

## THE EFFECT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE AT ASPET A. COMPANY LIMITED

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study was conducted to find out the effect of occupational stress on job performance at Aspet A. Company Limited. The study employed descriptive approach. The sample size adopted was one hundred and nine through the help of convenience sampling techniques. Descriptive analysis factors like frequency tables, mean scores and percentages were generated, and their interpretations thoroughly explained and interpreted. Based on the findings of the study, it was clear that there are multiple causes of stress which have physical, emotional and psychological effects on employees at the company. The study revealed that stress relation with workforce marital status, education, and working experience was negative. However, the study found out that stress among employees does enhance their job performance in a positive manner ( $r = 0.348$ , sig. value=.000). This gives the indication that as employee stress increases, their job performance also tends to increase and vice versa. This section concludes on the premise that stress to an extent enhances job performance at the company. It was therefore recommended that management of the company must come up with an overall coping strategy policy on stress reduction focusing on employees' marital status, education and working experience at the workplace. Also, the study recommended that tasks should be assigned taking into much consideration the marital status, education and working experience of employees in order not to overburden them with so much work and negatively affect them. Lastly, the research recommended the need to look at any further study concerning the effect of occupational stress on job performance to either confirm or refute the outcome of this study.*

**KEYWORDS:** Stress, Occupational stress, Job performance, and Stress Management.

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### INTRODUCTION

Organizational survival has been argued to be a primary goal or objective of every organization with which service companies cannot be neglected. As management in today organization creates 'will to work' necessary for the achievement of organizational goals, this has compared organizations to energized their workers through motivation and other promotional activities to work beyond their abilities (Chabra, 2010; Cole, 2004). This has led to the emergence of most common form of stress in various organizations today known as occupational stress.

Malta (2004) argued that occupational stress is any discomfort which is felt and seen at an individual level and triggered by instances, events or situations that are too intense and frequent in nature so as to exceed an individual's coping capabilities and resources to handle them adequately. Occupational stress is ubiquitous and has become a widespread phenomenon in every workplace. Occupational stress often displays high dissatisfaction among the employees, job mobility, burnout, poor work performance and less effective interpersonal relations at work

(Manshor, Rodrigue, and Chong, 2003). Johnson (2001) similarly argued that interventions, like identifying or determining the signs of stress, identifying the possible causes for the signs and developing possible proposed solutions for each sign, are required. Christo and Pienaar (2006), also postulated that the causes of occupational stress include perceived loss of job, and security, sitting for long periods of time or heavy lifting, lack of safety, a complexity of repetitiveness and lack of autonomy in the job. Besides, occupational stress is caused by lack of resources and equipment; work schedules (such as working late or overtime and organizational climate are considered as contributors to employees stress.

With these causes, one could, therefore, point out that stress, if not managed well, affects performance. The probability that employees not exempted from this menace may be high since there is the possibility of being burdened with excessive workloads, and long hours of work (overtime). Also, dealing with customers which at the end of the day may make them stressed out and when this happen, there may not able to give out their best which can affect performance either through absenteeism or sick leaves. However, if aptly managed, stress can energize, stimulate and induce growth and performance in one's profession. One can accomplish new objectives, and there can be positive personal changes (Quick, Nelson, & Quick, 1990; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Somerfield & McCrae, 2000)".

A lot of studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between stress and performance. For instance, in a study conducted by Elovainio et al. (2002), it was found that occupational stress inadvertently contributes to low organizational performance.

Despite the extremely negative effects of occupational stress on the human body and work performance, many organizations, with Aspet A. Limited not being an exception has not put in any concrete measures to address these stress - related conditions that negatively affect job performance. Therefore, the study intends to empirically look into how occupational stress affects job performance at Aspet A. Limited and interventions that can be applied by management and employees to manage stress effectively.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The concept of stress as an organizational phenomenon (occupational stress)**

The experience of stress involves situations that are demanding on resources as well as the feeling of distress experienced subjectively. An individual may experience stress at different levels based on what they view as stressful or not.

According to Bowling and Harvey (2001), the interaction between the environment and the individual results in stress, which brings about emotional discomfort which inevitably affects the physical and mental condition of the person. This tends to affect the people and consequently the job performance. It is important to note that stress is caused by stressors which are the situations or circumstances that bring a state of disequilibrium within an individual. Bowling and Harvey (2001) further argue that there exist an impeccable cost on people, organizations, and society as a result of stress. This is because stress brings about a lot of anxiety and stress-related disorders on the part of the employees which leads to low productivity on the part of employees.

## Sources (Causes) of Stress at Work

There have been five major sources of stress identified by Arnold, Robertson, and Cooper (1991). These are factors intrinsic to the job, the organizational role played, relationships at work, career development and organizational structure and climate.

### Factors Intrinsic to the Job

The factors intrinsic to the job include:

**Poor Working Conditions:** This refers 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 bombard a worker's senses and can affect his moods and overall mental state. Also, an office that is poorly designed physically can be classified under poor working condition, because this may hinder communication which might lead to poor working relationships and might lead to stress.

**Long Working Hours:** Many jobs require long working hours which in turn take its toll on employee's health and makes them suffer a lot of stress. For instance, an individual or a worker who may have had no sleep for long hours may find that both his/her work quality suffer. Also, the individual's health may be affected as well.

**Risk and Danger:** A job which involves more risk and danger put employees in higher stress level. This is because when an employee is constantly aware of potential danger and is prepared to react to any incident without hesitation, it brings about rush, respiration changes and muscles tension which are seen as potentially threatening to in the long-term.

**New Technology:** With the introduction of new technologies into the working environment, workers have to continually adapt to new equipment, new systems and new ways of working. This serves as a major source of stress because of the pressure it comes along with. For instance, being trained with current methods may be a burden for an employee who was trained and applied training methods the old ways.

**Work Under-Load:** This defines the situation whereby employees find their jobs not challenging enough or under their capabilities. This may be caused by doing the same work over and over which becomes a routine, work that is boring and not stimulating enough. This may lead to employee's dissatisfaction which can lead to stress (Anbazhagan et al., 2013).

**Role Overload:** This happens when the employee has so much work to do because of he/she has to meet some deadlines which often causes stress in employees. Osipow and Davis, (1988), posited that role overload is the extent to which role demands are perceived by the respondents as exceeding personal and workplace resources and their perceived inability to accomplish the expected workload. Role overload, therefore, can be seen as relating to the performance of a given amount of work in a given period and it is experienced when an individual decides to conform to some tasks and to refuse some in a given period.

**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 include the following:

**Role Ambiguity:** Yongkang et al., (2014), defined role ambiguity as the degree to which clear and specific information is lacking with role requirements. In order word, 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. According to Yongkang et al., (2014), it has also been established to be an aspect of job dissatisfaction, influence employee creativity and tendency to quit in the organization.

**Role Conflict:** According to Jahanzeb (2010), role conflict occurs when employee are 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.

**Relationship at Work:** 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. 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 this is because most employees spend so much time at the workplace and thereby poor working relationship can affect them adversely.

**Career 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. 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. 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 can cause pressure and strain. Also, the frustration of having reached one's career ceiling, or have been over promoted can result in stress (Mark, 2012).

**Physical Environment:** Working conditions of jobs have been linked to physical and mental health. Physical environment that can be sources of stressors includes exposure to hot room temperatures, frequent light outs, and dangerous poisonous substances. Osipow (1998), found that poor mental health related directly to unpleasant work conditions, 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.

### **Symptoms and Effects of Stress on Performance**

Blackwell (1998) stated that stress shows itself in some ways. For instance, an individual who is experiencing a high level of stress may develop high blood pressure, ulcers and the like. These can be grouped into three categories; physiological, psychological and behavioral symptoms". They are discussed in the next section.

### **Psychological Symptoms and its Effects**

These are the major consequences of stress. Then mental health of employees is threatened by high levels of stress and poor mental health. Employees work performance may deteriorate due to psychological symptoms, unlike the physical symptoms. Anger, anxiety, depression, nervousness, irritability, aggressiveness, and boredom is believed to result in low employee

performance, declines in self-esteem, resentment of supervision, inability to concentrate, trouble in making decision and job dissatisfaction. Also, the psychological symptoms of stress can lead to burnout. Job burnout is a continued withdrawal from work which makes the sufferer devalue his work and sees it as a source of dissatisfaction (Mark, 2012).

### **Behavioural Symptoms and its Effects**

The behavioral signs of stress include eating more or eating less, cigarette smoking, used of alcohol and drugs, rapid speech pattern nervous fidgeting which leads to absenteeism from work, hopping from job to job and causes performance to deteriorate (Mark, 2012).

### **Physiological Symptoms and its Effects**

These are changes in the metabolism that accompany stressors. The symptoms include increased heart rate, blood pressure, etc. With this, the wear and tear on the body become noticeable and problematic. The effects of this are back pains, migraine headaches, insomnia, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and even cancer which affect employees' job performance. These symptoms and its effects can lead to either positive or negative outcome, and to this extent, the dynamics of the nature of stress and the management of stress merit serious consideration.

### **Occupational Stress and Performance**

This section gives an in-depth description of stress and its effect on performance.

### **Effects of Stressors on Job Performance**

There is significant inconsistency among researchers concerning the direct and indirect effects of various putative stressors. Direct stress effects are those incurred by the task load alone irrespective of any psychological stress that may also be generated. Accordingly, indirect stress effects are those that evolve out of psychological factors associated with the task load demands. There is a narrow line that separates these two, and they can be indistinguishable at times. This fact has made their separation and measurement particularly difficult. There are several issues at the heart of the inconsistencies found in the literature. For example, is the application of some task demand (i.e. workload or time pressure) an application of stress?

Many would argue that it is, while others would contend the contrary. Proponents of the former typically offer one of two arguments. The first argument states that stress is a term that can be applied to any demand on a system. Therefore, any task that requires mental resources qualifies as a stressors-it place a demand on the system. This argument meets the criteria of early stress definitions (stimulus-based approaches); however, it is no longer as accepted demands incur a psychological cost in addition to their direct effects. That is to say; these demands trigger a psychological response such as frustration, anxiety, or psychological discomfort. This response often contains both physiological and mental components that vie for resources. In this way, devoting them instead to secondary psychological processors.

On the other hand, a compelling argument can be made that workload is a demand that does not require, not regularly incur, a secondary psychological cost. In applying the state definition of stress the interaction between three perceptions: demand, and the importance of being able to cope, it's difficult to see how demand characteristics alone qualify as stressors (McGrath, 1976). For example, in some cases, time pressure and or workload would trigger anxiety or

frustration that might further distract or interfere with performance. However, it is not clear that this would necessarily be so in most, let alone all, situations.

If agreed that subjective experience and specifically cognitive appraisal (a transactional model assumption) is elemental in defining stress, then one must assume it plays a significant role in answering questions about whether workload, time pressure, or other putative stressors carry both direct and indirect effects. Does this suggest that when demand is deemed stressful or upsetting it is performance yet is viewed as stressful by the operator, does this indicate that it would be considered a stressor? Reasonable arguments can be made to support both positions, and the research literature, in its current state, is a reflection of this fact. Although it can be argued that each —stressor| involves direct effects, each may also carry indirect effects as well. For example, time pressure limits the time available to perform a given task.

This limit is a physical boundary that does not require any psychological explanation in understanding its direct effects on performance. However, this limitation often evokes a corresponding psychological reaction such as anxiety that has secondary or indirect effects on performance. The ability to separate these two dimensions has proved difficult for the research community.

The research that addresses various putative stressors discussed in the review (e.g., workload, time pressure, heat and cold, noise, and fatigue) rarely makes the distinction between these two dimensions, given the inherent difficulty in doing so. Therefore, discussions of these factors in this review comprise both direct and indirect effects, without distinguishing between them.

Mathis and Jackson (2000) defined performance as a "measure of the quantity and quality of work done considering the cost of the resource it took to do the work." Mathis and Jackson (2000) further suggested that to measure organizational human resource performance one has to reflect total labor cost per unit of output. The authors further stated that an individual performance depends on three factors which are; "ability to do the work, the level of effort and support given to that person." The relationship of these factors, widely acknowledged in management literature, is that Performance (P) is the result of Ability (A) multiplied by Effort (E) multiplied by Support (S), that is  $P=A \times E \times S$ . "Performance is diminished if any of these factors are reduced or absent. They further emphasize that quality of production must also be considered as part of performance because one alternative might be to produce more but a lower quality".

According to Blumenthal (2003), an "inverted U-type curve has been used to portray the effect stress has on performance. Blumenthal (2003) using this curve indicated that as stress increases so does the performance. However, if stress continues to increase beyond an optimal point, performance will peak and start to decline. This shows that stress is necessary to enhance performance, but once it reaches a level of acute discomfort, it is harmful and counterproductive". Blumenthal (2003) continued to argue that "excess stress is harmful, destructive and detrimental to human well-being and performance. Stress can have an impact on an individual's well-being by causing dysfunction or disruption in multiple areas". This dysfunction extends into the organizational world and leads to decreased performance.

### **Stress Management at the Workplace**

Robbins (2004) indicated that stress could be handled in two ways; the individual and organizational approaches. Robbins (2004), indicated that the individual approach constitutes

exercise which entails walking, riding bicycles, attending aerobic classes, practicing yoga, jogging, swimming and playing tennis. Again, Robbins (2004), 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 (Robbins, 2004). 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 moments or periods 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. Also, Robbins (2004) suggested that fair entries on a regular basis in a diary may achieve the same thing.

Robbins (2004) moved further to explain 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 Oyetimein (2009), which he called defense mechanism: these are "unconscious strategies used to protect oneself from problems, difficulties, failures and other sources of stress. By using defense 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.

Humara (2002), also conducted a review of such programs (for sports performance) and found several common mechanisms across the programs evaluated. The results of his review indicate that programs that include the following concepts tend to be the most effective at improving performance and reducing anxiety: goal-setting, positive thinking, situation restructuring, relaxation, focused attention, and imagery and mental rehearsal.

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

The target population consisted of all employees of Aspet A. Company Limited, Techiman. The study had a population size of two hundred. However, a sample size of one hundred and

nine was used. The justification for the sample size is rooted in the argument for sample size determination raised by Fraeklin and Wallen (2002). According to Fraeklin and Wallen (2002), in choosing a sample size for a study, it is important for the researcher to choose a number that he/she can have access to within the time frame in which the study is being conducted.

Convenience sampling technique was employed to select the respondents for this research. This technique was adopted to ensure that respondents would be available throughout the study. Creswell (2009) acknowledges that with convenience sampling, the samples are selected because they are accessible to the researcher. Respondents were chosen simply because they are easy to recruit. To reach the aim of this research, both primary and secondary data was used during the research process. Primary data was gathered by administering questionnaires. Secondary source on the other hand comprised mainly published textbooks as well as websites. This data also helped in the study as it was readily available and was usually quite inexpensive.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used for the study. The qualitative data from secondary sources was analyzed using content analysis and logical analysis techniques. Frequencies and percentages were employed for the quantitative data analysis to define the proportion of respondents choosing the various responses. Data obtained from the field was keyed into a computer program known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive analysis factors including frequency tables, mean scores, and percentages were generated, and their discussions fully explained. The statistical tool appropriate for the analysis of data is the simple linear regression. This helps to identify the correlation between occupational stress and job performance.

## Empirical Discussion and Analysis

### Demographic Data

On demographic data, questions were asked on gender, age and educational level of respondents which one hundred and nine (109) employees.

**Table 1: Respondents Profile**

Questions	Categories	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	68	62.39
	Female	41	37.61
Level of Education	Advance Level	38	34.86
	Higher National Diploma	58	53.21
	First Degree	9	8.26
	Masters	4	3.67
Working Experience	Below one year	23	21.10
	1-5yrs	61	55.96
	6-10 years	20	18.35
	11 years and above	5	4.59
Marital Status	Married	70	64.22
	Single	39	35.78

*Source: Field survey (2017)*



Concerning gender, the results in Table 1 indicates that the greater number of the respondents of the research were males, which constitute 62.39% of the total respondents (109). On the other hand, the females respondents were made up of 37.61% which eventually formed the smaller part of respondents.

From Table 1, it can be observed that the highest number of respondents, had attained Higher National Diploma (HND) which represents 53.21%. This indicates that more than half of the employees of the company holds HND qualification. Following that is those employees with Advance level's qualification which was made up of 34.86%. Beyond that, 8.26% of the respondents were those holding first degree qualifications, of which 3.67% of the company employees were people with Master's background degree. It could be deduced that the company had a balance labor force, in that it had employed individuals from at least majority of the levels of education.

The findings in Table 1 shows that majority of the employees have been working for the company within one to five years which comprise of 55.96% of the total respondents. Next to that were new recruits who had work for the company less than one year and which constituted 21.10%. The findings further uncover 18.35% of the respondents who had worked in the company within six to ten years. The study further recorded 4.59% of employees who had worked at least eleven years or more in the company. It was realized that a good number of the employees had worked quietly a long time with the company and this is good for the company since such employees in no doubt had gained a considerable experience

Also, on marital status, 64.22% were married while 35.78% were single.

## CORRELATION

Correlations between the variables of the study were computed. Pearson correlation analysis was used in this study to portray the relationship between the demographic variables, independent variable as well as the dependent variables since this is a requirement for performing regression analysis. The correlation table and its interpretation are illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2**

VARIABLES	GN	EDU	WEX	MS	STRESS	JOP
GN	1					
EDU	.010	1				
WEX	.097	-.298**	1			
MS	.140**	-.298**	.413	1		
STRESS	-.119	-.253**	-.297**	-.392**	1	
JOP	-.150	-.079	.059	-.003	.211*	1

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

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 indicates that the dependent variable (job performance) relates positively with the independent variables (stress) showing a higher value ( $r = .211$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This indicates that as stress increases, job performance increase and vice versa. However, with the demographic

variable, education (EDU), working experience (WEX) and marital status (MS) relate negatively with stress (independent variable) with marital status showing a higher value ( $r = -.392, p < .01$ ) followed by working experience ( $r = -.297, p < .01$ ) and education ( $r = -.253, p < .01$ ).

### Sources of Stress among the employees of Aspet A. Company Limited.

**Table 3: Sources of Stress among employees of Aspet A. Company Limited**

Sources of Stress	Mean Score
I experience stress at the company because of dissatisfaction with my job	3.30
I suffer from stress at the company as a result of relationship difficulties in personal life	3.01
I experience stress because of my work relationship difficulties at work.	3.32
I experience stress because my work demands more than my abilities	3.33
I experience stress because I work under poor working conditions	3.01
I experience stress due to work overloads and pressure	3.48
I experience stress because my work involves risk	3.18

Source: Field Data 2017

From Table 3, it could be deduced that the most prominent source of stress among employees at Aspet A. Company Limited is work overload and pressure since it had the highest mean score of 3.48. The second most prominent source of stress among employees of Aspet A. Company Limited involves situations whereby their work demands more than their abilities. This indicator had a mean score of 3.33. With a mean score of 3.32, the third source of stress was work relationship difficulties at work. However, dissatisfaction with one's job was the fourth most prominent source of stress. This item had a mean score of 3.30. Moreover, the risk factor associated with the work of employees was identified as the fifth source of stress among employees with a mean score of 3.18.

Relationship difficulties in personal life and poor working conditions were identified as the least source of stress among employees with each having a mean score of 3.01. The findings of the study are in consonance with that of Cooper (1993). This is because Cooper (1993) made mention of work-related factors such as work overload, job dissatisfaction, risk and danger at the workplace, poor working conditions among others as sources of stress at the workplace. However, this study also depicts personal life issue of employees which also leads to stress. For instance, the study found that relationship difficulties in the personal lives of employees was a contributory factor to stress at the workplace. The next section explores the symptoms of stress.

### Symptoms of Stress among Employees of Aspet A. Company Limited.

**Table 4: Symptoms of Stress**

Symptoms Of Stress	Mean Score
When I get stressed up, I get worried, feel afraid and experience panic attacks	3.61
I feel tired, work less efficiently and have difficulty concentrating on my work when I am stressed up.	3.72

I experience multiple symptoms such as a headache and skin discomfort when I am stressed up.	3.51
I change jobs frequently due to stress	3.23
I feel nervous and depressed when I get stressed up.	3.47
I fell angry most of the time when I am stressed up	3.25
I forget things and lose interest easily	3.45

Source: *Field Data, 2017*

From Table 4, it is inferred that the most prominent symptom of stress among employees was "tiredness, less efficiency during work and difficulty in concentrating on their work." This was indicated by the highest mean score of 3.72. The second most prominent symptoms with a mean score of 3.61 was getting worried, feel afraid and experience panic attacks when stressed out. The third most prominent symptom of stress was experience of multiple symptoms such as a headache and skin discomfort when stress up. This symptom had a mean score of 3.51. The feeling of nervous and depressed when stress out was identified as the fourth most prominent source of stress with a mean score of 3.47. The fifth most prominent symptom of stress was forgetfulness and loss of interest easily which had a mean score of 3.45. Also, display of anger when stressed out with a mean score of 3.25 was the sixth most prominent symptom of stress by respondents. The least symptom of stress identified by the study was the change of jobs due to stress which had a mean score of 3.23. The findings of the study are in agreement with what Blackwell (1998) grouped as the physiological symptoms and psychological symptoms of stress. According to Blackwell (1998), psychological symptoms of stress include anxiety, anger, depression, nervousness, aggressiveness, and irritability. All these symptoms were established in the study as part of the symptoms of stress experienced by employees. Regarding physiological symptoms of stress, Blackwell (1998) made mention of increased heart rate, blood pressure, back pains, migraine headaches, insomnia and heart disease. Although the study could not capture all the physiological symptoms of stress in its findings, the experience of a headache by employees was a key physiological symptom that was identified in the study. The findings specify the symptoms of stress. However, since one of the objectives is to discover its direct effects on employees, the next section discusses specific effects associated with stress.

### Effects of Stress among Employees of Aspet A Company.

**Table 5: Effects of Stress**

Effects of Stress	Mean Score
When I get stressed up, I tend to lack initiative in everything I do	3.47
When I am stressed up, I tend to hold unrealistic standards about myself and others	3.67
When I am stressed up, I feel worthless and always feel a sense of failure.	3.28
When I am stressed up, I tend to lose the aspiration and interest in everything I do.	3.49
When I am stressed up, I tend to worry excessively over almost everything around me.	3.72
When I am stressed up, I absent myself from work.	3.28
I feel dissatisfied with my job due to stress.	3.33
When I am stressed, I am not able to attain my desire result at work.	3.67

Source: *Field Data, 2017*

From Table 5, the most prominent effect of stress at Aspet A. Company Limited was that employees tend to worry excessively over almost everything around them (Mean Score=3.72). The second most prominent effect of stress were that it prevented employees from achieving their desire result at work and also tend to hold unrealistic standards about themselves and others (Mean Score=3.67). The third most prominent effect of stress among employees was that when they stressed up, they tend to lose aspiration and interest in everything they do (Mean Score=3.49). The fourth most prominent effect of stress among employees was that they tend to lack initiative in everything they do (Mean Score=3.47). The fifth effect of stress on employees at the company was dissatisfaction with job (Mean Score=3.33). The least effect of stress on employees of Aspet A. Company Limited were both absenteeism from work and feeling of worthless and a sense of failure (Mean Score=3.28). There is some discrepancy between the findings of the study and existing literature. According to Blackwell (1998), stress brings about low employee performance, decline in self-esteem, resentment of supervision, inability to concentrate, trouble in decision making and job dissatisfaction. Blackwell (1998), further posits that stress at the workplace brings about absenteeism and also encourages employees to hop from one job to the other. However, although some of the effects of stress identified in the study such as lack of initiative, absenteeism and job dissatisfaction are consistent with the findings of Blackwell (1998), other effects such as inability to meet targets, holding on to unrealistic standards, feeling worthless and a sense of failure and loss of aspiration at the workplace among others were some of the effects of stress that were not consistent with findings in literature.

### Strategies for Coping with Stress among Employees of Aspet A. Company Limited

**Table 6: Strategies for Coping with Stress**

<b>STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH STRESS</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>
When I experience stress, I chat over my situations with my colleagues, friends, and family as a way of reducing stress.	3.54
I can personally manage my feelings and emotions to reduce stress.	3.80
I seek to understand, control and develop my problems as a way of reducing stress at the company.	3.49
I seek for distractions to reduce pressure and take my mind off things to reduce stress at the company.	3.54
I reduce stress at the company by eating a healthy diet and keeping my health in check.	3.46
I exercise regularly to reduce stress	3.77

*Source: Field Data, 2017*

According to Table 6, the most prominent strategy utilized by employees to reduce stress is their ability to manage their feelings and emotions personally (Mean Score=3.80). The second most prominent strategy to reduce stress among employees is their involvement in exercises (Mean Score=3.77). However, the third most prominent strategy to reduce stress among employees include both the seeking for distractions and taking mind off things as well as the ability to talk about problems with colleagues, friends, and family (Mean Score=3.54). Further, the fourth strategy for coping with stress among employees of Aspet A. Company Limited was their ability to understand, control and improve their situation (Mean Score=3.49). The least strategy used by employees in reducing stress involves the eating of healthy diet and keeping health in check (Mean Score=3.46). The strategies for coping with stress are to some extent congruence with Robbins (2003), who identified that stress could be managed at the individual

level and the organizational level. However, this study was able to cover the strategies for reducing stress at the individual level. Robbins emphasizes the use of exercises as a strategy to reduce stress. The author further emphasized the relevance of relaxations as a strategy to reduce stress. According to Robbins (2003), the ability of individuals to open up to their friends and family is also another way of reducing stress among them. It is salient to note that this study has added unique findings to strategies used in coping with stress since literature did not capture all the strategies used for coping with stress as established in the study. Some of the strategies identified in the study that were not consistent with literature include the following: the ability to understand, control and improve situations in order to reduce stress, eating healthy diet and also keeping one's health in check, managing of personal feeling and emotions in order to reduce stress, seeking for distractions to reduce pressure and also to take off one's mind from a situation in order to reduce stress. The next section describes the effects of stress on job performance.

### The effect of stress on job performance.

**Table 7: Summary of simple linear regression for the relationship between stress and job performance**

Model Summary					
model	R	adjusted R-square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R-square	sig.
<b>1</b>	<b>0.348<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>.113</b>	<b>.3466</b>	<b>.121</b>	<b>.000</b>

*Source: Field survey (2017)*

Table 7 gives a summary of simple linear regression to ascertain the impact of stress on job performance. The adjusted R-square value displayed in the table shows that 11.0% of the variation in the dependent variable (job performance) is explained by the independent variable (stress). Thus, the adjusted R-square value was accounted for .113 which means that 1% change in stress will result in 11% increase in job performance. However, the significant value of .000 was significant in the sense that the independent variable has a tendency of predicting the dependent variable. The finding of the study showed a significant positive relationship between employee stress and job performance ( $r = 0.348$ , sig. value=.000). This gives the indication that as employee stress increases, their job performance also tends to increase and so on.

This finding is to some extent in agreement with Blumenthal (2003). According to him, an inverted u-type curve is used to depict the effect of stress on employee performance. Thus, as stress increases, the performance of employees also increases. However, when stress becomes excessive, then the performance of employees also begins to decline. In this regard, the point of departure at the moment is the fact that stress among employees does enhance their performance in a positive manner. However such performance will decline if stress becomes excessive. Blumenthal further exclaims that excessive stress is very harmful and detrimental to the employee well-being and their overall performance.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This section of the study analyzed data to ascertain the effect of stress on job performance among employees of Aspet A. Company Limited. Based on the findings of the study, it was clear that there are multiple causes of stress which have physical, emotional and psychological

effects on employees at the company but they were able to cope with it. This section concludes on the premise that, although stress to an extent does not enhance job performance strategies of coping with it can yield positive production which intense can increase job performance.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

Firstly, even though the study has found that stress enhances the job performance of employees, but its relation with the workforce age, education and working experience at the company was negative. Therefore, the management of the company must come up with an overall coping strategy policy on stress reduction focusing on employees' age, education and working experience at the workplace. Also, jobs should be assigned taking into much consideration the age group, education and working experience of employees in order not to overburden them with so much work.

The study sought to find out about only work stress and its effects on job performance. It is therefore recommended that research is done on non-work stress or both work stress and non-work stress and their influence on job performance.

Lastly, the study has given enough knowledge into the study of the various causes of stress and its effect on job performance. The results cannot be generalized since the study took all the variables from the same source (that is Aspet A. Company Limited). Hence there can be a possibility of methods variance. That is cross-cultural studies are likely to give a better outcome and conclusion. Hence, there is the need to look at any further study concerning the effect of occupational stress on job performance to either confirm or refute the outcome of this study.

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