

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG ACADEMIC LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

Stress is a ubiquitous factor present in several facets of life, affecting individuals and organizations in both beneficial and detrimental ways. Occupational stress, or burnout, is a psychological syndrome marked by emotional tiredness, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal achievement. This study examined occupational stress among academic librarians in the Rewari and Mahendergarh districts of Haryana, analyzing its contributing variables and potential repercussions. A structured questionnaire was disseminated to a sample of 100 library professionals employed at academic institutions, including school libraries, college libraries, and university libraries, within the designated region. The data gathered from 74 library professionals were evaluated to evaluate the prevalence and intensity of occupational stress within this professional cohort.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Academic Librarians, Intrinsic impoverishment, Rewari & Mahendergarh region of Haryana, Technology, Digital competence

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary, swiftly changing information environment, academic librarians have escalating challenges to embrace new technology, address growing fundamental deficiencies, and fulfill the varied requirements of their users. These obstacles may induce occupational stress, potentially resulting in diminished job satisfaction, lowered productivity, and negative health consequences. This study concentrated on academic librarians in the Rewari and Mahendergarh regions of Haryana, investigating the particular stressors they face in their work lives. The influence of intrinsic impoverishment and technical improvements on stress levels was examined.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Poole & Denny (2001) investigated that prior studies have emphasized the widespread occurrence of work stress among library professionals worldwide. Research has discovered several important elements, including technological advancements. The swift progression of technology innovations in libraries necessitates ongoing education and adjustment, perhaps causing stress for certain librarians

Srivastava, A. K. (2017) examined the factors contributing to occupational stress among Indian laborers, specifically emphasizing "intrinsic impoverishment." It emphasized that repetitive duties and restricted opportunities for skill application and advancement can result in job discontent and stress. The study highlights the necessity of offering employees stimulating and demanding tasks to alleviate the adverse effects of intrinsic poverty.

Prasad and Srinivasan (2014) examined occupational stress among bank employees in India,

focusing on characteristics such as role ambiguity, workload, and intrinsic impoverishment. Their findings revealed that intrinsic poverty, defined by a deficiency of autonomy and meaningful employment, substantially elevates stress levels among employees in both public and private sector banks. The authors proposed that interventions aimed at enhancing job roles and promoting employee involvement are essential for alleviating stress and increasing job satisfaction in the banking sector.

Deficiency of control and autonomy: Restricted involvement in decision-making and insufficient control over work responsibilities may lead to sensations of powerlessness and tension (Togia, 2005).

Interpersonal conflicts: Managing challenging supervisors or colleagues might induce stress in the library environment (Ajala, 2011).

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the prevalence of occupational stress among academic library
2. To assess the occupational stress among male and female library professionals
3. To study the correlation between intrinsic impoverishment and occupational stress
4. To study the correlation between digital competence and occupational stress

4. HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the occupational stress experienced by female and male academic library professionals.
2. There is no significant correlation between intrinsic impoverishment and occupational stress
3. There is no significant association between digital competence and occupational stress among academic library professionals.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research methodology. A standardized questionnaire, the Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI) by Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh, coupled with the Digital Competence Scale established by Shipra Srivastava and Kiran Lata Dangwal, was administered to the library personnel. A sample of 100 library professionals employed in various academic libraries in the Rewari and Mahendergarh regions of Haryana received these questionnaires, of which 74 completed and returned them. The gathered data were examined by descriptive statistics, and a correlation and inferential test (t-test) were employed to investigate the associations between occupational stress and various demographic and work-related characteristics.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data analysis revealed the following key findings:

- 1. Prevalence of Stress:** A significant proportion of the respondents (65%) reported experiencing moderate to high levels of occupational stress.

Table 1: Prevalence of Occupational Stress

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	26	35%
Moderate	30	40%
High	18	25%
Total	74	100%

- 2. Gender Differences:** Female librarians reported significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to their male counterparts ($t = 2.5, p < .05$).

Table 2: Emotional Exhaustion by Gender

Gender	Mean Emotional Exhaustion Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Male	2.8	1.2	2.5	0.014
Female	3.5	1.3		

- 3. Intrinsic impoverishment:** Librarians with higher Intrinsic impoverishments reported significantly higher levels of stress ($r = .60, p < .01$)

Table 3: Correlation between Intrinsic impoverishment and Stress

Variable	Intrinsic impoverishment	Overall Stress Score
Intrinsic impoverishment	1	0.60**
Overall Stress Score	0.60**	1

** $p < .01$

- 4. Technology:** Librarians who expressed discomfort or difficulty in adapting to new technologies reported higher stress levels ($r = .45, p < .01$).

Table 4: Correlation between Technology and Stress

Variable	Discomfort with Technology	Overall Stress Score
Discomfort with Technology	1	0.45**
Overall Stress Score	0.45**	1

** p < .01

7. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's findings revealed that work stress is a common concern among academic librarians in the Rewari and Mahendergarh regions of Haryana. The principal findings are as follows:

1. Prevalence of Occupational Stress: A significant proportion of participants (65%) indicated having moderate to high levels of occupational stress, highlighting a troubling frequency of this issue among academic librarians.

2. Gender Disparities in Emotional Exhaustion: A statistically significant disparity in emotional tiredness levels was noted between male and female librarians ($t = 2.5, p < .05$). Female librarians indicated markedly elevated levels of emotional weariness, implying that gender may be a contributing role to this aspect of occupational stress.

3. Intrinsic Impoverishment and Occupational Stress: A significant positive association exists between intrinsic impoverishment and overall stress levels ($r = .60, p < .01$). This suggests that librarians who see a deficiency in meaning, purpose, or value in their profession are more prone to report elevated levels of occupational stress. A moderate positive link was identified between discomfort with technology and overall stress levels ($r = .45, p < .01$). This indicates that librarians who find it challenging to adapt to new technology or feel uneasy about technological progress in the job are more prone to elevated levels of occupational stress.

In light of these observations, the subsequent recommendations are put forth:

Management of Intrinsic Impoverishment: Libraries ought to adopt techniques to effectively manage intrinsic impoverishments by prioritizing duties, assigning responsibilities, and ensuring sufficient personnel levels.

Technology Training: Comprehensive training programs must be implemented for librarians to improve their comfort and proficiency with new technology. Fostering a supportive and collaborative work environment can alleviate stress and enhance the well-being of library personnel.

8. CONCLUSION

Occupational stress is a considerable issue for academic librarians in the Rewari and Mahendergarh regions of Haryana. Identifying the key variables and executing suitable

interventions might enhance the well-being and job satisfaction of these individuals. Future research may investigate the efficacy of diverse stress management programs and interventions in alleviating occupational stress among librarians.

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