

## EVALUATION OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG LIBRARY PERSONNEL IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH- WEST, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This study evaluated the effect of occupational stress on job performance among library personnel in private university libraries in South-West Nigeria. Adopting a descriptive survey method, 159 participants were surveyed across various job units. The findings revealed a pervasive high level of occupational stress, with a mean score of 42.01. Five major stress-generating factors were identified: responsibility pressure, role conflict, job vs. non-job conflict, workload, and quality concerns. Notably, responsibility pressure was most prominent in the reference section, while role conflict was highest in the circulation section, and quality concerns were most pronounced in the cataloguing section. The study also confirmed a significant negative relationship ( $r = -0.311$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between occupational stress and job performance, emphasising the need for targeted interventions. Recommendations were made on the need to implement targeted stress management programmes, unit-specific interventions, enhance workload distribution, and incorporate performance improvement initiatives. By addressing these recommendations, private university libraries can create a more supportive work environment, enhancing the well-being and performance of their personnel.

**Keywords:** Occupational Stress, Job Performance, Library Personnel, Private University Library

### Introduction

The need for global visibility and a competitive advantage has made performance, and efficiency a top priority for most institutions. Information revolution and increased speed brought about by globalisation in the 21st century, has made individual to speed up role and responsibilities to meet up work demands. This scenario is not far-fetched from the library environment, the migration from traditional library service system to digital library system has equally given rise to a new type of 'on-the-job stress,' i.e., "techno-stress" caused by working

with multiple and rapidly changing technological systems (Ranjna, 2015). Occupational stress, job stress, techno-stress and work stress are interchangeable terminologies, denoting the same thing (Larson, 2004). Extensively, Kaur and Kathuria (2018) surmised that occupational stress is a mental or physical tension or combination of both, created and related to occupation and its environment.

Occupational stress is a significant basis for decreasing employee performance and commitment (Adewoyin et al. 2020). As observed by Ikonne (2015) occupational stress could cause unusual dysfunctional work behaviour while contributing to poor physical and mental health. All of these are as the results of job stressors such as workload, working conditions, and expectations from management cause strain and can lead to employees' poor health, absenteeism, turnover intentions, low performance and service inefficiency (Behr & Glazer, 2001). Other manifestations of job stress may include illness, muscular tension, and ache, tightness in the chest, high blood pressure, heart problems, snapping and arguing with others, aggressive or hostile behaviour, blaming others or administration for tension (Ella et al, 2016). Apparently, the library personnel may not be too far from this plague.

Library personnel may experience stress on their job as they try to readjust to the constantly changing information world and library environment, (Devi & Lahkar, 2020). Hence, when faced by stress, their output decrease (Dina, 2016). Similarly, others factors such as irregular power supply, inadequate infrastructures, shortage of staff, limited media access, unconducive working environment, and insufficient funding, are some of the seemingly challenges creating stress among library personnel (Aderibigbe & Farouk, 2017; Kan, & Yu, 2016; Ikonne, 2015). In order to increase performance in workplace, job stress need to be

curtailed, Kio et al. (2018) enumerated general stress management techniques such as healthy living, self-awareness, coping strategies, getting support from loved ones, having job satisfaction. Though, having an empirical evidence on how occupational stressors could be identified and curb among library personnel could be strategic to librarianship. It is on this premise that this study evaluates the effect of occupational stress on job performance among library personnel in private universities in South-West, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

Competent human resources are essential for achieving institutional goals. This is especially true for university libraries; whose proper operation is essential to the delivery of services. Library personnel need to have a sense of fulfillment as well as psychological/emotionally stable to carry out their tasks flawlessly. If not, this could interfere with their ability to think clearly and act appropriately. However, research and observation have indicated that occupational stress hitchesoughtto be taken seriously in institutions since they frequently provide difficulties that could compromise productive performance. Previous research has concentrated on examining certain variables connected to job performance in an attempt to address these problems. Few study has looked at the relationship between job performance and occupational stress, particularly in libraries. It is against this backdrop that the study examines the effect of occupational stress on the job performance of library personnel in private university libraries in South-West Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of occupational stress among library personnel in private university libraries?
2. What are the major stressor-generating factors among library personnel in private university libraries?
3. What is extent of occupational stress based on library personnel section in private university libraries in South-West, Nigeria?

### Hypothesis

$H_{01}$ : There is no significance relationship between occupational stress and job performance of library personnel in university libraries in South-West, Nigeria.

### Literature Review

Library personnel perform responsibilities beyond their call of duties in most scenario, this may result in stress, which could lower the level of services. Divakar (2015), affirmed that personnel who experience lack of support from superiors and coworkers, also who find it difficult to exert control over work processes are more likely to experience stress. Ejike et al. (2014), revealed that different categories of job stress such as psychological stress, emotional stress, technological stress, situational stress, and accidental stress existed among polytechnic libraries in North-Central Nigeria. The author stressed that work overload, environmental hazards, poor communication, lack of social support, poor leadership style, job insecurity, lack of control, role ambiguity, and health-related factors are the causes of job stress among the library staff, which led to absenteeism, sleeplessness, health deterioration, depression, and tiredness

among the library staff. Another study by Adewoyin et al. (2020), on occupational stress among library personnel in public universities in South-West, Nigeria, adopted a survey research design.

Total enumeration was used to cover all library personnel. Out of the 280 copies of questionnaire administered, 268 (95.7%) were retrieved for analysis. The findings revealed that male library personnel experience more stress in public universities than their female counterpart. In a related development, Ikonnos' (2015). examined job stress and psychological well-being among library employees, this was a survey of library staff in selected university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The population consists of 125 library staff. The findings revealed challenges with technology and excess or quantity of workload. Dina (2016), study on the effect of stress on professional librarians' job performance in Nigerian university libraries reported that librarians who engage in other activities aside from their primary assignment for which they were employed are more prone to stress than others, thereby affecting their job performance negatively.

Onyia's (2017), studied gender differences and job stress management techniques of library staff of polytechnics in Nigeria. The study covered 148 library staff. The result revealed that, female polytechnic library staff indicated a non-conducive work environment as the cause of job stress. The study further affirmed that there were significant gender differences in the management of job stress.

In a study by Devi and Lankar (2020), on assessment of occupational stress among library professionals in university libraries of Assam, India. Descriptive research design and survey method was used for the study to obtain data from 66 library professionals working in the

libraries of central universities, state universities, and institution which were given the status of a university. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that the library professionals were experiencing high level of occupational stress, with role overload as a powerful stressor with highest weighted average ( $\bar{x} = 6.27$ ). Similarly, Devi and Lahkar (2021), in their investigation on effect of occupational stress on job performance among university library professionals in North-East India adopted the descriptive survey method and convenience sampling technique. Findings revealed that the majority of library professionals working in university libraries in North-East India perceived a moderate level of occupational stress. It was also found that, male and female library professionals do not differ in their perception of occupational stress ( $p > 0.05$ ), while a significant mean difference was found between male and female library professionals' perceptions of their job performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). It was further found that, there exists a modest but statistically significant negative relationship between occupational stress and job performance, which implies that an increment in the level of perceived occupational stress tends to influence library professionals' self-perception of job performance negatively.

Kaur and Kathuria (2018), study on occupational stress among library professionals working in universities of Punjab and Chandigarh. The study examined 301 library professionals working in the central libraries in 24 universities. The study revealed that occupational stress and job performance shared a negative but significant coefficient of correlation with each other, which implies that as the level of occupational stress increased, the level of job performance decreased. Ilo, et al (2019), conducted a study on the relationship between job stress and job performance in university libraries in Nigeria. The study identified low productivity, increased

absenteeism, hypertension, job dissatisfaction, frustration, depression, and negative job attitude as negative effects of stress on the job performance of librarians. Similarly, Oketunji, (2014), also investigated the impact of occupational stress on the job performance of library personnel in south-West, Nigeria. The findings revealed that there was a significant impact of occupational stress on job performance.

## Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population comprised of 221 library personnel in 25 private universities in South-West, Nigeria. Consequently, total enumeration technique was adopted. A structured questionnaire, was used to elicit information from the respondents. Out of the 221 copies of questionnaire distributed, 159 (71.9%) were returned and used for analysis. Research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean score and standard deviation. Additionally, the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

## Results

**Research Question One:** What is the level of Occupational Stress among Library Personnel in Private University Libraries?

**Table 1:** Level of Occupational Stress among Library Personnel

Occupational Stress	Statements	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Mean	SD
Responsibility pressure (Mean = 9.40; SD = 2.31)	Feeling you have too much responsibility for the work of others	13 (8.2%)	17 (10.7%)	40 (25.2%)	89 (56.0%)	3.41	0.45
	Having to do or decide things where mistakes could be quite costly	11 (6.9%)	21 (16.4%)	57 (35.8%)	65 (40.9%)	3.37	0.82
	Not having enough help or equipment to get the job done	31 (19.5%)	41 (25.8%)	47 (29.6%)	40 (25.2%)	2.62	1.04

Role conflict (Mean = 7.95, SD = 1.97)	well						
	Thinking that you'll not be able to meet the conflicting demands of various people you work with	27 (17.0%)	39 (24.5%)	55 (34.6%)	38 (23.9%)	2.61	0.89
	Not knowing what the people you work with expect of you	34 (21.4%)	51 (32.1%)	41 (25.8%)	33 (20.8%)	2.51	1.01
Quality concerns (mean = 7.87; SD = 2.58)	Thinking that the amount of work you have to do may interfere with how well it gets done	23 (14.5%)	37 (23.3%)	54 (34%)	45 (28.3%)	2.83	0.96
	Having to deal with or satisfy too many people	41 (25.8%)	51 (32.1%)	37 (23.3%)	30 (18.9%)	2.45	0.78
	Feeling that you have to do things that are against your better judgment	25 (15.7%)	64 (40.3%)	37 (23.3%)	33 (20.8%)	2.59	0.84
	Feeling unable to influence your immediate supervisor's decisions and actions that affect you	33 (20.8%)	41 (25.8%)	47 (29.6%)	38 (23.9%)	2.60	0.90
Job vs. non-job conflict (mean = 8.00; SD=2.60)	Feeling trapped in a job you don't like but can't get out of	45 (28.3%)	40 (25.2%)	39 (24.5%)	35 (22%)	2.37	1.05
	Being asked to work overtime when you don't want to	13 (8.2%)	49 (30.8%)	44 (27.7%)	53 (33.3%)	2.89	0.77
	Feeling that your job tends to interfere with your family life	24 (15.1%)	34 (21.4%)	52 (32.7%)	49 (30.8%)	2.74	0.78
Workload (Mean =9.02; SD = 2.18 )	How often does your job leave you with little time to get everything done?	33 (20.8%)	48 (30.2%)	38 (23.9%)	40 (25.2%)	2.65	0.79
	How often does your job require you to work very hard (physically or mentally)?	19 (11.9%)	25 (15.7%)	56 (35.2%)	59 (37.1%)	3.20	0.68
	How often does your job require you to work very fast?	20 (12.6%)	36 (22.6%)	45 (28.3%)	58 (36.5%)	3.17	0.71
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>42.01</b>	<b>11.58</b>



Based, on the analysis on (Table 1) above, a test of norm was conducted to determine the level of occupational stress among library personnel in private university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The scale between 1.00-20.00 shows that the level of occupational stress is low, the scale between 20.01 – 40.00 indicates that the level of occupational stress is moderate and the scale between 40.01 – 60.00 shows that the level of occupational stress of the respondents is high. The result in Table 1 showed that the overall mean was 42.01 which falls between the scale “40.01 – 60.00”. Therefore, it could be deduced that the level of occupational stress among library personnel was high. Such heightened stress levels are indicative of potential negative impacts on the overall well-being and job performance. Based on the test of norm, the overall mean was 42.01 which fall between the scales “40.01 – 60.00”. This study collaborates the findings of (Devi & Lankar 2020; Adewoyin, et al 2020; Ilo et al 2019).

**Research Question Two:** What are the major Stressor-generating factors among Library Personnel in Private University Libraries, in South-West, Nigeria?

The major stress-generating factors among library personnel in private university libraries in South-West Nigeria were obtained from the prominent mean scores for the five indicators of occupational stress based on the responses of the library personnel on (Table 1). The result showed that were: for responsibility pressure, the feeling of having too much responsibility for the work of others (mean = 33.41); for role conflict the thought that the amount of work to be done may interfere with how well it gets done (mean = 2.83); Job vs. non-job conflict, being asked to work overtime as against one’s wish (mean = 2.89); for workload, the frequency of having to work very hard (physically or mentally) (mean = 3.20); and for quality concerns, Feeling unable to influence your immediate supervisor’s decisions and actions that affect you (mean = 2.60). This suggests that the major stress-generating factors among library personnel

were responsibility pressure (mean = 9.40), workload (mean = 9.02) and Job vs. non-job conflict (mean = 8.00) respectively. Based on the above findings of the research question two it identified five key stress-generating factors among library personnel. Notably, responsibility pressure, role conflict, job vs. non-job conflict, workload, and quality concerns were pinpointed as major stressors. The findings of this study are in tandem with results from the studies of (Ikonnos 2015; Ejike et al 2014)

**Research Question Three:** What is the extent of Occupational Stress based on Personnel Sections in Private University Libraries, in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Extent of Occupational Stress based on Library Personnel Section

Section	Occupational Stress					Column Total
	Responsibility pressure Mean	Role conflict Mean	Quality concerns Mean	Job vs. non-job conflict Mean	Workload Mean	
Cataloguing	6.30	7.75	8.55	8.01	9.62	40.23
Circulation	9.90	8.41	7.65	7.98	9.43	43.37
Technical Services	7.81	8.01	8.14	8.03	8.92	40.91
Reference	11.41	7.81	7.56	8.11	8.89	43.78
Serials	10.61	7.77	7.43	7.93	8.65	42.39
E-Library	10.22	7.66	7.88	7.94	8.55	42.25
<b>Row Total</b>	56.25	47.41	47.21	48	54.06	

The result in Table 2 above presented the mean scores for occupational stress among library personnel with respect to their job units. The result indicated that the level of occupational stress was highest among the library personnel in reference section with overall mean score of 43.78. This was followed by circulation section with overall mean score of 43.37. It is instructive to note that the level of occupational stress in all the section still falls within the high range of the occupational stress scale. In terms of the occupational stressor, library personnel in reference section had highest responsibility pressure (11.41) while those in cataloguing section had the least. Also, for role conflict, library personnel in the circulation

section had the highest mean score of 8.41 while the personnel in cataloguing section had the highest level of stress relating to quality concerns (mean = 8.55).

Emanating from the result, it is revealed that reference section and circulation section experienced the highest overall stress levels. This nuanced understanding allows for targeted interventions based on job unit specifics. Addressing stress at the unit level is crucial for fostering a healthier and more productive work environment this is in line with results of Devi and Lankar (2020).

### Hypothesis

H<sub>10</sub>: There is no significance relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Performance of Library Personnel in Private University Libraries in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Performance of Library Personnel**

Variables	Mean	St. dev.	N	r	Sig. p.	Remark
Occupational stress	42.01	11.58	159	-0.311	0.001	Sig.
Job performance	64.40	17.10				

The result of the hypothesis shown in Table 3 using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) revealed that there was a negative but significant relationship between occupational stress and job performance of library personnel in university libraries in South-West, Nigeria ( $r = -0.311$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that there was an inverse linear relationship between occupational stress and job performance of library personnel. In other words, a reduction in the level of occupational stress would lead to a significant improvement in the level of job performance of library personnel. This result is in consonance with the findings of (Devi & Lanhkar 2021; Kaur & Kathuria, 2018; Oketunji, 2014).

## **Recommendations**

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Given the identified high levels of occupational stress among library personnel, it is imperative for private university libraries in South-West, Nigeria to implement targeted stress management programs. These initiatives should address specific stressors identified in the study.
2. Recognising the variations in stress levels across different job units, management of private university libraries should develop unit-specific interventions. Also, the study identified workload as a significant stressor among library personnel, to alleviate this stressor, private university libraries should assess and optimise workload distribution.
3. Strategies to ensure equitable distribution of tasks and preventing burnout should be prioritised. Private university libraries should incorporate performance improvement initiatives, in view of the negative relationship between occupational stress and job performance.

## **Conclusion**

This study established the dynamics of occupational stress among library personnel in private university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The findings underscore the pervasive high levels of occupational stress experienced by library personnel. The study also, highlighted specific stress-generating factors. And further revealed that, there was a negative but significant relationship between occupational stress and job performance of library personnel.

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