identified to contain the same responses hence were merged. Items on effects of stress on the personal life and on their health were answered with similar responses so after the pre-test, I merged them to form an elaborated single item.

Piloting of instruments, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) and Creswell, (2014) aid in the establishment of reliability, validity and practicability of the questions of a study. It serves among other things:

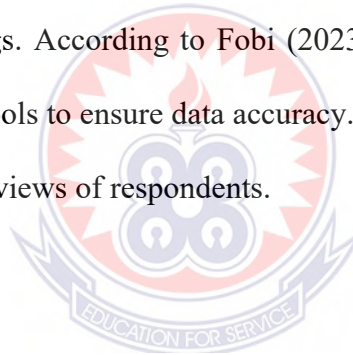
1. To check feedback on the response categories for data analyses
2. Eliminates ambiguity
3. Checks the clarity of the questions.

### **3.10.1 Trustworthiness of study findings**

Four trustworthiness criteria were considered in this study: credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability.

### **3.10.2 Credibility**

I ensured the credibility of this study by giving the data captured after every interview session to the respondent to go through to ensure what is said is captured and well captured to represent the respondent's intention and view (member checking). The audio recordings were also played for participants to listen for them to make input if they wished to change anything. I employed two data collection tools (individual interview and FGD) to ensure data triangulation was carried out to increase the credibility of the findings. According to Fobi (2023), credibility involves the use of various data collection tools to ensure data accuracy. It also ensured that data captured really reflects the actual views of respondents.



### **3.10.3 Transferability**

To ensure transferability, participants' demographics were well established. Participant's setting was well described with their characteristics. The study findings were also discussed and comparisons with previous studies in different context established. Thus, readers who find their own contexts to be similar to the context of the study can apply the findings to their respective situations.

### **3.10.4 Confirmability**

To ensure confirmability, I used direct quotes as possible. This reflects the real views of the participants as they gave during the data collection. Data were collected from different respondents to justify the true existence of the issue of occupational stress among the teachers and their strategies in managing their occupational stress. The data collection materials were kept accurately for confirmation and future confirmation. Confirmability relates to the level of confidence that the research study findings are based on participant's narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases (Fobi, 2023).

### **3.10.5 Dependability**

A detailed methodological process was followed to carry out this study. The descriptions in the methodology were adhered to. The study findings were reviewed over and over by the supervisor and other academic lecturers of the department who are seasoned researchers in the area of qualitative research. Fobi (2023) is of the view that to ensure dependability of study findings, the findings must be reviewed over by professionals in academia with the required experience in the subject matter. Fobi further avers that the methodology used to conduct the study must be justified and its effectiveness ascertained.

### **3.11 Ethical consideration**

I adhered to all protocols required for research study. Before the field visit, I obtained an introductory letter from the department of special education of the University (letter attached in appendix). This letter content introduced me and the topic of the study to the study school. The letter enabled the school to permit me access to

school and respondents. I also designed consent forms (see appendix D) which were read, understood and signed by the respondents to indicate their willingness to voluntarily participate in the study. On each of the visits, I carried along the consent forms. The forms contained two sections. Each section contained information that needs acceptance.

The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. Data were anonymised and no individual names were used to identify the participants to ensure anonymity. Respondents in the individual interview were labelled teacher 1, teacher 2 and so on to conceal their identities. For the FGD, respondents were labelled FGD Tr 1, 2, 3, and so forth. This ensured that responses from the FGD and individual interviews were not mixed up during the transcribing and data analysis process.

Respondents were not coerced in any form. They were urged to feel free to respond to their best. During the interview and the FGD, the head teacher and assistant head teacher were not present so as to present a tensed atmosphere to the respondents. Respondents were also given opportunity to select locations they felt safe and secured within the school environment to have the interview and the FGD. Ethical issues are part of research process which involves obtaining respondents' informed consent, observing their right to privacy, protecting them from harm which may be physical or emotional by the way a researcher asks questions and report findings. According to Creswell, (2014), ethical issues are very important in research so as not to put the respondents at risk in the course of the research process and after the research process. Ethical issues related to informed respondent's consent, confidentiality of responses,

transcription of questionnaires, findings reporting and information securing were adhered to strongly.

### **3.12 Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection procedure involves the systematic procedure a researcher follows in collecting data from participants. This includes how the researcher got access to the participants through gate keepers. In adherence to this, I followed all protocols as in research work. Before the start of the actual data collection, I visited the school to meet the headmistress for introduction, unfortunately, I could not meet her nor the assistant headmaster on the first visit. I returned the following day and had the opportunity to meet the assistant headmaster. I briefed him of my purpose and handed over the introductory letter I got from the department. Upon asking few questions around my research approach, sample and sampling technique, he placed a phone call to the headmistress who was away on official assignment informing her of my presence. He was directed to permit me access to respondents. I was given two teachers to lead me to the staff common room to meet the other teachers. I met them and briefed them on my mission and the intended work.

Three teachers volunteered on the spot to participate in the study. Though three teachers expressed interest, one did not meet the criteria. He had served only 1-year and three months. I could not therefore include him. I interviewed the two that were ready on that day. I returned the following day and met another three teachers. The FGD was conducted on the third visit. Many teachers were in the school and were not engaged so I decided to conduct the FGD which was smooth and successful. I returned the subsequent days to interview more teachers one on one. After visiting the school six times, I was able to interview ten teachers one-on-one and a FGD of six (6) members.



Unfortunately on my part, schools went on vacation after my 6<sup>th</sup> visit to the school. This brought the data collection to an end. After returning, I spent enough time studying the data collected. I noticed a pattern that run through most of the respondents. There were not too much difference in most of the responses. So I ended the data collection after the sixth visit because I assumed I had reached data saturation stage and also the fact that schools went on vacation. The entire data collection exercise took two weeks to complete. At the end of the data collection, I had a sample of five male hearing teachers for individual interviews and three female hearing teachers. I also had one male and one female deaf teacher's for the individual interviews. The FGD also consisted of one female and five male teachers. That made up a total of sixteen (16) respondent forming my sample. The deaf did not take part in the FGD session. They preferred being interviewed one-on-one. I am proficient in Ghanaian sign language so I did the signing and communication by myself and a colleague took down the responses. I then went back to the headmistress and assistant headmaster to thank them and also take data on staff enrolment.

### **3.13 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse data in this study. I transcribed the interviews into correct grammar and full English. I listened to the voice recordings and crosschecked with what I had written to ensure all relevant data were captured. I read through all the transcripts that were generated in order to familiarize myself with the data. At the coding stage, a coloured highlighter was used to identify issues that appeared repeatedly in the data. Based on the codes that were identified, I developed themes based on the four research questions. I analysed the data deductively. That is, I allowed the data to determine the themes. Some aspects of the data which did not speak

in line with any of the themes were discarded. This was done following Fobi (2023) assertion that in thematic analysis, the researcher carefully examines data to identify common themes- topics, ideas and meaning patterns that appear repeatedly and use that as the main themes for the data.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and the discussion. The chapter presents the transcriptions of data generated from the interviews. The analysis reflected the themes that emerged. Data were coded and subjected to thematic analyses and consequently, the themes were used in the analysis of the main research questions.

Themes were generated based the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress?
2. What are some of the factors that influence teachers' perception of occupational stress?
3. What are teachers' views of the effects of occupational stress on their job performance?
4. How do teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?

#### Presentation of findings

**Table 7: Presentation of data**

| Research question   | Themes generated   | Number of respondents |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Question one: What are teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress?</b> | • Student behavior as a source of occupational stress to teachers    | 16                    |
|   | • Challenge in communication   | 14                    |
|   | • School environment as a source of occupational stress to teachers  | 15                    |
|   | • Lack of support from colleagues as a source of occupational stress | 13                    |

|   |  |    |
|---|--|----|
|   | • Lack/limited administrative support as a source of occupational stress to teachers                                     | 15 |
|   | • Workload as a source of occupational stress to teachers  | 13 |
|   | • Motivation for staff (salary issues, accommodation etc)  | 16 |
|   | • Inadequate professional development programs as a source of stress to teachers of Sec Tech Deaf                        | 12 |
|   | • Academic specialization as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress among teachers of Sec Tech Deaf. | 11 |
| <b>Research Question 2:<br/>What are some of the factors that influence teachers' perception of occupational stress?</b>  | • Subject of teaching as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress                                      | 12 |
| <b>Research Question 3:<br/>What are teachers's views on the effects of occupational stress on their job performance?</b> | • Effects of stress on the health of teachers of Sec Tech Deaf   | 13 |
|   | • Effects of stress on the personal and social life of teachers of Sec Tech Deaf   | 16 |
|   | • Effects of stress on the job performance of teachers of Sec Tech Deaf  | 16 |
|   | • Effects of occupational stress on students' performance  | 14 |
| <b>Research Question 4:<br/>How do Mampong Sec Tech Deaf teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?</b>        | • Ignoring cause of the stress as a coping strategy among teachers of Sec Tech Deaf                                      | 13 |
|   | • Improvisation as a stress coping strategy among teacher of Sec Tech Deaf   | 14 |
|   | • Seeking social support from colleagues (social support) as a   | 10 |

## **4.2 Analysis of data by research questions**

### **4.3 Research Question One: What are teachers' perception of occupational stress?**

Research question one sought to find out from participants what some of their perceptions of occupational stress were. Participants provided their perceptions on issues that cause stress to them in the process of carrying out their duties as teachers of the deaf. Under this research question, seven themes emerged which participants indicated poses stress to them. These included students' misbehaviours, challenge in communicating using sign language, high workload, school environment, limited administrative support, unsupportive and attitudes of colleague staff, little motivation and lack of professional development programs for teachers.

#### **4.3.1 Student negative behavior as a source of occupational stress to teachers**

A major theme that emerged from the responses was on the behavior of students in Sec Tech Deaf. Eight out of the 10 participants in the individual interviews indicated that students' behaviour was a source of stress in their work. The data revealed that students' misbehaviours, lack of adherence to instructions, students' forgetfulness and students' physical attacks on teachers posed stress. The data also showed that teachers faced a challenge of controlling students' behaviors. Students tend to exhibit behaviors

that are contrary to the laid down rules. Students disregard school rules and also pose a physical threat to the safety of teachers. Respondents said:

*One major stress I encounter in this school is how students behave towards their studies, their colleagues and teachers. It is really bad. They don't respect at all. They feel they cannot be controlled. They even threatening attacking us if I dare go against them. (Tr 10, Female, hearing)*

*Two years back, a group of the students attacked a master. Destroyed his crops and animals because he punished them for leaving school without permission. I can say student behaviour has been a great concern to me as a teacher in this school, (Tr 4, male, deaf)*

*The students do not respect us the teachers. If you send one, they will refuse. They even tell you if not school, you are not older than them. I was onetime threatened by a student who I tried advising to take his studies seriously. I see deaf students in this school to be very disrespectful to teachers who they should have humbled themselves to learn from (Tr 2)*

One dimension to students' negative behavior could also be as a result of their youthful nature. Young people tend to exhibit signs that depict they prefer to have their freedom to do what suits and please them. Any external force from teachers would face resistance hence teachers face a challenge in students' disobedience to school rules and regulations.

Another dimension which could be deduced from teachers' responses of students' attitude to learning is the fact that students do not see the need to take their learning seriously. They might not have had good and successful role models who excelled through formal education hence their attitude towards learning. Other factors could also be the presence of multiple disabilities and some students also deliberately fail to pay attention which hinders students learning. As a participant indicated:

*The major issue I have in this school is students attitude towards learning. Students do not like learning. They like loitering around.*

*When you advise, they do not take it. You give them notes to write, some will never write (Tr 2, male, hearing).*

However, two of the participants held a different views about students' behavior as a source of occupational stress. One of them indicated that the training received in special education has adequately equipped him with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle students' negative behaviours. The participant is aware of such behaviors and is prepared to handle them. This shows that despite the widely held view of students' behavior, there were few that felt that with the necessary preparation and training, one is able to adjust to the behavior that students exhibit. The other respondents also felt that though students are noted to have issues with respected, some were very good and respect teachers, had good conduct and were serious with their studies. They remarked;

*Though students behaviour is not up to expectation, I do not see that to stress me because I was trained as a special educator to accommodate such children and I prepared my mind before coming here, (Tr 5, male, hearing)*

*Some of the students are well behaved and their behaviour does not pose stress to me. They are serious with their studies, (Tr 7, female, deaf)*

The issue of students behavior was also topical in the focus group discussion where all the six teachers noted indiscipline, students attitude to learning and disobedience on the part of students. All six respondents agreed:

*Controlling students is a very big challenge to us. They sometimes don't pay attention. We try keeping them on track and they easily become angry and threaten you.*

#### **4.3.2 Communication as a source of occupational stress to teachers**

Another main source of stress which kept all participants complaining was the issue of communication using sign language. The study findings revealed that 8 out of

the 10 individual interviews which constituted the hearing teachers find it difficult expressing themselves using the Ghanaian sign language which is the mode of communication for the deaf and their educators. The responses revealed that teachers who are hearing mostly face a big challenge when it comes to teaching with the sign language. They had the content but because most concepts are not represented in sign language, it became difficult for them to freely express themselves meaningfully to the students. This could be attributed to teachers limited knowledge and skills in the use of Ghanaian sign language. The eight teachers who were not deaf said it difficult to blend and decode the different sign language systems that students use in the school, as they reported:

*Communicating with the deaf has been a very difficult task. I find it difficult understanding their signs and also signing to them effectively.*

*Communication is the major stress for us in this school. Much of the concepts in the integrated science syllabus have no signs. We struggle before we able to teach with sign language. It possess challenge to me even in asking questions to test their understanding. We always have the idea but how to express ourselves in the sign language fully is our challenge.*

*Communication with students who are deaf is a challenge. We do not enjoy it at all. we are unable to freely express ourselves like in spoken language.*

On the other hand, Two of the 10 teachers who are deaf did not find communication using sign language as stressful to them. They found it to be their language and have mastered the use of it. They were therefore able to express themselves fluently in the sign language which might be the reason they did not find it as a stress in their work.

They indicated:

*Communication with sign language is not a challenge. We are deaf so communicating with sign language is not stressful. That has been our*



*language and medium through which we were taught so it is not a challenge at all, (Tr 4 & 7)*

Responses from the FGD were not different from those expressed in the individual interviews. All the 6 participants who constituted the FGD also rated communication in sign language as their main source of occupational stress in the teaching of deaf students. All 6 said:

*Lack of skills in sign language stress us a lot. Communicating with deaf students and using the sign language to teach is very stressful, (all teachers in the FGD)*

#### **4.3.3 The school environment as a source of occupational stress to teachers**

Another perception of source of occupational stress from the findings was the uncondusive school environment. Participants reported experiencing stressed from the school physical environment. They enumerated lack of spacious staff common room, poor ventilation in classrooms and distance between campuses (north and south campuses). Data revealed that teachers moving from campus to another to have lessons poses a stress to them physically. The data also revealed that infrastructure in some of the classrooms such as poor desks, fans, lighting, window blades and door panels was a source of stress to them. Their responses were:

*The school facilities are not conducive for learning. Some of the classes are just not good. No fans and with the little heat, we sweat. The school does not have enough accommodation for teachers so I do commute from town and school and that is tiring for me, (Tr 1, male, hearing).*

About the distance between the campuses, participants said:

*The school environment poses stress to us because there two campuses. Classes are scheduled in both campuses and we commute*

*between them to have lessons. We rely on taxi which is draining our meagre salary. The school doesn't give teachers support to enable us move up and down, (Trs 3, Tr 7, Tr 8)*



Another teacher explained their stress from the limited space in the staff common room which is meant to provide space for teachers to relax and prepare for their lessons, mark exercises and do recordings. Teachers were compelled to go home or sit under tree to carry out marking and preparation of lessons due to limited space in the staff common room. A teacher said:

*No enough space in the staff common room for us to have peaceful rest and prepare our lesson notes. This is stressing me as a teacher, (Tr 6, female, hearing).*

Data from the FGD further confirmed the pressure emerging from the school environment in which teachers work. The FGD data also confirmed that lack of space in the staff common room, distance between campuses, unconducive classrooms pose a lot of worry to teachers. Their responses were:

*The distance between the campuses is a challenge. Moving up and down the campuses is not easy. The risk involved in moving up and down to teach is very high (FGD Tr 4, male, hearing).*

Another member of the group added:

*The classrooms are not conducive for us to teach which is stressing us a lot. We sweat a lot due to lack of fans. When we move to the staff common room, it is very small. That place is not conducive for any meaningful work to go on there so this poses stress to us as we struggle to manage to work, (FGD Tr 1)*

#### **4.3.4 Lack of support from colleagues as a source of occupational stress**

It was established from the data that a major source of occupational stress to teachers in Secondary Technical school for the Deaf is limited or lack of support from colleague teachers. Eight of the 10 participants indicated there is lack of helping hand from colleagues in many areas especially when they request for assistance in identifying

some signs. Six participants also said colleagues shirk their duties thereby increasing others workload. Three of the respondents reported the presence of some teachers also becomes a nuisance to other teachers which was a source of stress as that distracted them from focusing on their work.

*Some colleagues pose more stress and challenges even than students. Some shirk their duties on me because we teach same subject. This increases my workload and put lots of pressure on me. (Tr 8, female, hearing).*

*The presence of some of my colleagues distracts me from focusing on my paperwork. I prefer my privacy that's why I leave campus after my lesson. (Tr 3, female, hearing).*

However, some participants held different views about their colleagues. To them, they feel supported and the presence of colleagues rather supported and did not pose stress to them. A participant said:

*I feel the needed support from my colleagues is encouraging. Especially in explaining difficult concepts, I fall on them and they are able to help me out (Tr 5).*

The FGD also confirmed the individual interviews reports. The focus group participants indicated that teachers shirk their duties on others. That increased their workload and further stressed them. A section of the FGD said:

*Some teachers shirk their responsibilities on others which increases our workload especially setting and marking scripts of general papers so colleagues are just supporting at all. (FGD Tr 4, FGD Tr2 and FGD Tr 5).*

#### **4.3.5 Limited administrative support as a source of occupational stress to teachers**

Limited administrative support emerged strongly as a source of stress to teachers. Respondents indicated that support from administration in terms of provision

of teaching and learning resources (TLRs) was lacking in the school. 7 participants said the administration was not providing their needs to enable them teach. In addition to TLRs is the constant ignoring of teachers' welfare. Teachers concerns never addressed or are addressed not satisfactorily and prompt. They failed to organise professional development sessions which will improve on teacher's skills. Responses supporting this include:

*School management is not providing us the needed materials to enable us deliver our lessons well and that is stress us. They also intimidate us with non-validation of salary if we do anything they do not like, (Tr 2, male, hearing).*

*School management is not providing the support needed to develop ourselves academically. They deny us many opportunities for our personal development. (Tr 6, female, hearing).*

Others however felt the support they receive from the administration was adequate. A respondent said;

*Administration is supporting us with the TLMs they can afford. They also give us token at the end of each semester. They do not contribute to the stress I perceive in this school, (Tr 5, male, hearing)*

The FGD responses were not different from the individual interviews. They also shared similar views on the limited support of administration to their welfare and their job performance. They said:

*“Teachers are turned into sign language interpreters to facilitate communication when non-sign language user visits the school to interact with the students without any compensation” (FGD Tr 6, FGD Tr 2 and FGD Tr 3)*

#### 4.3.6 Workload as a source of occupational stress to teachers

Another area in which teachers perceived occupational stress in the study was overload of work. Participants reported that aside their regular classroom lesson delivery, some are burdened with additional responsibilities some of which are not compensated for. Participants indicated some of them are form masters, house masters and sport masters which further put work on their already existing classroom and paper workload. Combining teaching, administrative work, other extracurricular activities together with their personal and home responsibilities was a great stress to them. Some of their quotes are presented below to support this assertion.

*I continue teaching after normal school hours in order to cover what I have prepared since I write everything on the board for students to see before I can start the explanation., (Tr 7, female, deaf).*

*My workload is high which is putting much stress on me. I prepare lessons and assess students on 5 classes on Geography and I always become very tired. (Tr 10, female, hearing)*

Some of the teachers however disagreed with the view that their workload was a source of stress and reported that they do not perceive their workload to be high. They indicated that;

*My workload is minimal. I teach only two classes and the enrolment is not that high so I do not feel the workload. I don't hold any other responsibility too in the school so I am always free, (Tr 9, female, hearing).*

*I feel my workload in the school is minimal because I prepare to teach 4 credit hours in week.*

#### **4.3.7 Inadequate professional development programs as a source of occupational stress to teachers of Sec Tech Deaf**

The participants indicated that lack of professional development programs is a source of stress to them since they are unable to improve and adopt effective ways of handling the students. Teachers wished that they be provided with programs which aim at improving on their communication skills in sign language, classroom management. This lack of professional development hampers on their effectiveness. They said these during the interview session;

*There are just no professional development programs for us in this school targeting educating the deaf. The few professional development programs are for general classroom teaching. There has never been a time a workshop was organised on sign language for which I am called to participate, (all respondents).*

The FGD also had participants sharing similar views. The participants in the FGD also unanimously indicated there are no professional development programs targeting their skills as teachers teaching the deaf.

#### **4.4 Research Question 2: What are some of the factors that influence teachers' perception of occupational stress?**

The second research question sought to investigate some of the specific factors that influence the perception of occupational stress among teachers in Sec Tech Deaf. Two themes emerged from this research question. These included teachers' academic specialization (area of specialization) and their current subjects being handled in the school.

#### 4.4.1 Academic specialization as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress among teachers of Sec Tech Deaf

During the interview, a major theme that emerged which teachers felt contributed to their perception of stress was the fact that some teachers did not have any background training in special education. 3 participants indicated they had no prior academic training in deaf education and had no knowledge of deaf culture prior to being posted to the school for the deaf. This they indicated posed a challenge to them and increased their perception of stress. To support this assertion, the participant reported;

*I was not trained in the area of deaf education nor special education. My first posting and encounter with deaf students is in this school, (Tr 2, male, hearing)*

Other teachers also said;

*I was not trained in deaf education. I never had training in special education so I learnt about deaf culture in this school. That I think makes things difficult for me. If I had prior training, I would have been prepared psychologically (Tr 3, male, hearing)*

*I received training in sociology and political science from the University of Ghana. I did not study special education. It was GES postings that brought me to this school. It is difficult for though but I have to manage in order to remain in employment, (Tr 6, female, hearing).*

However, a good number of the teachers indicated they had background training in special education at the university level. Some indicated their education in special education and knowledge in deaf education has reduced their perception of occupational stress especially in handling the behaviours of students who are deaf. About 7 of the participants indicated they had prior training in special education and that is helping them in their job as teachers of the deaf.



*I studied special education at the undergraduate level so area of academic specialization does not influence how I am facing stress in this school, (Tr 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10)*

The FGD responses were not too different from the individual interviews. Majority of participants also indicated they had training in special education so that was not a challenge to them. They reported that though they face a lot of challenges in the school, their challenges were not from their area of academic specialization. Only two respondents of the FGD respondents did not specialize in special education at the first degree level.

#### **4.4.2 Subject of teaching as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress**

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was the fact that respondents were teaching subjects for which they did not receive training on. According to the GES pre-tertiary education bill (2019), a teacher qualifies to be placed in the Senior High School upon attaining academic qualification of a principal superintendent (First degree) and above in a particular subject area. The situation was a bit different according to the responses in the interviews. Some respondents were teaching subjects to which they did not have specialty in. 6 out of the 10 participants indicated they were teaching subject areas to which they had no prior training on. This possess stress to them as they have to some of their responses were;

*I studied economics at the university level but I am currently teaching clothing and textiles which is posing difficulty to me. I would have been comfortable to teach economics but when I came, I was told they have enough economics teachers and the vacancy left was for clothing and textiles. So I accepted to teach it, (Tr 10, female, hearing)*

*I am currently teaching Mathematics. I would have wished to teach Geography as my training equipped me. But there are 4 geography*

*teachers here but few Mathematics teachers so I was given Maths and I have no option than to teach it, (Tr 1, male, hearing).*

Teacher 8 who is a hearing male also said;

*I studied special education and social studies at the university. I was expecting to teach social studies but I am given integrated science because they need teachers in science. It possess a big stress to me. The content knowledge is not there yet am asked to teach it. To make it worse, teaching something that you are not fluent in using sign language which is also very difficult. It is very stressful.*

Other participants were teaching the subject areas in which they specialized and did not feel it was a factor influencing their perception of occupational stress. They however felt they could do better if they had prior training in deaf education and sign language specifically. Two of their responses are as follows;

*I am teaching the subject area I was trained at the university but I did not have training on deaf education. I feel could have done better if I had training in sign language prior to my posting here. I have the perfect content knowledge but using sign language to teach it is a challenge to me, (Tr 4, male, hearing)*

Another participant said:

*I studied economics and I am currently teaching economics. The subject area is not really a problem to me. I know my subject content deeply and I am comfortable with it, (Tr 5, female, hearing).*

#### **4.5 Research Question 3: What are teachers' views of the impacts of occupational stress on their job performance?**

This research question sought to find out from teachers how they felt the presence of occupational stress is impacting either negatively or positively on their job performance. Stress has been reported to have significant impact on the individual largely in the negative side. Participants in the current study shared their perception of

the effects of stress on their lives and job performance. Under this research question, four themes emerged. These were, stress affects teachers' health, their personalities and socialization life, their job performance, and students' performance.

#### **4.5.1 Occupational stress affects the health of teachers of Sec Tech Deaf**

Results from the data reveals that stress impacts greatly on teachers' health and makes them weak and unable to work effectively. All the (10) participants of the individual interview indicated that they mostly feel pains in their joints, muscular skeletal pains, difficulty in sleeping at night and general body pains. This may be attributed to the constant straining of the hands and the other body parts sing communicating with deaf students involves the use of the hands and other body parts.

*After every lesson, am always tired and weak because I use a lot of energy to express myself for the students to understand, (Tr 5, male, hearing)*

*I feel pains of using hands to communicate. That makes me sometimes feel weak after every lesson, (Tr 9, female, hearing).*

*The stress I experience affects my sleep. It also makes me feel tensed and uncomfortable when is time for me to go to class, (Tr 8, male, hearing)*

Similar views were shared by participants in the FGD session. A summary of their views on the effects of stress on their health was that, they feel pains, tiredness. Some also find it difficult to sleep at night.

#### **4.5.2 Occupational stress affects teachers' personal and social life**

This was one of the themes that emerged strongly in the data. Almost all (9) of the participants indicated that stress affects their personal lives and impacts on their socialization with their families, colleagues and students. The data further revealed that

stress reduces the confidence of teachers and by extension, their pride as teachers. It extends to their home and family lives when teachers carry part of their work to the house, they tend to spend their leisure time marking and preparing scripts and lesson notes to the neglect of their families. It also dents on their image as people mock at them as a teacher of “mumu” and being tagged as one who will soon become deaf. They indicated;

*I feel bad sometimes when I am unable to explain things to the understanding of the deaf student. I feel people will say I do not have what it takes to teach for students to pass. (Tr 1, male, hearing)*

*People make mockery of me as a teacher of the mumu. No matter the education I give to them about deafness and disability. Sometimes I just feel frustrated, (Tr 3, female, hearing).*

*Sign language use is affecting my grammar and making me distort my English grammar. I do not longer feel confident when speaking English language because I am tempted to speak broken English language just as in sign language. (Tr 5, male, hearing).*

Participant five further added;

*It affects my social skills because once I am tired, I am unable to go out with friends. I am therefore unable to interact well with friends. I also feel sad sometimes when I put in very much effort yet the students do not seem to understand. It affects my morale and makes me feel like quitting the field of deaf education, (Tr 5, male, hearing).*

However, one of the participants holds a different view. To this participant, stress does not have any impact on the personality and social life. The participant feels adequately resourced and is able to overcome the impact of stress to stay positive and effective. The participant intimated;

*I don't feel any effect on my dignity as a person, (Tr 10, female, hearing)*

These issues also impacted on the personality and social lives of participants of the FGD as well. As opined in the views of the individual interviews, the FGD participants are also impacted same way. Two of the responses supporting this include:

*The slow nature of students here to understanding and passing their exams makes me feel I am wasting my time and energy. no matter what you do, people who are not aware of the needs of these students feel you are not qualified enough that's why the students are not doing well, (FGD Tr 3, hearing)*

*The participants unanimously indicated that their image and dignity as proud teachers was low as students are unable to impress them, (FGD all Trs)*

#### **4.5.3 Occupational stress affects teachers ability to perform their duties effectively**

The data revealed that all the 10 individual participants mentioned the effects of stress on their job performance. It can therefore be inferred that when teachers are stressed, they are unable to perform their roles to satisfaction. This often times lead to high rate of absenteeism, the quality of teaching is also affected because the teacher at the center of the teaching and learning process is of not sound and peaceful mind. This culminates in reduced contact hours as teachers sometimes abandon duties which affects students during assessments. They reported;

*When I am tired, there is no much I can do. I am compelled to abandon the teaching. This affects my curriculum completion hence challenge when students are to sit for the WASSCE exams, (Tr 1, male, hearing)*

*It makes me unable to focus to deliver my work. It takes much to regain self-confidence to be able to focus again and by that time, precious time have been wasted, (Tr 3, female, hearing).*

Also, the FGD added that they are unable to complete their syllabus because students are slow in grasping lessons. Participants in the FGD further added that

students' behaviour also affects their socialization with them because they sometimes pose a threat to their safety.

#### **4.5.4 Occupational stress affects students' performance**

Another notable effect of stress which emerged with all (10) of respondents raising it during the individual interview and the FGD participants was the effect that teachers who are stressed have on the performance of students of Sec Tech Deaf. It was noted that even though the study targeted teachers, the effect trickles down to the students as the end beneficiaries of teachers efforts. The study found that when teachers are stressed and are unable to deliver satisfactorily, students' academic performance is indirectly affected. The responses reveals that stress affects their content completion rate which also affects students' performance at semester examination and at the WASSCE level. They indicated;

*When am stressed and unable to teach well, it affects students' performance. Students are unable to perform to expectation in assessments (Tr 8, male, hearing).*

The rest of the 15 participants shared same view as Teacher 8. They all indicated when they are stressed, the effect trickles down and students' performance.

#### **4.6 Research Question 4: How do Mampong Sec Tech Deaf teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?**

This research question investigated the strategies teachers used to manage the stress they encounter in their work. Three themes emerged from this research question. These were; teachers use ignoring the source of occupational stress, improvisation of

teaching and learning resources and seeking support from their colleagues to deal with their challenges.

#### 4.6.1 Ignoring cause of the stress

The data revealed that teachers prefer ignoring behaviours which pose stress to them emerging from both students and their colleagues. The appropriate way of dealing with such behaviors was simply ignore and focus on what they can do. This was reported by all the 16 of the respondents. The findings further revealed that since students can be irritated and become violent on teachers, they prefer to ignore whatever behavior they feel could pose a threat to their safety. Some of their responses backing this interpretation include;

*I ignore their misbehaviour. Since the students can easily become irritated and physically attack me as a teacher, the best way I handle stress from them is to ignore them, (Tr 2, male, hearing)*

*I ignore them. Even when you punish them, they will still exhibit same behaviour. Those who disturb and disrupt lessons are made stand up or excuse them from the class. The abusive ones are reported to management for punishment, (Tr 3, female, hearing)*

On the part of managing stress emerging from colleagues, respondents reported they use similar strategy of ignoring the behavior and sometimes leaving the scene. Others indicated they prefer to return home immediately after their lessons to have conducive environment to work and to avoid been in a situation where their peace of mind will be disturbed.

*I turn deaf ear to whatever colleagues do. I cannot change their ways of doing things. The high noise in the staff common room and vehicular noise makes me leave campus after my lesson, (Tr 4, male, hearing)*

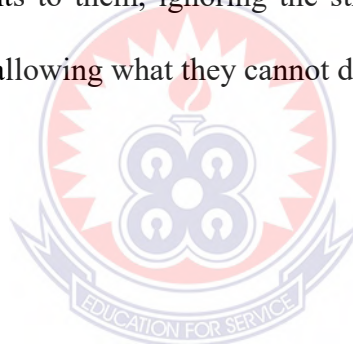
Respondents also reported that the stress imposed by the distance between the two campuses was not in their power to control. They therefore resort to managing the situation hoping for a better time. Some of the responses indicated;

*I manage with whatever I am faced with on the school environment. Since I cannot change anything, I just try to manage to carry out my responsibilities, (Tr 4, male, deaf)*

Four of the participants indicated similar views;

*We manage. We commute day in day out. Days that we are tired and have not money to pick taxi, we will not go to class at the south campus, (Tr 1, 3, 9,10)*

Participants in the FGD were not different in their responses. They indicated managing the situation as it presents to them, ignoring the stress source and doing what their capacity can permit and allowing what they cannot do.





#### 4.6.2 Improvisation of TLRs

As found in the data, participants who reported stress and challenges in accessing teaching and learning resources adopted improvising of materials in order to meet the needs of their students. This have not been found in the literature reviewed but was reported to be an effective strategy of managing challenging situations where the needed resources are unavailable. Participants indicated;

*Deaf students are visual learners and they learn better when the right materials are used in the lesson, when I do not get the materials, I improvise sometimes by producing similar materials using available raw materials. This I often us to enable me teach well (Tr 4, male, deaf).*

Participant 3 also reported;

*I often search on the internet to download pictures of materials I need to teach and show to students using my phone in place of the teaching and learning materials. This to make up for the unavailability of materials and resources I need.*

The FGD also reported similar strategies. The 6 participants all stated they improvise when necessary. Though they see that as time consuming and sometimes consume their internet data, they feel it was the readily available means of reducing their challenge in teaching and carrying out their duties.

#### 4.6.3 Seeking support from colleagues (social support)

Another theme that emerged on the ways teachers cope with their stress was seeking support from colleagues. Respondents said they most often resort to their colleagues as the primary source of support when they are stressed or faced with a difficult challenge. About seven of the respondents who were interviewed indicated

they always call on their colleagues when they are challenged. They mostly resort to support from their colleagues in handling issues with especially communication with the deaf, signing some concepts to students and also in dealing with difficult students. The findings further indicated collegial support is the easiest and accessible avenue one can rely on to succeed in their immediate challenges. One of the participants indicated;

*I first contact my colleagues especially the deaf teachers when I encounter challenge in explaining very difficult concepts to students. I can say they have been of very good support in that regard, (Tr 1, male, hearing)*

The FGD responses were however different from the views of the individual interview interviews. Responses from the FGD rather indicated that accessing support from colleagues was at the expense of the teacher. To the participants, it is better to focus on oneself than to rely on colleagues for support. This paints a picture of mistrust in the sight of accessing support from colleagues. A section of the participants said;

*I have never sought help from colleagues in managing my stress. I do not trust them, (FGD Tr 1).*

*Some can mislead you especially into signing wrong things which students will make mockery of you, (FGD Tr 3).*

*Asking for support from colleague teachers makes them feel they are more qualified than you are hence boast about their skills, (FGD Tr 2).*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the major findings of the study. Findings from the 16 respondents are discussed based on the themes generated from the research questions and inferences are made from previous studies. Each theme is discussed thoroughly with support from literature and linking it to theoretical backings. The discussion followed the order of the research questions and their themes generated under each of them.

#### 5.1 Research question one: What are teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress?

Under this research question, 7 themes emerged strongly which were analyzed in the findings. The themes included 1. student behavior, 2. challenge in communication, 3. physical school environment, 4. lack of collegial support, 5. lack/limited administrative support, 6. high workload, 7. inadequate professional development programs.

##### 5.1.1 Student Negative Behaviors

The findings revealed how students' behaviour posed stress to teachers. The findings agrees with (Kusi et al., 2018) who found in their study that students misbehaviour presents great stress to teachers. Student misbehaviour in Sec Tech Deaf exposed teachers to physical attack. This issue of students' behaviour as a source of occupational stress could be looked at from different angles. One side to this could be that, teachers did not have adequate management and students control skills in their training and

through their professional development. Teachers handling young adolescents at this stage expects different behaviors from them. Young adults at this stage desire to have freedom to do their wish. Any attempt to subdue them would face fierce resistance. Knowledge and strategies of people management skills and efforts in understanding the stages of human development is critical. When teachers develop knowledge on the characteristics that are likely to be exhibited by young adults at this stage of their development will enable them understand and be able to manage students behaviors. The second dimension to this issue of students' misbehaviour as a source of occupational stress as reported by teachers in the study could be as a result of students backgrounds, home training and probably the presence of multiple disabilities. Students from unconducive and disruptive homes would tend to exhibit certain unacceptable behaviors which contravenes the norms of the institution. Students from conducive and well-groomed backgrounds would more likely exhibit good behaviors. It is therefore important that teachers make conscious effort to understand the backgrounds of some students who exhibit these behaviours. This will enable them better appreciate and adjust to certain behaviors and help the students to succeed while they also succeed in their work with less stress as they will be psychologically prepared for such behaviours.

The findings further indicated that students inattentiveness in class during teaching was a source of stress to teachers. This could be attributed to why students always perform poorly in assessments. It is evident that learners who are provided with conducive environment and engaged in well-coordinated and activity based learning would often be active and pay attention (Agyire et al., 2017). Learners with a purpose would also be serious with their education. The reverse of this may result in learner's low interest in learning. In the community of deaf, it is largely known that most deaf people do not

have higher education (it is recently that deaf education is gaining attention with a considerable number of deaf people accessing and excelling academically to the higher level and becoming successful) and as a result, the urge and role models that deaf students would look up to in order to aspire high are limited, GNAD (2022). Deaf students could have the feeling that there is no need spending much time and paying attention in class because they are not certain of their future.

The teaching strategies and demonstrations employed by teachers could also be a contributor to students disinterest in learning. When teachers are unable to meet the learning needs of students, they will ultimately show low interest in learning. To ensure that students develop interest in learning and actively take part to ensure retention, teachers should make efforts to make learning interesting to the students. Teachers should also ensure they improve on their skills to meet the learning needs of their students. This will culminate in increased interest in learning and once students are interested in learning and are able to retain and comprehend lessons, teachers stress will be reduced. Relating this to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, it can be said that teachers in the study felt lacking the necessary skills in managing students behavior. This resulted in their stress. If they had the necessary skills and resources which commensurated with the demand from students negative behavior, they would have appreciated the stress and over come it. Apply this theory into this study will mean that teachers should make effort to develop the skills necessary to manage students behaviour so as to reduce their perception of stress emanating from the behaviors that students exhibit.

### **5.1.2 Challenge in communication using Ghanaian sign language**

As evident in the findings, communicating with students who are deaf is a challenge to many teachers who are hearing who interact with them. This finding is in line with results from most studies conducted in the area of deaf education such as (Eskay & Nwefuru, 2019; Richards & Marschark, 2015; McDonald & Filiatrault, 2016; Berman, 2018), their studies reported communication challenge as a major source of stress to the teachers. Except the teachers who are deaf who had little to no challenge with the communication using Ghanaian sign language because it is their natural language, the other respondents unanimously agreed that their greatest stress comes from communication. Teaching with sign language is a daunting task to teachers most of whom only learnt the language on the job. Some of them had no prior knowledge and skill of sign language and had never had exposure to deaf culture but were posted to teach. It is even more difficult in teaching subjects such as integrated science which has terminologies which are difficult to explain. Teachers most often write all notes on the board and point to them for students to memorize. This in my view could be a contributor to the poor performance of students during exams as reported by the respondents and other studies. This issue of communication challenge can also be linked to why students develop little interest in learning. Once their learning needs are not met by the teacher, they feel education is a waste of time and resources. Once a teacher is unable to explain the material to the students, they will also find it difficult to understand and at the end, little learning will be taking place meanwhile the teacher is stressing.

Since communication is very important in our daily lives, teachers are encouraged to develop themselves in the area of sign language in order to communicate

effectively with their students who are deaf. By extension, their ability to fluently communicate and decode the sign language will reduce their stress to a greater extent. Issues such as students' misbehaviours which might have been as a result of miscommunication will be addressed. The challenge in the ability to communicate using sign language in the study theory is termed as lack of resource/capacity. If teachers possess the capacity, they would not have communication as a stress just as the deaf teachers with the capacity did not see it as a source of stress. Once teachers build themselves to better and effectively communicate whatever information freely, the issue of communication challenge as a source of stress will cease to be rated as such. Teachers in the school and other schools for the deaf should make it a point to effectively build themselves either through emersion or attending capacity development programs in the use of sign language. They can also take up other short courses in this area to equip themselves.

### **5.1.3 School physical environment**

Physical environment play a critical role in increasing or reducing employee comfortability and effectiveness. By extension, conducive physical school environments promote effective teaching and learning. Unconducive school environments inhibit effective teaching and learning. In the context of this study, it was deduced that the school physical environment was a source of occupational stress to teachers. This finding is corroborate with the study of the American Psychology Association (2013); Demjaha et al., (2015) which reported that the physical environment of an employee could be a source of stress. Unconducive physical environment of a school poses stress to teachers and affects their health and job performance as well as students' performance. In the case of Secondary Technical

School for the Deaf, the infrastructure and distances between the campuses is a source of great stress which must be dealt with in order to have a stress-free teaching staff for the betterment and improvement of teaching and learning. With the exposure of Secondary Technical School for the Deaf teachers to constant noise, teachers stand the risk of developing problems with their hearing. The poor ventilation and lighting system in the classrooms could also expose teachers to developing eye strain and airborne disease. Teachers also stand the risk of been harmed by fast moving vehicles as they commute between the two campuses to carry out their duties. Resource wise, teachers use their meagre earnings to board transport between the campuses which have toll on their quality of financial strength.

Theoretically, the findings agreed with the theory that resources are important for the effective job performance of employees (here in, the teacher). The resources in school are not conducive for teaching and learning as found in the results. Teachers feel their resources as in financial human power is being depleted at a fast rate into their jobs without any form of recouping in the near future. This stresses them psychologically. It would be better for school management to quickly address the challenges in the school environment which are beyond the teachers' capacity so as to free them from those stress. School management could put measures such as school bus to convey teachers between the two campuses to transport teachers to carry out their duties. This will ease teachers the burden of using their own financial resources to pay for transportation. It will also to a large extent reduce the risk of teachers been knocked by moving vehicles since the campuses of the school are by a very busy main road.



#### **5.1.4 Limited support from colleagues**

Collegial support is very important in the smooth management of organisations. Where there is lack of or limited collegial support or cooperation, the social environment becomes less conducive for any productive and meaningful work to go on. The results from the interviews revealed that there was limited support and cooperation among teachers and that affected their work and poses stress to them. In support of the findings of Gyamfi et al., (2016); cooperation and support among employees in an organization helps reduce pressure where different skills and technical knowledge is harnessed to make up for the weakness of another.

The findings also agreed with that of AlMuammar et al., (2022) that people with very low need for contact with others would suffer stress if placed in working circumstances which has extensive social interaction with people/colleagues. This accounted for some teachers in the study feeling that they work better and with less stress when they are alone without noise and contact with colleagues. The nature of the school environment and the staff common room does not promote such working environment. Teachers seat together in the staff common room and that distracts others and increases their stress level. Such teachers would have wished that they are given separate places with little presence of colleagues. That will reduce their stress and make them effective. The findings further mean that the conduct and attitude of some teachers in the school pose threat to the survival and stay in the school. Reporting colleague teachers to authority could land them into trouble which could result in either query or non-validation for salary which is the only source of livelihood to some of the teachers. These does not promote a conducive collaboration to the teachers. Team work is very important especially in the field of deaf education. It is therefore important to encourage

team work in order to minimize stress. However, in encouraging team work, care must be taken in order not to inconvenience others who will not be effective with the presence of others.

#### **5.1.5 Limited administrative support**

Comments from the respondents revealed that administration which is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that teaching and learning materials are available to facilitate smooth teaching is reneging on their responsibility. Teachers are compelled to use their own ideas to improvise in order to teach. It is even more difficult teaching students who are deaf and depend largely on visuals when teachers are not well resourced. This view of the respondents agrees with the findings of (John & Akos, 2014; Agyire et al., 2017; Dyer, MacSweeney et al., 2003; Gregory, 1998) who found that teachers become easily stressed when the needed materials and support needed from administration is not adequate. It is even worse in the field of special education where teachers teach differently abled children.

In the field of deaf education, administrative support with provision of resources helps reduce the burden and stress of teachers as such materials improves on the understanding rate of students (Hindley, 2000). The findings was also in tangent with the findings of (Eskay & Nwefuru, 2019; Richards & Marschark, 2015) who stated that administrative support to teachers of the deaf helps reduce pressure and make them effective. In the case of Sec Tech Deaf, it is different because the support needed from the administration in terms of provision of TLRs and other supports such as permission to embark on further studies to enable teachers upgrade their knowledge is lacking. It is therefore prudent for administration to be up in doing by ensuring that the needs

teachers of teachers are provided. When teachers are resourced, they will be less stressed and become effective.

### **5.1.6 High Workload**

The findings under this theme paints a mixed views of participants on their perception of occupational stress emerging from workload. Even though majority of the respondents agreed that they have high workload, the minority says otherwise. Per the workload level of the Ghana Education Service contained in their human resource manual, a teacher at the senior high school level is mandated to teach a minimum of 18 credit hours (each lesson last for 2hours) and a maximum of 24 credit hours per week (GES, 2012). The manual also spelt out the number of times a teacher should meet students to be twice a week for a particular course (mostly in the core courses). This indicates that some teachers of Sec Tech Deaf work lower than the minimum credit hours as prescribed by the human resource manual of GES. With some teachers handling as low as 4 credit hours (twice meeting of a class in the case of teacher 4 who indicated teaching a single class) per week. The highest number of credit hours handled by a cross section of the teachers is handling 5 classes which translates into 24 credit hours per week. This can be concluded that in terms of workload in lesson delivery, teachers of the study school are working within the approved schedule. This finding disagreed with the findings of (Boateng, 2020; John & Akos, 2014) who reported that teachers are burdened with work overload in lesson delivery.

The other area which the respondents indicated stressed them was additional responsibilities and curricular activities which teachers take on. With the above being compared in the regular SHS setting, the human resource manual for GES staff is silent

on teachers who teach in special schools and Sec Tech Deaf in particular. There is no specified workload for teachers who handle special children and children who are deaf in particular. However, a study conducted in the UK (Society, 2015) proposed that teachers in schools for the deaf should handle a maximum of 12 credit hours per week with extracurricular activities inclusive. If this findings is compared with that study, the teachers who handle 3 to 5 classes would be said to have worked over with their extracurricular activities inclusive. This could be why teachers assessed their workload to be high and thereby stressful to them. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model proposed that teachers capacity to handle high volumes of work is a good and appreciated work. When teachers capacity is unable to meet the work demands, they are stressed. Based on this theory, teachers of Secondary Technical School for the Deaf and Ghana Education sector as a whole need to specify the workload of teachers in the school and in doing that, they should make conscious effort to engage eachers in workloads that would not exceed their capacity so as to give room for them to re-energize and to remain healthy and effective.

### **5.1.7 Limited Professional Development Programs**

Teacher professional development and in-service training is a critical component in the educational system of every country. Teachers having gone through their carrier training consistently needs in-service training to keep up to date with the ever-emerging new dynamics and technologies. On daily basis, there are new and challenging issues that keep emerging. This is what teacher in-service professional development seeks to take care of. Findings from interviews clearly shows that teacher in-service professional development in the area of teaching students who are deaf is critical but it is missing in the school. Teachers make do with their own skills, their own

research and knowledge. These findings resonate with (Richards & Marschark, 2015) who identified challenges faced by the teachers of the deaf in Zimbabwe and limited access to in-service training programs and mentorship programs was the major source of stress to teachers. The study further agreed with (Ntinda et al., 2019; Robertson & Johnes, 2013; Robertson & Jones) that lack of professional development programs for teachers of the deaf is a great concern since teachers of the deaf are constantly faced with multiple issues such as communication needs, handling of multiple disabilities in class and students behaviors as well as curriculum adaptation to suit the needs of deaf students. The study further reported that adoption of general curriculum to suit the need of the deaf is a daunting task. The curriculums for senior high schools are designed with the general students in perspective without recourse to deaf students. The teacher is therefore tasked with the responsibility of adopting the curriculum and adjusting to suit the needs of the deaf students bearing in mind state assessment guidelines. The manual for teacher professional development in Ghana is silent on the professional development needs of teachers specifically in special schools and Sec Tech Deaf in particular. It is much on inclusive education and integration of children with disabilities in regular schools.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) tasked with developing curriculum for pre-tertiary education in Ghana and providing professional development opportunities for teachers is also silent on the special needs of teachers of the deaf. The council does not have special curriculum for teachers in deaf schools and is limited in scope in the provision of curriculum for the deaf. The implication therefore is that, teachers will continue to use their limited skills and improvised ways of handling these students who are deaf in Sec Tech Deaf. The situation is therefore worrisome and

efforts must be made to factor in specialized in-service professional development sessions for teachers of Sec Tech Deaf to be able to acquire upskills which will facilitate and smoothen their work and reduce their stress.

## **5.2 Research Question Two: What are some of the factors that influence teachers' perception of occupational stress?**

This research question delved into the factors that influence teachers perception of sources of occupational stress. This part discusses the two themes that were raised are the area of academic specialization as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress among teachers of sec tech deaf and subject of teaching as a factor influencing the perception of occupational stress among the teachers in sec tech deaf.

### **5.2.1 Area of academic specialization (Course of study at the higher level)**

The findings above presents a mixed reaction of area of academic specialization as a source of occupational stress to teachers. Some of the respondents felt that their lack of preparation in the area of deaf education serves as a barricade to their efficient management of students who are deaf. To this group, their prior knowledge on deaf and deaf issues would have gone a long way to enhance their capacity to reduce their stress emanating from their role in the school. They attributed their perception of sources of occupational stress to the fact that they are not specialized in deaf education through their academic training. To this group, specializing academically in an area is a blue print to effective adjustment in this unique area of teaching in a school for the deaf. However, majority of the respondents were trained in special education and in deaf education with minor in different subject areas. To the majority of respondents, this factor did not influence their perception of occupational stress. They felt that adequate

preparation in the course area is enough to equip one to function well. Their capacity in terms of understanding the behaviour of people who are deaf has been enhanced hence they felt no eminent stress. It therefore important that educators of the deaf make efforts to undertake programs in the area of their job to be efficient and well versed in terms of knowledge in the area one operates.

### **5.2.2 Subject of current teaching**

The data under this theme presents a mixed views on the subjects being taught and how they perceive them to have influence on their perception of occupational stress. The data shows that a good number of the respondents were teaching in subject areas they did specialize in. As many as six respondents indicated they were teaching subject areas they are not specialize in and to them, it was a contributory factor which influences their perception of occupational stress. This agrees with the findings of (Yongkang et al., 2014; Khamisa, Peltzer & Oldenburg, 2015) who indicated that when teachers or employees are in a role to which they are not conversant and lacks the requisite information and knowledge, they are bound to face challenges and may likely not succeed in that role. Respondents teaching subject areas they had limited training in posed challenge to them and stressed them. Furthermore, where teachers or employees are in their areas of specialization, they become effective and reduces job strain and increased job satisfaction. They are able to perform their role with ease and reduced intensions of quitting their role.

The data clearly shows that respondents who are teaching in subject areas they are specialized in did not pose strain to them and they are comfortable because they have the capacity. Their resource (capacity to handle the task) is available hence they

did not feel it stressing as evident in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti (2007). It is therefore important to allocate to teachers subjects based on their specialization.

### **5.3 Research question 3: What are teachers' views of the effects of occupational stress on their job performance?**

Five themes emerged from this research question as presented in chapter four. Teachers felt that the presence of occupational stress impacts negatively on their job performance and their general well-being. The theme that are discussed under this research question include: effects of stress on teachers health, effects on their personalities and socialization and family, on their job performance, on students' performance and stress on general school management.

#### **5.3.1 Occupational stress impacts on teachers' health**

Maintaining state of good health is crucial for a healthy and productive organisations and institutions. As evident in the WHO, (2000) report, stress emerging from stress is a global issue which cost nations about 10% of Gross National Products. It is therefore imperative that institutions take steps to forestall any event when the health of employees would be at risk. Form the study findings, stress was noted to pose serious health problems to teachers in the study. These findings fell in line with previous studies conducted by other researchers (Cohen, 2017), who reported effects of stress on teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. Previous findings reported that teacher stress was found to have various dimensions including physical (high blood pressure, headaches, migraine), and general body pains, depression, anxiety, absenteeism, fatigue, resignation). This study also revealed that teachers of Sec Tech



Deaf also experience pains and health issues as a result of stress from their work. This could be contributor to reasons teachers wish to seek transfers to regular schools where they felt will have less stress. It is also evident in the responses that teachers do not feel performing their duties because of the tiredness and pains. This could also in a way be attributed to why teachers are unable to complete their course loads within the stipulated time. Linking this to the job demands-resources model of stress and coping, it is clear that the capacity to regain teachers lost energy and capacity kept deteriorating on daily basis. Teachers' capacity as remain healthy is non-existent. If teachers' workload and health status was kept at constant control, teachers would have remained very healthy and effective. This finding portrays that teachers appreciate their situation as a threat which they felt the best solution was to adopt the flee approach. To minimize the effects of stress on the health of teachers in Sec Tech Deaf, management and administration should make efforts to provide incentives to motivate teachers and also provide a sick bar and minor pain killers for teachers when they feel pains and headaches.

### **5.3.2 Occupational stress impacts on the personal and social lives of teachers:**

Stress among teachers especially teachers in special education has been a concern over the years. Stress affects many aspects of teachers and their personal and social lives are not exception. This study reveals that psychologically, some section of the teachers felt their personal and social lives have been impacted by the stress emanating from their work. Teachers feel low self-esteem and would use the nearest avenue to exit the school if the opportunity is provided. They feel students' performance serves as motivation for them to persevere. On the contrary, that form of motivation and encouragement is non-existent hence their frustration. This confirms and agrees with the findings of (Brown, 2002) who indicated that there are two major

classifications of effects of stress on teachers which are environmental and emotional. The environmental or external ones are related to the teacher's work as well as the teaching process.

The emotional or internal effects concerns the inner feelings resulting in anger, anxiety, low motivation and distress experienced by teachers in their quest to handle job stress. It was also evident that the effects of stress transcend down to affect their family lives. Teachers carry on work to the home which they tend spend their leisure time working on instead having time for their families. This was also reported in earlier studies conducted by (Adeoye, 2002; Gross, 2005; Van Horn et al., 2018). Their findings indicated that stress have the tendency of interfering with the relationship that exist among teachers and their family members. In the case of teachers of Sec Tech Deaf, stress affects their relationship and cost them greatly in socializing with family members.

### **5.3.3 Occupational stress impacts on teachers' job performance**

High employee job performance is very important in achieving a successful and productive institutions. Where the reverse is seen happening, the goals of the institution or organisation cannot be realised. In the same vein, the job performance of teachers in Sec Tech Deaf impacts greatly on the smooth management of the school and improves on student and general school performance. The findings indicates that stress from various aspects of sec tech deaf negatively impacts on teachers' job performance. From students slow in learning, teachers are unable to complete their syllabus before they are due for assessment. This in the researcher's view could be a contributor to their poor performance at the assessment levels. It is the desire of every teacher to complete

his/her workload and to be sure that students are prepared adequately for assessment. It is however a challenge with teachers in Sec Tech Deaf. The responses further indicates that teachers are unable to move at a desired pace because of lack of resources.

TLRs play a critical role in aiding and facilitating the smooth understanding of subject content and their unavailability may derail effective lesson progression. They therefore have to spend a large part of their time explaining abstract ideas to deaf students who find it difficult to understand and easily forget at the least chance. This finding resonates with the theory by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti (2007) who states that when resources are available to match the demand, it reduces the workload and pressure of employees. The theory also stressed on motivation which in this context is intrinsic and emerges from students' active participation and understanding of subject content. These findings therefore call for a swift action at providing the needed resources which will enable students better understand and retain what is taught. This will ensure that teachers are able to move at a reasonable pace to complete work schedules and to prepare students academically for assessment.

#### **5.3.4 Occupational stress impacts on students' academic performance**

Occupational stress of teachers poses indirect effects on students who are the beneficiaries of teachers' tuition. Well-resourced and stress-free teachers will in turn be effective teachers. Effective teachers have the ability to impact positively on the learning and performance of students. The general goal of the teacher's presence is to motivate and impact positively on students' behaviours and their academic performance. This goal may not be achieved in institutions where teachers are work under stress and are also in constant stressing situations. in the case of sec tech deaf,

teachers occupational stress had a toll on every aspect of the school life and functioning to which students' academic performance is a part. Stressed teachers are unable to deliver lessons to students' expectations. This often results in students' needs not being met. Students expects to complete their curriculum for particular levels before assessments. Where they are unable to do so because of reasons from the teachers' side, they lag behind. They are unable to answer questions in assessments both internal and externally. This affects their performance as external assessments are conducted using the standard applicable to schools of their level across the country.

Teachers who are unable to teach and give formative assessments will not be giving feedback to students who would have worked on their areas of improvements. This could be a contributor to the widely accepted notion that deaf students are underachievers and constantly perform below expectations in assessments at the national level (WASSCE). This finding of the study falls in line with similar findings of (Adoyo, 2007; Demjaha et al., 2015; Agyire et al., 2017; Aly et al., 2021) who all reported that stress affects the academic performance of students who are deaf. It is therefore important that conscious efforts should be geared towards minimizing the stress levels of teachers in sec tech deaf in order to minimize the impact on other areas of to which students' academic performance is inclusive. Once teachers are well resourced, they would be effective overcome their challenge and be effective. They will also be improvement in their teaching and learning would progress well for better and improved academic performance of students who are deaf at sec tech deaf.

#### **5.4 Research Question 4: How do Sec Tech Deaf teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?**

This research question accessed the adopted strategies that teachers employ to manage their work-related stress. The data analysed presented 3 themes on the approaches adopted by teachers in the management of their stress emerging from their work. These include ignoring the stressor, improvisation and seeking social support from other/colleague teachers. These themes are discussed in details below.

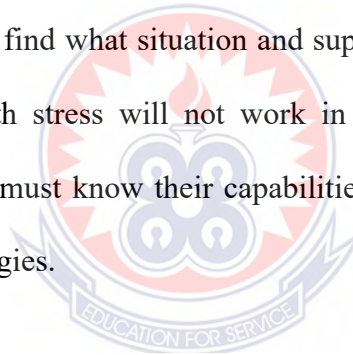
##### **5.4.1 Ignoring Sources of Occupational Stress**

The findings revealed that teachers of Sec Tech Deaf use cost effective measures to overcome some aspects of their occupational stress. Ignoring the behaviors of colleagues and students proved to be effective in dealing with their stress. This falls in line with the findings of many studies such as (Finkelstein and White, 2016; Grunewald, Ayasse and Wilcox, 2018; Sprenger, 2011) who reported that teachers adopt ignoring behaviours from colleagues and students as a way of managing the stress that is emerging from them. They termed this form of coping as a negative coping strategy. I cite with these authors terming it as a negative coping because the problem will still persist and if not dealt with, will resurface on repetitive basis. Teachers of Sec Tech Deaf could find a different strategy of dealing with the challenge by finding the cause and eliminating or minimizing it as much as possible other than ignoring.

Responses on collegial support generated in-consistencies where a section of respondents view support from colleagues to aid in the management of their occupational stress. Others view colleagues as not ready to offer the needed support. The first section agrees with the findings of (Jones et al., 2013) which reported that

teachers sharing useful teaching skills and behaviour management techniques is a critical way of coping with their stress. When teachers consult one another, they will be able to share ideas which will enable them build resilience to sustain and deal with stress. (Haseeb & Sattar, 2018) also stressed on the need for teachers to collaborate and share ideas on useful ways of dealing with stress in the teaching profession. These findings confirms that view as respondents indicated they had help and useful tips from colleagues.

However, the focus group responses disagree with the findings of (Jones et al., 2013) (Haseeb & Sattar, 2018). They rather view colleagues as threat to their effectiveness and could pose danger if they consult them. This implies that teachers in the study school have to find what situation and support works better for them. Mass approach to dealing with stress will not work in the case of the respondents. In conclusion, respondents must know their capabilities and what works well for them, then adopt the best strategies.



#### **5.4.1 Improvisation of TLRs**

Teaching and learning resources (TLRs) play a very important role in the teaching and learning process. They form the core of every teaching and learning process especially in the area of deaf education. Availability of these resources goes a long way to improve students learning while making teaching less stressful to educators. The study found that teachers regard TLRs as a core to their teaching hence their constant scout for them. They duly acknowledged that TLRs aids them in their teaching process and the learning process of the students. In the absence of these materials, teachers still feel the need to get a replica hence teachers opt to improvise

similar or close to similar materials which performs same function. Teachers improvise some materials which aided them. These range from concrete objects to using online technology on their phones so as for students to see and have a pictorial concept of the content of their lesson.

In the view of the teachers, whenever they are able to improvise, they had smooth lesson delivery. They leave the class feeling fulfilled. These improvised materials and other improvisation serve as a resource which boost their capacity. It is therefore suggested that to supplement the effort of school administration in providing these materials and resources, teachers who are encountering similar situation of the respondent teachers should adopt the system of improvisation. This will help them reduce their stress of having to struggle to explain contents.

#### **5.4.2 Seeking support from colleagues (social support)**

Collaboration between colleague workers fosters togetherness and team work which fastens the achievement of institutional goals. It is the desire of organizations and institutions to have a stronger team who will harness strengths in the attainment of the goal of the entity. Members in the team provides support to each other in areas of need. Similar team work was reported in the study findings. Teachers reported seeking support from colleagues in terms of need. To this group, collegial support has been instrumental to their management of stress in the line of their duty. This finding collaborates the accession of (Finkelstein & White, 2016; Gardner, 2010; Kyere, 2009; Saravanan et al., 2017) who reported social support as a commonly used coping strategies by teachers in their studies.

Colleagues are the easiest and readily available contact persons who are able to support in times of need. It is therefore imperative that institutions such as sec tech deaf take measures and steps to strengthen the bond between work colleagues/colleague teachers for the benefit of the school. Though it is worth noting that social support have both negative and positive tendencies of improving or derailing the success of an institution, it is advised to have teachers seek good social support in times of need.





## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations made based on the findings from the study which explored the sources of occupational stress and coping strategies among teachers in Senior High Technical School for the Deaf in Ghana.

#### Summary of the study

The research questions that guided the study were:

1. What are teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress at Sec Tech Deaf?
2. What are some of the factors that influence teachers' perception of occupational stress in Sec Tech Deaf?
3. What are teachers' views of the effects of occupational stress on their job performance at Sec Tech Deaf?
4. How do Sec Tech Deaf teachers manage the occupational stress in their job?

A total of 16 teachers from a population of 29 teachers were engaged to provide responses for the study through interviews on teachers who had served 3 years and more in the school. A qualitative research approach was used with a phenomenological design to reduce the individual experiences of the phenomenon of teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress and coping strategies among teachers of Sec Tec Deaf

to a general essence. Themes were generated from the data and analysed thematically with respondent quotations presented to support the themes.

## **6.1 Summary of key findings**

### **Teachers' perception of sources of occupational stress**

The study found that teachers perceived their occupational stress from different sources. These sources were; stress emerging from students behaviours, their inability to effectively communicate through the Ghanaian sign language, uncondusive school environment, lack of support from colleague teachers, limited administrative support, stress emerging from high workload, lack of motivation for teachers and inadequate professional development programs to build teachers capacity in managing stress from their work.

### **Factors influencing the perception of occupational stress**

Under this research question, findings indicates that lack of academic training (specialization) in the area of deaf education and teachers' subject areas they had little expertise were the responses from teachers.

### **Impacts of occupational stress on teachers job performance**

The findings under this research question were that, teacher occupational stress affects teachers' health, stress affects teachers personal and social lives, affects teachers job performances and finally affects the performance of students.

## **Coping strategies**

Under this research question, the findings revealed that teachers adopted ignoring behaviours which stresses them, improvising the needed teaching and learning materials to be able to help in the work and finally, teachers adopted seeking support from colleague teachers in order to manage their occupational stress.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was evident that teachers of the study school perceived stress from various sources. This stress affects their output and student performance. Teachers can be effective and school effectiveness will be improved if teachers are provided with the needed capacity. Teachers should be encouraged to upgrade themselves with the necessary skills to be able to reduce their stress levels. Also, the study findings points to the need for the school management to be up in their role in terms of provision of the necessary logistics to enable teachers carry out their duties with less stress. teachers concerns with the campus and transportation is very critical which needs urgent attention else more and more teachers will have high stress both on their personalities and their financial resources. Teachers safety is critical and as teachers trek between campuses, they stand the risk of being knocked down by fast moving vehicles. This should be given the urgent attention needed.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- ❖ The school administration should engage more staff to reduce the workload on teachers and also include staff professional programs to build the teachers capacity in their work and their people management skills.
- ❖ The school management should ensure that teachers are allocated subjects they are specialized in to teach to reduce their stress. The school should also consider requesting for more teachers who have speciality in deaf education and sign language background.
- ❖ There is the need for the school management to give much attention to the health situation of teachers to reduce the risk of teachers falling sick.
- ❖ Teachers of the deaf should be encouraged to adopt healthy coping strategies such as mindfulness, exercise, and self-care practices. The school should provide training and support to help teachers develop and implement these coping strategies.

### **6.4 Suggestion for further studies**

- ❖ Future research should explore the role of administrative support in reducing occupational stress among teachers.
- ❖ A need for research into the communication challenges faced by teachers of the deaf in more depth, including the potential impact on teacher stress levels and student' performance toide insights into how schools can better support teachers in this area.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>SECTION A: BIO-DATA OF RESPONDENT</b>   |             |
| Age Range .....  | Gender..... |
| Educational level (highest education)  |             |
| Area of academic specialization/course of study  |             |
| Which subject do you teach?  |             |
| How many periods do you handle per week?   |             |
| <b>SECTION B- PERCEPTION OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG TEACHERS OF SEC TECH DEAF</b>  |             |
| Please tell me some of the things that pose stress to you as a teacher of the deaf   |             |
| <b>Probes</b>  |             |
| How does Student behaviour pose a stress to you?   |             |
| How does this School environment pose a stress?  |             |
| How does presence and lack of support from colleagues pose a stress to you?  |             |
| How does lack of Support from administration pose a stress to you?   |             |
| How does Remuneration/salary/incentives pose a stress to you?  |             |
| How does external assessment bodies pose a stress to you?  |             |
| In what way does Workload pose a stress to you?  |             |
| How does Communication with students pose a stress to you?   |             |
| As a teacher of the deaf, have you ever considered leaving your teaching position?   |             |
| <b>SECTION C- FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERCEPTION STRESS AMONG TEACHERS AT SEC TECH DEAF</b>                                |             |
| Please share with me how your area of academic specialization influence how you perceive stress or otherwise in your work. |             |
| <b>Probes</b>  |             |
| Which subject area are you trained in?   |             |
| Do you currently teach that subject?   |             |
| How does your preparation influence the way you teach deaf student?  |             |

|  |
|--|
| <b>SECTION D- EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON TEACHERS OF SEC TECH DEAF</b>                                      |
| Please share with me the effects of stress on you as a teacher   |
| <b>Probes</b>  |
| How does stress affect your health as a teacher of the deaf?   |
| In what way does stress have impact on your dignity as a teacher of the deaf (social/personal life)                |
| In what way does stress affect your ability to perform your job (on job performance)                               |
| In what way does stress impact on your students' performance   |
| In what way does stress affect the general school management/functioning   |
| <b>SECTION E: STRESS COPING STRATEGIES AMONG TEACHERS OF THE DEAF</b>  |
| Please tell me how you manage your stress as a teacher of the deaf?  |
| <b>Probes</b>  |
| How do you manage your student behaviour which stress you?   |
| How do you manage stress emerging from school environment?   |
| How do you manage stress from lack of Support/relationship from colleagues?  |
| How do you manage stress emerging from limited support from administration?  |
| How do you manage stress relating to salary/incentives/motivation issues?  |
| How do you manage stress from external assessment bodies?  |
| How do you manage high workloads in the line of your duty?   |
| How do you overcome communication challenges with students in the process of your work?                            |
| How do you manage personal issues that poses stress to you in your work?   |
| <b>SECTION F: RECOMMENDATION</b>   |
| What recommendation do you have for school concerning recruiting teacher for schools for the deaf (Sec Tech Deaf)? |
| What recommendation do you have for school authorities towards the welfare of teachers in school for the deaf?     |
| Any other comment?   |

Thank you for your time

**APPENDIX B: FGD GUIDE**

Name of group.....

Date of FGD.....

Number in the group

(Male)..... (Female).....

**SECTION A**

|  |
|--|
| <b>SECTION B- PERCEPTION OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG TEACHERS OF SEC TECH DEAF</b>  |
| Q4. Please tell me some of the things that pose stress to you as a teacher of the deaf                                     |
| <b>Prompts</b>   |
| How does Student behaviour pose a stress to you?   |
| How does this School environment pose a stress?  |
| How does presence and lack of support from colleagues pose a stress to you?  |
| How does lack of Support from administration pose a stress to you?   |
| How does Remuneration/salary/incentives pose a stress to you?  |
| How does external assessment bodies pose a stress to you?  |
| In what way does Workload pose a stress to you?  |
| How does Communication with students pose a stress to you?   |
| <b>SECTION C- FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERCEPTION STRESS AMONG TEACHERS AT SEC TECH DEAF</b>                                |
| Please share with me how your area of academic specialization influence how you perceive stress or otherwise in your work. |
| <b>Probes</b>  |
| Which subject area are you trained in?   |
| Do you currently teach that subject?   |
| How does your preparation influence the way you teach deaf student?  |

|  |
|--|
| <b>SECTION D- EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON TEACHERS OF SEC TECH DEAF</b>                                      |
| Q7. Please share with me the effects of stress on you as a teacher   |
| <b>Probe</b>   |
| How does stress affect your health as a teacher of the deaf?   |
| In what way does stress have impact on your dignity as a teacher of the deaf (social/personal life)                |
| In what way does stress affect your ability to perform your job (on job performance)                               |
| In what way does stress impact on your students' performance   |
| In what way does stress affect the general school management/functioning   |
| <b>SECTION E: STRESS COPING STRATEGIES AMONG TEACHERS OF THE DEAF</b>  |
| Q8. Can you tell me how you manage your stress as a teacher of the deaf?   |
| <b>Probes</b>  |
| How do you manage your student behaviour which stress you?   |
| How do you manage stress emerging from school environment?   |
| How do you manage stress from lack of Support/relationship from colleagues?  |
| How do you manage stress emerging from limited support from administration?  |
| How do you manage stress relating to salary/incentives/motivation issues?  |
| How do you manage stress from external assessment bodies?  |
| How do you manage high workloads in the line of your duty?   |
| How do you overcome communication challenges with students in the process of your work?                            |
| How do you manage personal issues that poses stress to you in your work?   |
| <b>SECTION F: RECOMMENDATION</b>   |
| What recommendation do you have for school concerning recruiting teacher for schools for the deaf (Sec Tech Deaf)? |
| What recommendation do you have for school authorities towards the welfare of teachers in school for the deaf?     |
| Any other comment?   |

Thank you for your time

## APPENDIX C: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
(UEW)

OFFICE OF THE GRADUATE COORDINATOR

8<sup>th</sup> March, 2023

.....  
.....  
.....

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce to you, Mr Bernard Duorinaah an MPhil student of the Department of Special Education of the University of Education, Winneba.

He is currently working on the "*Occupational stress and coping strategies among teachers of Mampong Senior High Technical School for the Deaf, Ghana*".

I would be grateful if you could permit him carry out his studies in your institution.  
Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel".

Dr. Daniel Fobi PhD (ToD), MPhil, BEd (SPed)  
Lecturer in deaf education and inclusive education  
Graduate programmes coordinator  
Department of Special Education  
University of Education  
+233277143260

## Appendix D

### Participant Consent Form

Title of the Study: SOURCES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG TEACHERS IN MAMPONG SENIOR HIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, GHANA

Researcher: Bernard Duorinaah

#### Introduction

I invite you to participate in a research study that aims to explore the sources of occupational stress and coping strategies among teachers of Secondary Technical School for the Deaf, Mampong. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand the nature of the study, its procedures, potential risks, and benefits.

#### Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to the questions as will be posed by the researcher. This may include direct and probing questions

#### Risks and Benefits

There are minimal anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, some participants may feel discomfort in answering some parts and portions of the questions. The potential benefits of this study include contributing to knowledge on the subject under review.

#### Confidentiality

Your confidentiality is of utmost importance. All data collected will be kept confidential and will only be accessible to the researcher and authorized personnel. Your name and any identifiable information will be kept strictly confidential.

#### Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate or not will not affect any current or future relationships with the researcher or the institution.

#### Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact the researcher on 0241441804/0502333511.

#### Consent

I have read and understood the information provided above, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without consequence.

Participant's Name (Print): .....

Participant's Signature: .....

Date: .....

Researcher's Note: A copy of this form will be provided to you for your records. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the researcher at the provided contact information. Thank you for your participation.

