



## Research Article

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## Work Place Factors Contributing To Stress among University Teachers and Coping Strategies: A Study of Tamale Technical University

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**Abstract:** Workplace stress is a worldwide problem. Aside from teaching, university instructors have numerous other responsibilities and are always stressed. The study's goal was to investigate the effects of stress on staff performance at Tamale Technical University. To analyze the issue, a qualitative case study methodology was used. Purposive sampling was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with 20 university lecturers. Thematic analysis was used to examine the acquired data. Workplace stress has a detrimental influence on employee performance, according to the findings. This study was done on tertiary education level employees at Tamale Technical University, which is located in the Northern Regional Capital Tamale. As a result, the research might be limited to a single place. However, this study is crucial in order to retain highly valued university staff. An attempt was made to identify job stress mitigation measures that individuals and employers may use to overcome job stress and increase performance. Management can take the required actions to control workers' workplace stress levels in order to improve their job performance. They may offer counseling, a meditation program, incentives, and other benefits that increase employee performance over time.

**Keywords:** Impact, work stress, employee performance, Tamale Technical University.

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## INTRODUCTION

Employment stress is a psychological and physiological reaction to the negative consequences of the workplace environment (Awang *et al.*, 2021). According to studies, the academic world has become a very demanding environment for workers, particularly for higher education lecturers (Foy *et al.*, 2019). Many additional studies have pointed to workplace stress as a major cause of job turnover and burnout among academicians in higher education. It has been claimed that more modifications have lately happened in the work of university lecturers as a result of their multifaceted character of employment (Harshana, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2020). Pakistan's universities are a strategic asset. However, in recent years, universities have faced numerous challenges as a result of new trends and demands of the twenty-first century, as well as rapidly changing workplace demands. These developments have resulted in the establishment of new performance standards for university teachers at various levels, ranging from teaching to research to additional responsibilities. As a result, university lecturers are subjected to job stress as well as psychological strain and stress. Furthermore, there is a need to investigate the key sources of occupational stress for university lecturers. Working conditions in Pakistan are growing increasingly difficult, and working hours have grown. Statistics show that, in the past, 20 to 25% of academic staff worked

more than 50 or 60 hours per week, but this number has now risen to 30 to 40%, which is one of the major workplace stresses. In Pakistan, university professors are already overworked. They must shoulder additional responsibilities in addition to the primary teaching responsibility. Furthermore, they face stiff academic professional competition for promotion, and in most cases, they are promoted for many years (Faisal *et al.*, 2019). Although various governmental policies were drafted under the auspices of the higher education commission to improve the academic role of university teachers in order to improve their professional competencies, due to a lack of proper implementation of the relevant policies, no clear positive change has occurred in terms of decreasing stress levels among teachers. Among the major failures is the failure to successfully implement a promotion policy for university teachers; as a result, teachers face issues of timely promotion and other amenities available to teachers in colleges and schools, which is becoming a source of workplace stress among university faculty staff. Workload, job ambiguity and conflict, less effective management, inequality of incentives and punishments, unsupportive coworkers, and a lack of professional development chances were identified as important workplace variables generating stress among university professors in another study by Faisal *et al.* (2019). These developments have produced obstacles and sources of discontent among the university academic community,

and they are quickly becoming one of the biggest sources of stress. Because of the rapidly changing policies of higher education in Pakistan addressing university teacher advancement regulations, the problem of workplace stress has greatly developed among university instructors in recent years. Professors at universities are overwhelmed with many new tasks, which has raised the degree of workplace stress among teachers. Because of its multifaceted character, university teaching is commonly considered as a difficult job. Despite this, there is presently no stress management program or strategy accessible for teachers in Pakistan (Faisal *et al.* 2019). Furthermore, they proposed that workplace stress may be decreased by providing competent and supportive management, as well as clear career advancement prospects for everybody on an equitable basis. The purpose of this article was to investigate the sources of workplace issues that induce stress among university professors, as well as coping mechanisms. The purpose of this study is to investigate workplace variables that cause stress among university professors, as well as coping mechanisms for dealing with it.

### Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- What workplace issues stress university teachers? Explain.
- How workplace variables stress university teachers? Explain.
- How do job stressors affect university teachers? Explain.
- How can university teachers overcome workplace stressors? Explain.

The level of occupational stress has recently skyrocketed. Although stress has been described as one of the most prevalent problems in all occupations, its prevalence has increased in higher education in general, and particularly among university teachers in Pakistan, over the last two decades. There is a substantial body of research on this topic worldwide, but more in-depth studies are needed to investigate the major factors causing workplace stress among university teachers in the Pakistani context. The issue of workplace stress is becoming more prevalent in this country as a result of the complex and ambiguous nature of government plans in higher education and its frequently changing policies, particularly those affecting university teachers. In recent years, workplace stress has been openly discussed as a major cause of job burnout and job stress in the context of university teachers. It has also been linked to decrease job satisfaction and is a major source of job stressors among university teachers in Pakistan and other Asian countries such as Bangladesh and India. So far, no major breakthroughs in addressing the problem have been made by the governments of these countries.

In another study, researchers discovered that Indian universities are becoming a stressful place to work

due to the very quick expansion of universities on the one hand and the widening gap between new requirements and instructor performance as per the set criteria on the other. Teachers are expected to do high-quality research while concurrently performing instructional duties, which puts them under stress. Some academics have said that in recent years, university professors in south India have been stressed owing to increased management expectations to bear various tasks and the workers' incapacity to satisfy or cope with the demands. As a result, the demands have a negative and unfavorable physical, social, and psychological impact on teachers' emotional responses to the circumstance and academic performance. Similarly, research have indicated that university lecturers in Bangladesh feel overwhelmed as a result of the institutions' high work-related obligations, workload, and publishing needs. According to another survey, the key needs for university professors in Bangladeshi institutions are teaching and professional career requirements such as research publishing and other job-related responsibilities. Chinese institutions have had similar experiences, with academic personnel being required to produce excellent research articles and projects as goals. Teachers are also needed to oversee student research papers and other ancillary obligations. A research in the Chinese university environment showed that owing to rapidly changing higher education rules, there is a workload strain on university academic staff, which leads in stress. Teachers must be prepared for high levels of research and professional performance in order to advance in their careers. As a result, professional stress is becoming one of the most significant difficulties for teachers, reducing their creativity and inventiveness. Job stress and job burnout have been identified as the leading causes of workplace stress among academic personnel in Iran, according to research. Different workplace pressures have been blamed in Nigeria for decreased academic staff performance. It has been shown that academic employees at universities have difficult and stressful jobs. Some stress is tolerable, but chronic stress for an extended length of time may be more detrimental to emotional and physical health. Aggressive conduct, job discontent, job burnout, and poor performance are among the key causes of workplace stress among Ethiopian university academic personnel. Writers investigated the impact of job stress on job satisfaction among Malaysian university teaching staff and discovered that a lack of organizational support, job insecurity, job ambiguity, job conflict, and an excessive workload are the major factors causing workplace stress among university academic staff. Researchers studied the determinants of job-related stress in Malaysian universities and discovered that job demands, a lack of control, economic crises, and additional job responsibilities were the most common causes of workplace stress among university teachers. Researchers have discovered that, unlike in the past, the academic vocation has lost many of its distinguishing features (Chen *et al.*, 2021; Ahmad *et al.*, 2015; Jamal, 2005).

Academic job was once thought to be less stressful and more flexible. The traditional workplace was quantity based, but the present workplace is quality centered, which has become a cause of stress for members of the academic community (Saeed *et al.*, 2020; Beheshtifar *et al.*, 2013). Scholars have established that university lecturers are stressed as a result of increased job pressure and new tasks in addition to instructional duties (Bhargava & Trivedi, 2018). This has also occurred as a result of the rapid changes in policies and social status of higher education around the world, as well as the associated challenges and competition (Bhui *et al.*, 2012; Boyle *et al.*, 1995; Khan & Khurshid, 2017). The increased connectivity of university students and teachers with industry has also resulted in significant changes in university teachers' working styles, and as a result, universities are becoming more similar to other professions in terms of working environment and conditions (Bhui *et al.*, 2016; Christo & Pienaar, 2006; & Griffith *et al.*, 1999). Work overload is one of the most often mentioned difficulties experienced by university lecturers (Der Feltz-Cornelis *et al.*, 2020). This is due to the rapidly evolving culture of research as a requirement for career advancement and the assignment of additional administrative duties to university teachers (Areekkuzhiyil, 2014; & Cooper *et al.*, 2001). Thus, the job of teachers in higher education is becoming more demanding due to a variety of factors such as increased research demands, additional responsibilities, slow career growth or fewer opportunities for timely promotions, less support from superiors, and an increased gap between personal and professional requirements (Ferguson *et al.*, 2017). As a result, university teachers must have, in addition to effective teaching skills, entrepreneurial skills for obtaining funds and increased pressure for publication (Gartia & Sharma, 2013; & Li & Kou, 2018). The purpose of this study was to investigate workplace factors that cause stress among university teachers, as well as coping strategies.

## PERTINENT LITERATURE REVIEW

### Workplace Stress

Stress is a psychological and physical disorder caused by external circumstances (Wadhwa & Bano, 2020). If not addressed early on, it may lead to subsequent difficulties (Bhargava & Trivedi, 2018). It is defined as a bodily and psychological reaction to a particular scenario. When a person's competencies do not match the situational demands and requirements, stress occurs (Ahmad *et al.*, 2015). Workplace stress develops when there is an imbalance between job expectations and an individual's abilities and resources (National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health–NIOSH, 1999). Workplace stressors differ depending on the workplace. The atmosphere and nature of employment in today's world has swiftly evolved and has become competitive with each company, including higher education institutions. Coping with the ever-increasing changes is

getting increasingly difficult for both administration and academic personnel. As a result, people are anxious at work (Lyon, 2012; Sharma, 2014). Teachers are put in a difficult condition as a result of this predicament. The repercussions of job stress on employees are numerous. This might be shown in employee behavior in the form of anxiety and sadness, being aggressive, displaying rage and lacking drive in conduct, loss of attention and problem-solving abilities, or even some other physical symptoms such as headache and palpitation (Goodspeed & DeLucia, 1990). If the stress persists for an extended length of time, it can cause neuroendocrine, cardiac, and immune system disorders, as well as other psychological (Gul & Rafque, 2017) and physical sickness (Michie, 2002). Anxiety, stress, melancholy, suicidal ideation, and other family distractions are all caused by psychosocial issues in the workplace (Bhui *et al.*, 2012). Noise levels have also been linked to increased job stress. Employees who work in noisy environments are more likely to experience stress than those who work in quiet environments (Mursali *et al.*, 2016). In today's research-oriented work climate, the slogan for today's university instructors is "publish or perish," which has intensified the already strong battle for survival and career progression with others (Malik & Björkqvist, 2019). However, rather than being advantageous in defining university instructors' professional roles, this has proven to be harmful. It has impacted university lecturers' morale. Furthermore, university professors deal with a rising number of students in numerous positions such as research supervisor, counselor, coach, and teacher, which is becoming more challenging as time goes on (Shahid & Nauman, 2019). Teachers must adjust to new curriculum requirements while complying with newly implemented quality assurance standards. Simultaneously, instructors must study and implement technological improvements, as well as keep current on the most recent research findings and gain new abilities. They must also include all new tasks into their administrative responsibilities (Gul *et al.*, 2020c). According to experts, the issue of university underfunding and other challenges in the service structure of instructors have influenced university faculty members' attitudes and increased stress as one of the strongest contributors. A shortage of human and material resources to support the work of university lecturers has also become a significant hindrance to job efficiency and quality standards. As a result, they perceive their autonomy is under threat, which intensifies their resentment (Jamison & Enrera, 2015). Job insecurity, fewer opportunities for timely promotion, poor interpersonal ties, specifically a lack of support from colleagues and coworkers as well as seniors, and a sense of underestimation due to the belief that their work is not properly recognized and compensated, all contribute to workplace stress, according to research. These issues have a negative impact on the morale of university lecturers (Johnson *et al.*, 2005). According to several research, life imbalance is another source of stress among higher education academic personnel (Gul *et al.*, 2020d).

University academic staff is often obliged to work in the evenings and even on weekends due to increased job demands, which has a severe influence on their personal lives, and they have failed to achieve a balance between work and life, producing considerable stress among them. Such a condition frequently results in employment churn among academic professionals (Gul *et al.*, 2020b; Lupien *et al.*, 2009; Lyon, 2012). According to recent research, academic professionals lack proper working space, which contributes to psychological difficulties such as anxiety and melancholy (Marks & Yardley, 2004). This has had an effect on the devotion and professional performance of academic employees. Most of the time, prolonged working hours due to increasing demands of extra responsibilities, a lack of leisure time, and sleep problems have an influence on the professional performance of university instructors (Masuku & Muchemwa, 2015). Researchers discovered that teachers who have less control over their work schedules and receive less support from their supervisors had a high level of work imbalance (Meng & Wang, 2018). This is associated with poor psychological well-being, low job satisfaction, and a higher inclination to work turnout among university professors (Mostert *et al.*, 2008). Aside from working conditions, university job conditions have changed, such as policy requirements for resolving gender balance-related appointments challenges (Mursali *et al.*, 2016; Oshagbemi, 1997). Aside from teaching, stress difficulties include the ever-increasing demands and expectations of research projects (Gul & Khilji, 2021) and extracurricular activities. Women university employees have reported considerable levels of stress as a result of gender discrimination in appointments, work allocation, and career progression, and in many cases, they quit their employment (Namey *et al.*, 2008). Academic personnel in higher education commonly cite home-work imbalances, which are usually viewed as a primary source of stress (Nekzada & Tekest, 2013; Peretomode, 2012). Several studies, however, showed no significant differences in the degree and impact of demands on the professional and personal life of male and female employees (Gul *et al.*, 2021d). Few studies have discovered that university professors are more stressed as a result of organizational structure, work climate, insufficient management style of university management and administration (Gul *et al.*, 2020a), less involvement in decision-making, and a lack of autonomy and control over work (Gul *et al.*, 2020a; Sahibzada & Bano, 2012; Sarwar *et al.*, 2012; Shimazu & Kosugi, 2003). The excessively hierarchical organization of a university work environment driven by the power concept is another source of job-related stress. Higher education's power typology is based on the rising legal authority of academics in higher positions. The two groups, which comprise assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors, are clearly distinguished by power, autonomy, work substance, and job security. These positions can develop in teachers sentiments of superiority and inferiority, which contributes to stress (Fatima *et al.*, 2019; Slikovi & Seri, 2011). Teachers in

junior level roles, according to research, are more stressed than those in senior level positions due to variations in compensation, job security, and status. Others, on the other hand, have no noticeable work position disparities (Bukhari *et al.*, 2021b). Others have compared the stress levels of university employees with those working in industry and discovered that work-related stresses in higher education were connected with making key decisions and coping with crisis circumstances. Stress in the workplace has been highlighted as a possible concern all over the world.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In human interactions, the idea of stress is not new. It has existed in human behaviors from the beginning of time (Mulugeta *et al.*, 2021). People have utilized a variety of approaches and cures to handle stress-related difficulties in the workplace over the years (Ali *et al.*, 2021). However, due to the quick growth in professional competitiveness, technological improvements, and the rapidly expanding impact of social media in today's corporate culture, the prevalence of stress has become an obvious fact (Fatima *et al.*, 2019). This phenomena may also be observed in higher education. Due to strong professional expectations and requirements, university teachers labor in a stressful environment (Awang *et al.*, 2021). Workplace stress, as previously stated, is a circumstance in which job-related elements interact with the worker to modify his or her psychological or physiological condition, causing the individual to depart from normal functioning (Ayub *et al.*, 2021). Many hypotheses have been developed to explain the notion of workplace stress, its dimensions, and its impacts. Person-environment fit theory, occupational stress framework, and demand control support model are three of the most significant theories on workplace stress (Vandenberg *et al.*, 2002). These ideas clearly demonstrate that because every working location is mostly comprised of human resources, human produces challenges for human. The demand control support model emphasizes that job stress is dependent on coworkers and colleagues. The working atmosphere will be stressful if they are less or non-cooperative and make conflicts in the workplace (Foy *et al.*, 2019; Troman, 2000). Similarly, workplace stress experts have usually identified that several terms for employees' stress include workplace stress, occupational stress, organizational stress, and work-related stress. Its meaning has evolved through time. Initially, it was thought to be a pressure that an employee feels from his or her surroundings (Saeed *et al.*, 2020). It is now regarded a link between an employee's surroundings and his or her reaction to them. It occurs when an employee is unable to satisfy the demands of the workplace and is put under strain. As a result, the employee suffers from a variety of mental and physical illnesses (Harshana, 2018). Workplace stress has now infiltrated all levels of education, including universities. Until the mid-1980s, universities were seen to be places where tension was normal, and university teaching was thought to be a low-stress career.

According to research, universities are the most stressful locations owing to several factors such as job loads, inadequate educational policies from the government, a lack of autonomy, and a drop in academic standards (Wadhwa & Bano, 2020; Fisher, 1994). According to research studies on stress among academic and general staff, occupational stress in universities is frighteningly increasing (Mohammed *et al.*, 2020). Previously, only senior employees were subjected to workplace stress as a result of various tasks and strain, but this is no longer the case (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research approach

The research was conducted using a qualitative case study methodology. Qualitative researchers seek for nuanced information by probing a variety of sources for insight into a situation. In addition, a qualitative study might be useful if investigators are curious about the ways in which individuals construct meaning from their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997).

Due to the individual nature of stress responses, qualitative studies are best suited for examining stress by focusing on the participants' own accounts of their experiences (Bryman, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997).

This study set out to investigate faculty members' perspectives on the sources of stress in the workplace and the methods they use to manage it at one of Ghana's Technical Universities in the country's northernmost region (Tamale). Researching the issue via a qualitative case study was chosen in light of these considerations. The samples were collected using a method of sampling that was both quick and easy. The corona period coincided with the time when data collecting was taking place, making it challenging to approach the subjects. Therefore, it was agreed to schedule meetings with participants from various divisions according to their availability and desire to take part in the research. Thus, in order to collect more comprehensive and diverse data, we randomly selected faculties. Different numbers of professors throughout the university's four schools were contacted in this way. Interviews with academic members across disciplines might be terminated at any time if no new information was discovered, depending on the nature of that data. So, when it became clear, after a certain number of interviews that no new material was being provided by the instructors, further interviews in that faculty were halted and teachers in other faculties were approached. Twenty interviews were done in this fashion, with additional interviews being stopped when saturation was reached.

**Table 1.** displays the respondents' demographic information

Teachers	Classification	Frequency
Gender	Male	11
	Female	09
Faculties	Sec. & management	07
	Logistic & Procumbent Management	04
	Liberal Studies	06
	Entrepreneurship and Enterprise	03
	Development	
Education	M.Phil.	08
	MA	05
	PhD	07
Professional experience	1 – 5 years	
	10 – 15 years	
	More than 10 years	

**Source:** Authors own construct, 2022

### Instrument Used

Based on the available literature, we built a semi-structured interview guide. The interview questions were open-ended, so Lecturers could talk at length about the stress they felt on the job. Since stress reaction is an individually experienced state, qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and narrative summaries, may be most suitable for studying the effects of stress. That manner, the answers may more accurately reflect the reality of the situation. For this reason, the researchers decided to conduct the interviews in a semi-structured format.

The questions asked in the interviews centered on the following topics uncovered in the readings: (a)

Experiences with stress in the job, (b) reactions to stressors and (c) methods for dealing with stressful situations.

Iterations of the interview schedule were made several times to accommodate respondents' schedules and level of interest. Four test interviews were done before the actual interviews. The interview guide was revised and updated based on the information gleaned from these discussions. Important measures were made to meet all ethical benchmarks for the investigation. Each participant gave their own informed written consent, and they were all given the opportunity to cancel the interviews at any moment. There was careful consideration and complete adherence to the

respondents' requests that their real identities not be used. A fictitious name was utilized for each interviewee instead of their genuine ones. After that, the researchers scheduled interviews with each of the chosen educators to get their thoughts on the matter. Before conducting interviews, a time and location were settled on and shared with participants.

### Data Collection Procedures

During qualitative studies, researchers pay attention to how much detail and information they can glean from participants. Twenty lecturers from throughout Tamale Technical University's four departments took part in the research. There were four distinct schools: the Department of Secretary and Management, the Department of Logistics and procurement Management, the Department of Liberal Studies, and the Department of Entrepreneurship and Development. Choosing faculties with varying viewpoints within the same university was a primary motivation. When the goal of the study is to construct or present a rich and varied account, or when the goal of the research is to uncover or explore parallels, or when establishing interdisciplinary comparisons, qualitative interview is regarded acceptable (Saunders & Townsend, 2016).

The purpose of this research was to identify and gather first-hand accounts of the stress-inducing aspects of university faculty members' workplaces. Therefore, interviews were performed with the educators in order to obtain a detailed assessment of the causes of stress in the classroom. Teachers' approval was sought and secured prior to any data collection, and they were informed of the study's goals. Researchers conducted interviews at participants' homes after receiving permission from educators. The researcher met with each educator in person after obtaining the necessary permissions and setting up mutually agreeable appointment times and locations. The interviewees were treated with respect throughout the process. The interviewees' experiences were not stifled by the researchers' imposing of their own preferences or ideas; rather, the researchers maintained a distance.

At times when additional investigation of the issue was required, leading questions were asked. Interviews lasted varying amounts of time depending on the responder. The average duration was 15–20 minutes, although in some cases it lasted as long as 40 minutes. The interviewee's demeanor and the nature of the information being sought both had a role. When participants gave signs that they were losing interest in continuing the interview, the researchers did not push the issue. Respondents' personal and professional commitments meant that only a small fraction of interviews were brief. Prior to the interviews, it was guaranteed that the participants would have complete anonymity to express their opinions without fear of being judged. All of the conversations were captured on tape.

Only a subset of the interviews were recorded; the others were documented in Feld notes.

Some of the female educators did not agree to have their interviews recorded for cultural or personal reasons. The researchers transcribed the interviews and utterances into written formats immediately after recording or noting them down. After the interviews were transcribed, the participants were given a chance to review them and make sure nothing important was left out or misrepresented. The researchers chose to begin analysis after reviewing all of the interview transcripts. Researchers ended conducting interviews after talking to 20 participants because they had gathered all the information they could from their perspective.

### Data Analysis

The information collected from the interviews was analyzed using a thematic analysis strategy. Data patterns were found, analyzed, and reported using thematic analysis. With the use of thematic analysis, one may gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of any given subject (Marks & Yardley, 2004). Thematic analysis looks deeper than just counting words and phrases to discover and characterize underlying themes. Ideas or themes are coded, and then those codes are applied to or connected to raw data as summary markers for further analysis, such as comparing the relative frequencies of themes or subjects within a data collection, looking for code co-occurrence, or visually presenting code associations (Namey *et al.*, 2008 as cited by Kashif *et al.*; 2022). Therefore, the various procedures of theme analysis were applied during the data analysis process. The gathered transcriptions were read twice or thrice by the researcher to become comfortable with the material, and then codes were developed by highlighting and classifying the most salient information. Major themes, including various variables contributing to workplace stress and copying methods among university professors, were established by grouping similar concepts together and then defending the resulting themes.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Data analysis revealed five themes. These topics are relevant to university instructors' occupational stress. These variables include increased workload, working space, job security, promotion delays, and work environment.

### Increased workload

University lecturers are facing an increased workload. University professors have had a plethora of additional obligations in addition to teaching-learning activities. Workload was identified as one of the major sources of stress among teachers by 13 of the 20 respondents. They stated that in addition to teaching, they had to take classes, do research, and execute departmental chores. One of those responders, for example, stated:

*I've been attending normal classes at the department, in addition to undertaking research activities as a supervisor, and as a marking students scripts have to deal with a slew of other tasks that add up to a load and stress me out.*

During the interview, 11 of the 20 respondents mentioned that it was important to emphasize that they had to bear certain extra obligations allocated by the administration inside the administrative machinery of the institution, which contributed to their anguish and stress. According to one of the responders,

*"The increased administrative obligations imposed have an impact on my academic and other departmental work." I sometimes go to classes while waiting for a meeting call. In such circumstances, I am anxious about completing course work on schedule and supervising research researchers.*

Ten (10) of the twenty (20) lecturers expressed difficulty performing their primary role as university teachers, which was teaching. They were, however, overloaded by the added fee from management. This not only hampered their professional work but also put them under a lot of pressure. They mentioned the situation with management several times, but no effective action was made to solve it. Five lecturers stated that as the amount of work grows, employees experience discouragement and fatigue, which can lead to job turnover. So, managing and reserving time for family at home while not being able to finish organizational chores at work is rather challenging in these situations. Lecturers are really frustrated as a result of this. One of the responders stated,

*"Time and again, my family has objected to me to conduct my official job at university, not at home...."*

Sixteen (16) lecturers held the same opinions as the rest of the respondents. They also stated that when there is a dearth of academic and supporting personnel, the workload increases. They went on to say that if labor is allocated evenly across employees, it may help people manage their job and cope with stress.

### **Work Space**

Instructors, particularly university teachers, require a proper office, as well as related amenities and equipment. During the interviews, 16 out of 20 respondents stated that they did not have enough work space, such as an office. They were compelled to sit with other members of staff, which caused issues because they needed to meet with students, guests, and research students. They stated that the working conditions were unsuitable for research and other official duties. They said that offices were frequently shared by three to four professors, making it impossible for them to collaborate because each teacher had their own pupils and research researchers. These pupils seek advice from their lecturers

on academic difficulties. That is why disruption occurs, resulting in tension. One person stated,

*"I am a PhD doctor, okay?" Look at this office; we have three or four people working in there. I demanded a separate office so many times in order to enjoy a tranquil workplace, but.....!!!! I have yet to receive an office.*

Respondents worried about a lack of storage capacity for data and student portfolios. They also stated that they had an internal examination system, which required professors to review students' papers in their offices. Due to limited capacity, the professors consolidated all of their own academic and exam-related files, which caused issues when searching for the files in an emergency. One of the replies brought this up. He revealed that:

*I don't have my own office. Our files are frequently confused with one another.*

Previously, my results were delayed because the student's papers were mixed up with other files and I couldn't find them. I was in a really high state of tension. They also stated that if the university administration creates more acceptable working environments for its staff, it is probable that it will improve their job performance and minimize stress.

### **Job Security**

15 of the 20 respondents stated that many instructors were employed on a daily salary basis. Their work was not secure, and they may be discharged at any time. This scenario exacerbated the tension. Twelve participants answered that many academic members are always afraid about losing their employment. One of the professors described the issue as follows:

*"My work is contractual, and if I lose my position, it will have major fiscal ramifications for me."*

Many personnel in public colleges work on a contract or on another basis. The majority of such employees are concerned about contract renewal. During the interviews, seven instructors stated that they were working for the time being, but they were concerned about their future stability since they did not see their future as safe and secure, and they also had families and needs. That is why they cited it as a major source of workplace stress. A total of 11 respondents stated that job instability had a significant impact on their working attitude. This sense of employment uncertainty keeps people constantly fearful and stressed. They claimed that because of the contractual renewal restrictions, they did not feel respected for their responsibility and service despite being a contractual or daily pay employee. They also stated that they did not know how long their positions would be available. They couldn't even choose when they wanted to take their classes. As a result, the constant sense of employment insecurity prevented them from working wholeheartedly. They stated that if they

did not own their organization, how could they own the organization? They listed a variety of causes for their stress, with job instability topping the list. That is why they said that if they were secure, they could give their services enthusiastically. One of the responders elaborated on the problem, saying, "I have no idea if I will teach this topic till the conclusion of the semester or not." University can expel me at any point.... as a result, I overthink.... You tell me now! How can I concentrate myself to providing my services while I feel insecure? Furthermore, those respondents who worked as daily wagers or fixed payers were always stressed and anxious since they knew that if the management was dissatisfied with them, the payment procedure for daily courses would be very slow. They stated that it sometimes took a long time to pay, despite the fact that they were dealing with major economic issues and its implications. According to one reply,

*"The last time I waited up to two months for my money." I was having financial difficulties..... I was out of money and had no other options..... They said that their suggestions for class schedules were rejected because permanent staff regarded them negatively.*

As a result, they often felt pressed and powerless and just followed orders. When asked for suggestions on how to deal with workplace stress, the majority of these respondents thought that they needed to be hired on as permanent employees. It would provide them a sense of job security; however, this was not authorized, so they were concerned.

### **Delay in Promotion**

18 of 20 employees stated that they were not promoted on schedule. Respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the administration and management. They believed that the issue of promotion was tied to human nature, and that everyone desired to climb the ladder of success, professional advancement, and social progress. As a result, respondents expected their firm to take care of its employees in terms of timely promotion, often known as career advancement. They stated that getting promoted signified that they were valued. They also stated that being promoted without being asked increased our passion for the organizational aim. For example, one responder stated,

*"If my promotion is due and it is delayed by one strategy or another, then I have to approach other authorities for my due right.....So it affects my self-esteem and produces a kind of stress." Why shouldn't it be done without the employees' permission...?*

A total of 14 out of 20 respondents said that if a business wanted its staff to perform well, it should give instructors more freedom and independence, which would alleviate tension and stress. The university administration must prioritize the interests and desires of

its employees. Among those, one responder stated as follows:

*"How will a teacher focus on academic activities and other departmental work if he is always thinking about his job and has troubles with promotion?"*

According to the respondents, promotion was a form of incentive that may help people improve their mental and social conditions. They expected their organizations to give it. They provided services to the corporation, thus they must be appreciated by the organization.

### **Work Environment**

A less supportive work environment was mentioned by 16 out of 20 respondents as another possible source of workplace stress for instructors. That is why it was necessary to create a suitable learning atmosphere. Every teacher seeks for every chance to improve students' learning and make the classroom and institution a better place to learn. Previous research has discovered that, among some of the elements affecting the office environment, a good working environment was one of the characteristics that both boosted and mitigated the effect of workplace stress. Thus, 13 of the 20 respondents went on to say that, among other things, noise in the workplace was one of the key occupational dangers that also had psychological repercussions including mental stress. During the interviews, respondents said that outsiders and students from other departments cause disruption in the hallway in reaction to the reasons producing stress. They also stated that even during exams, pupils were spotted making a lot of noise while attempting their papers. It bothered the pupils and may cause difficulties for professors in overseeing the examination. They remarked that working in a loud setting is tough.

*"The workplace atmosphere, classrooms, and corridors are loud and disrupt our working rhythm," one responder remarked. It has a significant impact on my growth."*

As a result, 17 of 20 respondents requested a tranquil environment. According to them, the bulk of lecturers at Tamale Technical University had joint offices where they sat together. As a result, one person's activities influenced the work and attention of others.

Another person explained the issue as follows:  
*"I requested a separate office to do my research work in a tranquil setting, but I have yet to receive it."*

Respondents also indicated that because there was no set time for visitors and students from other departments, one should be set aside for them. They disrupted their work and harmed the favorable teaching-learning process.



## DISCUSSION

This research included all of the key results from the interviews. These research identified excessive workload, workspace, job security, promotion delays, and working environment as important workplace players creating stress among university professors.

### Increased Workload

The majority of instructors stated that they were stressed since they had to handle numerous additional tasks in addition to teaching duties.

The current study findings complement the findings of (Ahmad *et al.*; 2022; Fisher, 1994) that the employment demands of university professors as researchers, administrators, and supervisors increase job-related stress. Workload has also been identified as a prevalent workplace stressor in previous research.

According to one study, additional responsibilities for university teachers include administrative responsibilities, managing research work, supervising research scholars, handling departmental tasks, attending meetings, and taking classes with students, which collectively place a burden on the teacher's shoulders and create a stressful situation in the workplace (Gul *et al.*, 2021b).

Other researchers, such as Wadhwa & Bano (2020) have identified several other factors that contribute to teacher stress, such as excessive research work, limited time and energy, and the burden of teaching extra classes, which cause teachers to experience emotional and psychological distress (Ahmad & Gul, 2021). Similarly, Awang *et al.* (2021) found that instructors who have a severe workload are anxious at work. Others have found that unrealistic extra administrative obligations are the primary causes of poor occupational stress among university lecturers. Workload was also identified as a major stressor among university lecturers by Slikovi & Seri (2011). According to their findings, more than three-quarters of teachers reported working more than 40 hours per week, and over 40% worked more than 50 hours per week, causing them stress. These findings reflect our study's findings that stress workload is a key source of stress among university professors. According to several research, full professors are less likely to experience occupational stress than assistant and associate professors. Gupta *et al.* (2015), for example, conducted a research on occupational stress among faculty members. They observed that job overload might cause a high degree of stress and have a significant physical and emotional impact on instructors.

### Workspace

The lack of enough working space was cited as a workplace element that contributed to university professors' stress. Scholars have proposed that in higher education, every instructor should have a tranquil and

separate office in which to do research (Bukhari *et al.*, 2021a). It was discovered in this survey that there were no separate offices for instructors. The majority of professors indicated that this element added to their stress since the combined forces made it difficult for them to complete their assigned work and entertain research students and visitors while sitting in the same room with other colleagues. Sitting with any instructor in a single-combined office therefore had a direct impact on their job and interfered with their calm discharge of tasks. According to Basheka (2008), higher educational institutions must have material resources, financial resources, and human resources, among other resources, in order to achieve efficiency. Many additional research in different situations have identified adequate workspace as a primary occupational stressor. According to Peretomode (2012), among all the strains at higher education academic administrators, a key element was a lack of infrastructure. According to the findings of this study, instructors were having difficulty obtaining the distinct physical space or infrastructure that they need. Researchers have also identified poor working conditions and a lack of resources as major workplace stresses. Gillespie *et al.* (2001) identified limited resources, financing, and facilities as major workplace stresses. In their investigations, Faisal *et al.* (2019) distinguished between distinct stresses depending on public and private sector universities. They said that staff of public sector universities were less stressed than employees of private sector institutions. This is because research funding and other resources are available to staff of public sector institutions. Needless to say, it is critical for university lecturers to have a good location, office, or laboratory in which to conduct academic meetings, preserve records, and interact with students and parents (Gul *et al.*, 2021a). However, it was discovered in the current study that teachers did not have an appropriate area or office to handle day-to-day affairs easily. This had an impact on their work performance. This conclusion is unusual in the context of this study since there is no evidence in the previous literature relating to workspace as a stress factor. This discovery adds to the corpus of information on stress studies in the context of higher education. There was no material available from the Pakistani national context on workplace as a stress factor for university lecturers. Previous research studies, however, have identified either a lack of a tranquil workplace or a helpful environment as variables impacting work performance among instructors.

### Job Security

This study also discovered that job instability is a key occupational stressor for university lecturers. Many professors reported feeling unsafe as university workers since they were paid on a daily basis and might be fired at any time by management. The instructors said that their increased sense of uncertainty had a significant impact on their dedication to job performance and made them demotivated at times. As a result of the stress

created by the perception of job instability, they felt uneasy at work. Job instability was revealed to be a substantial source of stress for all higher education workers in a research done by Tytherleigh *et al.* (2005) in UK higher education institutions. Their research also discovered that job instability was a source of stress for all employees, regardless of their classification. During this survey, it was also shown that losing a job and having restricted contracts were major pressures at the current employment. Previous research investigations have also validated this conclusion. According to Gillespie *et al.* (2001), two-thirds of respondents were very anxious about their job instability owing to a redundancy cycle. Their studies also demonstrate that, in order to avoid losing their jobs, people take on more work than they can do. The perception of job instability was clearly proven to have a detrimental impact on the work in progress of university lecturers in this study as well. During our research, we discovered that daily wagers and contractual employees experienced greater stress than permanent employees. Sahibzada & Bano (2012) discovered that instructors with contractual contracts were more stressed in a research on job stress among faculty members in Pakistan's public and private sector institutions. They were discovered to have a sense of uneasiness as a result of their job contracts, and as a result, their work performance suffered. They encountered several issues as a result of their contracts, including bill payment delays, insufficient resources, a tremendous workload, and role uncertainty (Batool *et al.*, 2021). Christo & Pienaar (2006) agreed that job loss and security concerns are variables that contribute to workplace stress.

### **Promotional Delay**

Another workplace element producing stress among university instructors, according to this study, is a delay in promotion. Many respondents in the current survey claimed that promotion delays were a severe concern. The majority of lecturers, assistant professors, and associate professors expressed concern that the advancement of teachers was a major worry for the university. They proposed that higher education administration give strong job security to faculty members by ensuring that personnel are promoted on time; otherwise, it has serious effects for the academic climate, student learning, and higher education quality. As a result, promotion, particularly timely promotion of staff, has been identified as a substantial source of stress among instructors. Meng & Wang (2018) investigated the origins of occupational stress among university teachers. They stated that the professional rating of instructors impacts compensation, academic standing, and research resources in institutions. As a result, among other work concerns, pursuing promotion has become a cause of anxiety for university staff (Gul *et al.*, 2022). The study done in China also supports the notion of promotion as a major stressor. According to Li and Kou (2018), academic advancement of teachers is a major workplace stressor. On the other hand, receiving a

promotion is associated with employee motivation and recognition, which eventually boosts staff morale. It also has a good influence on teacher performance and minimizes the effects of stress.

### **Working Atmosphere**

According to this study, a stressful employment atmosphere is a major cause of stress among university lecturers. Respondents complained about the university's inadequate climate in offices and classrooms. They described a variety of variables relating to the institutional environment, which the researcher summed up after the analysis as a non-conducive setting. For example, a lack of internet access and a competitive relationship with coworkers were identified as workplace social atmospheric elements that contribute to teacher stress. During this survey, a small number of respondents stated that there was professional envy among their coworkers, which caused conflict and contributed to workplace stress. Rahoo *et al.* (2017) performed a survey in which 76% of the respondents were female lecturers from various institutions. Their findings revealed a variety of occupational factors that contributed to stress, including an unhealthy connection with coworkers (Ahmad *et al.*, 2022). Arekkuzhiyil (2014) further said that the office environment influenced communication patterns as well as the culture of collaboration among employees. According to Arekkuzhiyil (2014), a favorable and adequate working environment has good effects for companies, but a poor atmosphere causes stress. According to Kabito *et al.* (2020), student misconduct is a source of stress for instructors. Ferguson *et al.* (2017) discovered that because instructors spend the majority of their time in classrooms, stress from students' conduct may be the most urgent issue that teachers encounter with such severity that teachers were stressed only because of this disruptive behavior. According to Baglioni (1995), the biggest stressor for instructors that undermines their discipline is disruptive pupils' conduct.

### **Coping Strategies Suggestions**

Professional training was recognized as one of the top techniques for stress coping methods at the higher education workplace in this study. The majority of respondents stated that instructors did not know how to deal with difficult situations owing to a lack of suitable training. According to the findings of this study, management and organizations are accountable for offering stress management training to their employees on the job. It was also proposed in this study that higher education administration and management give sufficient support and an inspiring work environment to instructors so that they may accomplish their tasks with devotion and commitment. According to recent studies, providing assistance to employees enhances the level of dedication to work. As a result, it was urged that staff take advantage of training opportunities in time management, stress management, and resource management. Respondents indicated that higher

education institutions establish and encourage chances for workshops and seminars for their staff professional growth in stress management measures. It was also said that instructors must be properly supported and provided ample opportunity for continuous professional development, as well as orientation on the most sophisticated various pedagogical approaches of teaching. It will assist instructors in better serving the aim of the teaching-learning process and dealing with any emergent stressful scenario. Otherwise, the lack of stress-related trainings and opportunities would exacerbate job stress. Previous research has validated the current study's conclusions. For example, Khan *et al.* (2014) identified a lack of sufficient training and a supportive atmosphere as major workplace-related stresses. Their research also found that when there is a lack of a good training system for teachers, it impacts their degree of dedication to work and interest in performing tasks linked to academic topics, causing stress as a result of the strain on teachers in terms of overload. According to Faisal *et al.* (2019), teaching workers at private sector universities face greater pressures than those at public sector institutions. They stated that one of the most significant sources of stress for private sector employees was a lack of sufficient options for professional training as compared to employees of public sector colleges (Akbar & Akhter, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

In the context of the current investigation, many major elements were identified as workplace-related stresses. These included assigning teachers extra workload in addition to their designated teaching duties, a lack of working space to work in a smooth and peaceful manner, a lack of job security as a result of stress, a delay in promotion of teachers after a specific time period, and a lack of a supportive work environment. According to the report, the existing situation might be improved by providing prompt and ongoing professional training and assistance. Management's provision of academic and social assistance, as well as an encouraging work environment, were proven to be important contributors in improving job performance and lowering workplace stress. It was shown that recognizing the extra responsibilities undertaken by instructors helped boost their dedication to work. This study suggests that university professors are burdened with administrative obligations, research work, taking classes, meetings, and family concerns, despite their best efforts to do all of these things efficiently. As a result, when teachers' competences fail to reach the deadline and they are carrying such heavy burdens, they frequently experience occupational stress. The majority of instructors are stressed due to a lack of timely job promotion and promotion delays. This study also suggests that higher education professors in the setting of the current study face an excessive level of professional stress on a daily basis, which increases with time. It was determined that most of the time, moving up the scale takes time. As

advancement to the next level is related with a rise in social standing, an increase in extra cash gains, and recognition of services. That is why instructors are concerned about receiving promotion on schedule. In the framework of this study, it was also established that instructors are stressed owing to a lack of distinct workspace and resources. Material resources play an important function in any organization that cannot be overlooked. The needed resources include a calm environment, pleasant and well-equipped offices where instructors may sit and do research while still performing departmental work. The absence of offices or the combination of offices exacerbates the challenges of the instructors involved. Another workplace-related stress factor discovered by the study was a non-conductive atmosphere. It is fundamentally associated with peace of mind, which is affected by the surrounding environment. It is determined that in order to have a tranquil work environment, it is necessary to minimize or manage noise in hallways, classes, and offices; reduce conflicts with coworkers or have non-cooperative colleagues; and control disruptive student behaviors, particularly in overcrowded classrooms. Teachers are extremely stressed as a result of these factors.

## Recommendations

Public University administrations can better incentivize their faculty to do their best teaching by paying them on time and in full every pay period, as well as providing other appropriate incentives.

Furthermore, if feasible, sufficient instructors should be hired to lessen the strain of the current private university teachers.

Lecturers can drink a lot of water, practice deep breathing, and keep a positive attitude at all times to help them deal with stress, in addition to other techniques such as setting goals, relaxing after work, thinking positively, planning ahead and prioritizing, learning to control emotions, and forgetting about events from the classroom after hours.

## Limitation and Future Research Directions

There are caveats to the current study that must be noted. The findings are interesting since they are the result of a study that exclusively included professors teaching at Tamale Technical University and used a qualitative method and a case study design (TTU). More extensive studies are needed, ideally with other public universities in Ghana so that findings may be generalized.

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