Macrothink Institute™

Journal of Public Administration and Governance
ISSN 2161-7104
2026, Vol. 16, No. 1

Covid-19 and Career Shock among Employees of Private Tertiary Institutions in Ghana

Akpeko Agbevade (Corresponding Author)

Department Of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

E-mail: aagbevade@ug.edu.gh/aagbevade@gmail.com

Justice K.G.A. Boateng

Institutional Affiliation Office, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Received: Feb. 27, 2026 Accepted: May 19, 2026 Online published: Jun. 23, 2026

doi:10.5296/jpag.v16i1.23854 URL: https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v16i1.23854

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic affected every fiber of society resulting in gainers and losers in all fronts. This study examined the pandemic in the context of career shock. Using the mixed methods approach of research, the article examined the degree to which the pandemic culminated into career shock, the career decisions taken and the effect on the level of job satisfaction among employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana. The findings revealed that employees had both positive and negative career shocks. The negatives were in the form of delayed promotions, training and development, cuts in salary and loss of job and the positives were in the new opportunities that employees were exposed to. In response to the shock, career decisions such as the search for a new job, further studies and entrepreneurship were taken. Employees who remained with their employers experienced mixed levels of job satisfaction depending on whether the career shock was positive or negative to them. The paper recommends that employees should be versatile in the knowledge, skill and ability to handle future situations likely to result in career shock, the Labour Act, 2003 should be amended to give workers some safety nets in times of natural occurrences like disasters and pandemics and Government of Ghana with stakeholders such as the Ghana Employers Association, Ghana Association of Private Tertiary Institutions (GAPTI) and the Conference of Heads of Private Universities, Ghana (CHPUG) should consider establishing emergency fund to cater for their workers during pandemics and disasters.

Keywords: COVID-19, career shock, private tertiary institutions, entrepreneurship, career decisions

1. Introduction

Coronavirus (COVID-19) which is an amorphous and a wicked problem plagued the entire world and almost brought everything to a standstill (Agbevade, 2023; Ayee, 2022). Historically, the COVID-19 caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV-2) was first detected in Wuhan, China on December 19, 2019. The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared it on March 11, 2020, as a global pandemic (World Health Organisation, 2020b; Azizi et al, 2021). Some scholars referred to it as human and health crises (Collings et al, 2021). A joint statement by The World Health Organization and the International Chamber of Commerce intimated that the pandemic must be attended to head-on by state authorities to avert its spread due to its consequences on the health and economic sectors of nation-states (Azizi et al, 2021).

On March 12, 2020, Ghana recorded its first two cases of the coronavirus (Ghana Health Service, 2020). Adhering to the clarion call of the WHO, the government instituted immediate measures to contain the spread of the pandemic. These were closure of schools, churches, mosques and other places of worship; ban on public gatherings; and a partial lockdown of selected major cities including Accra and Kumasi. In addition, the government laid out five key objectives to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. These were (i) limit and stop importation of the virus; (ii) contain its spread; (iii) provide adequate care for the sick; (iv) limit the impact of the virus on social and economic life; and (v) inspire the expansion of domestic capability and deepen self-reliance (Republic of Ghana, 2020). The government also adopted the WHO guidelines in containing the pandemic to suit the country's specific condition (Asante and Mills, 2020). Deepening the government's commitment to the fight against the virus, the President in a nationwide address on March 15, 2020, placed a hold on all public gatherings for one month. Executive Instrument (E.I.), known as The Imposition of Restrictions Act, 2020 (Act 1012) was enacted. In exercising the presidential powers granted under the Act, the President on March 27, 2020, announced a partial lockdown which took effect from March 30, 2020, in areas considered hotspots of the pandemic (President of Ghana, March 27, 2020).

COVID-19 is considered one of the biggest global health problems which have made organisations volatile, uncertain and complex, which did not only threaten the sustenance and continuity of organisations but also disrupted the career of employees with both positive and negative consequences, thereby resulting in career shocks across the globe. The devastating effect on organisations have made human resource management practitioners to formulate and implement strategies to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of employees for the continuous operations of their respective entities to attain organisational goals (Agbevade, 2022; Bieńkowska et al, 2022; Collings et al 2021; Hamouche, 2021; Diep et al, 2021; Iza, 2020). The implementation of the human resource management interventions affected the human capital of organisations variously, whereas some had positive impacts, others were negatively affected in different dimensions.

The pandemic has shaped scholarship in human resource management as researchers in the field shifted focus to examine the COVID-19 and human resource management. Most of the

scholarships were centered on the human resource interventions and strategies, challenges and opportunities, impact of the pandemic on human resource management practice, COVID-19 and work life balance (Agbevade, 2022; Bieńkowska et al, 2022; Collings et al 2021; Hamouche, 2021; Diep et al, 2021; Iza, 2020; Azizi et al, 2021; Carnevala and Hatak, 2020). A couple of studies also examined the nexus between COVID-19 and career shocks deploying the qualitative approach (Akkermans et al; 2020; Nantwi, 2020). From the above, it can be deduced that research on COVID-19 and human resources is budding across the globe. Missing however is empirical studies on COVID-19 and career shock in the Ghanaian context. This study contributes to the burgeoning literature on COVID-19 by specifically concentrating effort on the subject matter among employees in private tertiary institutions in Ghana. The focus is on private tertiary institutions because the entire education sector was closed for almost a year. While employees of public tertiary education institutions had all human resource management process ongoing (payment of salaries, promotions etc), most of their private sector counterparts resorted to downsizing, non-payment of salaries or salary cuts etc. Human resource management processes were in hiatus in most private tertiary institutions.

The burden of this study is three-fold:

1. To determine the relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and career shock among employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana.

2. To determine employee response to the career shock caused by COVID-19 and

3. To determine the relationship between COVID-19 and job satisfaction among employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana.

Structurally, the rest of the paper is segmented into seven sections. These are theorizing and conceptualizing career shock and cognitive behavioural theory, studies on COVID-19 and human resource management, studies on COVID-19 and career shock, the private tertiary education landscape in Ghana, methodology, findings and discussion and conclusion and recommendations.

2. Theorizing and Conceptualizing Career Shock

Before attempting any meaning of the word career shock, it is imperative to explain the meaning of the two words making up the term. Career simply means an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities for progress. Career is long lasting and enduring. For instance, people can pursue careers in accounting, engineering, nursing, carpentry etc. Shock is a sudden upsetting or surprising event or experience. It can be caused by both endogenous and exogenous factors. In most cases, people do not have any control over the event that causes the shock; however, they are to intentionally respond to the shock.

Career shock is defined as "a disruptive and extraordinary event that is, at least to some degree, caused by factors outside the focal individual's control and that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career" (Akkermans et al, 2021). Lee and Mitchell (1994)

defined a career shock as "an event that generates information or has meaning about a person's job". Lee and Mitchell (1994) proposed career shock as a jarring event that evokes a person to pause and think about the meaning of their jobs and in turn, provokes some considerations about leaving their jobs. Shocks can be positive, neutral or negative, expected or unexpected, and personal or organisational (Holtom et al, 2005). From these three scholarly definitions, career shock could be referred to as mostly external situations that affect the career of individuals with the individual having no control yet expected to take decisions that will shape or influence the career trajectory or path. The above explanations unearth two key elements in career shock. These are events and a process of initial sense making. It is instructive to note that not all disruptive and extraordinary events are classified as career shock. For example, one person can interpret the unannounced demise of a mentor or close allied worker as a major shock, whereas another may perceive it as 'business as usual' (Akkermans et al, 2020). From the career shock literature, Akkermans et al, (2018) identified five attributes of career shock which shapes career of individuals. These are frequency, predictability/controllability, valence, duration and source. Frequency simply refers to how often individuals experience shock. Some shocks (e.g., being sexually harassed at work) occur more frequently than others (e.g., an environmental disaster). A question of special interest regarding frequency is whether it leads to habituation that inhibits reflection and action (Nalis et al, 2021).

Predictability and controllability deals with the diverse degree of likelihood and controllability of shocks. Planned events such as pregnancy and resignation can cause career shock. Employees informed of organisation-wide events such as redundancy, downsizing etc. create awareness hence the career shock is predictable largely, but the job loss is uncontrollable. In addressing the issue of predictability and controllability, Seibert et al, (2016) espoused the growth-oriented mind strategy. This encourages individuals to be versatile, industrious and adventurous in ideas instead of limiting themselves. Through this, individuals develop personal abilities and capabilities that result in growth in new roles thereby coping with career shock.

Valence refers to the evaluation of the impact of career shock. Generally, the impact can be positive, negative or status quo is maintained. Shocks trigger deliberate reflection and action pertaining to the career path that could possibly lead to a general shift in individual career paths (Seibert et al, 2013). Positive and negative valence lends themselves to positive and negative outcomes respectively. However, studies have also shown the reverse. For instance, Blokker et al, (2019) in their study on young employees revealed the effect of positive career shocks on efforts to attain career success and employability, with negative career shocks having inverse effects. Contrarily, Rummel et al, (2021), found positive outcomes from negative shocks. This implies that the valence of career shock on individuals is not cast in iron, but rather shaped by the thought pattern of the individual involved. This is amplified by Seibert et al. (2013) "shocks trigger deliberate reflection and action pertaining to the career path that could possibly lead to a general shift in individual career paths".

Duration is the period of the shock event itself and the proximal or distal consequences. The length of the event causing the shock determines the impact of the shock. A prolonged shock

culminates into more dire consequences (Akkermans et al. 2018). Additionally, Lee et al. (1999) opined that a longer period of discomfort from shock, the deliberate thought process and career decisions might change the course of outcome through either an unpredicted job offer or elicit change.

Source as an attribute of career shock means the origin of the event bringing about the career shock. It can be both internal and external. Specifically, the sources include interpersonal, family related, organisational, environmental, or geo-political. They also concern issues of structural barriers, inequality, and injustice. Duffy et al. (2016) and Blustein et al. (2019) utilizing psychology of working theory vividly echoed that ethnic background and social class pose structural barriers and risks to career development. The impact of the source (whether positive or negative valence) on careers is influenced by the information that individuals have about the source and the decisions they make can serve as a buffer against negative outcomes (Seibert et al. 2013). For instance, if an individual has reasons to assume that the shock of job loss was not caused by personal failure, but has an external source, for example mass layoffs; the source of the shock can act as a buffer (Bright et al. 2009).

Scholarships have been devoted to career shock even though attention to it is a recent phenomenon. Some of the studies are reviewed.

Nalis et al. (2021) discussed career shock within the context of the five attributes of career shock mooted by Akkermans et al. (2018). Their study unveiled the impact of shocks on career paths and found different responses to shocks according to how the shock was described. Participants of the study reported career shocks, listed in alphabetical order, regarding accidents, bankruptcy of the employer, changes in the management, conflict with the organizational culture. Others were conflicts with the management and team, earthquake, the economic recession after the financial crisis, financial troubles and fraud of the employing company. The rest were gender and ethnicity related to injustice, goal conflicts, job loss, job offer, unplanned pregnancy and severe injury. Based on these, their analyses of career shocks first revealed a pattern of distinct agentic responses in relation to shocks of different attributes. Secondly, from the analyses of shock attributes and corresponding responses over time career change, profiles emerged which differ regarding career change behaviour and magnitude of change in the career (e.g., major career changes into another field).

Research has also amplified the role of human resource management practice in career shock. Career shock brings to the fore the significance and timeous manner of human resource management strategies and interventions in influencing the individual employee and organisational productivity. Human resource management practitioners have been castigated for focusing on organisational performance to the detriment of other stakeholders of the organisation (Agbevade, 2022; Collings et al. 2021, Dundon and Rafferty, 2018). Collings et al. (2021) were emphatic on this. To them, the myopic focus of how corporate entities manage their valued assets was exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak because of the impact on people's careers. This was corroborated by Akkermans et al. (2018) as the natural response of people to the pandemic can trigger deliberations including potential changes in career-related behaviours in the form of undertaking capacity development, job

switch and the tendency to change work motivation and behaviors directed at the achievement of career goals (Seibert et al. 2013).

Contributing further to the literature on negative career shocks and individual outcomes, Feng et al. (2019) discussed the intervening dynamics that influenced the effect of negative career shocks focusing on opportunities (positive dimension of occupational future time perspective). Their study found that internal social capital and organisational embeddedness act as the mediating factors between negative career shocks and focus on opportunities. The relationship is stronger when individuals are highly embedded in organisations. Their findings further attest to the assertion that the individual is the fulcrum for determining the outcome of negative career shocks. Whereas others argued for the development of career resilient competences (such as knowledge, skills and abilities), Feng et al. (2019) advocated for the development of a strong organisational social network that offers career opportunities to the individual.

Akkermans et al. (2021) explored the challenges in researching career shocks. They identified four factors posing as setbacks.

One, conceptual clarity. There is no clarity as to what constitutes career shock. The concept is described variously by scholars. Terminologies such as happenstance (Miller, 1983), serendipity (Betsworth and Hansen, 1996) and chance events (Roe and Baruch, 1967 cited in Feng et al. 2019) have been used. This line of research has established that unplanned, accidental events have a considerable impact on people's careers (Bright et al. 2005). Two, lack of research focusing on the proximal and distal career outcomes of career shocks. Three, studies have paid insufficient attention to the mechanisms that explain how career shocks influence individual career development and four, there is little interdisciplinary connectivity in career shocks research.

The study deployed Beck's (1976) cognitive behavioural theory (CBT) to support career shock in explaining the findings. Cognitive Behavioral Theory is an umbrella theory for several cognitive and behavioral theories and formed the basis for cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). The theory argued that "people's emotional reactions and behaviors are strongly influenced by cognitions (thoughts, beliefs, and interpretations of themselves or situations in which they find themselves)". A person's cognition shapes their emotional and behavioural reactions more than the event itself. Hence, individuals react differently to similar events. Additionally, these cognitions, emotions, and behaviors interact with each other in complex feedback processes, and interact with the environment. CBT is significant for the study because of the different career shocks employees experienced culminating in different career decisions in response.

3. Scholarship on COVID-19 with Human Resource Management Concentration

In the wake of the pandemic, research has been undertaken linking COVID-19 to human resource management practice. At its core, the COVID-19 pandemic is seen as a human crisis. As a result, human resource management practitioners have been pivotal in seeking remedies to improve their effect on organisational operations. The COVID-19 is at variance with

previous crises such as the global recession of 2008–09 or the Y2K crisis at the commencement of the millennium that emphasized the significance of finance and information technology professionals respectively. By amplifying the role of human resource managers, COVID-19 has become a reference point with substantive implications for human resource management across the world (Collings et al. 2021). In addition, the COVID-19 has made the human resource management practice environment a complicated and problematic one requiring professional proactiveness, creativity, innovativeness and ingenuity in proffering solutions to organisational sustainability (Hamouche, 2021).

Bieńkowska et al. (2022) discussed the importance of human resource management-oriented strategies in shaping job performance through job related attitudes such as work motivation, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment during the pandemic. Canevalea and Hatak (2020) examined challenges and opportunities that COVID-19 presents to human resource management practice as well as the associated avenues for future research. Similarly, Iza (2020) underscored the fact that the outbreak of the pandemic brought untold hiccups on organisations with emphasis on human resource management practice. Diep et al. (2021) also discussed the human resource management practices adopted by organisations to make them resilient in the face of the COVID-19 and recommended investment in human resource capacity to make organisations resilient during crisis.

In Ghana, the COVID-19 brought about suspension of work and re-organisation of many economic and human resource activities. The pandemic impacted key human resource management practices in the formal sector. It also affected both parties in the employment contract; the employee and the employer were affected in jobs with regular hours of work and pay. Evidence in the Ghanaian setting showed that the initial three-week lockdown period in Accra and Kumasi which are considered the nucleus of public services and government agencies though remained opened, however, nonessential staff were telecommuting leading to a 20% average decline in productivity (Adonu et al. 2020).

Human resource management practitioners in Ghana's public sector designed and implemented specific human resource management interventions to ensure organisational continuity. Agbevade (2022) identified communication, training and development, employee health, safety and wellbeing, performance management and rewards and motivation as key strategies deployed by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority at the height of the pandemic. He further asserted that these interventions affected the work life balance of employees and organisational productivity.

4. Studies linking Career Shocks and COVID-19

Studies have been devoted to examining the linkage between natural disasters and pandemics, and career shock. For instance, Wordsworth and Nilakant (2021) found that the 2011 New Zealand earthquakes led people to cling to the status quo, while it triggered others to activate existing latent dissatisfaction to make a career move. Akkermans et al. (2020) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic affected people's career in diverse ways. Empirical studies have shown that they impacted people's career planning (Seibert et al. 2013), career success (Kraimer et al. 2019) and employability (Blokker et al. 2019).

Akkermans et al. (2020) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic could be considered a career shock that had major impact on people's work and careers. Following these, they enumerated three key lessons and implications of the pandemic for careers and vocational behaviour. These are discussed below.

First, the implications of career shock are directly impacted by the interplay between contextual and individual factors. This has to do with the relationship between external factors (COVID-19) and internal factors such as the individual competence (knowledge, skills and abilities) and how they affect the career of the individual (career shock). The authors argued that the shock on the individual either negative or positive (valence) is largely determined by the career competence level of the employee. For employees to minimize the shock, they must develop resilient competences such as reflective, communicative, behavioural and psychological strategies (Blokker et al. 2019; Seibert et al. 2016; Akkermans et al. 2015).

Second, career shock can have a different impact in the short-term versus the long-term and for different career stages. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's career either in the short or long term depends on the stage of the employee's career and the career competences developed for resilience.

Third, negative career shocks can result in positive career outcomes. This implies that negative career shock does not always result in negative career outcomes. It can sometimes lead to positive career outcomes based on the resilient competencies developed by the individual. For instance, the outbreak of the pandemic instantly brought about loss of jobs (negative career shock), but with time it allowed affected employees to reevaluate their career trajectory making them take career decisions inuring to their benefit (positive career shock). The benefits may include taking advantage of opportunities to change career arrangements, career development and value additions. This study complements existing literature on COVID-19 and career shock by not only examining career shock from the human resource management perspective but also the linkage between career shock and COVID-19 among employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana in a study that points out how the pandemic affected employees, employee responses and effect on job satisfaction.

5. Tertiary Education Landscape in Ghana

The Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) of 1983 and its associated Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of 1987 recommended prescriptions such as decentralization, privatization among others did not exempt the educational sector (especially tertiary education). In response to the reform on the tertiary education, the University Rationalization Committee (URC) was established in 1987 with the following terms of reference "to develop strategies to expand access and equity, to improve efficiency and effectiveness at the university level so as to improve on the quality and relevance of degree programmes". In response, the URC recommended reforms to revamp and expand university education system. The reforms sought to improve upon educational access, relevance and quality to speed up the developmental agenda of the country. In addition, tertiary education reforms were also essential because of reforms at both basic and secondary levels which culminated in more

demand for higher education apart from the structural changes that were required of universities (Bingab et.al. 2016). The URC made 166 recommendations to reform higher education system. These were adopted by the Government in 1991 and became Government White Paper entitled "Reforms to Tertiary Education System". The URC recommendations and the Government White Paper were given impetus in Article 38(3a) which stipulates … "equal access to university or equivalent education" (Republic of Ghana, 1992). Key among the reforms was the expansion of university education to private participation because of the wind of liberalization blowing across the globe (Bingab et.al. 2016).

Private tertiary institutions started springing up in the delivery of higher education. It is worthy of note that within a decade, private tertiary institutions accredited in Ghana increased from three in 1999 to 52 by December 2009 (Amposah and Onuoha, 2013). With these numbers, issues of quality emerged. This resulted in the establishment of the National Accreditation Board (NAB) and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) for quality and regulation respectively. These two bodies were merged to form the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission following the passage of the New Education Regulatory Act, 2020 (Act 1023). Both the public and private sector institutions provide tertiary education. Public institutions are owned and funded by the state while private ones are owned and funded by faith-based organizations and individuals.

6. The Lacunae in Literature

From the above reviews on all the key variables (career shocks, COVID-19, human resource management and private tertiary education in Ghana) underpinning the study, it can be inferred that there is no explicit and direct study which deployed these variables. This study therefore fills the lacunae in the literature by not only discussing the relationship between COVID-19 and career shock among employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana but also how the relationship influenced the career decisions of the employees and impact on job satisfaction. This study is significant as it expands and complements the literature on COVID-19 from human resource management, CBT and education perspectives with private sector dimension.

7. Methodology of the Study

The study employed mixed methods because it is qualitative and quantitative in nature and explanatory by design. Data was collected through the administration of questionnaires designed based on the research objectives of the study. The study was limited to private tertiary institutions in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Assembly because the area is cosmopolitan, epicenter of education in Ghana, it represents the microcosm of Ghana and for cost purposes. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized in the study. Primary data was collected through questionnaires and semi structured interview guide while book chapters and journal articles were the main sources of secondary data.

Private tertiary institutions were visited in the Greater Accra Region with introductory letter from the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana. Key questions posed were whether COVID-19 had a career shock on them, the nature of the shock, how they responded

to the shock in terms of career decisions and the outcome and whether the pandemic affected their levels of job satisfaction. A total of 150 questionnaires were administered through both electronic and physical means targeted at only employees of private tertiary institutions at the time of the COVID-19 because not all respondents were available at the time of the field trip. As such, the emails and phone numbers of staff were collected from the authorities for transmission and administration of the questionnaires and interviews electronically. Ninety-four (94) responses were received, signifying a response rate of 62.6% while seventy (17) willingly responded to the interview. The simple random sampling was used. The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 27 from which frequency distribution tables and graphs were derived while content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Member checking was used to check the reliability of the qualitative data as respondents were given the opportunity to review the findings to ensure their views were accurately represented for accuracy to minimize misrepresentation while Cronbach's Alpha was used for the statistic reliability of the quantitative data. The table below depicts the reliability statistics.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.54	.620	9

From the Reliability Statistics Table, Cronbach's Alpha of .54 was reported using nine items. Generally, Cronbach's Alpha of .54 should be categorized as internally inconsistent since it falls below the .70 threshold rule. However, it can be considered internally consistent because of the number of items which are nine in the study. In the literature, for scales with a small number of items (e.g. less than 10), it is sometimes difficult to get a decent Cronbach alpha value (Pallant, 2007).

8. Findings and Discussion

On the sex of the respondents, 59.6% were male while 40.4% were female. This implies that more males participated in the study compared to females. The finding is illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1. Sex of respondents

Sex					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	56	59.6	59.6	59.6
	Female	38	40.4	40.4	100.0
	Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

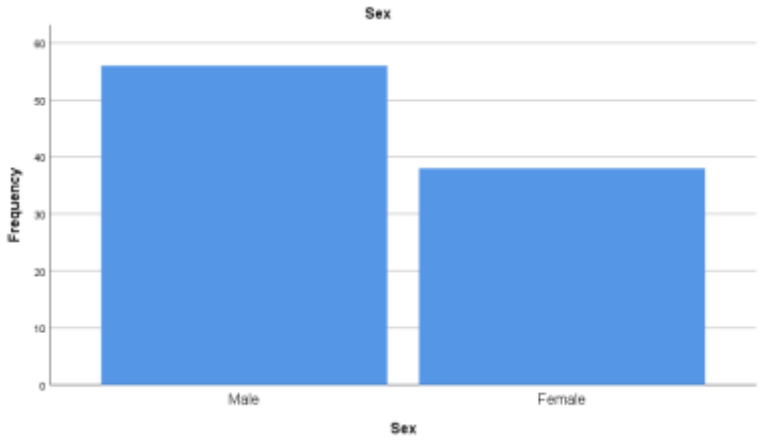


Figure 1. Figure showing the sex distribution of respondents

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

On the category of staff, administrative/support staff and lecturers (academic staff) participated in the study. The former category had 53.2% while the latter had 43.6% participating. Three respondents did not disclose their category of employment. Table 2 and Figure 2 below depict the responses.

Table 2. Category of employees

Category of employee

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Administrative/support staff	50	53.2	54.9	54.9
	Lecturer	41	43.6	45.1	100.0
	Total	91	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.2		
Total		94	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

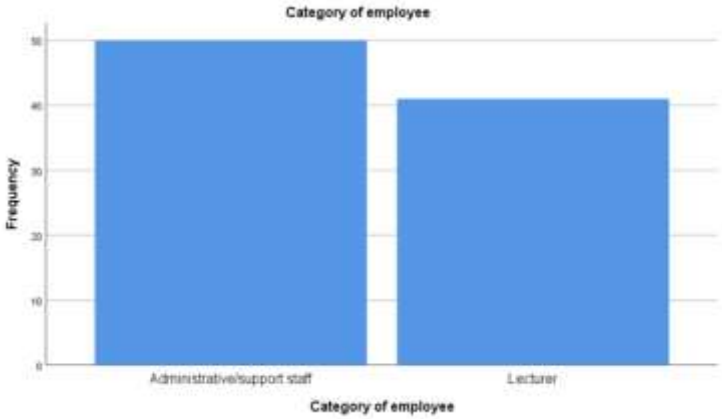


Figure 2. Category of employees

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

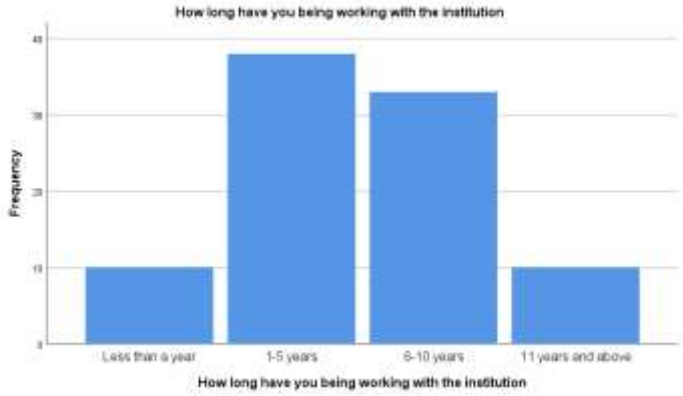
On how long the respondents have been with their establishments, most of them responded as follows: 40.4% of them responded as being with the organisation between one and five years, 35.1% indicated between 6 and 10 years while 10.6% responded as having been in employment of their establishments for 11 years and above and less than a year. This is illustrated in Table 3 and Figure 3 below.

Table 3. How long have you been working with the institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than a year	10	10.6	11.0	11.0
	1-5 years	38	40.4	41.8	52.7
	6-10 years	33	35.1	36.3	89.0
	11 years and above	10	10.6	11.0	100.0
	Total	91	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.2		
Total		94	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 3. How long have you been working with the institution



Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Objective 1: The effect of COVID-19 on career shock among employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana

The outbreak of the coronavirus had both positive and negative impacts on the career of employees. The impact was on relationships with work colleagues, training and development, promotion and salary. Whereas 1.1% intimated that it affected their relationships with work colleagues positively, 6.4% indicated that they were negatively affected. With respect to training and development, 5.3% responded in the affirmative while 10.6 responded in the negative. "*I was scheduled for a capacity building programme with our mentor university, but the outbreak of the pandemic denied me the opportunity,"* said a respondent. In a related manner, other mentor institutions rescheduled the training and development programmes hence the employees had the benefit of participating, "*you see, our mentor university organised the training programme immediately after the lockdown was eased for schools to resume*" indicated a respondent. On promotion, 1.1% of the respondents indicated that they were both negatively and positively affected by the outbreak of the pandemic. This shows that there was proportionate impact on their promotions. The promotion predominantly involved the administrative staff. On the issue of salary, 2.1% indicated that the coronavirus had a positive impact on their salaries because of the increment in their salaries due to the annual policy of increasing salaries while 30.0% indicated otherwise. As indicated by a respondent "*with my decision to stay with the institution, I had an appreciable level of improvement in my salary, this is not the case in some other institutions*". Another respondent from a different institution stated, "*though I decided not to make a career move, I did not experience salary appreciation because the student numbers were low*". This is because students are the main source of financing most private tertiary institutions in Ghana hence a fall in student numbers affect their operations. These findings revealed that private tertiary institutions and mentor universities responded to the COVID-19 in different ways resulting in the diverse effects on employees and human resource management practice. The above narrations are represented in Tables 4, 5 and 6 below.

Table 4. The outbreak of the COVID-19 affected my career

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positively	24	25.5	25.8	25.8
	Negatively	57	60.6	61.3	87.1
	No effect	12	12.8	12.9	100.0
	Total	93	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.1		
Total		94	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 5. The areas of positive impact of the COVID-19 on employees

If your answer is positive, then the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak affected my career positively through

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Relationship with colleagues	1	1.1	11.1	11.1
	Training and development	5	5.3	55.6	66.7
	Promotion	1	1.1	11.1	77.8
	Salary	2	2.1	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	9.6	100.0	
Missing	System	85	90.4		
Total		94	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 6. The areas of negative impact of the COVID-19 on employees

If your answer is negative, then the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak affected my career negatively through

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Relationship with colleagues	6	6.4	8.8	8.8
	Training and development	10	10.6	14.7	23.5
	Promotion	1	1.1	1.5	25.0
	Salary	31	33.0	45.6	70.6
	All of the above	20	21.3	29.4	100.0
	Total	68	72.3	100.0	
Missing	System	26	27.7		
Total		94	100.0		

Sources: Fieldwork, 2024

Objective 2: Employee responses to the career shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

The employees responded to the effect of the career shock caused by the COVID-19 variously. Whereas some responded by taking major career decisions, others did not. From the fieldwork data, 60.6% alluded to the fact that the shock compelled them to make a career decision while 35.1% said they did not make any career decision following the shock. Approximately 5% were indifferent to the question. Table 7 below depicts the response.

Table 7. The effect of the pandemic caused me to take a career decision

The effect of the pandemic caused me to take a career decision.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	57	60.6	63.3	63.3
	No	33	35.1	36.7	100.0
	Total	90	95.7	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.3		
Total		94	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Entrepreneurship, search for a new job and further studies were the decisions taken by those who responded in the positive. From Table 8 below, 13.8% of the respondents indicated that they took decisions to venture into entrepreneurship (thus establishing their own businesses), 14.9% decided to further their education while 10.6% resorted to the search for a new job. 11.7% took the decision to further their studies and venture into entrepreneurship, another 4.3% also decided to further their education while at the same time looking for a new job opportunity. Still another 2.1% embarked on the search for a new job combined with venturing into entrepreneurship and 6.4% responded that they combined the three decisions (further studies, search for new job and entrepreneurship) as their decisions in response to the career shock caused by the COVID-19. This is presented in Table 8 and Figure 4 below. The findings resonate with the cognitive behavioural theory as the employees reacted differently to the event (COVID-19) in terms of their career decisions. In addition, the employees were also of the belief that their career decisions have the potential to change their circumstances in the future further affirming the theory. For instance, one employee indicated "*I strongly believe that the career decision to further my education will position me better in the future.*"

Table 8. Decisions taken due to career choice

If yes, career decisions were taken in the following areas

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		34	36.2	36.2	36.2
	Entrepreneurship	13	13.8	13.8	50.0
	Search for a new job	10	10.6	10.6	60.6
	All the options	6	6.4	6.4	67.0
	1 and 3 only	11	11.7	11.7	78.7
	1 and 2 only	4	4.3	4.3	83.0
	2 and 3 only	2	2.1	2.1	85.1
	Further studies	14	14.9	14.9	100.0
	Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

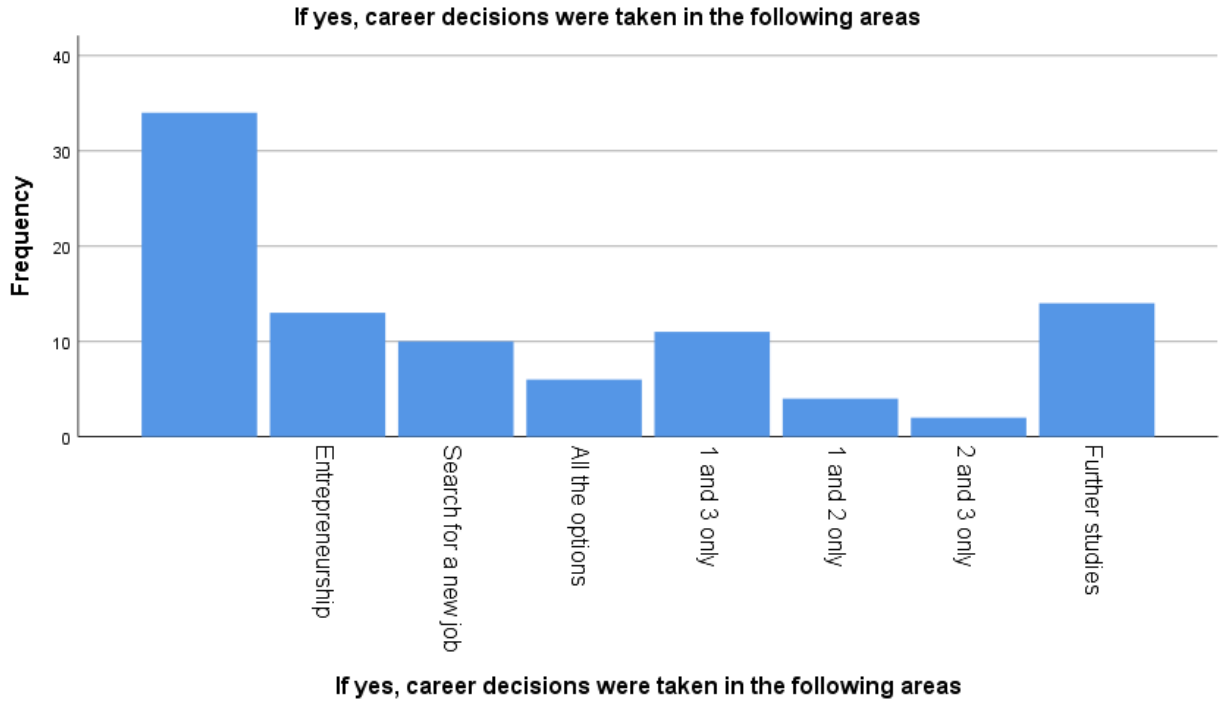


Figure 4. Decisions taken due to career shock

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Objective 3: Relationship between COVID-19 and job satisfaction among employees of private tertiary institutions

Job satisfaction is a complex multidimensional concept encompassing diverse variables including affective, cognitive and behavioural dynamics. It is defined as an individual's positive emotional state and subjective evaluation of their work experiences, encapsulating contentment, fulfillment, and happiness derived from their job roles, environment, and appraisal of its value. The study also sought to gauge the degree to which the COVID-19 affected the job satisfaction of employees. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents indicated that the pandemic affected their level of job satisfaction, 24.5% responded in the negative while 8% were indifferent on the extent to which the coronavirus affected their level of job satisfaction. The specific aspects of job satisfaction impacted were identified as job security, pay and benefits, career development, engagement and benefits. Specifically, the impact of job satisfaction was enumerated as follows: 22.3%, 14.9%, 8.5%, 6.4% and 1.1% in pay and benefits, job security, career development, engagement and respect respectively. In addition, a whopping 20.2% of the respondents averred that they had a combination of aspects of job satisfaction impacted. 26.6% of the respondents were silent on the area of effect. The above is illustrated in Tables 9 and 10 and Figure 5 below.

Table 9. Career shock and effect on job satisfaction

The career shock affected my level of job satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	63	67.0	73.3	73.3
	No	23	24.5	26.7	100.0
	Total	86	91.5	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.5		
Total		94	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 10. Areas of job satisfaction affected by career shock

If yes, the areas affected were

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A combination of the areas	19	20.2	27.5	27.5
	Job Security	14	14.9	20.3	47.8
	Pay and benefits	21	22.3	30.4	78.3
	Career development	8	8.5	11.6	89.9
	Engagement	6	6.4	8.7	98.6
	Respect	1	1.1	1.4	100.0
	Total	69	73.4	100.0	
Missing	System	25	26.6		
Total		94	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

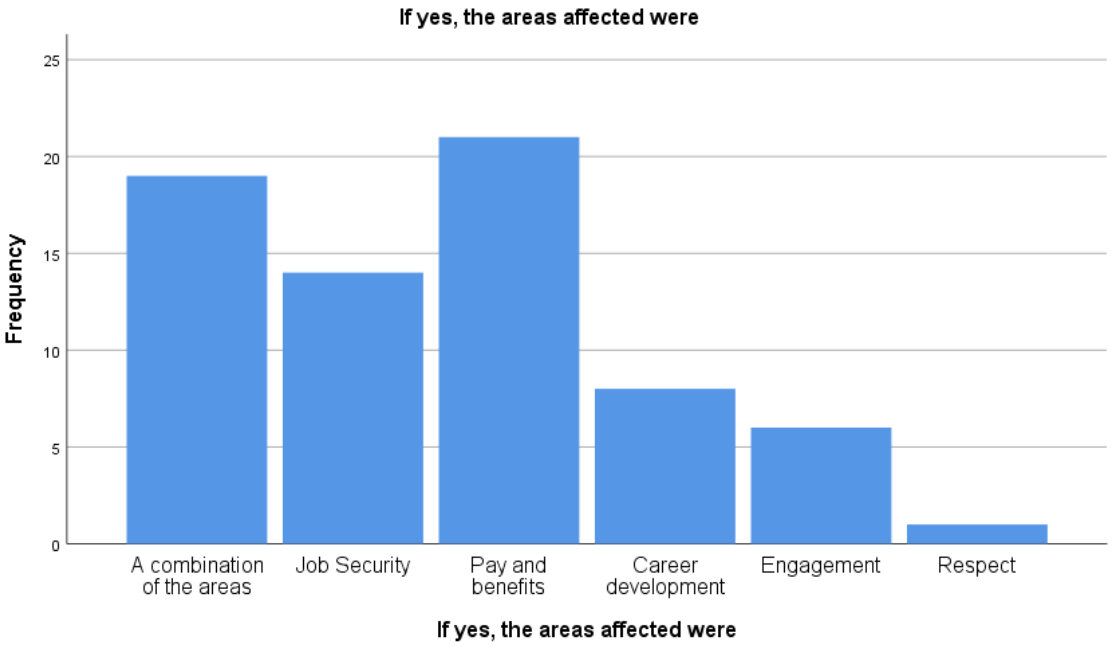


Figure 5. Areas of job satisfaction affected by the career shock

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The study further investigated the relationship between sex and career decision following the career shock. Thirty-three (33) males responded in the affirmative, six (6) in the negative while fifteen (15) were emphatic that they took no career decisions. On the part of the female respondents, 24 and 6 responded yes and no respectively on career decisions taken. Again 21 of the female respondents also stated emphatically that no career decisions were taken. The above responses are presented in Table 11 and Figure 6 below.

Table 11. Crosstabulation showing relationship between sex and career decisions made

Sex * The effect of the pandemic caused me to take a career decision. Crosstabulation

Count

		The effect of the pandemic caused me to take a career decision.			
		Yes	No	No career decision was taken	Total
Sex	Male	33	6	15	54
	Female	24	6	6	36
Total		57	12	21	90

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

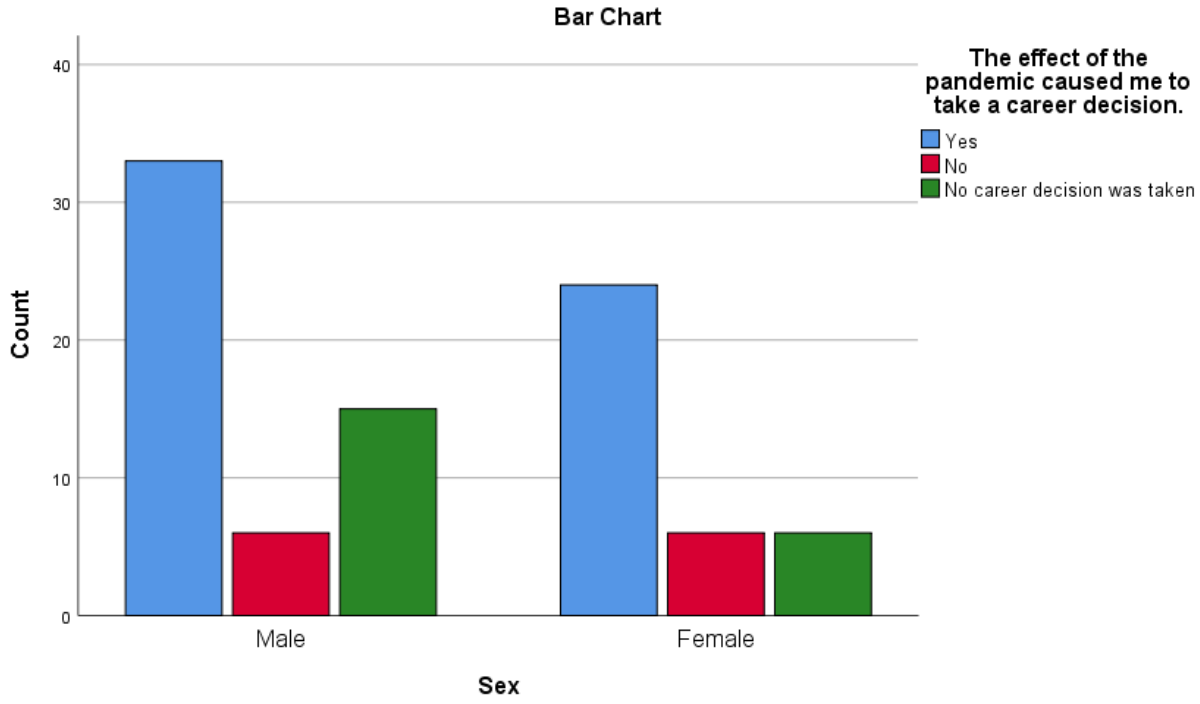


Figure 6. Relationship between sex and career decision by respondents

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

With respect to sex and specific areas of career decisions, the male responded as follows: six took the decision to venture into entrepreneurship, seven resorted to the search for a new job. Three male respondents took the triple decision of entrepreneurship, search for a new job and further studies, seven respondents decided on further studies and entrepreneurship, one respondent decided on further studies and search for a new job. Furthermore, two male respondents opted for search of a new job and entrepreneurship while eight embarked on further studies. On the part of the female respondents, the responses were as follows: 7 took entrepreneurial decision, 3 resorted to the search for a new job, another three of the respondents opted for all the three career decision options, four ventured into options 1 and 3, three respondents also took decisions involving options 1 and 2, while six went on further studies as their career decision. None of the respondents took options 2 and 3. The above is depicted in Table 12 and Figure 7 below.

Table 12. Crosstabulation showing relationship between sex and specific career decision taken

			If yes, career decisions were taken in the following areas							
			Entrepreneurship	Search for a new job	All the options	1 and 3 only	1 and 2 only	2 and 3 only	Further studies	Total
Sex	Male	22	6	7	3	7	1	2	8	56
	Female	12	7	3	3	4	3	0	6	38
Total		34	13	10	6	11	4	2	14	94

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

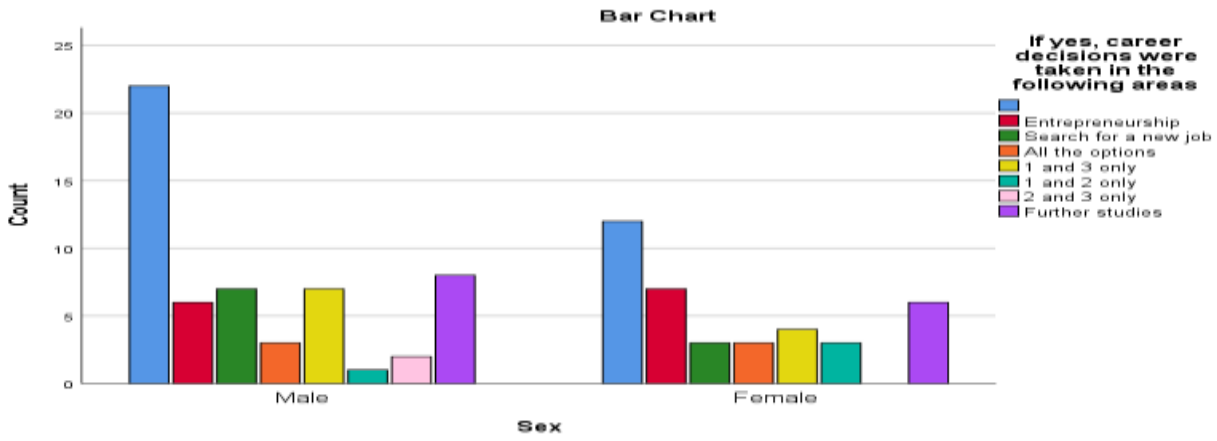


Figure 7. Relationship between sex and specific career decision taken

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The study also examined the relationship between sex and job satisfaction within the context of career shock caused by the COVID-19.

Table 13. Crosstabulation showing relationship between sex and job satisfaction

Sex * If yes, the areas affected were Crosstabulation

Count

		If yes, the areas affected were						
		A combination of the areas	Job Security	Pay and benefits	Career development	Engagement	Respect	Total
Sex	Male	10	10	14	5	2	0	41
	Female	9	4	7	3	4	1	28
Total		19	14	21	8	6	1	69

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

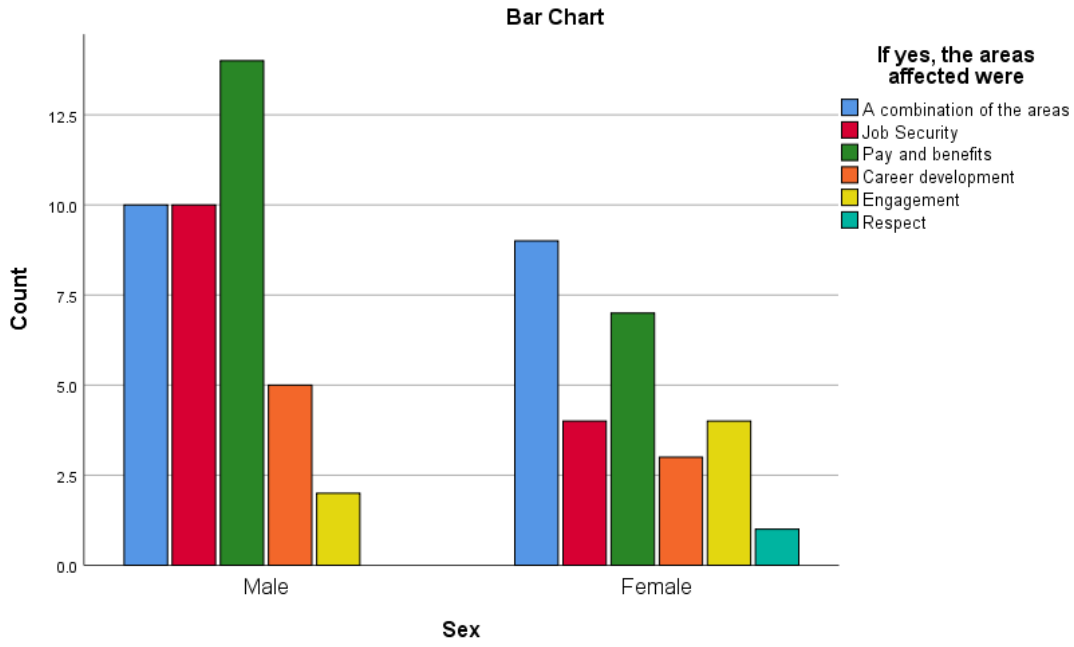


Figure 8. Relationship between sex and job satisfaction

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

From Table 13 and Figure 8 above, 14 males indicated that their pay and benefits were affected, 10 alluded to job security and another 10 also mentioned a combination of areas. Five, two and zero respondents mentioned career development, engagement and respect respectively. On the part of the female respondents, nine (9) mentioned that the coronavirus affected their job satisfaction in multiple areas, seven (7) attributed the effect to pay and benefits whiles four (4) each mentioned job security and engagement. Three and one respondents mentioned career development and respect respectively. This implies that the effect of the pandemic affected both sexes but in different dimensions.

9. Discussion

The COVID-19 brought about abrupt disruption in the career of employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana. This is because the emergence of the pandemic resulted in people losing their jobs, suffering promotion delays, lack of salary receipts, and training opportunities primarily due to the closure of educational institutions for barely one year. The disruption manifested in both positive, negative and neutral effects as demonstrated by the data. The findings are in tandem with Holtom et al. (2005) and Seibert et al. (2013) who identified career shock as occurring in these three dimensions. In the Ghanaian case, the career shock which was mostly perceived as having negative effective on employees to some extent turned out to culminate into a gain as the affected employees made career decisions that turned their fortunes around as espoused by Akkermans et al. (2020) and Rummel et al. (2019). The pandemic and its' effects on employees and the subsequent career decisions by employees reinforce the cognitive behavioural theory which stipulates that people's emotional reactions and behaviours are strongly influenced by cognitions (Beck, 1976). The

perception of the pandemic and career shock as negatively affecting employees also fits into the cognitive triad of Beck (1976) as some employees had negative views about themselves and the future. However, their responses through the various career decisions made brought a ray of hope to them, thereby diffusing the negativity. According to the CBT, there are different levels of cognition with core belief at the center. The core belief is the fundamental belief that one holds about themselves, others, the world in general, and the future. These beliefs according to Beck must be addressed for changes in emotion and behaviour to occur. The study found that changes in emotion and behaviour occurred following the career decisions that most employees took. The change was dependent on the effect of the career decisions made by the employees.

Nalis et al. (2021) espoused that people respond to career shocks differently in terms of their career decisions and career paths. Most employees in the study responded to the career shock caused by the COVID-19 variously as they took decisions to further their studies, entrepreneurship, change of job and a blend of these decisions. The decisions by these respondents did inure to their benefit as some started their own entities thereby making them to be gainfully employed. The fruit of those who opted for further studies is yet to be seen as most of them are still on the programmes. Those who switched jobs now work with different organisations. These findings concur with the existing literature on workers' response to career shock and the cognitive behavioural theory. In the words of Lee et. al. (1999) career shock results in a deliberate thought process leading to career decisions that alter the course of outcome through either an unpredicted job offer or elicit change.

The career shock caused by the coronavirus also impacted the job satisfaction of the employees both positively and negatively. The impact on job satisfaction stemmed from the fact that during the period some of the employees suffered cuts in salary, delayed promotion, training and development, and relationships with colleagues among others. These negative impacts resulted in low level of job satisfaction among the affected employees as they were unhappy and discontented because their expectations were not satisfied. These resulted in low employee morale and dampened spirit with its spillover effect on employee performance in the immediate post COVID-19 lockdown period. On the other hand, employees who experienced positive levels of job satisfaction had a sense of belonging, happiness and high morale. These culminated in renewed commitment to their institutions.

The study found that the pandemic affected both sexes affirming the work of Alon et al. (2020) who intimated that employee decision making regarding the COVID-19 pandemic were not gender specific as employees were generally affected, however, Lafkas et al. (2023) argued that the outbreak of the virus affected female more than male especially in areas of career progression since schools were closed for a period. On career decisions, both sexes made career decisions to survive the post pandemic period. Specific career decisions made include job changes, entrepreneurship, further studies and combination of the options. According to Barnir (2025), there exists relationship between gender and career decisions made by employees in the post pandemic era and indicated that there were gaps in entrepreneurial intentions between and across gender and there were varied social support systems for entrepreneurial decisions in response to the pandemic as was the case in Ghana

with government intervention like the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme-Business Support Scheme (CAP-BuSS) where the government allocated GH₵600.00 million to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

On gender and job satisfaction, the literature generally points to the fact that female tends to have higher job satisfaction compared to their male counterparts (Krishna, 2015; Clark, 1997), however, this study points to the contrary as male employees recorded higher job satisfaction than female employees in Ghana's private tertiary education sector confirming the work of Lafkas et al. (2023) that the COVID-19 affected females more than males. Possible reasons for this outcome might be attributed to the domestic roles performed by women which increased at the pick of the pandemic while their male counterparts had the opportunity to take up other jobs or were already engaged in multiple jobs prior to the pandemic.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The outbreak of the coronavirus brought about career shock among employees of private tertiary institutions in Ghana. The career shock was both positive and negative depending on the deliberate thought and response pattern of the affected employees. In response, employees took major career decisions such as entrepreneurship, change of job, further studies and a combination. This led to a change in what would have been a negative impact to a positive one on the employees. The level of job satisfaction of employees who remained with their institutions was affected both positively and negatively based on policies implemented by the institutions.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) should be amended to make room for natural disasters and pandemics with some safety nets such as entitlements for employees. Second, employees should be versatile in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities to cater for emergency situations so that they will not be found wanting. Institutions should develop their ICT infrastructure with emphasis on e-governance to allow for remote working during emergency periods. In addition, the Ghana Association of Private Tertiary Institutions (GAPTI) and Conference of Head of Private Universities, Ghana (CHPUG) in particular and Ghana Employers' Association in general together with the Government of Ghana should consider establishing emergency fund to handle remuneration of employees during disasters and emergencies.

References

Adonu, D., Opuni, Y. A., & Dorkenoo, C. B. (2020). Implications of COVID-19 on human resource practices: A case of the Ghanaian formal sector. *Journal of Human Resource Management, 8*(4), 209–214.

Agbevade, A. (2022). Human resource management response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Ghana's public sector: The experience of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA). *International Journal of Human Resource & Industrial Research, 9*(2), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7623550.

Akkermans, J., Brenninkmeijer, V., Schaufeli, W. B., & Blonk, R. W. B. (2015). It's all about

CareerSKILLS: Effectiveness of a career development intervention for young employees. *Human Resource Management, 54*(4), 533–551. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21633

Akkermans, J., Collings, D. G., Veiga, S. P. M., Prayag, C., & Seibert, S. E. (2021). Toward a broader understanding of career shocks: Exploring interdisciplinary connections with research on job search, human resource management, entrepreneurship, and diversity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 126*, Article 103563. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103563

Akkermans, J., Richardson, J., & Kraimer, M. L. (2020). The Covid-19 crisis as a career shock: Implications for careers and vocational behavior. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 119*, Article 103434. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103434

Akkermans, J., Seibert, S. E., & Mol, S. T. (2018). Tales of the unexpected: Integrating career shocks in the contemporary careers literature. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, 44*, Article e1503. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v44i0.1503

Alon, T., Doepke, M., Olmstead-Rumsey, J., & Tertilt, M. (2020). *The impact of COVID-19 on gender equality* (NBER Working Paper No. 26947). National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26947/w26947.pdf

Amponsah, E. B., & Onuoha, L. N. (2013). The performance and challenges of private universities in Ghana and Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 4*(5), 256–263.

Asante, L. A., & Mills, R. O. (2020). Exploring the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 pandemic in marketplaces in urban Ghana. *Africa Spectrum, 55*(2), 170–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002039720943612

Azizi, M. R., Atlasi, R., Ziapour, A., Abbas, J., & Naemi, R. (2021). Innovative human resource management strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic narrative review approach. *Heliyon, 7*(6), Article e07233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07233

Barnir, A. (2025). The effect of COVID-19 on entrepreneurial career choice: Gender and ethnic differences among university students. *Journal of Education and Work, 38*(1–4), 113–129. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2025.2576875

Betsworth, D. G., & Hansen, J. I. C. (1996). The categorization of serendipitous career development events. *Journal of Career Assessment, 4*(1), 91–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/106907279600400106

Bieńkowska, A., Koszela, A., Sałamacha, A., & Tworek, K. (2022). COVID-19 oriented HRM strategies influence on job and organizational performance through job-related attitudes. *PLOS ONE, 17*(4), Article e0266364. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0266364

Bingab, B. B. B., Forson, J. A., Mmbali, O. S., & Baah-Ennumh, T. Y. (2016). The evolution of university governance in Ghana: Implications for education policy and practice. *Asian Social Science, 12*(5), 1–14.

Blokker, R., Akkermans, J., Tims, M., Jansen, P., & Khapova, S. (2019). Building a sustainable start: The role of career competencies, career success, and career shocks in young professionals' employability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 112*, 172–184. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.02.013

Bright, J. E. H., Pryor, R. G. L., Chan, E. W. M., & Rijanto, J. (2009). Chance events in career development: Influence, control and multiplicity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 75*(1), 14–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.02.007

Blustein, D. L., Kenny, M. E., Autin, K., & Duffy, R. (2019). The psychology of working in practice: A theory of change for a new era. *The Career Development Quarterly, 67*(3), 236–254. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12193

Carnevale, J. B., & Hatak, I. (2020). Employee adjustment and well-being in the era of COVID-19: Implications for human resource management. *Journal of Business Research, 116*, 183–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.037

Clark, A. E. (1997). Job satisfaction and gender: Why are women so happy at work? *Labour Economics, 4*(4), 341–372. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0927-5371

(97)00010-9

Collings, D. G., McMackin, J., Nyberg, A. J., & Wright, P. M. (2021). Strategic human resource management in the era of COVID-19. *Journal of Management Studies, 58*(5), 1378–1382. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12695

Diep, N. S., Diep, L. T., Huynh, H. M. T., Nguyen, H. H. T., & O'Mahony, B. (2021). Enhancing resilience in the Covid-19 crisis: Lessons from human resource management practices in Vietnam. *Current Issues in Tourism, 24*(22), 3189–3205. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1863930

Duffy, R. D., Blustein, D. L., Diemer, M. A., & Autin, K. L. (2016). The psychology of working theory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 63*(2), 127–148. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000140

Dundon, T., & Rafferty, A. (2018). The (potential) demise of HRM? *Human Resource Management Journal, 28*(3), 377–391. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12195

Feng, J., Zhou, W., Li, S., & Mengyi, L. (2019). Obstacles open the door: Negative shocks can motivate individuals to focus on opportunities. *Frontiers of Business Research in China, 13*, Article 21. https://doi.org/10.1186/s11782-019-0061-1

Ghana Health Service. (2020, May 7). *Situation update: Covid-19 outbreak in Ghana as at 7 May 2020*. https://ghanahealthservice.org/covid19/archive.php

Hamouche, S. (2021). Human resource management and the COVID-19 crisis: Implications, challenges, opportunities, and future organizational directions. *Journal of Management & Organization, 29*(5), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2021.15

Holtom, B. C., Mitchell, T. R., Lee, T. W., & Inderrieden, E. J. (2005). Shocks as causes of

turnover: What they are and how organizations can manage them. *Human Resource Management, 44*(3), 337–352. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20074

Iza, G. (2020). Influence of Covid-19 crisis on human resource management and companies' response: The expert study. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration, 6*(6), 15–24. https://doi.org/10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.66.1002

Kraimer, M. L., Greco, L., Seibert, S. E., & Sargent, L. D. (2019). An investigation of academic career success: The new tempo of academic life. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 18*(2), 128–152. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2017.0391

Krishna, G. S. (2015). Gender difference and job satisfaction: A study among faculties of private colleges in India. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 1*(Special Issue), 227–237. https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2015.s11.227237

Lafkas, S. M., Christensen, M., & Madsen, S. R. (2023). The impact of COVID-19 on women and work: Career advancement challenges. *Merits, 3*(1), 167–185. https://doi.org/10.3390/merits3010011

Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. (1994). An alternative approach: The unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover. *Academy of Management Review, 19*(1), 51–89. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1994.9410122008

Lee, T. W., Mitchell, T. R., Holtom, B. C., McDaniel, L. S., & Hill, J. W. (1999). The unfolding model of voluntary turnover: A replication and extension. *Academy of Management Journal, 42*(4), 450–462. https://doi.org/10.2307/257015

Miller, M. J. (1983). The role of happenstance in career choice. *The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 32*(1), 16–20. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-585X.1983.tb01552.x

Nalis, I., Kubicek, B., & Korunka, C. (2021). From shock to shift: A qualitative analysis of accounts in mid-career about changes in the career path. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, Article 641248. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.641248

Nantwi, W. K. (2020). COVID-19 and education in Ghana: A tale of chaos and calm. *African Journal of Emerging Issues, 1*, 1–13.

Pallant, J. (2007). *SPSS survival manual: A step-by-step guide to data analysis using SPSS for Windows* (3rd ed.). Open University Press.

President of Ghana. (2020, March 15). *President Akufo-Addo addresses nation on updates to Ghana's enhanced response to the coronavirus pandemic*. http://presidency.gov.gh/index.php/briefing-room/speeches/1546-president-akufo-addo-addresses-nation-on-updates-to-ghana-s-enhanced-response-to-the-coronavirus-pandemic

Republic of Ghana. (1992). *The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*. Assembly Press.

Republic of Ghana. (2020). *Imposition of Restrictions Act, 2020 (Act 1012)*. Assembly Press. https://verfassungsblog.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Imposition-of-Restrictions-Act

-2020-Act-1012.pdf

Rummel, S., Akkermans, J., Blokker, R., & Van Gelderen, M. (2021). Shocks and entrepreneurship: A study of career shocks among newly graduated entrepreneurs. *Career Development International, 26*(4), 415–433. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-11-2018-0296

Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., Holtom, B. C., & Pierotti, A. J. (2013). Even the best laid plans sometimes go askew: Career self-management processes, career shocks, and the decision to pursue graduate education. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 98*(1), 169–182. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030882

Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Heslin, P. A. (2016). Developing career resilience and adaptability. *Organizational Dynamics, 45*(3), 245–257. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2016.07.009

Wordsworth, R., & Nilakant, V. (2021). Unexpected change: Career transitions following a significant extra-organizational shock. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 127*, Article 103555. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103555

World Health Organization. (2020, April 23). *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): Situation report – 94*. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200423-sitrep-94-covid-19.pdf

Copyright Disclaimer

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).