Article

Evaluating Teachers' Workplace Climate and Anxiety Response during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of Information Seeking Platforms

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Abstract: The COVID-19 disease affected the school workplace climate for teachers and led to psychological consequences. However, it is not clear how the workplace climate affected the anxiety levels of teachers. This study assessed the connection between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety among senior high school (SHS) teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study further examined the moderating role of professional and social media platform use on the relationship between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety among teachers. Through a cross-sectional survey design, 395 high school teachers were conveniently sampled from various schools in the Central Region of Ghana. A questionnaire was used to survey participants, and the obtained data were analysed using descriptive statistics as well as simple linear regression and moderation analyses with Hayes' PROCESS. This study revealed a negative association between workplace climate and anxiety. The relationship between workplace climate and anxiety was contingent on social media use but not professional platform use. Therefore, the consumption of unscrutinised COVID-19-related information on social media heightened fear and anxiety among teachers, even in the midst of a safe workplace environment. An effective strategy against teachers' COVID-19-related anxiety required the provision of accurate science-driven information about the virus. School counselling psychologists, school welfare officers, and school health coordinators are encouraged to collaborate towards designed interventions that promote a safe working environment and the mental health of teachers.

Keywords: anxiety; COVID-19 information; social media; work environment; teachers

1. Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic became a major life-threatening encounter. The disease's emergence prompted a few modifications in the education system in numerous regions of the world, influencing the school climate (learning environment). Working circumstances, consisting of mediums of instruction and school physical activities, amplified workload/job demand among instructors and learners, prompting psychological consequences such as stress, fear, depression, tension, and anxiety among both educators and learners [1–4]. During this time, the security and wellbeing of instructors and learners was a main issue for states, districts, and stakeholders upon the reopening and continuation

of school activities [5]. This study assesses the workplace climate and anxiety of senior high school (SHS) teachers while examining the roles of social media and professional platforms.

In the context of this research, "workplace or school climate refers to teachers' perceptions of physical school environmental safety from the level of risk they might have been exposed to during the pandemic". From the perspective of safety needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, "a positive school climate (i.e., a safe school environment) is a fundamental need for all humans that must be satisfied/fulfilled before one can enjoy and appreciate other needs" [6]. Drawing from social cognitive theory, Bandura [7] proposed that workplace environmental variables influence how educators perceive themselves as active and dynamic facilitators within the learning context during the pandemic. The issue of workplace climate is likely to be of great concern at a time when schools resumed after the COVID-19 outbreak. Obviously, teachers may be worried about their safety within the school environment during teaching and learning activities.

Fundamentally, an individual's safety or security is achieved and acknowledged when the individual can function and work normally with few or no imaginary discernments or actual experiences of physical or mental torture [8]. Consequently, providing a safe workplace environment for educators during the pandemic, such as relatedness/connectedness, wellbeing and safety plans, and support networks, could help them perform their obligations meticulously and steadily and be satisfied with their job [9]. Teachers who work in positive, supportive, and helpful learning conditions are more likely to feel safe in the face of adversity because they develop a sense of belonging and contribute to the development of their school and community. As a result, a perilous school environment adversely impacted educators' emotional wellness, mental health, pedagogical practices, and social capital formation during the pandemic [10–13]. Given the relevance of safety to mental health outcomes, research in this form is essential to assess the school safety climate after the resumption of school.

Previous investigations established associations between school environment/climate and mental health consequences (e.g., anxiety, fear, depression, panic, stress) among teachers [4,12,14–16]. Other studies have found that an unsafe classroom environment (e.g., unprepared virtual instruction, poor working conditions, inadequate personal protective equipment, insufficient administrative support, limited technology, readiness, and preparation) is a significant predictor of teachers' COVID-19-related anxiety [12,17–20]. Studies in Asian countries like Japan, Indonesia, and Pakistan also found workplace contamination, job demands, and an unsafe workplace climate as determinants of teachers' COVID-19-related anxieties [21–24]. Teachers may minimise the level of anxiety during the pandemic as a result of the school climate through information from social media platforms (social networking sites/virtual/web-based entertainment podiums). The heightened utilisation of social networking websites has been recorded in recent studies during the COVID-19 pandemic [25,26]. Social media podiums provide manifold podiums for educators to help one another, promote the distribution of health and wellbeing data, disseminate educational content, and support medical education to aid with the management of the pandemic and keep people connected despite the imposition of social/physical distancing [27–29]. During this pandemic, teachers received different COVID-19-related evidence from both conventional and electronic media podiums, including social media, and professional and non-professional platforms. These platforms could serve as powerful mechanisms that either increase or decrease the strength and direction of the influence of school climate on teachers' COVID-19-related anxiety.

However, excessive usage of social networking sites became a source of concern during the epidemic. Relatively, the information on some of these platforms was misleading or inaccurate, which led to poor health choices and anxiety among the general public. The users of these platforms spread erroneous estimations of cases and deaths, wrong information, hearsay, and paranoid ideas during the pandemic, which caused fear, panic, and anxiety among the general public, including teachers and students [4,13,30–34]. Aside from social media platforms, teachers also managed their pandemic anxiety emanating from the learning

environment via professional platforms. These professional platforms acted as a resource, and potential buffer against mental health consequences as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. Teachers could receive several social supports (e.g., health information, emotional support) from experts like health professionals on life safety/security, overall wellbeing, disease and symptom control, a recovery plan, and how to reduce anxiety and depression during the crisis [35–41]. Hence, social support and information from professional platforms served as a protective mechanism for coping with the global pandemic.

In Ghana, physical workplace or school safety among teachers and students has been a major concern among the government and other policymakers. Accordingly, the government has, over the years, made conscious efforts to improve the physical working environment for teachers and learners. However, the pandemic worsened the situation during the COVID-19 crisis. The outbreak of the virus led to an infrastructure and digital divide among schools and individuals in Ghana [1]. This gap increased the demands/workloads on teachers and students, causing psychological consequences such as depression, anxiety, stress, fear, and panic [42–45]. Previous studies in Ghana revealed that both teachers and students perceived their school environment to be unsafe during the pandemic [4,12,16]. This safety concern may cause anxiety among teachers because of feelings of isolation and a lack of support. Teachers experiencing work anxiety due to an unsafe workplace climate may experience teacher burnout, job dissatisfaction, disengagement, and poor performance and may negatively affect students. Teacher anxiety may create classroom environments that are less conducive to learning, which could lead to poor students' performance, lost interest, and decreased motivation for learning.

Globally, there are examinations on workplace environment and COVID-19-related anxiety among residents, including teachers [17,20–22] and how social networks and professional platforms affected their COVID-19 anxiety [25,27,33,46]. However, empirical inquiry on teachers' perceived workplace climate and anxiety and the roles of social media and professional platforms as information sources during epidemics is limited. Most studies in Ghana focused on knowledge, risk perceptions, anxiety, school climate, preparedness towards COVID-19, and coping strategies [4,12,16,43,45,47–49]. Hence, there is a "knowledge gap in the mental health and psychology literature", which the present investigation seeks to fill. Accordingly, assessing and understanding teachers' perceived workplace climate and anxiety during COVID-19 and the roles of social media and professional platforms as information sources are critical. The rationale of this study was to evaluate the workplace climate and anxiety of high school teachers while examining the roles of social media and professional platforms. Specifically, the following objectives guided the research:

1. Assess the association between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety.
2. Examine the moderating role of professional platform use in the relationship between workplace climate and anxiety.
3. Investigate the moderating role of social media platform use in the relationship between workplace climate and anxiety.

The findings could help the government and its organisations responsible for the administration of Ghana's high school education in creating instructional and formal preparation programmes that will encourage teachers to follow and adhere to control procedures by using relevant COVID-19-related information that will improve working conditions in schools.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Participants' Selection

Using a cross-sectional survey design, 395 SHS teachers in the Central Region of Ghana were conveniently selected to participate in the study. It must be stressed that the research was conducted at a time when schools had reopened after the long COVID-19 lockdown, and as such, only teachers who were willing and available participated. After the necessary permissions had been given, the teachers were contacted at the school premises and informed about the study. Those who opted to be part of the research were given the chance

to respond to the questionnaire. Among these teachers, 349 were Christians and 46 were Muslims. The respondents had either a certificate, diploma, bachelor's degree, or master's degree. Teachers sampled for the study had between one (1) and above five (5) years of teaching experience. Between "social media platforms and professional platforms", the majority of the teachers used social media platforms as a COVID-19 information source.

2.2. Instrumentation

A questionnaire was utilised as a data collection instrument for the study. The questionnaire comprised three sections: A—Socio-demographic variables, B—COVID-19 anxiety, and C—Workplace climate.

2.2.1. Socio-Demographic Variables

The study surveyed a number of variables, which comprise age, religion, sex, highest education level, and years of teaching at the SHS level. Other variables explored include participants' usage of "social media and professional platforms" as COVID-19 information sources during the COVID-19 pandemic; this item was a general item where the participants were requested to indicate "yes" or "no" to indicate whether they used social media platforms or not, as well as whether they used professional platforms or not. For purposes of clarity, we gave examples of social network podiums (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.) and professional podiums (e.g., websites/platforms of the Ministry of Health, Ghana Medical Council, Medical Doctors, Ghana Health Service, etc.).

2.2.2. Anxiety Associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic

"COVID-19-related anxiety was operationalized in this study as the degree to which teachers experienced apprehensive symptoms (non-clinical indicators) during the COVID-19 pandemic". Six items were adapted from the well-known Beck et al.'s [50] anxiety scale. This approach to item adaptation and generation has been supported in similar studies [4,16]. These items were *"I fear the worst happening"*, *"I feel nervous"*, *"I have self-doubts"*, *"I feel very much concerned"*, *"I feel unrelaxed"*, and *"I feel unsteady"*. The items had response decisions within 0–3, with *0* indicating '*not at all*', *1* depicting *somewhat*, *2* representing *moderately*, and *3* indicating *very much so*. The validity and reliability properties of the anxiety scale were reported to be sufficient, with an omega reliability estimate of 0.71 [4,16]. Participants with high scores on the scale reflect a high anxiety level associated with COVID-19, and vice versa.

2.2.3. COVID-19 Workplace Climate

"Workplace climate was operationalized within the context of this study as the degree to which the physical teaching and learning environment in senior high schools was perceived as safe from COVID-19 transmission and infection". Guided by previously standardised scales [51,52], as well as previous empirical research in Ghana [4,16], five items were created by the researchers to measure this variable. The items included *"Do you feel safe teaching lessons amid COVID-19 pandemic?"*, *"Are you comfortable engaging students in lessons amidst this COVID-19 outbreak?"* and *"Does the institution provide the necessary protective equipment to prevent the infection and transmission of COVID-19 during lessons?"*. The participants were required to respond to the items using a *"yes"* or *"no"*. The responses were given a weight of 1 and 0 for *"yes"* and *"no"*, respectively, with a total score of 5. High scores reflect a positive COVID-19 workplace climate, and low scores represent a negative COVID-19 workplace climate. Using the Kuder–Richardson 21 reliability approach [53], a reliability estimate of 0.72 was obtained, a figure deemed adequate [54].

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

The Regional Director of Education, Central Region—Ghana, granted approval following the ethical clearance standards of the IRB of UCC with reference number UCC/IRB/EXT/2020/25 to enable teachers to participate in the study. The headmasters/headteachers of

the institutions that were selected for the study also permitted their staff to participate. To gain access to the educators to respond to the questionnaire, the heads of schools served as gatekeepers [55]. The researchers discussed the benefits and impact of the study with the potential participants. A good relationship was established between participants and researchers to agree on when data collection would be convenient and appropriate. Prior to collecting the data, informed consent forms were obtained from all participants, after which the survey instruments were distributed to them to respond to using pencils and taken the same day after administration. Participants took 25–30 min to respond to the survey instrument. Confidentiality, the freedom to withdraw or continue responding to the survey items, the safety of the responses provided, and anonymity were assured by the researchers. All COVID-19 safety protocols were strictly observed by providing sufficient hand sanitizers and nose masks to all participants and those who helped in data collection.

2.4. Data Analysis Plan

The primary data gathered were screened and cleaned. Outliers and missing data were checked, but none of them were recorded. The analysis first presented the demographic information of respondents, including the variables, their levels, and their respective frequencies and percentages. Further, descriptive statistics (such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) of anxiety and workplace climate were also presented. A simple linear regression analysis was used to ascertain the association between workplace climate and anxiety. Moderation analysis was performed to examine the role of social media and professional platform usage in the link between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety. The moderation analysis was performed using the bootstrapping approach with Model 1 of the Hayes PROCESS macro (SPSS version 25 add-on).

3. Results

3.1. Preliminary Analyses

The preliminary analyses presented include the socio-demographic information as well as the descriptive statistics of the variables in this study.

The details in Table 1 show that the majority of the sample was above 40 years (28.6%), followed by 25–29 years ($n = 100$, 25.3%), and very few aged within 20–24 years ($n = 23$, 5.8%). Male participants (65.8%) dominated the sample. Regarding their religious affiliations, 88.4% of respondents reported being Christians, and 11.6% were Muslims. More than half of the participants were bachelor's degree holders (52.6%), with about 16.7% having a master's degree. Most of the participants had more than 5 years of teaching experience, and a few of them had taught for less than a year (11.4%). Over 70% of the participants utilised social media as a COVID-19 information source (70.6%), whereas two-thirds of them indicated that they use professional platforms as a COVID-19 information source.

Table 2 further provides descriptive statistics of the key variables (i.e., anxiety and workplace climate) in the study. A bivariate analysis (i.e., bi-serial correlation and Pearson correlation) was conducted among the variables. Further, the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis estimates were computed as well.

Anxiety associated with COVID-19 had a mean of 1.537 and a standard deviation of 0.611, whereas workplace climate had a mean of 2.605 and a standard deviation of 1.49. The skewness values were −0.003 and 0.068 for COVID-19-related anxiety and workplace climate, respectively. The kurtosis values were −0.887 and −0.955 for anxiety associated with COVID-19 and workplace climate, respectively. Both the skewness values (−2 to +2) and kurtosis (−7 to +7) estimates are within the acceptable range [56]. A positive association was also found between anxiety and professional platforms. Anxiety and workplace climate were also negatively related.

Table 1. Participants' description.

Variable	Levels	Frequency	Percent
	20–24	23	5.8
	25–29	100	25.3
Age (years)	30–34	86	21.8
	35–39	73	18.5
	40 and above	113	28.6
Sex	Male	260	65.8
	Female	135	34.2
Religion	Christian	349	88.4
	Muslim	46	11.6
	Certificate	22	5.6
Education level	Diploma	99	25.1
	Bachelor's	208	52.6
	Master's	66	16.7
	<1 year	45	11.4
Years of teaching	1–2 years	82	20.7
	3–4 years	92	23.3
	above 5 years	176	44.6
Use of social media platforms as a COVID-19 information source	Yes	279	70.6
	No	116	29.4
Use of professional platforms as a COVID-19 information source	Yes	129	32.7
	No	266	67.3

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for anxiety and workplace climate.

Variables	Workplace Climate	Anxiety	Professional Platform Use	Social Media Use
Workplace climate	1			
Anxiety	−0.209 **	1		
Professional platform use	−0.018	0.157 **	1	
Social media use	−0.016	−0.041	0.331 **	1
Score range	0–3	0–5	n/a	n/a
Mean	1.537	2.605	n/a	n/a
Std. Deviation	.611	1.490	n/a	n/a
Skewness	−0.003	0.068	n/a	n/a
Kurtosis	−0.887	−0.955	n/a	n/a

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

3.2. Association between Workplace Climate and COVID-19-Related Anxiety

The association between workplace climate and *COVID-19-related* anxiety was explored through simple regression analysis using workplace climate as the predictor, anxiety response as the criterion, with age, gender, and information sources as covariates. The parameters from the estimation are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Model fit indices and regression parameters of the relationship between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Intercept	1.603	0.108	14.818	0.000	1.391	1.816
Workple climate	−0.082	0.020	−4.015	0.000	−0.121	−0.042
Gender [Male]	−0.017	0.070	−0.240	0.811	−0.154	0.121
Professional platform use [Yes]	−0.271	0.069	−3.959	0.000	−0.406	−0.137
Social media use [Yes]	0.122	0.070	1.752	0.081	−0.015	0.259
Age	0.047	0.026	1.800	0.073	−0.004	0.098

Dependent variable: COVID-19-related anxiety; Predictor: workplace climate.

As presented in Table 3, the model having workplace climate as a predictor (with age, gender, social media use, and professional platform use as covariates) and COVID-19-related anxiety as a criterion was significant (fit), $F(63, 326) = 7.637$, $p < 0.001$. In the presence of these mediators, workplace climate explained about 45.8% of the variances associated with anxiety responses. The analysis outcome further indicates that workplace climate was negatively related to COVID-19-related anxiety, $B = -0.082$, $t = -4.015$, $p < 0.001$. Regarding the covariates, the use of professional platforms was negatively associated with anxiety response, $B = -0.2712$, $t = -3.959$, $p < 0.001$. Gender, age, and use of social media had a nonsignificant association with the anxiety response of the teachers.

3.3. Moderating Role of Professional Platform Use in the Relationship between Workplace Climate and COVID-19-Related Anxiety

Moderation analysis output on the role of professional platform use in the link between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety has been presented in Table 4. To avoid the interaction effect, both moderators (i.e., professional platform use and social media use) were used in a single moderation model. The details of the results showed that about 34.9% of the variances in COVID-19 anxiety responses can be attributed to workplace climate and the information sources the teachers relied on, $F(5, 389) = 7.939$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 4. Moderation parameters of professional platform usage in workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety.

	B	Std. Error	t	sig.	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Constant	1.563	0.098	16.015	0.000	1.371	1.755
Workplace climate	−0.055	0.031	−1.751	0.081	−0.117	0.007
W1	0.237	0.134	1.775	0.077	−0.026	0.500
Int_1	−0.001	0.043	−0.025	0.980	−0.086	0.083
Z1	0.163	0.146	1.115	0.266	−0.124	0.451
Int_2	−0.117	0.049	−2.401	0.017	−0.213	−0.021

$R^2 = 0.349$; $F(5, 389) = 7.939$, $p < 0.001$. Criterion variable: COVID-19-related anxiety. LLCI—lower limit confidence interval; ULCI—upper limit confidence interval. W1—do not use professional platforms; reference group for W1: those who use professional platforms. Z1—do not use social media platforms; reference group: those who use social media platforms. Int_1: interaction term for workplace climate and W1; interaction term for workplace climate and Z1.

The outcome of the moderation analysis revealed that professional platform use did not significantly moderate the relationship between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety, $B = 0.237$, $SE = 0.043$, *BootCI* (−0.086, 0.083) (see Table 4). The results suggest that the use of professional platforms did not make any difference in the association between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety.

3.4. Moderating Role of Social Media Platform Use in the Relationship between Workplace Climate and COVID-19-Related Anxiety

The study also examined the role of social media platform usage in the relationship between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety. Figure 1 shows the analysis output.

The results from the moderation analysis showed that the use of social media platforms as COVID-19 information sources moderates the relationship between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety, $B = -0.117$, $SE = 0.049$, *BootCI* (−0.219, −0.021) (see Table 4). Amid an increasingly safer workplace environment, teachers who do not use social media platforms as COVID-19 information sources are more likely to experience low levels of anxiety compared to teachers who utilised social media platforms (see Figure 1). In other words, improving the safety of the teaching environment did not result in a reduced anxiety response for teachers who relied on social media information sources.
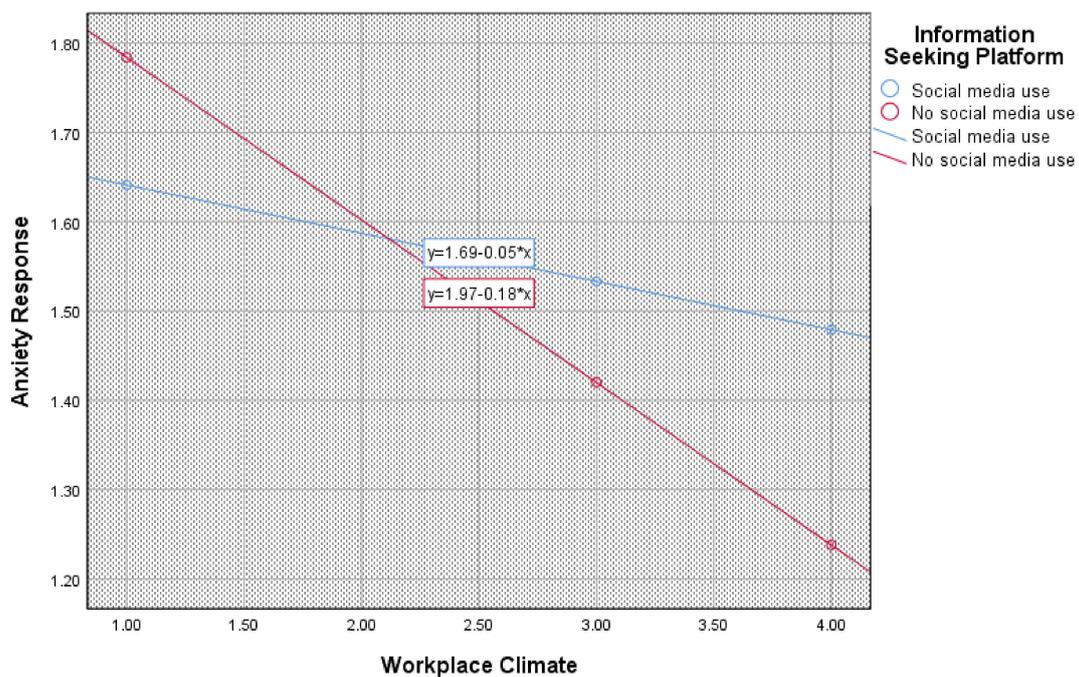
Figure 1. Moderating role of social media platform use (as an information source) in the relationship between workplace climate and anxiety response.

4. Discussion

This inquiry examined the connection between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety among SHS teachers, as well as the moderating role of professional and social media platforms. Evidence from this study shows a link between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety, with workplace climate explaining about 4 percent of variations in anxiety among teachers. The results signify that a positive workplace climate is associated with reduced levels of anxiety related to COVID-19. That is, when teachers' working environment is seen as safe and protective, their level of anxiety decreases. This finding is aligned with Maslow's needs theory that safety is a fundamental human need for survival. Generally, when people work in an environment that is safe and protective, they feel warm and secure and are not threatened by danger. A safe working environment allays all fears and suspicions relating to COVID-19. This situation could influence how SHS teachers perceived themselves as active and dynamic facilitators within the learning context during the pandemic. This finding also supported Bandura's social cognitive theory that a positive working environment influences individual's actions and behaviours and reduces anxiety and stress that one may experience in the learning environment.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many individuals feared working in person and resorted to working through virtual means due to the fear of contracting or infecting others with the disease. This current study aligns with those of previous studies globally [17–20,23,24]. Studies in the USA, for instance, found that the presence of colleague teachers and other visitors became a worry to teachers as they feared being infected with COVID-19 [17]. Similarly, Quansah et al. [4,16], in Ghana, discovered that both "teachers and students perceived the school environment as unsafe due to uncertainty about their safety, inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE), and discomfort during lessons". Though their study was among students, it is of essence to teachers since both teachers and students operate within the same environment. Although teachers' anxiety explained workplace climate to an appreciable extent, other conditions in the workplace climate (e.g., warmth, support, interpersonal relations, positive culture, teaching and learning resources, sense of community) could be considered in reducing teachers' anxiety during stressful situations like the COVID-19 pandemic [57].

When professional platform usage interacted with workplace climate, the interaction term could not predict COVID-19-related anxiety. This finding suggests that obtaining

COVID-19 health-related data from "professional platforms" does not necessarily cause variations in the connection between workplace climate and COVID-19-related anxiety. Comparatively, other examinations have established that the medium by which an individual obtains health-related data can affect and build his/her anxiety level during the pandemic [57–59]. Prior research has indicated that professional platforms could act as a resource, potential buffer, or important mechanism for reducing the mental health consequences emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic. With this understanding, teachers could receive several social supports through health information or emotional support from experts like health professionals to help manage their overall wellbeing [37,39]. Reasonably, the information teachers receive from these professional platforms is the same as that presented on broadcast media such as television and radio. During the COVID-19 outbreak in Ghana, there were a series of state-sponsored and other private institution-sponsored advertisements and COVID-19 education programmes running on television and radio stations. The content of this information is usually vetted and approved by health professionals and experts. Therefore, when the same information approved by the experts and professionals is disseminated through their professional platforms, the expected education may not occur since that might have already been carried out on the radio or television. This situation might have resulted in the nonsignificant moderation effect of professional platform use as an information source in the link between workplace climate and anxiety responses.

Other findings indicated that social media use moderates the connection between the workplace safety environment and COVID-19-related anxiety among SHS teachers. That is, the link between school climate and teachers' anxiety, although negative, was strong among the teachers who did not use social media platforms, relative to those who used them. The implication is that, comparatively, with an improved workplace climate, educators who received COVID-19 information through virtual network sites were bound to experience higher levels of anxiety than educators who did not learn about COVID-19 through social media. Consistent with other studies [30,31,33,34], teachers who selected "social media and commercial media" as their main sources of data about the pandemic were bound to feel anxious. Social or virtual network handlers (i.e., users) frequently disseminate rumours, conspiracy theories, misinformation, and even inaccurate estimates of COVID-19 cases and fatalities, which make people more afraid and anxious overall, including teachers, as has been shown in some studies. For example, Zhao and Zhou [34] found that social media usage by teachers had a higher risk of becoming fearful of COVID-19, which led to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Similarly, learners who received data from virtual platforms and radio experienced high levels of anxiety in Ghana during the COVID-19 crisis [4] because, information from those platforms was not officially examined and reviewed accordingly [58]. Meanwhile, it has already been discovered that teachers in Ghana predominantly make use of WhatsApp and Facebook platforms [60,61]. Given this notion, it is likely that information from such outlets might be contaminated with inaccurate information, which results in increased anxiety levels among teachers [57,58].

Relatedly, other key factors could also explain the relationship revealed among the workplace climate, use of information sources, and anxiety response levels of the teachers. A key factor is the level of digital health literacy of the teachers at the time of conducting this research. It is possible that teachers who have a higher level of digital health literacy might not experience much anxiety even when they rely on social media or a less protective environment [62,63]. Such teachers will be able to evaluate the accuracy of the information retrieved from social media, and this can explain their mental health outcomes. It must be quickly mentioned that although some information on social media may be inaccurate, there is a high possibility of obtaining accurate information from the same platform. It has also been found that financial resources and coping are critical in explaining anxiety levels in the presence of a poor protective environment and dependence on inaccurate information sources [64–66]. This connection suggests that teachers who find themselves in a less protective school environment and yet depend on social media outlets for information may not show an intense anxiety response when greater financial resource and an active

coping strategy are adopted. These dynamics are likely to exacerbate or alleviate anxiety levels among the teachers. Future studies may target these critical variables to expand the discussion on the anxiety responses of teachers.

Strengths and Limitations

Due to the cross-sectional nature of this investigation, the evidence adduced only provides a snapshot view of the interplay of workplace climate and anxiety, vis à vis social media and professional platform use. The situation might, however, differ with the passage of time. Additionally, the use of cross-sectional data also suggests a limited possibility of drawing causal conclusions from the findings. Therefore, the findings of this inquiry must be treated with caution. Notwithstanding, the current findings provide empirical evidence of the disservice social media did during the pandemic. Also, workplace climate was measured using self-report, and there could be social exaggeration and biases from the respondents regarding shared information on the school climate and the preventive measures established by their institutions. Further, the data did not contain profound information about the usage of social media and professional platforms, personal and social resources, the frequency of infections and hospitalizations; hence, these specifics may also serve as limitations of the study. Because participants were conveniently sampled, generalisations about the larger pool of teachers are limited due to its representativeness [67]. However, given that PPE and other COVID-19-related logistics were largely supplied by the government, the workplace environment of other teachers in the country may not be so different from that of the current study.

5. Conclusions

In summary, the present examination highlights that the role of social media use cannot be underestimated. Therefore, much attention ought to be given to the dissemination of COVID-19 information, particularly on social media. Misinformation from such platforms triggered heightened fear and anxiety among teachers. Thus, information through such media outlets should be scrutinised before dissemination to allay the fears of people regarding the disease and perhaps future cases. Teachers' access to accurate, fact-based, science-driven information about COVID-19 is a good way to prevent their anxiety from growing due to misunderstandings of the virus's epidemiology. Encouraging the use of emerging technologies like text mining and natural language processing to find unsupported online content is crucial. The reported negative association between the working environment and teachers' anxiety during the crisis emphasises how important it is for workplaces to provide support for teachers' mental and psychological wellbeing. Therefore, school health coordinators, school welfare officers, and counselling psychologists are encouraged to work together to improve teachers' wellbeing. In order to encourage and incentivize teachers' productivity, stakeholders in education are encouraged to create a safe learning environment. The implementation of interventions (e.g., social emotional learning training) that support teachers' wellbeing and a safe work environment (e.g., provision of adequate teaching and learning materials and PPE) is required. Future studies in the nation could examine regional patterns and the extent of disinformation related to COVID-19 on various social media platforms. This future research area could include the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at mitigating teachers' anxiety or the impact of workplace climate on other aspects of teachers' wellbeing.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of University of Cape Coast, Ghana, with a reference number: UCCIRB/EXT/2020/25.

Informed Consent Statement: Written informed consent was taken from all study participants before data collection.

Data Availability Statement: The data are available upon reasonable request through the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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