



REVITALIZATION OF LIBRARY SERVICES FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

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INFLUENCE OF STRESS AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper investigated the influence of stress and demographic variables on job performance of academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives and two corresponding research questions. The Survey research design method was used for the study. The total population for the study was 143 academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria. The study adopted total enumeration or census method because the population was manageable. Questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. Out of 143 copies of questionnaire administered, 127(89%) copies were filled, returned and used for the analysis. Descriptive statistical tool involving frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed among others that unconducive working environment and lack of opportunity for career development results in stress and poor job performance of the academic librarians. Manual activities or routines of the library such as cataloguing, classification, indexing and abstracting lead to job dissatisfaction and low morale. Demographic variables such as age, gender and marital status affect the level of job performance of academic librarians in the library. The study concluded that stress among academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria impinge on their service delivery. Aside from the demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, work experience and academic qualifications could exacerbate stress among academic librarians which also include excessive job demands, epileptic power supply, lack of ICT knowledge and shortage of staff increases the level of stress among librarians in the studied areas. The study recommended among others that the management of federal university libraries studied should ensure that library staff are not saddled with too many responsibilities to prevent excessive stress. gender balance is necessary for assigning responsibilities.

Keywords: Academic librarians, Demographic variables, Job performance, Stress.

Introduction

Job performance is the effort made by an employee within an organisation in order to achieve particular pre-determined results through the use of available resources. Specifically, job performances are those behavior and actions that support and enrich the social environment for enhancement of in-role, which

bring about effective and high productivity. Robbins and Coutler (2013) put it that, performance in the workplace is the accumulated results of activities that an employee performs, it comprises what an employee does in the workplace, the achievement of organisational goals and the outcome of his/her actions which are measurable.

Therefore, high performance at work has been adjudged to be a determinant factor in the success and profitability of organisation (Dizgah, Chegini, Bisokhan, 2012). That is to say that, the level of performance of an employee is determined by how favourable and unfavourable the working conditions are.

However, when workers are employed, it is expected that they adhere to the operations/conditions of employment and conditions of service. This has necessitated several organisations to develop procedures, laws, policies, regulations and processes to ensure that their goals and objectives are met. Often times, formal organisations use various working conditions such as reward, training, leave, job security, promotion, appraisal and disciplinary measures to control and encourage their employees to get a desirable job performance which will bring overall positive change in the organization. Libraries like any other organisation set out goals, objectives, policies and processes to ensure that the information resources available in the library are utilized by their users satisfactorily as well as the services rendered by the librarians. Efficiency and effectiveness of libraries depends on the job performance of the librarians.

There are many factors that determine the performance of a librarian and one of them is stress. Stress is part of human life and every living organism undergoes series of stress as a result of daily life activity. Stress at work is one of the major psychosocial risks at work. Work related stress is a problem and is of great concern to employees, employers, psychologists and counselors (Joseph, 2013). In recent time, stress is increasingly becoming an epidemic in the work environment thereby leading to decline in the effectiveness and efficiency of employee on the job.

Stress is experienced at one time or the other irrespective of race, cultural background, and occupational status of an individual. Stress, according to Ali, Raheem, Nawaz, and Imanuddin (2014) is the human and cognitive reaction to severe conditions. Ali *et al.* (2014) further reiterated that stress is a force, pressure, or tension that human beings resist and attempt to uphold its true condition. Librarian job functions are getting more multifaceted and altering more rapidly as compared to the days of methodical management. This flexibility could only be achieved with better use of people. Therefore, libraries should develop their librarians to be better informed and equipped to handle the problems and

situations of various types of clientele such as students, lecturers, or researchers (Ogunlana *et al.*, 2013).

Evidently, in university libraries in Nigeria, there are life threatening harmful and challenging situations which are stressful to professional librarian's existence and wellbeing. Some of these include economic instability (caused by drastic fall in oil world market), unconducive working environment, incessant power outage, vandalism of information materials, defective information services, insufficient funding and fuel shortage (Amusa *et al.*, 2013).

Emerging issues in the profession that pose a threat or stress factor to professional librarians include: new expectations and the constantly changing role of librarians due to the dynamic nature of information and its delivery in the university system triggered by the emergence of Information Technology (IT) in the library and information practice (Shah, 2015). The funding problems that have continued to plague Nigerian libraries include: inadequate human and other resources and role conflict or ambiguity are increasing the librarian's stress (Ajala, 2011). Stress may manifest by the presence of headache, sleep disturbances, difficulty in concentration, hot temper, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction and low morale. Other manifestations or indications of the presence of job stress include muscular tensions and ache, tightness in the chest, high blood pressure, heat problems, snapping and arguing with others, aggressive or hostile behavior, blaming others or administration for tension, and absenteeism (Jamadin *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, Nwosu, Ugwoegbu, and Okeke, (2013) found that the librarians were poorly motivated and this results in low performance in their workplaces. The implication of this finding is that the job performance of the librarians must be improved. This calls for the understanding of the factors that affect job performance of which demographic variables have been identified in the literature. It is important that we also understand how far these variables can predict librarians' job performance as a right step in the direction of developing performance improvement strategies.

Demography according to Abadina and Mba (2014) is the study of the overall social positions of individuals within the social and economic domain. This entails occupation and income, educational attainment or level and family structure or size. Furthermore, it encompasses the study of the size, structure and distribution of the populations of human beings. Malik (2011) opined that, demographic variables, age, job rank, job qualification and years of experience were slightly related to the overall job performance of university faculty members.

Paul and Phua (2011) indicated that while variables such as job position and age influenced the levels of job performance, the variables such as: academic qualification, gender, marital status, and length of employment had no influence of statistical significance. Noordin and Jusoff (2019) found out that the demographic factors such as: current job status, marital status, age and salary appeared to have significant impact on the respondents' level of job performance.

Statement of the Problem

Librarians are one of the major players when it comes to upholding the academic standard of any university by serving as a bridge between the library collection and the library users. Information provided by librarians is used to support the teaching, learning and research activities of the parent institution. Stress is a psychological concept that affects the health, wellbeing and job performance of librarians in negative dimensions. Stress is a prevalent problem in society and the resultant effects are numerous, ranging from low productivity to increased absenteeism, high rate of job turnover, depression, mental instability, cardio-vascular illness as well as problems with the general wellbeing of an employee (Gbrobler *et al.*, 2014). The issue of stress has become a regular occurrence in the everyday situation and librarians are no exception. It could be observed that inadequate organisational support, considerably heavy workloads, dealing with co-workers, poor career progression, limited resources, poor staffing, shortage of fund as well as the lack of enough human and information resources have continued to plague the universities under study thereby increasing the librarian's stress. It could be observed further that, the performance of librarians are affected by external stressors that may not be work related which includes poor financial status and lack of sleep caused by anxiety. These situations are disturbing as it has led to decline in job performance of librarians in university libraries which could have been avoided if properly managed. With adequate awareness on stress, the effect on productivity and its management by librarians will lead to drastic reduction of low job performance experienced by them.

Objectives of the Study

1. ascertain the effect of stress on job performance of academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria.
2. determine the influence of demographic variables on the job performance of academic librarians in the federal university libraries studied

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of stress on job performance of academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of demographic variables on the job performance of academic librarians in the federal university libraries studied?

Literature Review

Stress is part of human life and every human being including librarians undergoes series of stress as a result of daily life activity or discharge of duty. Stress at work is one of the major psychosocial risks at work. Joseph (2013) opined that work related stress is a problem and is of great concern to employees, employers, psychologists and counsellors. Stress is a pattern of negative physiological state and psychological responses occurring in situations where individuals perceive threats to their well-being, which they may be unable to meet. Dawson, O'Brien, and Beehr, (2015) posited that whether stressors are harmful or not depends solely on individuals appraise the stressors and how the mind interprets them. Stress therefore is the way the librarians and other individuals respond to conditions that scare, threaten, anger or excite them.

Similarly, Casey (2013) opined that stress is a psychological concept that can affect health, wellbeing and job performance in negative dimensions. Academic librarians' job performance can be affected or impaired negatively when their health or wellbeing is being threatened. Ozioko *et al.* (2014) opined that job stress is a condition where in job-related factors interacts with the worker to change his psychological or physiological condition such that he/she is forced to deviate from normal functioning.

In the same vein, Isebe (2015) posited that stress may be manifested by the presence of headache, sleep disturbances, difficulty in concentration, hot temper, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction and low morale. Other manifestations or indications of the presence of job stress include muscular tensions and ache, tightness in the chest, high blood pressure, heat problems, snapping and arguing with others, aggressive or hostile behaviour, blaming others or administration for tension, and absenteeism as stated by (Jamadin, 2015). Once academic librarians and other employees fail to deal adequately with pressure, symptoms of stress appear which negatively affect the level of their job performance. Job stress possesses great risk to most employees including librarians and it is important to meet the challenges by dealing with excessive and long term causes of stress.

According to Ebenezer and Bamini (2013) similarly opined that stress reduces academic librarians and other employees' wellbeing and excessive or

sustained work pressure can lead to stress which may affect job performance. This is corroborated with the findings of Ikonne (2015) that stress is an important psychological concept that can affect health, well-being and job performance in negative dimensions. Stress is regarded as a force that pushes a physical or psychological factor beyond its range of stability, producing a strain within the individual. Raja (2011) argued that stress is the process by which environmental events threaten us, how these threats are interpreted, and how they make us feel.

Demographic variables are gradually becoming important factors in stress management of academic librarians in university libraries. Management of stress is a problem in the library organisation, just as it is in other organisations. Well and Hogan (2016) posited that the vast majority of employees experience high level of stress in their work places, which can generate negative impact on both the employee and the organisation. Therefore, it becomes imperative to identify and understand the stress experienced by academic librarians and other employees in order to develop appropriate management methods.

Marital status is a demographic variable associated with stress management. This concern is critical since management of stress may have different level of impact between married and unmarried librarians and other employees in discharging their duties. Iravania, *et al.*, (2012) observed that married employees are more stressed as compared to their unmarried colleagues. In specific terms, the researcher concluded that married female employees experience more stress than married males. Nagaru and Nandini (2013) asserted that there are significant differences between insurance employee's marital status and occupational stress. They asserted further that, working married women experience more stress than their male counterparts.

Stress is anything the physical, emotional, behavioural or mental state being of an individual in their environment. Academic librarian's family responsibilities outside library could be one of the stressors that may affect the level of their job performance. Okonkwo (2014) stated that family stress interferences with work result in family conflicts which in turn results to pressure tension, anxiety, and stress to the employee. On the other hand, Anju (2015) observed that there is statistically no difference between married and unmarried employees.

Gender for males in carrying or discharging their work is more related to concerns about their roles whereas female employees experience stress in terms of job requirement and family relationships. Kim *et al.* (2014) similarly carried out a study between demographic factors and stress factors that one third of the

respondent reported significant levels of stress, which vary by age and gender. The result of the analyses showed that gender varied. This indicates that male respondents indicated more stress related to organizational processes such as performance, committing mistakes and job security, while female recorded higher frequencies for stress relating to role characteristics such as conflicting duties, lack of assistance and confusion with service.

Educational qualification refers to the formal education obtained by academic librarians at different or various levels. Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014) viewed education as an act of seeking knowledge about a particular thing. It is the knowledge and abilities, development and character and mental power resulting from intellectual training. Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014) opined further that education plays an important role in employee job performance, but the relationship between the measures of education and job performance is not largely known. Some studies have found that women who held both work and family roles reported better physical and mental health and consequently better job performance than was reported by women who stayed at home or single. (Jordan and Zitech, 2018).

Academic librarians obtain educational training at various library schools in universities, polytechnics and other formal institutions worldwide. These include Ph.D, MLS, BLS and its equivalent to mention but a few. It is expected that the higher the educational qualification of academic librarians the higher the level of job performance and proficiency in rendering services to their users and the lower their job stress and vice versa. Librarianship as a profession requires expertise such as in the areas of cataloguing, classification, indexing, abstracting to mention but a few. Hence, library schools in Nigeria and across the globe are geared towards preparing academic librarians on the task of rendering services to their users. Babalola (2013) opined that the higher the training attained, the higher the degree of intellectual exposure among librarians. This might be the reason why librarians and faculty members educational qualification is stringent to their promotion in their work places. The complex nature of university libraries generally demands that its core professional staff have specific educational qualification and professional certifications.

Work experience refers to the duration or years academic librarians and other employees spent on their current jobs as well as the skills they possess in doing their jobs adequately. Academic librarians working in university libraries have different working experience depending on their educational qualification and how long they have been doing the jobs, academic librarians with higher working experience are expected to possess more skills and deliver effective

services with less stress than those with lower working experience.

Table 1: Effect of Stress on the Job Performance of Academic Librarians

S/ N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Decision
		4	3	2	1	127				
1	Manual activities or routines of the library such as cataloguing, classification, indexing and abstracting lead to job dissatisfaction and low morale	50	51	23	3	127	402	3.17	0.67	Agreed
2	Excessive job demands gives me headache	70	45	9	3	127	436	3.43	0.93	Agreed
3	Epileptic power supply leads to difficulty in concentration	43	52	24	8	127	384	3.02	0.52	Agreed
4	Lack of ICT knowledge leads to aggressive or hostile behaviour	24	21	45	37	127	252	1.98	0.52	Disagreed
5	Shortage of staff leads to blaming others or administration for tension and absenteeism	20	26	33	48	127	272	2.14	0.36	Disagreed

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD)

Table 1 showed that five items were listed for academic librarians to respond on the effect of stress on their job performance. Three items produced high mean scores which were above the average benchmark of 2.50. These items include item 1: Manual activities or routines of the library such as cataloguing, classification, indexing and abstracting lead to job dissatisfaction and low morale ($\bar{x}=3.17$; $SD=0.67$), item 2: Excessive job demands gives me headache ($\bar{x}=3.43$; $SD=0.93$) and item 3: Epileptic power supply leads to difficulty in concentration ($\bar{x}=3.02$; $SD=0.52$). On the other hand, two items produced low mean scores which

were below the average benchmark of 2.50. These items include item 5: Shortage of staff leads to blaming others or administration for tension and absenteeism ($\bar{x}=2.14$; $SD=0.36$) and item 4: Lack of ICT knowledge leads to aggressive or hostile behaviour ($\bar{x}=1.98$; $SD=0.52$).

Table 2: Influence of Demographic Variables on the Job Performance of Academic Librarians

S/N	Statements	S	A	D	SD	n	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Decision
		A								
		4	3	2	1	127				
1	My gender affects the level of my job performance in the library	36	44	15	32	127	338	2.66	0.16	Agreed
2	My age does not affect the level of my job performance in the library	7	32	45	43	127	257	2.02	0.48	Disagreed
3	My marital status affects the level of my job performance in the library	50	41	26	10	127	385	3.03	0.53	Agreed
4	My work experience does not affect the level of my job performance in the library	32	44	32	19	127	343	2.70	0.20	Agreed
5	My qualification affects the level of my job performance in the library	20	38	26	43	127	289	2.28	0.22	Disagreed
6	My position in the library does not affect the level of my job performance	11	17	50	49	127	244	1.92	0.58	Disagreed
7	My income does not affect the level of my job performance in the library	21	32	45	29	127	299	2.35	0.15	Disagreed
8	My family affects the level of my job performance in the library	13	24	52	38	127	266	2.09	0.41	Disagreed

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD)

Table 2 showed that eight items were listed for academic librarians to respond on how demographic variables affect the job performance of librarians. Three items produced high mean scores which were above the average benchmark of 2.50. These items include item 3: My marital status affects the level of my job performance in the library ($\bar{x}=3.03$; $SD=0.53$), item 4: My work experience does not affect the level of my job performance in the library ($\bar{x}=2.70$; $SD=0.20$) and item 1: My gender affects the level of my job performance in the library ($\bar{x}=2.66$; $SD=0.16$). Similarly, five items produced low mean score below the average benchmark of 2.50 which include item 7: My income does not affect the level of my job performance in the library ($\bar{x}=2.35$; $SD=0.15$), item 5: My qualification affects the level of my job performance in the library ($\bar{x}=2.28$; $SD=0.22$), item 8: My family affects the level of my job performance in the library ($\bar{x}=2.09$; $SD=0.41$), item 2: My age does not affect the level of my job performance in the library ($\bar{x}=2.02$; $SD=0.48$) and item 6: My position in the library does not affect the level of my job performance ($\bar{x}=1.92$; $SD=0.58$).

Discussion

The study showed that the effect of stress on job performance of library staff is high. The findings of the study revealed that the effect of stress on job performance of academic librarians were difficulty in concentration due to epileptic power supply, headache as a result of excessive job demand and manual activities or routines of the library such as cataloguing, classification, indexing and abstracting lead to job dissatisfaction and low morale of academic librarians. This affects their level of job performance negatively. This is because manual activities in the library can be energy consuming and time wasting unlike when these activities are performed digitally. This is in line with the findings Gibbons (2012) who argued that the behaviour indicators of stressors include: decreased productivity and quality of job performance; tendency to make mistakes, poor judgment, forgetfulness and blocking, diminished attention to details; pre-occupation, day dreaming, inability to concentrate on tasks, reduced creativity and increased use of alcohol and or drugs, increased absenteeism and illness, lethargy, loss of interest and accident proneness.

The findings from research question two revealed that demographic variables such as gender, marital status and work experience were agreed by the respondents to influence their level of job performance. This can be said for both genders in terms of preparing spouse and children for work and school This is in line with the findings of Okonkwo (2014) that family stress interferences with work result in family conflicts which in turn results to pressure tension, anxiety,

and stress to the employee. Similarly, Kim (2014) carried out a study between demographic factors and stress factors and that one third of the respondent reported significant levels of stress, which vary by age and gender.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that stress among academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria impinge on their service delivery. Aside from the demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, work experience and academic qualifications could exacerbate stress among academic librarians which also include excessive job demands, epileptic power supply, lack of ICT knowledge and shortage of staff increases the level of stress among librarians in the studied areas. Failing to address these challenges will compromise the commitment and productivity of academic librarians in federal university libraries in **North-central**, Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. The management of federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria should ensure that activities such as cataloguing and classification, indexing and abstracting in the library are automated to reduce stress and job dissatisfaction. The management of the federal university libraries studied should also ensure the provision of alternative source(s) of power supply as this will reduce stress encountered by librarians especially while discharging their duties or performing their job that requires the use of ICT facilities which invariably use electricity to function.
2. The management of federal university libraries in North-central, Nigeria where the university libraries are established should ensure that library staff are not saddled with too many responsibilities to prevent excessive stress. Gender balance is necessary for assigning responsibilities.

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