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Estimation of Perceived Occupational Stress among Library Professionals of Central University Libraries in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh: A Comparative Study

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Abstract: *Occupational Stress is a growing problem today that affects the well-being and health of employees and their work organisations around the globe. A university library plays pivotal role in higher studies globally; builds the academic character of the university and acts as an active tool for research and development activities for the university in particular; and nation and society in general. The present study was investigated to ascertain the occupational stress among library professionals of central university libraries in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in a comparative way. Census sample was used to collect data from the working library professionals of university libraries in Delhi (N=137) and Uttar Pradesh (N=200). The data was gathered through Occupational Stress Index (OSI) designed and developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981). The findings of the study revealed that there was significant difference exists on occupational stress among library professionals of central university libraries in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.*

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Library Professionals, University Library, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh

Introduction:

The growth and advancement of information and communication technology at high pace has changed the human life accordingly. Internet and mobile communication technology became an inevitable part of life; that insist the individuals and organisations to meet and work virtually rather than physically. Social networking applications such as facebook, twitter, myspace, orkut changed the pattern of life of an individual belonging to the modern society of 21st century. These changes also impacted on personnel, customers and users of the organisation. They all connect, communicate and work with each other to accomplish common goals. The modern world of work is more dynamic and complex than ever before.

University libraries are not only repositories of knowledge but also responsible for disseminate such knowledge to the users community. Furthermore, where libraries are ignored or not given due recognition, the country and society as a whole suffers because the standard of the study, teaching, research and developmental activities majorly depend upon the qualitative and quantitative service rendered by the university libraries. Thus, Sri Phadya (1969)¹ stated that university library is not merely a storage of books and other reading and non-reading materials and preservation of them but is a dynamic instrument of education.

The present study was undertaken on library professionals of central university libraries in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in a comparative manner. Library professionals play a valuable role in supporting the programmes of faculty and scholars of an academic scheme. They are extremely important facet of a university and society for their role as a custodian, organiser and disseminators of information.

Occupational Stress:

The term stress has been derived from the Latin word “Stringer” which means “to draw tight.” Stress can be considered as any factor, acting internally or externally, that makes it difficult to adapt and that induces increased effort on the part of the person to maintain a state of equilibrium both internally and with the external environment (Humphrey, 1992).² In life sciences, the concept of stress was initially introduced by Hans Selye (1936)³ who defined it as, “The force, pressure or strain exerted upon a material object or person who resists these forces and attempts to maintain its original state.”

21st century is the era of complexities and stress. Stress is a part of everyone’s day to day life but too much stress may be harmful. Occupational stress has become a matter of concern for the organisations, employers and employees as well. When they are failed to manage occupational stress; it affects the productivity, quality and performance of the organisation and psycho-social well-being of the employees. Stress has been defined by different scholars in various ways. One well established definition of stress is that “stress is the response to an inappropriate level of pressure. It is a response to the pressure, not the pressure itself (Arroba and James, 1987).⁴ Stress is a condition of strain that has a direct bearing on emotions, thought process and physical conditions of a person (Jayashree, 2010).⁵ Morrow (2011)⁶ defined that stress is the body’s reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. It can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous or anxious dealing with a serious illness or caring for someone who is can cause a great deal of stress.

Merriam Webster dictionary⁷ define occupation as an activity or a job or profession in which one engaged or holding an office or position. ‘Occupational Stress’ refers to the ongoing or progressing stress that an employee feel or experiences due to the responsibilities, environmental conditions and other many more pressures of the workplace. These are different types depending on the individual employee, their job role, organization culture, work process, workload, job security, relationships with co-workers and supervisors and so on. Occupational stress is also defined as the perception of a discrepancy between environmental demands (stressors) and individual capacities to fulfil these demands (Topper, 2007).⁸ Occupational stress is a ‘mental’ or ‘physical tension’ or both, created and related to occupation and its environment comprising of persons and objects from within and outside the work place which results into absenteeism, turnover accidents, low productivity and service efficiency, lack of motivation and initiative, job dissatisfaction, alienation and disruption of the smooth functioning of the organization stated by Kaur and Kathuria (2018).⁹

Thus, Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension that can be generated from any event or thought; that makes one feel depressed, frustrated, angry or nervous. It can be positive or negative. Stress is a normal reaction the one's body has when changes occur, resulting in physical, emotional intellectual responses. Stress responses help to body to survive in new circumstances, keeping alert, motivated and ready to avoid danger. When stress stays long, it's harm in one's life.

Categories of Occupational Stress:

Disappointments with private life, daily hassles, hobbies, interests and sports, physical and mental health problems, financial, school related problems, terrifying experiences and any sort of significant life change are the sources of stress in personal life. Role conflict, role ambiguity, level of responsibility, role overload or underload, lack of social support; participation/non-participation in decision making, the home/work interface, job insecurity and unemployment are the major sources of stress in work life. In pursuant to Murphy (1995)¹⁰, stress can be the outcome of the following circumstances at the workplace.

Table 1: Categories and factors of occupational stress.	
Categories	Factors
Factors unique to the job	Workload, Process of work, Autonomy, Shift/hours of work, Physical environment, Isolation from the workplace
Role in the organization	Role conflict, Role ambiguity, Level of responsibility
Career development	Promotion, Job security, Career development opportunities, Over all job satisfaction
Interpersonal relationships at work	Supervisor, Co-workers, Subordinates, Threat of violence/harassment
Organizational Environment/Structure	Participation/non-participation in decision making, Management style, Communication patterns

Occupational stress is recognized problem in library profession; librarianship is the profession where stress may be at high level. Occupational stress comes from various stressors in library that means heavy workload, over timing in work, changing shifts, antagonistic workplace environment and reducing the numbers of staff are the main stressors in library. Occupational stress impact directly on human body, it feels anxiety and increase heart rate. The persons who face the occupational stress he couldn't control the work load (Rohal, 2009).¹¹

Consequences of Job Stress:

Academic and non-academic institutions have different work settings; therefore, there would be the difference in symptoms, causes and consequences of stress. Stress may have both positive and negative consequences in academic institutions if not well managed. Furthermore, the consequences of work stress are felt by individuals, their families, the organisations they work for, and the economy as a whole.

Depression, boredom, low self-esteem, anxiety, forgetfulness, anger, apathy or worry are the psychological consequences and hypertension, fatigue, diabetes, headaches, chest and back pain, ulcers or even infectious diseases are the physical consequences of the job. Behavioral consequences may include overeating/loss of appetite, smoking, alcohol abuse, sleep disorders or violence and aggression (Randolfi, 1996).¹²

Review of Literature:

Topper (2007)⁸ highlighted the impact of stress on library professionals and found that they are working under stress. 'Overload of work' is the chief cause of stress due to the shortage of library staff. Library will continue to be a 'workplace of stress' for library professionals but to manage with stress is a balancing act. The study suggested that the library should facilitate to library professionals to alleviate some of the stress by providing training programs and to teach them how to deal with such problems. Strategies and theories for reducing stress are also outlined.

Ugwuanyi and Ugwu (2010)¹³ investigated study to find out the causes and strategies for managing job stress in setup of academic libraries. This study found that poor career development, relationship at work, personality characteristics of librarians, home-work interface were at the root of stress eruption in libraries. Ensuring adequate and fair compensations, assigning tasks to individual according to their abilities, encouraging and developing conducive work environment were also found to be some of the strategies for dealing with workplace stress.

Ajala (2011)¹⁴ conducted a study to find out the areas and causes of stress among the librarians and information professionals of the University of Ibadan Library System. The findings of the study suggested to deal properly with workplace stress in libraries, a closer look and emphasis be placed on dealing with stressors that individual might encounter in association with entering the work-place by providing good orientation program for new workers in the library to get them familiar with the system and the new technology of the system before allowing them to work alone. The study also suggested that there should be adequate on-the-job training through various programmes in the form of conferences, workshops, seminars, job rotations and so on.

Somvir and Kaushik (2013)¹⁵ concluded that the library professionals in Haryana did not have occupational stress at all. There is no significance difference related to gender, marital status, nature of job, involvement in IT, and library professional (urban/ rural) in terms of occupational stress factors among library professional. Furthermore, the study found that occupational stress factors equally affect everyone's productivity. There are many factors to reduce stress of employees like to give respect to their work, motivate them, try to listen their problems so that he/she feels more comfortable during work time. These things definitely reduce stress among employees and increase their productivity.

Jayaprakash, Rekha and Rajendiran (2013)¹⁶ study was conducted to identify the work stress among library professionals in general employed in various institutions in and around

India. It is found that they have work related stress and physical symptoms. Further, the study revealed that respondents are carrying out their activities with stress. The study recommended that the work stress can be minimized by coping strategies such as integrating new skills into professional responsibility, effective communication within the environment, giving close attention to physical health, acquiring technological skills continuously and thereby lead to increased feelings of confidence and competence, attending yoga classes and doing regular exercises to reduce stress.

Akakandelwa and Jain (2013)¹⁷ found that University of Botswana library staff have higher levels of stress as compared to the staff of University of Zambia. Conditions of service, differences in status of library staff, size of the university community served by the library, job security, and promotion opportunity etc. were the various factors that are responsible for these differences. Lack of recognition from management is another factor that usually contributes to job stress. Salary-related issues were found to be the highest source of stress among both library staff samples followed by workload related issues. Low stress items among library staff fell into two broad categories namely conflict-related and management-related items. The findings suggested that managing stress at the workplace is beneficial to employees and institution both, as it may bear a positive impact on the organizational productivity.

Mouli and Krishnan (2014)¹⁸ presented empirical evidence to ascertain the work related stress among the academic librarian across the private Arts and Science College in Chennai, Tamilnadu state. The results of the study indicated that stress does not progressively increased or decreased with demographical background of the respondents as might be expected. Out of 15 aspects of the stress examined, seven aspects of the demographical background only six aspects has significantly co-related with the overall stress of the respondents and three aspects not co-related with stress level of the respondents.

Mahanta (2015)¹⁹ conducted a study to find out the sources and level of stress among the library professionals of central library, Tezpur University. Study found that the library professionals were experiencing moderate organizational role stress. Major sources of stress among library staff were role ambiguity, inter-role distance, role stagnation and role erosion etc.

Ikonne (2015)²⁰ study investigated role ambiguity, role conflict and physical work environment to determine their relationships with psychological well-being of library staff in selected university libraries in South-West Nigeria. The study found that library personnel had challenges with technology and workload. Role ambiguity shows that the library staff did not know; how much authority they have? Majority of the staff stated that role conflict did not cause them any job stress. Work environment recognized as stress free. Study depicted that role ambiguity, role conflict, and work environment have a positive significant relationship on psychological well-being of the library staff. Findings of the study recommended that the library administration should create awareness to understand the factors that result in job stress for the library staff and measures to cater for the welfare and

psychological well-being of the library staff as well as help to over-see the needs and challenges of the library staff.

Ekwelem (2015)²¹ conducted the study to find out the sources of job related stress and coping strategies among librarians in universities in South-East Nigeria. The study revealed that the sources of librarians' stress are multidimensional and in general, derive from poor working conditions like lack of promotional opportunities for librarians, having to publish academic papers for promotion, delayed promotion and lack of recognition for extra work. Librarians, irrespective of their qualifications, years of service and ranks are dissatisfied with their conditions of service. Role conflict, role ambiguity, qualitative and quantitative work overload were shown to be related to symptoms of stress. These stressors would result to decrease in work performance in terms of low productivity. Studies suggest that poor working conditions, user's misbehaviour, overcrowded workrooms, poor incentive and poor health, among others have adverse effects on abilities of academic librarians to perform effectively in the library. In conclusion, stress or terms like burnout, stress out, overwhelmed, angry, irritable, depressed, anxious, and on verge of losing it can be described as the body reaction to any change that requires an adjustment. Concern authority (whether library or university authority) need to recognize the importance of stress-free working environments not only to satisfy their legal obligations but also to ensure the long and healthy working life of library employees.

Ilio (2016)²² study findings revealed that female librarians facing more job stress than male librarian. Job stress has significant effects on effectiveness of librarians in university libraries on equally as results stated. The negative implications of work stress are the challenges to librarians as well as to the organization. They reduce the workplace stress by social withdrawal, emotional regulation and wishful thinking. Research also investigated that the library management can also provide the ways to reducing stress by establishing positive rapport between librarians.

Kaur and Katharia (2018)²³ have surveyed with self-constructed questionnaire to find the occupational stress among library professionals working in the universities of Punjab and Chandigarh. There was no significant difference in the degree of occupational stress among library professionals regarding their gender and marital status. This study also found that the library professionals working in private and deemed universities were more prone to be stressed than the library professionals working in central and state universities.

Devi and Lahkar (2020)²⁴ study revealed that the library professionals were experiencing high level of occupational stress in the university libraries of Assam, India. They found 'work overload' as the most powerful stressor with highest weighted average ($\bar{x} = 6.27$) among low status, personal inadequacy, under participation and poor peer relationship. The study also found that there was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in the mean scores of occupational stress of library professionals on the basis of their gender and marital status. The study recommended that the parent organization should recruit more skilled library professionals, make reward to the working professionals in the form of

'promotion,' 'favorable working conditions' and recognize their 'work performance' to overcome stressful circumstances. It is also suggested that one must learn how to identify the stressors and develop coping strategies to deal with them with practice and planning. A stressful environment will result into low productivity and bad job performance and thus accelerate to the job dissatisfaction.

Adebamiro and Popoola (2021)²⁵ investigated the effects of work stress and information anxiety of library personnel in academic libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The study showed that the main causes of work stress among the library personnel were user's attitude, more workload, less recognition of good performance, lack of equipment to work with etc. The study also found that the level of work stress of the library personnel is moderate with a mean score $X = 52.45$; $SD=7.366$. Break time, well-furnished environment, adequate working equipments, job rescheduling will help to alleviate stress at the workplace. The study also recommended that the programmes like seminars, workshops and conferences should be organised for library personnel to make more aware, to learn and to make more skilled by academic library management which ultimately decrease the level of stress.

Objective:

The objective of the present study is following:

1. To find out the difference between library professionals of central university libraries in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh on occupational stress.

Hypothesis:

Following hypothesis was formulated to test the significance of study:

1. There would be no significant difference between library professionals working in central universities in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in the degree of occupational stress.

Methodology

For the present study the investigator applied questionnaire method for the collection of data. The researcher distributed the questionnaires among respondents in selected university libraries and collected back. The data collected through questionnaires were organized, tabulated and analysed by using appropriate statistical tools & techniques.

Population and Sample:

The study has been conducting on the following five central universities in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh:

1. Delhi University (DU), New Delhi;
2. Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), New Delhi;
3. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi;
4. Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh; and
5. Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi.

Census sample technique was used to this study. Library professionals with designation right from library assistant to the university librarian currently working in the target

universities were focused for the purpose. The sample consisted of librarians, deputy librarians, assistant librarians, professional assistants, semi professionals, and some other technical library professionals such as library assistants, junior library assistants, library Clark and senior library assistants etc.

Table number 2 shows the breakdown of sample from five central university libraries of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Table 2			
Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=337)			
Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	257	76.3
	Female	80	23.7
Age (in Years)	≥35	59	17.5
	36-45	114	33.8
	≤46	164	48.7
Marital Status	Married	317	94.1
	Unmarried	20	5.9
Designation	University Librarian	6	1.8
	Deputy Librarian	15	4.5
	Assistant Librarian	21	6.2
	Professional Assistant	116	34.4
	Semi Professional Assistant	120	35.6
	Other Library Professionals	59	17.5
Qualification	Certificate	52	15.4
	BLISC	70	20.8
	MLISC	125	37.1
	MPhil	36	10.7
	PhD	54	16.0
Experience (in Years)	≥15	100	29.6
	16-25	145	43.0
	≤26	92	27.3
Universities	DU	43	12.8
	JMI	38	11.3
	JNU	56	16.6
	AMU	85	25.2
	BHU	115	34.1
States	Delhi	137	40.7
	Utter Pradesh	200	59.3

Tool:

The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981) was used in the present study. This standard scale has 46 statements, each to be rated on five

points Likert Scale ranging on the continuum of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Out of 46 statements, 28 are 'true keyed' and remaining 18 are 'false keyed'. All the items are related to all the relevant components of the job life that cause stress directly or indirectly.

Following are the 12 dimensions of the Occupational Stress Index namely Role overload, Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Unreasonable group and political pressure, Responsibility for persons, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor peer relations, Intrinsic impoverishment, Low status, Poor working condition and unprofitability.

Data Collection Procedure:

The researcher had collected data for the present study in the year 2021. The researcher has personally visited to the central universities and their libraries for gathering data. With the permission of the university librarian, data has collected from each library professionals personally through questionnaire. Filling questionnaires were analysed for getting the results of the present study.

Statistical Analysis:

Keeping in view the objective and hypothesis of the present research, statistical analyses namely; Mean, SD and Independent-Samples T-Test (t-test) were carried out in order to identify the significant difference between library professionals of central university libraries in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Results and discussion are being presented in the following way.

Results and Discussion:

<i>Table 3</i>							
<i>Mean, SD and t-test of Occupational Stress among Central Universities of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh Library Professionals</i>							
Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	
Library Professionals of Delhi	137	139.34	12.181	4.529	335	.000	
Library Professionals of U.P.	200	132.38	14.905				

Table 4 showed Mean, SD, t and p values between central university libraries of Delhi as well as U.P. library professionals on occupational stress. The Mean and SD in the case of central universities of Delhi library professionals on occupational stress were accounted 139.34 and 12.181, while in the case of central universities of U.P. library professionals were reported 132.38 and 14.905 respectively. Mean scores stated that central universities of Delhi library professionals experienced higher level of occupational stress as compared to central universities of U.P. library professionals. Results revealed significant difference between central universities of Delhi as well as U.P. library professionals on occupational stress (t= 4.529, df= 335, p < .001). Therefore, hypothesis there would be no significant difference

between library professionals working in central universities in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in the degree of occupational stress is rejected.

Occupational Stress is a psychological, emotional and physiological phenomenon that affects the productivity and performance of an individual to a great extent in the organisation. In case of library professionals, it is more essential to be stress free or satisfied to render the services effectively. Library professionals are more effective, intelligent and creative to make the society better and progressive through providing variety of services to the faculty, research scholar and students in particular and to the library user's community and society in general.

The findings of the present study make a clear understanding about occupational stress and to measure level of stress between the library professionals of central universities of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. This study will also draw the clear picture of comparative scenario of the library professionals of central university libraries of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh on occupational stress.

To meet the challenge of quality education, university libraries are also in the stressful position to manage the drastic changes in collection development, organization and dissemination of information in this digital era within the limited financial and human resources. As the stress is looming in the environment, library professionals can not escape themselves from this impact of stress. "Because of globalization and growing competition in higher education sector, every component of university in general and library and information services in particular is undergoing metamorphosis, almost developing a corporate culture of management (Malhan, 2006).²⁶

The university library is the most important academic library and its effectiveness depend on the quality and degree of performance it offers to its users, and that library's success depends only on how effectively it satisfies its users. In this modern era, where all about the use of computer and state-of-the-art technologies has become technically more sophisticated, university libraries are being updated by using advanced technology such as paper digitization, internet facilities, online databases, the use of various types of library software etc. to offer better services to their user groups in less.

Limitations of the Study:

The present study has been conducted on selected central university libraries of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. These selected university libraries are Dr. Zakir Husain Central Library (JMI), Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Central Library (JNU), Central Library (DU) of Delhi and Maulana Azad Library (AMU) and Sayaji Rao Gaekwad Library (BHU) of Uttar Pradesh. The study was delimited only to the working library professionals of university library system of these universities including their central libraries of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Conclusion:

Thus, stress is a variety of behavioural, cognitive and physiological symptoms or consequences. The physiological symptoms link to the 'Fight-or-Flight' response when faced with a 'Stressor.' Psychological symptoms are fear, anxiety, emotional disorder and defensive attitudes and behaviour. Job related behavioural symptoms are problem with concentration and judgement, sickness, absenteeism and lack of cooperation. The findings of the study revealed that the significant difference was found between library professionals of Delhi and of Uttar Pradesh on occupational stress. A stress free employee can increase the productivity and efficiency of an organisation likewise a stress free library professional can enhance the quality of library services to the users' community which may results into the satisfaction of library users. A user and a library professional satisfaction are parallel to each other which show the service quality. Quality service of libraries is the need of the hour for the research and development of the university and nation. Thus, the library professionals should remain stress free with their job, work place and working conditions to provide the accurate information to the users at the right time for the organisational growth and development.

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