

# Occupational Stress and Job Performance among University Library Professionals

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## ABSTRACT

Occupational Stress refers to mental or physical tension or both, created and related to occupation and its environment. Due to technological changes all over the world, occupational stress has emerged as a growing concern for all working organizations including University libraries. Stress in library environment is not good for universities as it leads to decrease in quality of service delivery and job performance among library professionals. In the present study, descriptive survey method was employed to collect data from 301 library professionals working in central libraries of 24 universities of Punjab and Chandigarh. Questionnaire was used to measure the levels of occupational stress and job performance among library professionals. Statistical techniques like mean, S.D., t-test and ANOVA were used to analyze data and infer the results. Results of the study revealed that no significant difference was found in mean scores of occupational stress and job performance of library professionals on the basis of gender. A negative but significant co-efficient of correlation was found between occupational stress and Job performance among library professionals. The mean difference in job performance of library professionals with low and high level of occupational stress was found to be significant at .01 level.

**Keywords:** Occupational Stress, Library professionals, University Libraries, Job Performance

Today stress is prevailing everywhere whether it is in the family, business organization, enterprise or any other social or economic activity. At every step, an individual is exposed to stress in one way or the other way. The psychological disorders like frustration and dissatisfaction generally reflect stress, are dominantly disturbing the minds of people.

Stress is a word derived from the Latin word 'stringere', meaning to 'draw tight' (Arnold and & Robertson, 1995). According to New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language "Stress is a constraining, urging or impelling physical force, strain and mechanically a force tending to produce strain or tension."

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

resulting into absenteeism, lack of motivation and initiative, low productivity and service efficiency, job dissatisfaction and disruption of the smooth functioning of the organization.

"Work related stress is a crucial problem and is of great concern to employees, employers, psychologists and counselors" (Joseph, 2013).

Library profession is known as the noblest and service oriented profession. In this information era, many under graduates, graduates and post graduates are opting this profession. But with the advancement and new innovations of ICT, automation of library functions, digitization of library resources and speedy response to user queries, work in libraries is converting to brainstorming job generating stress among library professionals. Now a days, there are various National level quality checking committees and organizations such as NAAC and QCI for assessing

the library work, which set credits for the academic libraries by observing their library services. Thus, the library services account a lot for the reputation of an academic institution like university libraries.

The University libraries constitute a vital component of the educational system. Library professionals play very important role in the education and training of faculty and students by providing resources for research and scholarly purpose. They actively participate in research and academic programs by providing information sources, resources and library services to students, researchers and faculty members. Human resource is a very important organ of any organization, who has the whole command of force to make the concerned organization a success. But due to shortage of staff, changing library environment, financial constraints, job insecurity and technological advancements all over the world, occupational stress has emerged as a growing concern for all working organizations including university libraries.

Also daily demands at the work place are a constant challenge to the assimilative and adaptive capabilities of library professionals. Thus, a library professional, who is overtaxed and unable to cope with changing environmental demands, would develop stress and emotional exhaustion, ultimately affecting his job performance. The aims and objectives of a university library can be fully attained only if the library professionals are stress free to deliver better library services. Thus, it is evident that the efficiency of a university library depends immensely on the attitude of its library professionals towards their job and their level of commitment to job performance.

“Job performance can be said to be an act of executing a command, duty, purpose, promise. It can also be seen an observable, or measurable behavior of a person in a particular situation” (Thompson, 1992). Today Job Performance has become one of the significant indicators in this globalized world. Digitization and shrinking of staff due to shrinking of budget has changed the scenario of measuring job performance among library professionals. As in the past, the performance of a library professional was measured quantitatively in terms of books classified, catalogued and number of queries answered etc. But now in this Internet era, the performance of a library professional is measured in terms of his

innovative, tech savvy, communication skills resulting into more competition and hence generating more occupational stress among professionals of the academic organizations such as university libraries.

Stress in library environment is not good for the universities as it leads to decrease in quality of service delivery and job performance among library professionals. It is also not good for the library professional as increase in occupational stress leads to increase in job dissatisfaction and low morale among them. There are few studies which were conducted on occupational stress and job performance among university library professionals.

Igbokwe (2011) examined job satisfaction and job performance among librarians of four Federal University Libraries in South East Nigeria. Findings revealed that job satisfaction has great influence on job performance. Lack of opportunity for promotion found to be the greatest factor that can affect their job satisfaction and performance. It was also found out that the existence of promotion opportunities and other factors such as salary increment; opportunity for training, concrete job description to a great extent enhanced the job satisfaction and performance among the University librarians in South East Nigeria.

Ratha, Hardiya and Naidu (2012) compared occupational stress among 33 librarians, 33 assistant librarians and 33 book lifters of 33 private engineering colleges of Indore by administering standardized Questionnaire of Occupational Stress. The various causes of stress among library professionals detected were; increasing workload, changing library environment due to technology, shrinking strength of library staff, shift work, user satisfaction, job insecurity, lack of administrative support, low status and inadequate salary, etc. Results revealed that librarians had slightly less occupational stress in comparison to the assistant librarian, whereas the occupational stress level of the book lifter was more in comparison to the librarian as well as the assistant librarian. Proper distribution of work among library staff according to their area of specialization, providing opportunities for training to staff including attending professional seminars, workshops and refresher courses were suggested for enabling them to work in stress free environment and for better qualitative and quantitative productivity and services.

Shabani *et al.* (2012) observed occupational burnout in relation to education, field of study, age, experience, and position among 61 librarians working in University of Isfahan. Level of emotional exhaustion was found to be higher in female librarians in comparison to that of male librarians. No significant relationship was detected between occupational burnout and other demographic factors such as age, experience, and positions of the employees. Results clearly indicated that occupational burnout was found to be at moderate level and decrease in stress and burnout levels resulted in increased performance, efficiency, less medical expenses, more job satisfaction.

Dina (2016) carried out a descriptive survey to investigate the effect of stress on professional librarian's job performance in University of Lagos, Akoka and Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos. The findings of the study revealed that professional librarian's quality in terms of job performance in relation to their job demand and expectation can be affected due to existence of more stress. It was further observed that professional librarians engaged in other activities aside their primary assignment found to be more prone to stress, thereby affecting their job performance negatively. Professional librarian's absence as a result of job related stress was found to affect the overall university library productivity. Results of the study revealed occupational stress as one of the cardinal problems militating wellbeing, commitment as well as job performance of professional librarians.

**Methodology and Sample of the Study:** In the present study, descriptive survey method was employed to collect data from 301 library professionals working in Central libraries of 24 universities of Punjab and Chandigarh. The collected data was scored and statistical techniques were used to interpret results.

**Tool Used:** A questionnaire was constructed by the researcher to measure occupational stress and job performance level among library professionals working in university libraries of Punjab and Chandigarh.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the level of occupational stress among male and female library professionals.

2. To compare the level of job performance among male and female library professionals.
3. To compute the relationship between occupational stress and job performance of library professionals.
4. To study the job performance at various levels of occupational stress among library professionals.

### Hypotheses

1. There exists no significant difference in mean scores of occupational stress among male and female library professionals.
2. There exists no significant difference in mean scores of job performance among male and female library professionals.
3. There exists no significant correlation between job performance and occupational stress of library professionals.
4. There exists no significant difference in job performance at various levels of occupational stress among library professionals.

### Statistical Techniques

Statistical Techniques like mean, S.D., t-test and ANOVA were used to analyze data and infer the results.

**Hypothesis I:** There exists no significant difference in mean scores of occupational stress among male and female library professionals.

**Table 1:** Significance of mean difference in occupational stress of library professionals on the basis of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-Ratio	Inference
Male	130	83.00	20.51	2.27	0.49	Insignificant
Female	171	84.11	18.72			

The result of the Table 1 clearly depicts the significance of mean difference in occupational stress of library professionals on the basis of their gender. The t-value for mean difference in occupational stress of male and female is found to be 0.49, which is insignificant at .01 level. It means that male and female library professionals working

in university libraries do not differ in the variable of occupational stress.

Thus, the above stated hypothesis is retained.

**Hypothesis II:** There exists no significant difference in mean scores of job performance among male and female library professionals.

**Table 2:** Significance of mean difference in job performance of library professionals on the basis of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-Ratio	Inference
Male	130	42.76	6.775	.777	.702	Insignificant at .01 level
Female	171	42.22	6.600			

The results in the Table 2 clearly depict that the t- value for mean difference in job performance of male and female came out be 0.702 at .01 level which is not significant. It means there is no significant difference in mean scores of job performance of library professionals on the basis of their gender.

Thus, the above stated hypothesis is retained.

**Hypothesis III:** There exists no significant correlation between job performance and occupational stress among library professionals.

**Table 3:** Co-efficient of correlation between occupational stress and job performance of library professionals

		Occupational Stress	Job Performance
Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	-.273**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	301	301
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	-.273**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	301	301

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

The results in the Table 3 shows the co-efficient of correlation between occupational stress and job performance of library professionals is found to be -.273, which is significant at .01 level. Negative but a significant relationship was found between

occupational stress and job performance of library professionals. Thus, with increase in the level of occupational stress, job performance found to be decreased among library professionals.

Thus, the above stated hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis IV:** There exists no significant difference in job performance at various levels of occupational stress among library professionals.

**Table 4:** Summary of Analysis of Variance for job performance of library professionals on the basis of their occupational stress

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Inference
Between Groups	709.87	2	354.93	8.37	Significant at .01 level
Within Groups	12638.68	298	42.41		
<b>Total</b>	<b>13348.55</b>	<b>300</b>			

Table 4 depicts the significance of mean difference in job performance of library professionals on the basis of their occupational stress. The F -value for mean difference in job performance of library professionals with high, average and low level of occupational stress is 8.37, which is significant at .01 level. It means there is a significant difference in mean scores of job performance of library professionals on the basis of their occupational stress. Further, post hoc test was applied to compare the pair wise mean difference.

**Table 5:** Post Hoc test for Mean difference in job performance on the basis of occupational stress

Occupational stress Level	Occupational stress Level	Mean Difference	Inference
Low	Average	0.49	Insignificant
	High	4.39	Significant at .01 level
Average	High	3.91	Significant at .01 level

Table 5 shows the results of post hoc test after ANOVA for job performance of library professionals on the basis of their occupational stress. The result shows that the mean difference in job performance of library professionals with low and average level of occupational stress is not significant. The mean difference in job performance of library professionals



with low and high level of occupational stress is significant at .01 level. The mean difference in job performance of library professionals with average and high level of occupational stress is significant at .01 levels.

Thus the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference exists in job performance at various levels of occupational stress among library professionals' is rejected.

## CONCLUSION

The present study reported that there is no significant difference was found in mean scores of occupational stress of library professionals working in university libraries on the basis of their gender. It was also revealed in the results that male and female library professionals working in university libraries do not differ in the variable of job performance.

It was also found that occupational stress and job performance share a negative co-relation with each other, which shows as the level of occupational stress increased, the level job performance found to be decreased among library professionals.

A significant difference was reported in the mean scores of job performance of library professionals on the basis of their occupational stress. The mean difference in job performance of library professionals with low and high level of occupational stress was found to be significant at .01 level and same results were inferred with average and high level of occupational stress.

Thus, it is clear that occupational stress can affect productivity and job performance among library professionals working in university libraries in negative dimensions. Thus, considering the vital role of university libraries in higher educational system, it becomes very important to provide a conducive and stress free environment for the library professionals to enhance their job performance to provide better and quality library services to their clienteles including faculty, researchers and students.

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