

Work-related Stress in Hotels: An Analysis of the Causes and Effects among Frontline Hotel Employees in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana

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Abstract

Work-related stress has become an important issue within the hospitality literature. In spite of the increase in the number of hotel facilities with its corresponding increase in employment opportunities in the Kumasi Metropolis little is known on work-related stress among frontline employees. Questionnaires were administered to 296 frontline hotel employees in the Metropolis with a view of assessing the causes and effects of work-related stress. From the study, it emerged that seven factors cause work-related stress. Frontline hotel employees indicated they suffer headaches, become frustrated and are unable to concentrate as a result of work-related stress. Hotel managers should address issues relating to training of frontline employees in the bid to empower them to handle problems that arise as a result of dealing with guests. Finally, frontline employees are encouraged to include relaxation activities such as exercising and taking enough rest in their daily routine.

Keywords: Cause; Effects; Frontline employees; Hotel; Kumasi metropolis; Work-related stress

Introduction

Work within the hospitality industry and for that matter, hotel, is highly labour intensive and has increasingly harsh environmental demands imposed upon it. The nature of work within hotels, according to Kristensen et al. [1] include hard deadlines, unexpected interactions with guests, long working hours, night and evening work, repetitive work, high emotional demands, low influence (control), shift work, high work space and problems with coordination of work. In their work, Lo and Lamm [2] reported that working in the hospitality industry can be stressful and that many workers are vulnerable in terms of their poor working conditions and low wages.

The above assertions give credence to the incidence of Work-Related Stress (WRS) among those who work within the hotel environment, especially frontline employees. Frontline work in hotels, according to Dann [3], place much emphasis on face-to-face contact with guests and the real time nature of service delivery means that workers in this environment are not only exposed to pressure of being required to respond to promptly. Hales and Nightingale [4], posit that frontline employees are 'subject to a mass of competing, often contradictory or conflicting demands and expectations for a multiplicity of services'. This has the potential to affect frontline employees in relation to their output and can result in health related issues as well as absenteeism and labour turn over.

WRS can be defined as 'a pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse and noxious aspects of work content, work organisation and work environment. It is a state characterised by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of not coping' (The European Commission, 2002) [5]. The indication is that, working as a frontline employee can be very stressful, given the indications above. This has resulted in high labour turnover and absenteeism [6] and headaches, gastrointestinal problems, sleep disturbances and depressions [7].

WRS is a significant issue within the hospitality industry and has dire consequences for both employers and employees. Although addressing and reducing stress is both a noble goal and is capable of resulting in expense reductions for employers [8], the nature and quantity of hospitality employee stress is not fully understood. A

number of studies into WRS among hotel employees in the hospitality industry have being conducted in this regard [2] Health and Safety Executive (2000) [9,10] these studies were however limited to Europe and Asia.

Though attempts have been made to research into accommodation units and stress in Ghana, little is known on WRS among frontline hotel employees. Majority of the studies on accommodation in Ghana are limited to hotel facilities rather than employees [11-13]. Again, though the study by Atindanbila was on stress, the focus of his study was on lecturers at the University of Ghana. No detailed studies have been conducted on WRS among frontline hotel employees in the Kumasi Metropolis. The current study therefore seeks to investigate into this phenomenon.

The concept of work-related Stress

Malta [14] states that occupational stress is any discomfort which is felt and perceived at a personal level and triggered by instances, events or situations that are too intense and frequent in nature so as to exceed a person's coping capabilities and resources to handle them adequately. The National Institute For occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) explains WRS as an individual's emotional and physical response to the demands of a job that is incongruent with his or her abilities, resources, or needs (NIOSH N.D.) [15]. The Health and Safety Executive [16] defines WRS as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'.

The underlying factor, therefore, is that WRS relates both to an individuals' perception of the demands made on them and to their perception of their capability to meet those demands. A mismatch will

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mean that an individual's stress threshold is exceeded, triggering a stress response [17]. WRS has also been defined as a particular relationship between the employee and his or her work [18]. On their part [19], see WRS as demands that exceed the worker's coping ability.

Theoretical underpinnings

Much research on WRS, according to HSE [16], has been driven by two long standing interactional models: Person-Environment Fit theory [20] and Karasek's [21] theory of job demands and control. Dollard [22] on the hand, have distinguished between two psychological theories of WRS, namely, interactional and transactional models. These theories are examined.

Interactional theories

The interactional approach is a cause and effect approach that focuses on the statistical interaction between stimulus and response. This implies that the perceived presence of certain work conditions may be associated with a number of stress responses [23]. According to Kyriacou [24], interactional theories place emphasis on the work environment and an individual's interactions with it as the source of stress. The theory has been frequently used to analyse stress in social service occupations such as teaching [25].

Interactional theories have been criticised based on the fact that focusing on the interaction between two variables implies that attempts to explain complexities of such a relationship are limited to "structural manipulation", that is, the influence of a third moderator [23], reported that this approach does not fully provide a sufficient framework to facilitate a full understanding of the stress process. However, he maintained that its importance lies in the fact that it draws attention to the separate constructs that play a significant role in understanding stress [23].

Transactional theories

Transactional theories, in contrast to interactional theories, focus on the thoughts and feelings of the individual in response to their interaction with their environment, and the meanings they ascribe to what happens [22]. The transactional approach is consistent with the conceptualisation of WRS advanced by the British government through the agency of the Health and Safety Executive, the enforcement body for health and safety in Britain, as well as that of the European Commission [26].

According to Cooper et al. [23], contemporary approaches to understanding work stress are based on the transactional process perspective and that job related stressors have built upon this perspective.

Causes of work-related stress

Strank [27] described the causes of stress as stressors. The workplace, according to Malik [28], is an important source of both demands and pressures causing stress and structural and social resources to counteract stress. He continues that workplace factors that have been found to be associated with stress and health risks can be categorised as those that have to do with the content of work and those that have to do with the social and organisational contexts of work. Erkutlu and Chafr [29] stated that the workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress purely because of the amount of time that is spent in this setting.

In close relation to the above, Michie [30] stressed that factors that are intrinsic to the job (long hours, work overload, time pressure,

difficult or complex tasks, lack of breaks, lack of variety and poor working conditions); under work or conflicting roles and boundaries; under promotion, lack of promotion, lack of training and job insecurity are sources of stress at the work place. He concluded that two sources, that is, relationship at work and the organisational culture can either cause or reduce stress at the workplace. Di Salvo et al., [31] observed that WRS is generally as a result of an imbalance between environmental demands and individual capabilities. Other sources of stress identified by Ramires et al. [32] include: work feeling badly managed and resourced, managerial responsibilities and dealing with customers. Ivancevich and Matteson [33] suggest four clusters of work stressors: physical environment; individual level (a mixture of role and career development variables); group level (primarily relationship-based); and organization level (a mixture of climate, structure, job design, and task characteristics).

A research on occupational stress by the United Kingdom Higher Education Institute identified the main causes of stress as overload, control, work relationships, job insecurity, work-life balance, resources and communications, payments and benefits and aspects of the job [34]. The HSE [35] recommended assessing and addressing seven major hazards that can cause stress for employees. One of the hazards, culture, has since been subsumed into the other six hazards [36]. However, as employees can relate to different aspects of culture such as the long-hours culture, bullying culture and so on, culture was retained as one of the hazards in the model. Thus, culture is seen to influence or be a part of the six main hazards, which include: demands, control, support, relationships, role and change.

The foregoing discussions on the causes of WRS revealed a number of stressors; and in accordance with the objectives the relevant stressors are identified and discussed below as the causes of WRS.

Work-place demands

Various studies have proven that individuals working in the hospitality industry show signs of stress and overwork, due to demands placed by organisations that tend to pressurise the employees [37]. Demands at work include exposure to issues such as workload, work patterns and work environments; for example, volume and complexity of work, shift work, unrealistic deadlines (HSE, 2001) [35]. Lee and Wang [38] also found out that a high level of occupational stress is related to workload and responsibility. The hotel environment has been described as being characterised by shift work and fatigue as a result of working long hours, unpredictable shifts, few breaks, heavy physical demands (manual handling of heavy loads, etc.), and mental and emotional demands [39]. These contribute to the demand at work and hence result in WRS, especially when the employee perceives these demands as higher than his/her ability to cope with them.

Control

According to HSE (2001) [35], control over work includes: how much say and involvement the person has in the way they do their work. The implication is that lack of control in relation to the demands of work, lack of autonomy and too much supervision can lead to WRS. The experience of pressure is strongly linked to perceptions of control. Lack of influence and consultation in the way in which work is organised and performed can be a potential source of WRS [34]. Examples of control at work are: lack of involvement in decision making, account not taken of staff ideas/suggestions about the job, lack of influence over performance targets and lack of time.

Support

Support consists of issues such as encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and all colleagues. For example, training for core functions of job and catering for individual differences (HSE, 2001) [35]. This is very crucial in eliminating or reducing WRS. Lo and Lamm [2] observed that the prevalence of a close working relationship in hotel cases suggests that social support may play a critical role in neutralising employees' experience of occupational stress. They further argued that given the all-consuming aspect of hospitality work in terms of long and unsocial hours, it is not unusual for work teams to provide a "second family" for many hospitality workers. Ismail and Tech-Hong argued WRS occurs as a result of misfit between employees' abilities (technical skills) and skills (interpersonal skills) and as such when they are not given adequate training and resources to perform their tasks in the most effective way, they are at risk of WRS. The training consists of training employees to understand the hotel's values and expectations as well as training to provide employees with requisite skills needed for the job.

Relationships

According to Blair and Littlewood [40], work relationships are potential stressors and this is as a result of conflicts with co-workers as well as lack of staff support. This assertion is in consonance with the view of HSE [9] that lack of understanding and support from managers has negative effect on workers' stress. Relationships include promoting positive working relationships to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviours such as bullying and harassments and conflicts at work (HSE, 2001) [35]. Rayner and Hoel [41] argue that relationships at work include poor relationship with the boss or colleagues, an extreme component of which is bullying in the workplace. Good relationships at work produce amiable environment because it eliminates tension between and among employees, supervisors and managers. This in turn eliminates WRS. Galvin and Dileepan [42] reported that poor relationship with colleagues is among the most stressful factor within an organisation.

Role

Role has been identified as one of the major causes of WRS [43]. Bass and Stogdill also argued that stress in individuals or groups occur when their situation is overly complex, ambiguous and unclear. Similarly, Jamal [44] posited that employees faced with conflicting job requirements and demands are likely to suffer from WRS.

Copper and Marshall [45] observed that several role-related factors can be stress-inducing; role ambiguity (confusion about the scope or specific responsibilities of the job); role conflict (being pulled in different directions by incompatible demands); roles which are high in responsibility for workers, and the perception of minimal authority in one's organisational role. The HSE [35] states that role refers to whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that employees do not have conflicting roles (for example, conflicting roles avoided, vague job descriptions, etc.).

Hotel guests

Work within hotels, especially, frontline employees, involves frequent interaction with customers since they are required to deal with numerous requests from these customers. Again, frontline work in hotels place much emphasis on face-to-face contact with guests

and the real time nature of service delivery means that workers in this environment are exposed to pressure of being required to respond promptly [3].

As noted by Hales and Nightingale [4], frontline employees are "subject to a mass of competing, often contradictory or conflicting demands and expectations for a multiplicity of services". These have the potential of heightening WRS [10].

Income/salary

According to Haynes and Fryer [46], low pay is a concern as far as WRS in the hotel industry is concerned. This, according to him, is because work in the industry is remunerated on the basis of qualification standards which tend to be set lower in relation to other service industries.

Effects of work-related stress

WRS is said to have adverse effects on productivity, worker turnover, and employee health and well-being. In addition, these effects have clear-cut direct costs to employers [47]. The effects can, however, be divided into two broad categories: effects on the employee and the effects on the organisation [48]. Similarly, Ross [49] also believes that WRS produces undesirable, expensive, and debilitating consequences which affect both individuals and organisations.

The literature on WRS indicates that effects of WRS on the individual include but is not limited to the following: physical (sleep disturbances, headaches, gastrointestinal upset, raised blood pressure/cardiovascular diseases); emotional (anxiety and irritability, depression, labile emotions); intellectual (loss of concentration, lack of motivation, difficulty with thought process, loss of memory, poor decision-making); and behavioural (substance misuse, decreased libido, inappropriate display of behaviour, isolation, unpunctuality). On the other hand, effects of WRS on the organisation include high absenteeism, high labour turnover, poor time keeping, poor performance and productivity, low morale, poor motivation, increased employee complaints and increased ill-health, accidents and incidents reports. In summary, individual issues include behavioural, mental, and physical outcomes while organisational issues include decrease in performance, job satisfaction and organisational commitment [50]. The current study was however limited to the effects of WRS on employees.

Study area

Kumasi Metropolis, the capital city of the Ashanti Region, is located between latitudes 6.35° N to 6.40° N and longitudes 1.30° W to 1.35° W and covers a total land area of approximately 245 km². The city was considered appropriate for this research due to the following reasons. According to the Ghana Tourist Authority, (GTA, 2012) [51], the city has all categories of accommodation units with the exception of a five-star hotel. In essence, the city can be said to be the only one in Ghana to have a four-star hotel outside Accra.

The city is also uniquely positioned, making it a traversing point from all parts of the county. This has contributed to making Kumasi a notable city for business and partly explains why the city can boast of a wide range of accommodations facilities. Due to this, accommodation for transit travellers, business travellers and tourists/holiday makers in the city is not a challenge. In terms of tourism, the city is endowed with a host of tourism attractions.

In line with this, Boakye [52] described Kumasi, together with Accra and Cape Coast as the "Tourism Triangle" of Ghana. Tourist

attractions in the city include: the Armed Forces Museum (the only inland fort in Ghana), the Manhya Palace, the Komfo Anokye Sword site, the Kumasi Zoological Garden, Centre for National Culture (which houses the Prempeh II Museum, craft shops and the regional offices of the Ghana Tourism Authority) [51]. The city's proximity to tourist attractions such as Lake Bosomtwe and the famous Kente City of Bonwire is worthy of mention. Figure 1 shows the map of the study area.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This design is a more rigid, planned and structured design, and is typically based on a large sample [53]. Creswell [54] posits that the main purpose of the descriptive research design is to provide an accurate description of observations of a phenomenon and no attempt is made to change behaviour or conditions. Since the main aim of this study was to describe the causes and effects of WRS among frontline hotel employees with no intention of introducing any intervention, the descriptive research design was deemed appropriate.

The total number of hotels in Kumasi is 249 (GTA, 2012) [51]. The licensed hotels were classified into four-star, three-star, two-star, one-star, guest houses and budget hotels. This was done based on the criteria set by the GTA. However, the three-star, two-star and one-star hotels were purposively selected. The total number of hotels selected was therefore, seventy (70) licensed hotels. Using the sample size calculator

at a confidence level of 95%, which is the most widely used in social sciences, and a confidence interval of five (5), the sample size (number of hotels) for the study was fifty-nine (59) licensed hotels. However, since there were only five 3-star hotels, they were purposely included. The only 4-star hotel in the city was excluded because management of this hotel declined participation during the data collection exercise, even though they had earlier indicated their willingness to participate in the study.

The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study. At the first stage, fifty nine hotels were put into strata and the required number of hotels within each stratum was randomly selected (3-star=5; 2-star=29; 1-star=25). At the second stage, six (6) employees were accidentally selected from the sampled hotels. The accidental sampling technique was employed because hotel managers/owners were not willing to submit the list of frontline staff. In all, three hundred and fifty-four (354) respondents were selected for the study. Questionnaires were used for collecting primary data for the study. The questionnaires were developed using the Health and Safety Management Standards Indicator Tool. Almost all the items on the HSE tool were used with modifications made to suit the current study. In consonance with the literature and objectives of the study, the questionnaire was structured into three modules. Module 1 dealt with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Module 2 handled the causes of WRS whilst module 3 looked at the effects of WRS on the employee. A 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neutral; 4=disagree; 5=strongly disagree) was used

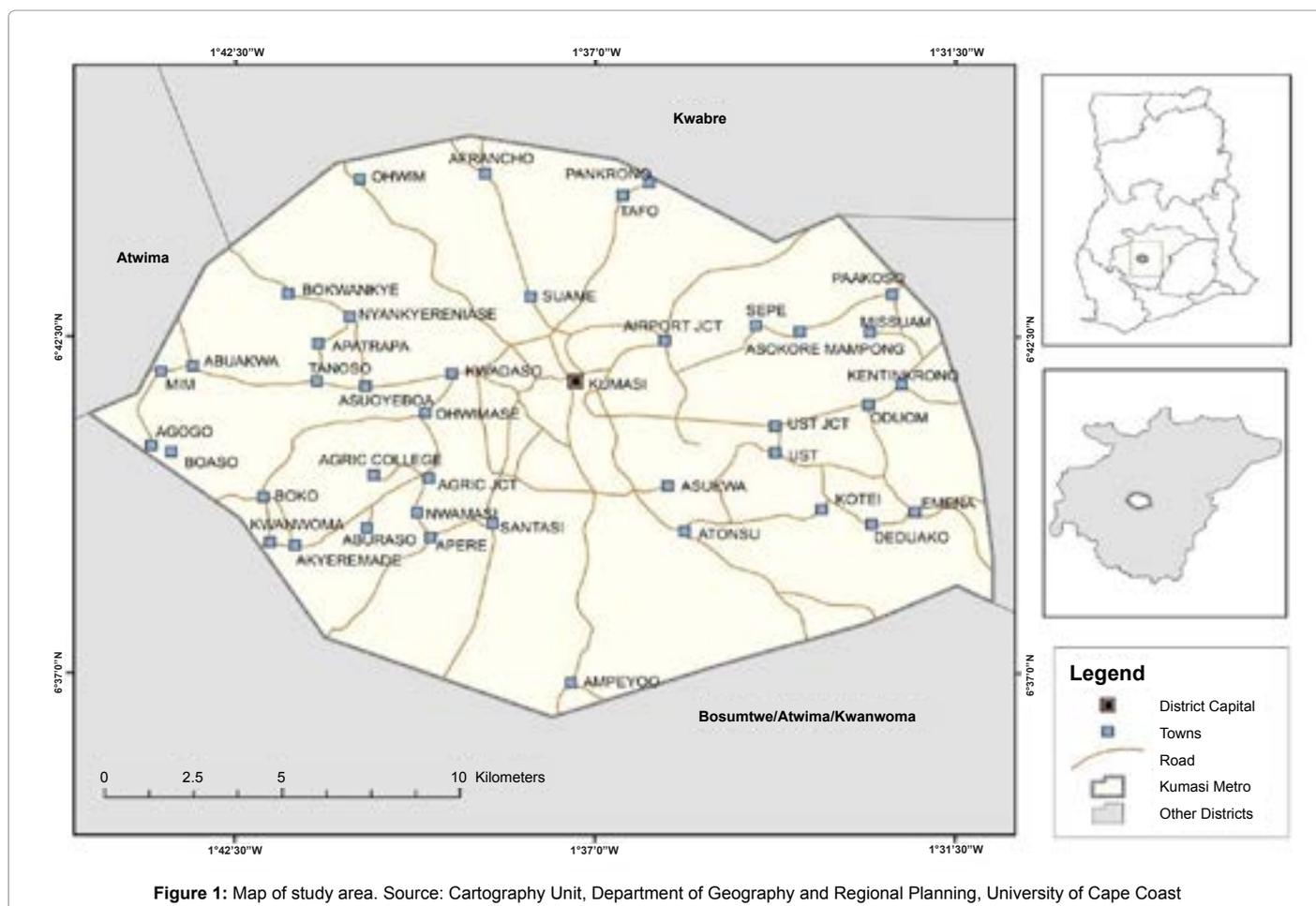


Figure 1: Map of study area. Source: Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast

to measure the causes as well as the effects of WRS on employees. Data obtained from the field was processed using the SPSS (version 17). In addition, factor analysis was used to identify the structure of the factors that account for the causes and effects of WRS among employees.

The accidental non-probability sampling technique was employed in selecting frontline hotel employees. Due to this, generalisations and further extrapolations based on the results of this study should be done with utmost care. Reliability and validity of the research instrument were however assured. This was done through a pre-testing of research instrument to ensure that the instrument measured the specific objectives outlined as well as the consistency of the results.

Results

Background of employees

A total of 296 respondents out of a target of 354 participated in the study. This represents a response rate of 83.6%. One hundred and sixty-five (55.7%) of the total respondents were males while the remaining one hundred and thirty-one (44.3%) were females. Majority of the respondents (45.9%) were <25 years of age, more than two-thirds (75.0%) were single. Most of the respondents had completed secondary education (43.9%) and mostly belonging to the Christian religion (90.2%). With regards to workstation, 42.9% were receptionists, 35.5% were waiters/waitresses, while the remaining 21.6% were bar attendants. Majority of the respondents (92.9%) were permanent workers while the remaining (7.1%) were contract employees with contracts ranging between one and five years. Almost 80% of the respondents had worked within the hospitality industry for between one and five years, 16.6% between six and fifteen years and about four percent having worked for more than 15 years within the hospitality industry. The above is represented in Table 1.

Causes of work-related stress

Factor analysis (FA) was employed to determine the underlying components of the causes of WRS among frontline hotel employees. However, the appropriateness of using the FA technique was first determined. The Bartlett's test of sphericity (1859.032) was significant at $p=0.0001$ while the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.870. The items responsible for causes WRS were subjected to FA using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) Pallant [53] indicates that a recommendation is made for the inspection of a correlation matrix of 0.3 or more while factors or components with eigenvalues of 1.0 or more are retained for further investigation. Thus, the PCA, using the varimax rotation, reduced the 40 variables to 7 main underlying factors which accounts for the causes of WRS. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to test the reliability of the scale used. A figure of more than 0.7, according to Pallant [55] is appropriate.

Overall, the 7 factors accounted for 54.1% of the total variance explained. However each factor contributed differently to the total explained variance. The results of the FA presented in Table 2.

Factor 1 (Support) explained 4.3 (22.2%) of the total variance with a corresponding Cronbach alpha of 0.85. This factor considered issues training and development, rewards and promotions as well as acceptance of employees' ideals. Factor 2 was labelled 'role'. Variables underlying this factor include "I often have to break a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment", "I often receive an assignment without the necessary resources to execute it", "I often work with more than one section/department that operates quite differently", "I know what is expected of me on the job", "I have clear, planned goals and

Socio-demographics variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	165	55.7
Female	131	44.3
Total	296	100.0
Age		
<25	136	45.9
25-29	98	33.1
30-34	25	8.4
35-39	14	4.7
40-44	8	2.7
45-49	9	3.1
>50	6	2.1
Total	296	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	222	75.0
Married	74	25.0
Total	296	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	267	90.2
Islam	24	8.1
Traditional	5	1.7
Total	296	100.0
Level of education		
Basic	40	13.6
Secondary	130	43.9
Vocational/Training Colleges	22	7.4
University/Polytechnic	105	35.1
Total	296	100.0
Workstation		
Receptionists	127	42.9
Waiters/Waitresses	105	35.5
Bar Attendants	64	21.6
Total	296	100.0
Employment status		
Permanent	275	92.9
Contract	21	7.1
Total	296	100.0
No. of years in hospitality industry		
<6	236	79.7
6-15	49	16.6
>15	11	3.7
Total	296	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 1: Socio-demographic background of respondents.

objectives for my job", "my supervisor has clearly explained to me what has to be done on the job". Role contributed 3.2 (7.2%) of the total variance explained and a Cronbach alpha value of 0.73.

Factor 3 (demand) contributed 2.1 (5.2%) of the total variance, accounting for 0.79 Cronbach alpha coefficient. The factor comprised issues such as workload, work patterns, working hours and work environment. Factor 4, which is measured as 'relationships' covers issues relating to promoting conducive working environment with the hope to avoiding conflicts as well as dealing with issues such as bullying and harassment at the work place. This factor contributed 2.5 (5.9%) of total variance with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.81. Factor 5 was captured as 'customers' and looked into issues such as the frequency of interactions between frontline employees and customers as well as the level of communication between frontline employees and customers. This factor contributed 2.0 or 4.8% of total variance explained and a Cronbach alpha of 0.71.

'Control' was labelled as factor 6. This factor looks at how much say and involvement employees have in the way they do their work. That is work autonomy and supervision of roles. This factor loaded 1.9 (4.6%) of the total variance explained with a corresponding Cronbach alpha of 0.75. Lastly, factor 7 was measured using two variables which

Factor	Variables included in the factor	Loadings	Eigenvalues	% of Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
I	I receive a lot of job-related training	0.588	4.290	22.215	0.85
	The organization has a strong training Programme	0.573			
	The organization has a strong commitment to training and development	0.577			
	There is hardly any training	0.521			
	I get rewards for achieving targets	0.450			
	My ideals have always been rejected	0.631			
	I am not giving well deserved promotion	0.643			
	I worry I am not learning and developing	0.413			
II	I often have to break a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment	0.403	3.158	7.159	0.73
	I often receive an assignment without necessary resources to execute it	0.382			
	I often work with more than one section/department that operate quite differently	0.633			
	I sometimes work on unnecessary things	0.609			
	I know what is expected of me on the job	0.458			
	I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my job	0.399			
	My supervisor has clearly explained to me what has to be done on the job	0.344			
	I clearly know what my responsibilities are	0.413			
III	I am quite sure about how much authority I have on the job.	0.496	2.173	5.175	0.79
	I have strained relationship with my supervisor	0.464			
	I have strained relationship with my co-worker	0.649			
	I am subject to bullying at work	0.723			
IV	I feel that I am always neglected and disregarded by my colleagues	0.646	2.478	5.899	0.81
	I have to work very fast	0.391			
	I am unable to take sufficient breaks	0.422			
	I am giving performance targets	0.689			
	My performance is measured	0.610			
	I have unachievable deadlines	0.396			
V	I have to work for long hours	0.459	1.995	4.751	0.71
	I need to carefully discuss with customers	0.412			
	The customer has to be physically present to receive the service	0.566			
	I do not need to see or talk to the customer before doing my job	0.335			
	I do not need to communicate with customers before doing my job	0.408			
VI	I deal with customers who are very demanding	0.643	1.919	4.569	0.75
	My working time is flexible	0.371			
	Most decisions are taken by my supervisor	0.444			
	I have authority to decide on how to handle work expectations	0.401			
VII	I don't have the authority to ignore a hotel rule	0.406	1.786	4.253	0.78
	I am not allowed to decide on my own	0.473			
Total	I feel I get less salary	0.394	17.799	54.121	
	I don't get my salary on time	0.579			

Source: Fieldwork, 2011
 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 1859.032, Significance = 0.001
 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sample Adequacy = 0.870

Table 2: Factors that account for causes of work-related stress among respondents.

includes prompt payment of salary and whether employees receive adequate salary or not. This factor with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.78 contributed 1.8 (4.3%) of total variance explained.

Effects of work-related stress

As earlier indicated, this study looked at the effects of WRS on employees. These include: physical, emotional, intellectual and behavioural. From Table 3, the most common physical effect of WRS was that employees affected by WRS 'suffered from headaches'. Majority of the respondents (52.7%) agreed that they experience headaches because of the prevalence of WRS at the work place. The mean scores for 'suffering from headaches' as a result of WRS was 1.7939. Other effects of WRS of prime relevance included 'becoming weak' (1.9189) and 'backaches' (1.9764).

However, with the mean score of 2.6419, respondents were divided as to whether they suffer from blood pressure as a result of work related-stress. Nevertheless, 10.8% of the respondents agreed that sometimes their blood pressure levels go up as a result of WRS. Employees were unsure whether physical effects of WRS were prevalent in the hotels. This was indicated by the overall mean score of 2.2471 (31.3%).

Among the emotional effects, 39.9% (2.0473) of the respondents agreed that they become frustrated when they are stressed. The respondents also indicated that they become anxious (2.1791) when they are stressed out though becoming irritated was not a major effect as a result of WRS. The mean score of 2.5473 and 12.8% of respondents agreeing that the statement 'I suffer from irritability' attests to this. The overall mean score of 2.2579 is an indication that the respondents were indifferent on the emotional effects of WRS. With regards to intellectual effects, 31.4%, 29.4% and 28.7% of the respondents agreed

Statement	N	% in Agreement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Physical				
I suffer from headache	296	52.7	1.7939	0.05225
I suffer from blood pressure	296	10.8	2.6419	0.03889
I suffer from indigestion	296	12.5	2.6216	0.04056
I suffer from sleeplessness	296	29.4	2.2804	0.05174
I suffer backache	296	46.3	1.9764	0.05528
I suffer stomach disorder	296	18.2	2.4966	0.04565
I become weak	296	49.3	1.9189	0.05520
Overall score	296	31.3	2.2471	0.04778
Emotional				
I become very anxious	296	30.1	2.1791	0.05037
I suffer from irritability	296	12.8	2.5473	0.04136
I become frustrated	296	39.9	2.0473	0.05344
Overall score	296	27.6	2.2579	0.04839
Intellectual				
I suffer from inability to concentrate	296	31.4	2.2365	0.05237
I lack motivation	296	29.4	2.2736	0.05164
I am not able to express my thoughts and ideas	296	28.7	2.2905	0.05144
Overall score	296	29.8	2.2667	0.05182
Behavioural				
I put on weight	296	22.3	2.4324	0.04841
I don't go to work	296	10.1	2.7466	0.03645
Overall score	296	16.2	2.5896	0.04243

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

Table 3: Effects of work-related stress.

that when they are unable to concentrate, lack motivation or are not able to express their thoughts and ideas respectively, when they are stressed. The study further showed that employees working in hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis were also faced with behavioural effects of WRS. Minority of the respondents agreed that they put on weight (22.3%) and do not go to work (10.1%) because of WRS.

Discussions

The current study showed that there were seven main factors accounting for the causes of WRS among frontline hotel employees. These factors, as revealed by the factor analysis, were consistent with other works in the literature, particularly that of the HSE (2001) [35].

The first factor, support, is very crucial in dealing with WRS. For example, training for core functions of job and catering for individual differences (HSE, 2007) [16] will ensure that employees are well equipped and resources for deploying their duties and responsibilities as frontline hotel employees. In essence, they will be better positioned to carry out effective and efficient services to guests, resulting in repeat visits.

The second cause of WRS, role, has been identified as one of the major cause of WRS [43]. This assertion is reinforced by Bass and Stogdrill. They argued that stress in individuals or groups occur when their situation is overly complex, ambiguous and unclear. Similarly, Jamal [44] posited that employees faced with conflicting job requirements and demands are likely to suffer from WRS.

Blair and Littlewood [40] identified work relationships as potential stressor and concluded that this is as a result of conflicts with co-workers as well as lack of staff support. This is in consonance with the current study since 'relationships' emerged as third cause of WRS among frontline hotel employees in the Kumasi Metropolis. The HSE [9] indicated that lack of understanding and support from managers has negative effect on workers' stress.

Demands at work, which includes exposure to issues such as workload, work patterns and work environment HSE, [35] has been identified as a major contributor to WRS. This emerged as the fourth cause of WRS. Parker and DeCotis [56] observed that WRS can occur when individuals are faced with too much work than they can carry out. The implication is that employees who perceive their work load to be high are likely to experience WRS, especially when the demands of the job do not match their capacity to handle such workloads.

Further to the above, customers (guests) were found to be the source of WRS among frontline hotel employees. This is obvious since frontline employees have constant and continues interaction with hotel guests from the time the guest arrives through to his/her departure. This, according to Karatepe and Uludag [10] has potential of heightening WRS.

Again, the study found out that 'control' contributed to WRS among frontline employees in hotels. Control deals with how much say and involvement the employees have in the way they do their work [35]. The implication is that lack of control in relation to the demands of work, lack of autonomy and too much supervision can lead to WRS. The experience of pressure is strongly linked to perceptions of control. Lack of influence and consultation in the way in which work is organised and performed can be a potential source of WRS [34].

The last factor that emerged from the study was income. According to Haynes and Fryer [46], low pay is a concern as far as WRS in the hotel industry is concerned. This, according to them, is because work in the industry is remunerated on the basis of qualification standards which tend to be set lower in relation to other service industries.

In respect of effects of WRS, the findings from the study were in consonance with most of the studies in the literature. With regards to physical effects, it emerged that, employees under stress suffered from headaches and backaches, as well as becoming weak. This agrees with the studies of Comish and Swindle [57], Dua [58], Lind and Otte [59],

Ben-Bakr et al. [60], Johnson and Indvik [61], Earnshaw and Morrison [62], Antoniou et al. [26] and Beheshtifar et al. [50] that employees under WRS can suffer from headaches, backaches, stomach disorders, high blood pressures, among others.

Further to the above, the literature lists emotional effects as one of the effects of WRS. When affected by WRS, employees become increasingly distressed and irritable as well as feeling tired, depressed and anxious [48]. Emotional effects, as emerged from the study included frustration, anxiety and irritation. Leka et al. [48] also found out from their study that when affected by WRS, employees are unable to relax or concentrate and they tend to have difficulty in thinking logically and making decisions. Accordingly, employees do not enjoy their work and feel less committed or lack motivation to work.

Similarly, intellectual and behavioural effects of WRS were consistent with findings in the literature. Leka et al. [48] indicated listed loss of concentration, lack of motivation, difficulty with thought process, loss of memory and poor decision-making as intellectual effects and substance misuse, decreased libido, inappropriate display of behaviour, isolation and unpunctuality as behavioural effects of WRS. It emerged from that employees under stress were unable to concentrate, lack motivation and are not able to express their thoughts and ideas.

Conclusion

The study sought to examine the causes and effects of WRS on frontline hotel employees in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. Out of the 249 hotels in the Metropolis, 70 were selected using the sample size calculator. In all, a total of 296 respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique.

It could be concluded that frontline hotel employees in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana, experience WRS as a result of their work due to lack of support they receive from their employees, role conflict and ambiguity, poor working relationship with supervisors and colleagues, work demands, frequent interactions with hotel guests, lack of control over their work and issues relating to poor remuneration.

As a result, employees are susceptible to headaches and backaches; feel less motivated to work, lacks concentration and are not able to make right decisions. These, if not checked, can have dire consequences for the employees.

Critical issues that need immediate attention in terms of the causes relates to training of frontline staff employees, encouragement of employees from their line managers and supervisors, sponsorships, promotions and adjustments in respect of employee remuneration. Frontline hotel employees are also encouraged to include relaxation activities in their daily routines.

Further research can be conducted to ascertain the effects of WRS on hotels as well as look into other relationship between employee socio demographics and WRS.

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