

## **OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES**

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### **Abstract**

*Occupational stress is ubiquitous at work places and has recently gained numerous researches because of the impact it has on employees' job performance. Unlike developing and newly industrialized countries, most advanced countries are becoming more familiar with the phenomenon and how to manage it. The current study finds out the level of occupational stress of SMEs on demographic variables and also determines the impact of occupational stress on employees' job performance. A total of 225 employees working in SMEs were purposively selected for the study. Percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and regression were used to analyze the data gathered. The results showed that, 47 (20.9%) of the employees recorded low levels of occupational stress, 74 (32.9%) were moderately stressed and 104 representing 46.2% were highly stressed. The results showed that majority of the*

*employees were moderately and highly stressed. The results further showed inverse relationship between occupational stress and employees' job performance and that occupational stress significantly predicted job performance. It is recommended that more research should be conducted in developing countries. Again, relevant institutions in developing and newly industrialized countries should engage in more collaborative programmes and policies with international institutions such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), The National Institutions for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Australian Safety and Compensation Council, and European Agency for Safety and Health to help ameliorate occupational stress.*

*Keywords: Job Performance, Occupational Stress, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, SMEs*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The contribution of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises to the development of Ghana cannot be overemphasized. In developing countries, the largest part of the work-force is self-employed, occupied in small companies and home industries (Houtman, Jettinghoff & Cedillo 2007) and the contribution of these SMEs sector to job opportunities is greater in Africa (Calice, Chando & Sekioua 2012). The sector has high prospects of business profitability, thereby giving a lot of opportunities to young entrepreneurs especially women. However, employees in the SMEs in newly industrialized and developing countries are at a higher risk of developing job-related stress than in developed countries. In developed countries people are becoming more familiar with what work-related stress is and how to manage it (Houtman, Jettinghoff & Cedillo 2007). Occupational stress is ubiquitous and has become a universal phenomenon in every work place. Occupational stress has become a major challenge facing organizations (Donaldson-Feilder, et al 2011) and now becoming the global issue which is affecting all the countries, all categories of employees and societies (Haider & Supriya, 2007). Interest in the phenomenon of work-related stress has increased markedly during the last few years (Parker & DeCotis 1983) because researches have suggested an increase level of occupational stress among employees (NIOSH 2008; Jamal 2011; Cooper 1978; Osipow 1998; Levi 1984; HSE 2005; Parker & DeCotis 1983; Vanishree 2014; W.H.O 1999; Houtman, Jettinghoff & Cedillo 2007). International research efforts continue in an attempt to reduce the human and economic costs of work-related stress (Dollard et al 2000). The literature has shown much research works, in developed countries with regard to occupational stress. Although some research has been conducted in developing countries particularly in Latin America, these are still not enough in-depth studies to fully analyze cultural differences and behaviours which vary from one country to

the other (Houtman; Jettinghoff & Cedillo2007). Again, the impact of stress has been investigated broadly on students (Affum-Oseiet al 2014, Gartia & Kumari2012, Rafida et al 2009;, Chiang 1995), academic staff (Suandi, Ismail & Othman 2014,Kebelo 2012; Dunmade, Adegoke & Agboola 2014; Jeyaraj 2013; Coetzee & Rothmann 2005; Tiwari & Balani 2013), bankers (Velnampy & Aravintham 2013; Yahaya et al 1996; Ali et al 2013), the public sector (Yozgat, Yurkovu & Bilginoglu 2013; Yunus & Mahajar 2011; Dollard, et al 2000; Aghdasi et al 2011),the private sector ( Siu 2003; Jamal 2011), and the health sector(Naqvi, Khat, Khan 2013). However, few researches have been conducted in specific areas of occupational stress of employees in SMEs especially in developing countries (Vanishree 2014; Rahman et al 2014; June & Mahmood 2011). There are outmoded daily life resources that will ease employees' routine activities; bad road networks, unstable internet facilities, water shortages, erratic power supply and political tensions, etc. all facilitate high risk of stress in many developing countries. However, there is lack of awareness of this modern hazard known as "occupational stress" in SMEs in most African countries. Therefore, it is very imperative to assess the impact of occupational stress on employees' job performance in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Ghana.

### **Objective of the study**

1. To determine the level of occupational stress of employees of SMEs on demographic variables including gender, age, marital status and the level of education
2. To find out the impact of occupational stress on employees job performance in SMEs
3. To provide useful suggestions, recommendations and insights on occupational stress to stakeholders in SMEs and other relevant organizations.

### **Research Questions**

What is the level of occupational stress of employees of SMEs on demographic variables including gender, age, marital status and the level of education?

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There will be an inverse relationship between occupational stress and job performance of employees of SMEs

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There will be a significant impact of occupational stress on job performance of employees in SMEs

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Defining Occupational Stress

Ivancevich & Matterson have labeled stress as “the most imprecise [term] in scientific dictionary” (1980a p.5, cited by Parker & DeCotis 1983). However, Parker & DeCotis (1983) have defined job stress as a particular individual’s awareness or feeling of personal dysfunction as a result of perceived conditions or happening in the work settings. Work-related stress occurs when there is a mismatch between the demands of the job and the resources and capabilities of the individual worker to meet those demands (Blaug, Kenyon & Lekhi 2007). Occupational stress can be defined as the experience of unpleasant negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, frustration, anger and depression resulting from aspects of work (Salami 2010). The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH 2008) defined occupational stress as the harmful physical and emotional response that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the work.

The U.K HSE (2005) identified six categories of substantive factors that can be identified as potential causes of work-related stress which are demands, control, relationship, change, role and support. Parker & DeCotis (1983) outlined six stressors; Characteristics and conditions of the job itself, conditions associated with the organisation’s culture, climate and information flow, role-related factors, relationship at work, perceived career development and external commitments and responsibilities. Osipow (1998) proposed the OSI-R model theory-based and assesses the effects on the individual of three “factors” (occupational roles, psychological strain and coping resources across fourteen dimensions (see also Hicks, Bahr & Fujiwara 2009). According to Schuler (1982) work stressors can be grouped into seven categories in organisations: job qualities, relationships, organisational structure, physical qualities, career development, change and role in the organisation. Srivastava and Singh (1981) also developed an occupational stress index (OSI). This occupational stress index has 12 dimensions on role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, group and political pressures, responsibility for persons, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) identified four categories of work stressors to be; physical environment, individual level (a mixer of role and career development variables), group level (primarily relationship-based) and organisational level (a mixture of climate, structure, job design and task characteristic). The impact of these stressors may be devastated on the individual and the organization. According to Donaldson-Feilder et al (2011), the impact of stress on an organization can be significant and can be measured in many ways including; absence, presenteeism, turnover and accidents and injury and hidden cost (including negative PR, Employee relations disputes, insurance premium).

Occupational stress has negative impact on psychological well-being (Siu, Lu & Cooper 1999, Siu et al 2002; Salami 2010) and strongest predictor of productivity was psychological well-being (Donald et al 2005).

### **Occupational Stress and Job Performance**

Occupational stress has been found to be related to job performance (Motowidlo, Packard, Manning, 1986; Donaldson-Feilder 2011). Yozgat, Yurtkora, Bilginoglu (2013), in a research of job stress and job performance among employees in public sector found a negative relationship between job stress and job performance. In a similar research in China, Siu (2003) revealed that there is a negative relationship between sources of stress and self-related job performance. Motowidlo, Packard, Manning, (1986), in a study found that, events identified as a cause of stress lead to depression, which in turn, cause decrements in interpersonal and cognitive/motivation aspect of job performance. Mahan et al (2010) found that ongoing and episodic stressors were significantly and positively associated with anxiety and depression. Mahan et al (2010), argued that, as ongoing stressors increases in teachers working environment so as anxiety which affect their performance. Job stressors affect the general physical health of employees, their job satisfaction and performance as well as their commitment negatively (Shikieri & Musa 2011). Wu (2011), in a similar study, found that job stress and job performance were negatively correlated. Naqvi et al (2013), found lack of financial rewards, inflexibility in work hours, personal issues, low control over the work environment and bureaucratic management system to be negatively correlated with employees' productivity. In a similar study, Dhamodharan & Arumugasamy (2011) found that, occupational stressors influence positively the coercive and authoritative leadership and influence negatively the affiliative, democratic, pace-setting and coaching. A research work by Jeyaraj (2013) on occupational stress among teachers, found that teachers who reported greater stress were less satisfied with teaching, report greater frequency of absence and a greater number of total days absent, were more likely to leave teaching (career intentions) and less likely to take up a teaching career again (career commitment).

Dunmade, Adegoke & Agboola (2014), in a study of techno-stress among university workers, found that, techno-stress has negative consequences on the individual worker's performance. In a similar research among state university department Suandi, Ismail, & Othman (2014), found that, the relationship between job stress and job performance is at a quite negative but moderate level. According Forkuoh et al (2014), employees' commitment positively impact on the growth and succession of small and medium scale enterprises but high level of stress significantly impact on commitment and affect productivity (Jamal 2011; Siu 2003).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Population**

The discovery of oil in the Western Region has attracted many local and foreign entrepreneurs to the region. The population of the region is growing rapidly and the region is becoming one of the nation's busiest business destinations. Based on this background, the research targeted Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in the Western Region of Ghana for the current study.

### **Sample**

The selection of an appropriate sampling method depends upon the aim of the study (Marshall 1996). The current research employs the purposive sampling technique which is defined as selecting units (e.g. individuals, groups, institutions), based on a specific purpose associated with answering a research / study's question (Teddlie & Yu 2007). This method allows the researcher to actively select the most productive sample to answer the research questions (Marshall 1996). Therefore, the purposive sampling technique was used to select three hundred respondents (300) for the study. However, out of the three hundred questionnaires sent only two hundred and twenty five (225) representing 75% were retrieved and used for the study.

### **Research Instrument**

The study adopted questionnaires as the main instrument for the study. The questionnaires were in three parts, the first part sought demographic information from the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire, sought responses on occupational stress of the respondents and the last part, respondents answered questions on performance. In measuring occupational stress, the occupational stress inventory revised edition (OSI-R) developed by Osipow (1998) was adopted for the study. The original scale measures occupational stress, personal strain and coping resources across fourteen (14) dimensions. Each sub-scale contains 10 items totaling 140 questions. The current research makes use of the 50 items under the dimensions of occupational stress inventory revised edition. The internal consistency of all 14 scales has high levels of reliability (Osipow 1998). The alpha coefficient recorded of all the 14 scales were between 0.70 and 0.89 (Osipow 1998).

The performance scale used for this study was developed by Duinsky and Mattson (1979). The scale has also been used by Yozgat, Yurkoru & Bilginoglu (2013) in a study. The scale consist of 6 items using a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1=poor performance to 5=excellent performance (see also Yozgat, Yurkoru & Bilginoglu 2013). The performance measure was also used by Singh, Verbeke and Rhoads (1996) in their research on

organizational practices and role stress processes. The scale achieved accepted reliability ( $\alpha=.80$ ) (Singh, Verbeke & Rhoads (1996).

### Statistical Tools

The researchers used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22.0) to analyze the data gathered. Percentages were used to analyze the demographic data of the respondents. Karl Pearson's Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to find the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables under study. Finally, regression analysis was run to find the impact of occupational stress on the employees' job performance.

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In research of such nature the background statistical information of the respondents is very important. Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 provide the background statistical information of the respondents. Tables 5, 6, 7 sought to answer the research question and the research hypothesis.

Table1: Gender of the Respondents

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
Male	105	46.7
Female	120	53.3
Total	225	100

Table 1 shows gender of the respondents and out of 225 samples 105 (46.7%) were males and 120 representing 53.3% were females.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
30 yrs. & Below	152	67.6
Above 30 yrs.	73	32.4
Total	225	100

Table 2 shows age of the respondents out of a sample of 225, 152 (67.6%) were 30 years and below while 73 (32.4%) of the respondents were above 30 years.

Table 3: Educational Level of the Respondents

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree & Below	184	81.8
Above 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree	41	18.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 represents the educational level of respondents 184 (81.8%) out of a total sample of 225 have first degree and below and 41(18.2%) have certificates above first degree.

Table 4: Marital Status of the Respondents

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
Single	117	52
Married	108	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows the marital status of respondents. Out of a total of 225 respondents, 117 (52%) employees were single and 108 representing 48% were married.

Table 5: Occupational Stress Level of the Respondents

Variables	Low	Moderate	High	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Gender: Male	25 (23.8)	33 (31.4)	47 (44.8)	105 (100)
Female	22 (18.3)	41 (34.2)	57 (47.5)	120 (100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>47 (20.9)</b>	<b>74 (32.9)</b>	<b>104 (46.2)</b>	<b>225 (100)</b>
Age: 30 yrs. & Below	22 (18.3)	41 (34.2)	57 (47.5)	152 (100)
Above 30 yrs.	7 (9.6)	22 (30.1)	44 (60.3)	73 (100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>47 (20.9)</b>	<b>74 (32.9)</b>	<b>104 (46.2)</b>	<b>225 (100)</b>
Education Level:				
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree & Below	36 (19.6)	62 (33.7)	86 (46.7)	184 (100)
Above 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree	10 (24.4)	12 (29.3)	19 (46.3)	41 (100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>46 (20.4)</b>	<b>74 (32.9)</b>	<b>105 (46.7)</b>	<b>225 (100)</b>
Marital Status: Single	28 (24.0)	39 (33.3)	50 (42.7)	117 (100)
Married	20 (18.5)	34 (31.5)	54(50.0)	108 (100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>49 (21.8)</b>	<b>74 (32.9)</b>	<b>97 (43.1)</b>	<b>225 (100)</b>

Table 5, shows the level of occupational stress of SMEs employees. The employees' occupational stress level was rated on low stress level, moderately stress level and highly stress

level. Out of a total of 225 employees sampled for the study, 47 (20.9%) had low stress level, 74 (32.9) were moderately stressed and 104 representing 46.2% were highly stressed. These findings show that the majority of the employees were highly stressed. In a total of 105 male employees, 25 (23.8%) recorded low stress levels, 33 (31.4%) were moderately stressed and 47 (44.8%) were highly stressed. The female employees were 120, out of which 22 (18.3%) had low stress level, 41 (34.2%) had moderate stress level and 57 (47.5%) had high stress levels. The employees who were 30 years and below were 152 out of which 57 (47.5%) were highly stressed, 22 (18.3%) had low stress level and 41 representing 34.2% was moderately stressed. Again, employees who were above 30 years were 73. Out of this number, 7 (9.6%) recorded low stress level 22 (30.1%) were moderately stressed and 44 (60.3%) were highly stressed. The employees with first degree and below were 184 out of which 36 (19.6%) had low stress level, 62 (33.7%) were moderately stressed and 86 representing 46.7% were highly stressed. Employees whose educational level is above first degree were 41. Out of this, 10 (24.4%) had low stress, 12 (29.3%) had moderate stress level and 19 (46.3%) were highly stressed with regard to their roles in their respective enterprises. The occupational stress level with respect to the employees marital status showed that, out of a total of 117 single employees, 28 (24.0%) had low occupational stress levels, 39 (33.3%) were moderately stress and 50 (42.7%) were highly stressed.

Table 6: Correlation between Occupational Stress and Employees' Performance

Variables	Occupational Stress	Performance
Occupational Stress	1	-.663**
Performance	-.663**	1

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

Table 6 shows the correlation between occupational stress and employees' performance. The result shows a strong negative correlation between the dependent variable and the independent variable. There is a strong inverse relationship between occupational stress and employees' performance ( $r = -.663, p < 0.01$ ).

This finding indicates that, as occupational stress of employees' increases the performance of employees also decreases and that, lower occupational stress will lead to a higher performance of the employees working in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises. Therefore, the first alternative hypothesis is accepted against the null hypothesis.

Table 7a: Regression Analysis-Model Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted	Std. Error of the
			R- Square	Estimate
1	.663 <sup>a</sup>	.439	.437	4.63798

a. Predictors: (Constant), Occupational Stress of SMEs Employees

Table 7a shows the summary results of the regression analysis for the independent variable (Occupational Stress) and the dependent variable (Employees' performance). The model derived correlation coefficient of (R=.663) which indicates a strong linear relationship between criterion variable which is employees' performance and occupational stress which is the predictor variable.

The coefficient of determination derived ( $R^2=.439$ ) which means that, approximately 44% of the total variability in the criterion variable is accounted for by the predictor variable. In other words, occupational stress explains approximately 44% of the amount of variation in employees' performance. The calculated Adjusted R square derived .437, indicating 43.7% of the impact on employees' performance is explained by the model and 56.3% provides explanations outside the model. This shows that 56.3% may be due to other factors which cannot be explained by the model.

Table 7b: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	37.550	1.536		24.441	.000
Occupational Stress-	.117	.009	-.663	-13.221	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance of SMEs Employees

Table 7b shows the results of coefficient of the predictor of employees' job performance in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises. The model shows that, the occupational stress was a significant predictor of employees' job performance, ( $\beta=-.663$ ,  $t(223)=-13.22$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $R^2=.439$ ) therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative. That is occupational stress has a significant negative impact on employees' job performance.

Again, there is evidence that the independent variable helps to predict the dependent variable ( $p < 0.05$ ) and that there is some explanatory power in the model.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the current study show interesting occupational stress levels of the respondents. The results showed that majority of the employees working in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises experienced high level of occupational stress. The study showed that, out of a total of 225 respondents 104 representing 46.2% were highly stressed. This finding is consistent with research work by Rahman et al (2014) whose finding suggested that, intrinsic to the job of employees in SMEs had the lowest score of 2.80 classified as a tendency of highest stress. Vanishree (2014) in assessing the impact of occupational stress in SMEs found that all role stressors were significant related to job stress. Similar researches works on other sectors have found that majority of employees experienced high level of occupational stress (Kebelo 2012; Yunus & Mahajar 2011; Shikieri 2012; Ali et al 2013; Jeyeraj 2013). However, in contrast, a study by Suandi et al (2014) on the relationship between organisational climate, job stress and job performance found none of the respondents to be experiencing high occupational stress level. Female employees reported high level of occupational role stress compared to their male counterparts. Out of the 120 female employees 57 (47.5%) reported high level of occupational role stress. This result corroborated with previous study by Siu, Lu & Cooper (1996), in assessing managerial stress in Hong Kong and Taiwan. It was found female manageress had perceived more sources of occupational stress and higher quitting intensions than male managers. In another related National Survey by the Australian Bureaucratic Statistics in 2001, it was found that, proportionally fewer males than females across most age groups reported high levels of distress; of those who have very high levels of distress, 63% were females. In Ghana and most African countries females combine basic household chores including cooking for their family, taking care of children and older parents. They also engage in social events such as funerals, churches, parties etc. and combining these responsibilities with work roles perhaps must have contributed to the high rate of stress of the female employees. The result also indicated that, the older people tend to perceive high level of occupational role stress compared to the younger employees. 60.3% of employees above the age of 30 years experienced high level of occupational stress. This result is consistent with a study by Jeyaraj (2013) on occupational stress among teachers. Here, it was found that, teachers who were 40-50 years of age experience high level of occupational stress. This result may be due to the fact that, young people are now developing their careers and may feel more relaxed because they see more opportunities ahead. The older people in the organization may feel they are near to retirement and have more responsibilities taking care of their families and other job responsibilities tend to perceived high level of stress. Employees who hold first degree and below tend to perceive high level of stress compared to those with qualifications which are

above first degree. Out of a total number of 184 employees with first degree and below, 86 (46.7%) experienced high level of occupational stress. These findings may be due to the fact that, most of the employees who have qualifications above first degree hold high positions as managers, CEOs and also act as employers. Individuals with these high qualifications are highly respected in the workplace and are expected to engage in planning and taking higher decisions. However, most of the highly stressful roles may have been delegated to their subordinates. The study also showed that, 50% out of a total of 54 of married respondents experienced high level of occupational stress. Combining marriage and work roles is a great source of stress to many workers. According to Lingard & Francis (2001), work-family conflict may lead to stress and strain. Donaldson-Feilder, Yarker & Lewis (2011), posit that, inability of the individual to balance the demands of work and home, particularly in the context of dependent care and dual-earning families is a source of stress in this regard.

The correlation analysis between occupational stress and employees' performance indicated a strong negative relationship. This means that, occupational stress increases with a decreasing rate in employees' job performance and vice versa. This finding is corroborated with a study by Vanishree (2014) who confirmed that, work overload, work ambiguity and work conflict brings about job stress among workers in SMEs resulting in poor concentration, mental block and poor decision making skills. In a similar study by Yozgat, Yurtkora, Bilginoglu (2013), on job stress and job performance among employees in public sector found a negative relationship between job stress and job performance. The current findings also corroborated with a study by Jamal (2011) who found that, overall job stress and four job stressors work overload, ambiguity, conflict, and resources inadequacy were negatively related to job performance. Siu (2003) in a research in China revealed a negative relationship between sources of stress and self-related job performance. According to Siu et al (2002), sources of stress were negatively related to job satisfaction, mental and physical well-being.

The regression analysis showed that, occupational stress has a significant impact on employees' job performance. As indicated by the regression analysis, 43.7% employees' job performance is due to occupational stress whereas 56.3% is contributed by other factors outside this study. The current findings is consistent with Siu et al (1999), who confirmed that sources of stress had negative impact on job satisfaction, mental and physical well-being and Donald et al (2005) found that, the strongest predictor of productivity was psychological well-being. Mahan et al (2010), argued that, as ongoing stressors increases in employees' working environment, so does anxiety which affects their performance. However, June & Mahmood (2011), findings suggest that, when fit exist between employees and the job that they are doing, they tend to exert more effort in carrying out duties which may lead to greater job performance.

Many researchers (Jamal & Baba 1992; Donald et al 2005; Yozgat, Yurtkora, Bilginoglu 2013; Naqvi, Khat Khan 2013; Dhamodharan & Arumugasamy (2011 Mahan et al 2010) have found the significant relationships between occupational stress and employees job performance but most of their research work were conducted in a broad perspective, thus very little evidence exist to understand job performance in those working in SMEs (June & Mahmood 2011). However, the current study has added a significant source of information to the available literature on occupational stress and employees' job performance especially in the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The measurement of stress has gained numerous attentions. Occupational stress may not be well managed without proper measurement. In most developing countries, unlike advanced countries, stress has not been well measured. Abbas, Farah, & Sposito-Apkinar (2013) had suggested that, researchers should use more objective measures of stress assessment rather than just measuring respondents' perception regarding the stressors prevailing in the job environment. According to Health and Safety Executive (2002), estimates of 13.4 million working days were lost in Great Britain in 2001/2002 due to stress. European figures suggest that approximately 41 million people in Europe (nearly one in three workers) are affected by stress, costing European member states more than 20 billion Euros every year (Paoli & Merllie 2000, cited by Donaldson Feilder, Yarker & Lewis 2011) and in U.S with an estimated 297 million working days lost to stress, costing the US economy \$150 billion every year (Whatson Wyatt worldwide 2001 cited by Donaldson Feilder, Yarker & Lewis 2011). According to the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (2005), between 1992-1993 and 2000-2001, there was an 89% increase in the total number of claims where stress was nominated as the mechanism of disease or injury; the percentage of stress claims has since been increase steadily reaching 4.4% in 2000-2001. What is the statistics in developing and newly industrialized countries? About 75% of the world's working population which counts about 2400 million lives and works in developing countries and 50% of the working population in industrialized countries judge their work to be "mentally demanding" (W.H.O 1995). Again, more than 80% of the workforce consists of small and medium-sized enterprises and it is estimated that, there is even more of the workforce in the informal sector (W.H.O 1995). 20-50% of workers may be subject to hazardous exposure at work in industrialized countries and the rate may be even higher in developing and newly industrialized countries (W.H.O 1995). Most of these workers do not have ideas on occupational stress and how it impacts on performance and psychological well-being. It is suggested that much research should be channeled to developing

countries especially in Africa to measure the impact of occupational stress on the physical and psychological well-being of workers in order to create awareness in developing countries. As suggested by Siu et al (2002) “the problem of occupational stress should be particularly relevant for countries undergoing enormous economic and social changes” because developed countries have recently become aware of occupational stress and how to possibly manage it (Houtman, Jettinghoff & Cedillo, 2007). Since there is little awareness of this “modern hazard” in most developing countries, it is recommended that, Occupational Health Services should be intensified by government in developing and other newly industrialized countries. Occupational Health and Safety programmes should be instituted to create sufficient awareness in small and medium scale enterprises in order to manage occupational stress to improve occupational health as well as psychological and physical well-being among employees. It is also recommended that, health institutions in developing countries should engage in more collaborative programmes and policies with international institutions such as the National Institutions for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Australian Safety and Compensation Council, and European Agency for Safety and Health to help ameliorate occupational stress.

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