

ANALYSIS OF WORK STRESS AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate work stress and job performance among library professionals in Edo State, Nigeria. Through accidental sampling technique, 220 library professionals were identified. Questionnaires were distributed to 167 personnel, out of which 118 returned. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results showed that moodiness and irritability were the major symptoms of stress by the respondents. Workload, inability to satisfy users and lack of career development programs were the major causes of work stress among the respondents. However, regular sleep and recreation activities were the major coping strategies identified to ease stress in their workplaces. The study found that library personnel among other things require training and development programs from management in a bid to cushion work related stress. The study with a grand mean of 2.06 against the criterion mean of 2.50 revealed that stress had no negative effect of the job performance of the respondents. The study concluded that whether stress would have positive or negative effect on the job performance of library personnel depends on the level of stress management by the personnel. Consequently, recommendations were stated.

Keywords : *Library Professionals, Librarian, Stress, Work Stress, Job Stress, Occupational Stress, Stress Management, Job Performance, Job Autonomy, Job Rotation, Nigerian Universities, Edo State, Nigeria.*

1. Introduction

Stress is the imbalance between external or environmental demands and individual capabilities that results to pressure (Ogunlana et al. 2013). They further posited that it is the psychological state of an individual predicted by ranging environmental factors referred to as work stressors. Thus work stressors are environmental factors that induce stress on employees in the work place. According to Aldwin (2007), these work stressors could be in the form of excess work load, toxic working conditions, poor work environment, personnel discrimination and unpleasant working relationship with

colleagues and bosses. The effect of work stress on the library includes personnel absenteeism, intention to quit job, interpersonal conflicts and poor performance (Foy, 2015). Library professionals working under the influence of these stressors will find it difficult to be productive regardless of their knowledge, skill and experience in the practice. Consequently, the external environment of library professionals which reflects his or her work stressors is a predictor of the job performance of the professional.

Library professionals are under pressure by their superiors to perform without due consideration to the environmental

influences that stimulate performance. This pressure along with other forms of work stressors could affect the satisfaction and performance of library personnel. Therefore, creating a stress free environment would positively influence the job satisfaction of library personnel which is a stimulant for job performance. According to Igbinoia and Popoola (2016), job performance entails the set of actions, behavior and attitude that personnel engage in that help in the realization of organizational goals and objectives. By implication, job performance of employee is a vital element that ensures the success of the organization. Thus, the individual performance of employees in an organization will reflect the collective performance of that organization. The effectiveness of any organization therefore depends on the job performance (both task and contextual) which creates value for the organization (Peng, 2014).

Inclusion of technology in library workplace, repetitive nature of library works etc. have spiked the incidence of stress among the workforce. The adoption of technology in rendering library services, ever changing information needs of library users and the challenges of meeting these needs, call for library personnel to engage in continuous education, all exposes library personnel to workplaces stressors that could assert adverse physical, psychological and emotional effect on the personnel. These work stressors might be accountable for the perceived low job performance of some librarians in Edo State, Nigeria.

Preliminary investigation revealed that library personnel expects more stress free environment than they encounter which creates an imbalance that results to poor level of job performance and a poor sense of commitment to jobs which deter the library's ability to achieve its objectives. Also, there is a dearth of empirical studies investigating the

effect of work stress on job performance of library professionals especially in Edo State, Nigeria. Hence, this present study has been undertaken to investigate the work stress and job performance among library professionals in Edo State, Nigeria which has not been done so far.

2. Review of Literature

Stress is often used to describe either the external stimulus from the environment or the subjective response of an individual which can occur in anyone who feels he or she is under pressure (Ogunlana et al., 2013). Stress according to Okeke et al. (2017), is a state where personnel are required to carry out tasks that above their ability and resources for accomplishing such tasks. Therefore, job stress could also arise from strenuous work activities without corresponding abilities to handle such activities. Thus, it poses a threat to the health of workers and, in turn, to the health of the organizations.

Dina (2016) affirmed that stress is triggered by external forces in which people have little or no ability to manage or cope with. Employees who are unable to manage work place pressures thus encounter work related stress (Jayaprakash et al. 2013). Therefore, work stress arises from the inability of employees to cope with work related pressures or a response to an inappropriate level of pressure from the work environment. According to Rajiv (2017), stress sprouts from the over demands placed on the physical and mental energy of an individual, without corresponding capacity to cope.

Babatope (2013) investigated the causes and effects of job related stress on 56 librarians from three polytechnic libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. Job stress as part of the psychological well-being of library staff in selected university libraries in South-West Nigeria was studied by Ikonne (2015).

The stress associated to library workplace was recognized by Berry and Reynolds (2011) when they opined that librarians' responsibility to meeting the information needs of users can be overwhelming, placing pressures on them. According to Shupe and Phjung (2011) workplaces inclusive of libraries are constantly seeking employees with digital experience and the capacity to adapt to digital trends. Thus, librarians struggle to adjust to the vast digital skills required for effective library services and sometimes over assert their knowledge in an effort to be productive. This corroborates the findings of Riley-Huff and Rhoads (2011) that several librarians experience stress in an attempt to keep abreast with evolving technologies and apply it into library services. Library personnel experience different forms of stress resulting from the work environment as well as the conditions of the work place. According to Aldwin (2007), stressors can be in the form of workload, speed of work, dangerous or toxic working conditions, poorly designed environment, interpersonal discord with supervisors, colleagues, and discrimination based on age and sex, and frustration related to the social organization of the workplace.

On stress management, Rajiv (2017) opined that library personnel in a bid to manage stress must get quality and adequate sleep that is restful and restorative. Also, paying attention to the career development of staff, their work relationship, characteristics of the librarians, home-work interface would help library personnel manage work stress (Ugwuanyi & Ugwu, 2010). Ekwelem (2015) investigated stress coping strategies of academic librarians in Universities in South-East Nigeria.

Sabherwal, et al. (2015) investigated the causes of occupational stress of teachers and examine the correlation between stress and job satisfaction which is a predictor of performance.

Iroka (2011) investigated stress among library staff in University of Nigeria. Questionnaire was adopted as an instrument for data collection which was distributed to 120 of 190 staff in the library under study. The effect of stress on the job performance of librarians was investigated by Dina (2016) using sampling random technique to select 50 librarians from Lagos State University and University of Lagos both in Lagos State, Nigeria. A joint study was done by Singh and Prasad (2018) to investigate the effect of stress on librarians' job performance in the selected universities. Another paper from India written by Kaur and Kiran (2018) collected data from 301 library professionals working in central libraries of 24 universities of Punjab and Chandigarh and studied the occupational stress and job performance.

3. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain the symptoms of stress that influence library professionals' work in Edo State
2. Investigate the causes of stress among library professionals in Edo State,
3. Examine the strategies employed by library professionals in managing work related stress,
4. Examine library professionals' expectations of library management toward making work environment stress free
5. Study the effect of stress on job performance of library and information science professionals in Edo State.
6. Put forward recommendations out of this study.

4. Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study comprising of library professionals in Edo state (both practicing librarians and library and information science educators). The population of the study consists of LIS professionals in Edo State which is 220 as at December 2019 (Source: NLA, Edo State Chapter). However, the 167 participants of the 2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM) / Conference of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Edo State Chapter, were considered for the study. Consequently, the study is said to have adopted accidental or convenient sampling type of the non probability sampling technique with the sampling size as 167 library professionals.

The research tool used in eliciting data from the respondents was the semi-structured questionnaire. Which was an adaptation of Malarvizhi and Jeyarathnam (2016) which among other things consisted of scales to measure stress symptoms, coping strategies and stress effect on job performance with Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.77.

The other scales (library professionals' expectation from management and causes of stress), used in the study which were not catered for by the adaptation, were self-developed by the researchers based on previous literature on stress.

A total number of 167 copies of the questionnaire were administered and 118 were retrieved and found usable for this study which accounted for 71% return rate. The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

5. Analysis of Data

The result of the analysis carried out and the interpretations are stated subsequently in line with the objectives of the study.

5.1 Demographic Information

5.1.1. Designation of Respondents

Among the respondents 26 of them are librarian2/lecturer2, 23 are librarian1/lecturer1 and 22 are higher library officer. Senior lecturer/librarians are 18 in number. Very few (5) of them are Professors/University Librarian.

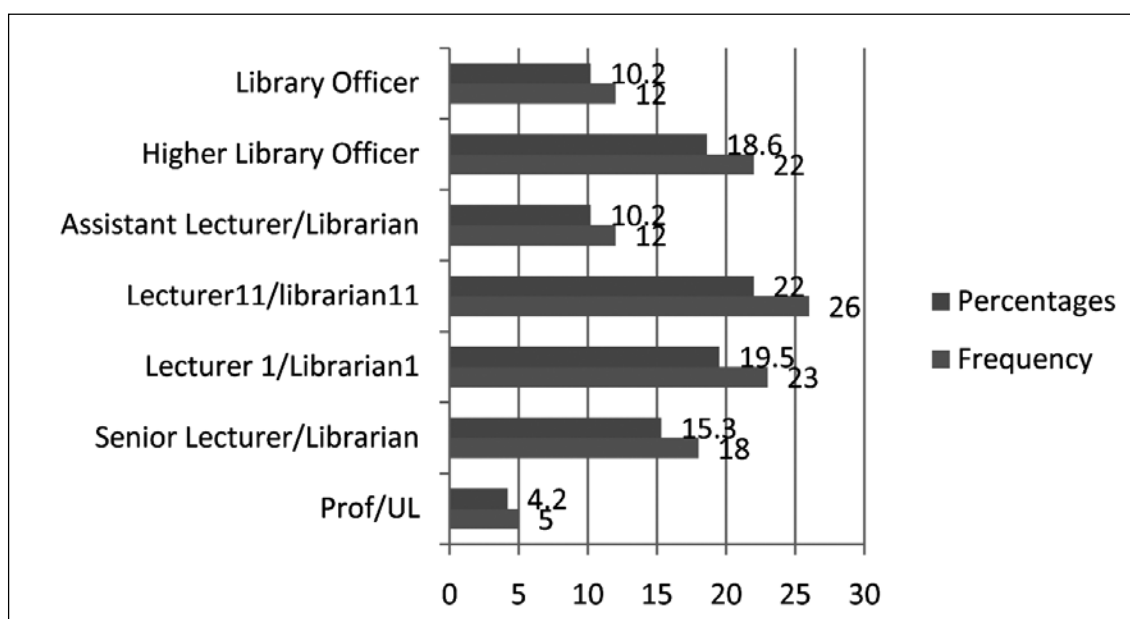


Fig.1: Designation of LIS Professionals

5.1.2. Age of Respondents

The age of the respondents revealed that those in the age range of 36-45 years are more

(42.37%). Respondents above 55 years are 27.88% and 46-55 years are 17.80%. The rest are comparatively less.

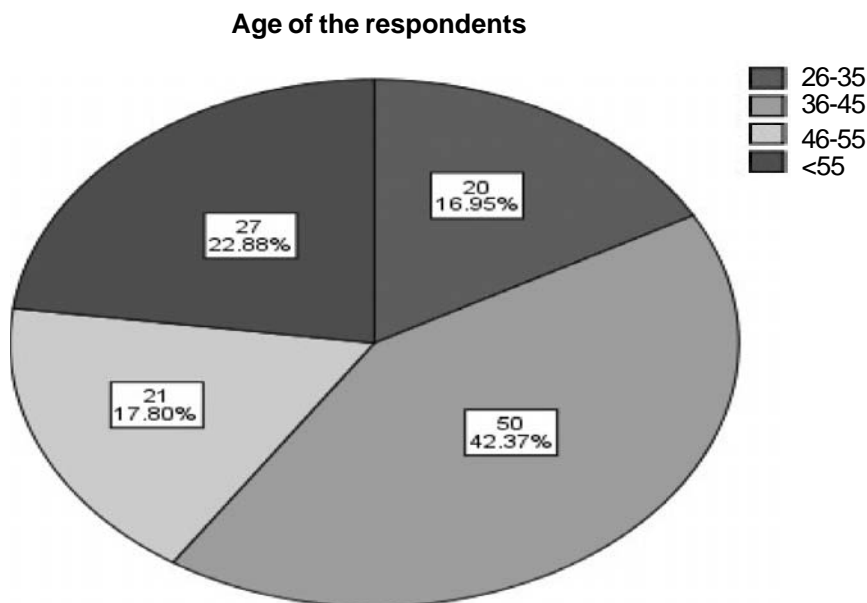


Fig.2: Age of the Respondents

5.1.3. Educational Qualifications

With regard to educational qualifications, it is found that respondents with bachelors degree are 2/5th of the sample (41.5%). Those with masters degree are 26.3% and diploma holders are a quarter (25.4%). The

implication of this, is that majority of the respondents were first degree holder. By the prescription of the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN), majority of the respondents are considered as professional librarians (LRCN, 2014).

Table 1
Educational Qualifications of the Respondents

Sl.No.	Qualifications	Number	Percentage
1	Diploma	30	25.4
2	Bachelors	49	41.5
3	Masters	31	26.3
4	Ph.D	08	06.8
	Total	118	100.00

5.1.4. Years of Experience

The response on job experience revealed that one third of them fall into 5-10 years

category (33.9%). This is followed by 11-15 years (23.7%). Above 20 years are 21.2% and less than 5 years 15.3% and 16-20 years (5.93%).

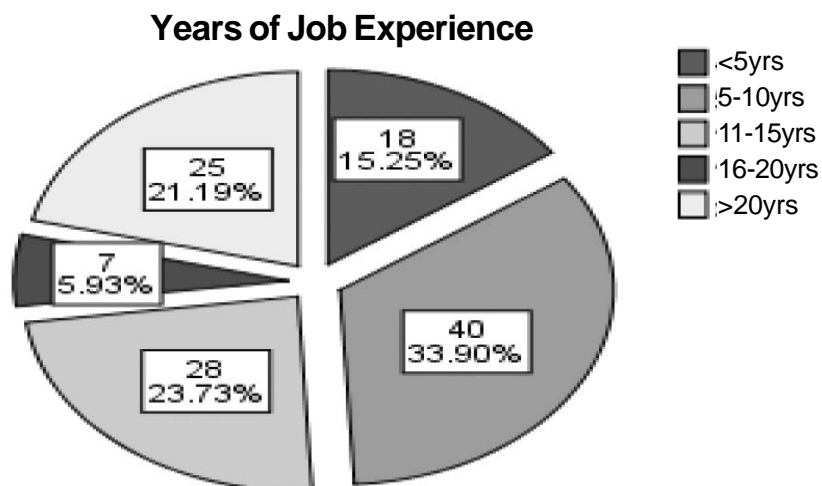


Fig. 3 : Years of Job Experience

5.2 Analysis Based on Objectives

This section presents the results based on the objectives of the study.

5.2.1. Symptoms of Stress

The first objective is to ascertain the symptoms of stress that influence library professionals' work in Edo State. It was

revealed that Moodiness (2.5) and irritability (2.5) do occur in library work life. However symptoms such as nail biting, weight gain/loss, accelerated speech, lack of confidence, short temper, lack of confidence, restlessness are hardly noticeable as symptoms of stress as indicated by library professional in Edo state.

Table 2

Symptoms of Stress that Influence Library Professionals' Work

Sl. No.	Symptoms experienced	Never F %	Rarely F %	Sometimes F %	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Moody	17 (14.4)	21 (17.8)	80 (67.8)	2.5	.74
2	Irritability	21 (17.8)	16 (13.6)	81 (68.6)	2.5	.736
3	Short temper	52 (44.1)	16 (13.6)	50 (42.4)	2.0	.933
4	Accelerated Speech	57 (48.3)	17 (14.4)	44 (37.3)	1.9	.922
5	Nail biting	66 (55.9)	50 (42.4)	02 (1.7)	1.4	.533
6	Restlessness	29 (24.6)	17 (14.4)	72 (61.0)	2.4	.854
7	Lack of control	73 (61.9)	29 (24.9)	16 (13.6)	2.4	.854
8	Get confused easily	28 (23.7)	18 (15.3)	72 (61.0)	2.4	.845
9	Feeling Negative	28 (23.7)	73 (61.9)	17 (14.4)	2.4	.846
10	Gain/loss weight	28 (23.6)	72 (61.0)	18 (15.3)	2.4	.846
11	Nervousness	29 (24.6)	73 (61.9)	16 (13.6)	2.4	.855

5.2.2. Causes of Stress

The second objective is to find out the causes of stress among library professionals in Edo state. It is seen from the analysis given in table 3, that poor work environment, pressure from management/bosses, challenges of coping with new technologies, lack of job security and feeling of

powerlessness constitute no stress to more than 70% of the respondents. Meanwhile, more than 70% of the respondents indicated that workload, inability to satisfy all users, lack of career development program, poor salary, time pressures and deadlines, lack of supervision, repetitive and boring works, poor and unplanned works, shortage of required resources, constitute causes of stress to them.

Table 3
Causes of Stress among Library Professionals

SI. No.	Causes of Stress	Yes F %	No F %
1	Poor work Environment	30 (25.4)	88 (74.6)
2	Pressure from management/bosses	30 (25.4)	88 (74.6)
3	Challenges of coping with New technology	25 (21.2)	93 (78.8)
4	Workload	103 (87.3)	15 (12.7)
5	Unable to satisfy all users	86 (72.9)	32 (27.1)
6	Lack of Job security	11 (9.3)	107 (90.7)
7	Feeling of Powerlessness	11 (9.3)	107 (90.7)
8	Lack of career development programme	86 (72.9)	32 (27.1)
9	Poor salary	85 (72.0)	33 (28.0)
10	Time pressures and deadlines	87 (73.7)	31 (26.3)
11	Lack of supervision	85 (72.0)	33 (28.0)
12	Repetitive and boring work	87 (73.7)	31 (26.3)
13	Poor and unplanned work	87 (73.7)	31 (26.3)
14	Lack of required resources	87 (73.7)	31 (26.3)
15	Shortage of staff	51 (43.2)	67 (56.8)
16	Administrative and paperwork	71 (60.2)	47 (39.8)
17	Excessive interruption	81 (68.6)	37 (56.8)
18	Continuous and chaotic job demands	71 (60.2)	47 (39.8)
19	Lack of information	81 (68.6)	37 (31.4)
20	Lack of recognition	80 (67.8)	38 (32.2)
21	Office politics and conflicts	82 (69.5)	36 (30.5)

5.2.3. Strategies Employed in Managing Stress

The third objective is to examine the strategies employed in managing stress among LIS professionals. The analysis depicted in table 4 revealed that all the respondents employed regular sleep as coping strategy. Another significant proportion of the respondents was recreation activities which

was followed job redesign/rotation as coping strategies. This is closely followed by recreation/past time activities, physical exercise, and positive thinking as coping strategies. The library professionals do not attend stress management programs as indicated by 95.8% of the respondents. It is also revealed that there is no social support system at workplace as indicated by 97.5% of the respondents.

Table 4
Strategies Employed in Managing Stress among Library Professionals

SI. No.	Strategies	Yes F %	No F %
1	Attendance at Health awareness programs	85 (72.0)	33 (28.0)
2	Vacation and holiday trips	42 (35.6)	76 (64.4)
3	Stress management programs	5 (4.2)	113 (95.8)
4	Job redesign/rotation	100 (84.7)	18 (15.3)
5	Recreation/past time activities	115 (97.5)	3 (2.5)
6	Social support system at workplace	3 (2.5)	115 (97.5)
7	Physical exercise e.g Health work	100 (84.7)	18 (15.3)
8	Regular sleep	118 (100)	-
9	Delegate responsibility	75 (63.6)	43 (36.4)
10	Chatting with likeminded persons	67 (56.8)	51 (43.2)
11	Positive thinking	100 (84.7)	18 (15.3)73
12	Medication	45 (38.1)	(61.9)

5.2.4. Expectations of Library Professionals

The fourth objective is to examine the Library professionals' expectations in making work environment stress free. In response to the expectations of library professionals from the management, training and development programs top the list, followed by employing

more staff, sufficient support, opportunities for career development ranked second while counseling programs and proper recognition ranked least (third on the ranking). Thus the respondents recognized the place of capacity development in managing stress as well as the need for more staff to shoulder the excess work load capable of inciting work stress.

Table 5
Ranking of Expectations of Library Professional

Sl.No.	Expectations	Ranking
1	Training and development programs	1 st
2	Employing more staff	2 nd
3	Sufficient support	2 nd
4	Opportunities for career development	2 nd
5	Counseling programs	3 rd
6	Proper recognition	3 rd

5.2.5. Effect of Stress on Job Performance

The fifth objective is to investigate the effect of stress on job performance of LIS professionals in Edo state. The results (table 6) revealed that job dissatisfaction, decreased productivity, reduced work effectiveness and

low morale with mean scores of 3.2, 2.9, 2.5 and 2.5 respectively were according to the respondents could result from work related stress. However, when taken together, with a grand mean of 2.06 and a criterion mean of 2.50, the study showed that work related stress does not have negative effect on the job performance of the respondents.

Table 6
Effects of Stress on Job Performance of Library Professionals

SI. No.	Effects of Stress on Performance	SA F %	A F %	D F %	SD F %	Mean
1	Increased Absenteeism	1 (0.8)	-	39 (33.1)	78 (66.1)	1.4
2	Decreased productivity	11(9.3)	93(78.8)	1(0.8)	13 (11.0)	2.9
3	Wasted potentials and skills	1(0.8)	1 (0.8)	3 (2.5)	113 (95.8)	1.1
4	Reduced work effectiveness	-	89 (75.4)	3 (2.5)	26 (22.0)	2.5
5	Low morale	1 (0.8)	65 (55.1)	40 (34.0)	12 (10.2)	2.5
6	Premature retirement plan	1(0.8)	-	4 (3.5)	113 (95.8)	1.1
7	Job dissatisfaction	51 (43.2)	51 (43.2)	1 (0.8)	15 (12.7)	3.2
8	Plan for change of job/career	-	1 (0.8)	87 (73.7)	30 (25.4)	1.8

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Standard Deviation

6. Discussion of Findings

The study discovered that library personnel respond to stress by several

psychological symptoms including moodiness and irritability. This finding is in line with Michie (2002) who asserted that acute responses to stress are manifested in feelings

of irritability and depressive mood. Also, International Labor Organization (ILO) (2016) identified irritability in social relationships as non-specific symptoms associated with work stress. ILO reported the empirical investigation of Canadian third National Study of Work-Life Balance where a consistent proportion of the respondents indicated highly depressed mood as symptom of work related stress. Similarly, Sahoo (2016) gave the emotional effects of work stress on individuals as irritability and depression (which is a negative mood). Thus, work stress among library personnel causes the feeling of moodiness and irritability which adversely affect the social/working relationships of library personnel with adverse effect on their tendency to perform especially in service oriented institutions like library and information centers.

The causes of work stress seem to vary from one work place to another and it is considered by Ekwelem (2015) to be multidimensional. However, the study found that workload, time pressure and deadlines, repetitive and boring work, poor and unplanned work, and lack of required resources are all causes of work stress among library personnel. This finding corroborates the causes of work stress as stipulated by Ilo (2016) to include excess workload and inadequate infrastructural provisions. Excessive or heavy workload has been identified as one of the primary causes of work stress among employees including library professionals (Picincu, 2019 and Jayaprakash, Rekha & Rajendiran, 2013). Moreover, Beh and Loo (2012) gave conditions that cause stress to include repetitive work, poor working condition, bureaucratic system of work and excess work load. It is almost impossible to completely eliminate stress from workplaces inclusive of libraries. However, from the investigated causes of stress in the library workplace, a restructuring of library activities and tasks, with mindfulness on the workload, deadlines,

job rotation, flexibility and facilitating conditions will ease the stress level of library personnel.

The study found regular sleep, recreation/past time activities, job redesign/rotation, physical exercise and positive thinking as some of the major coping strategies employed by librarians in alleviating the effect of work related stress. The finding supported the Jayaprakash, Rekha & Rajendiran, (2013) assertion that positive thinking is a stress coping strategy by library professionals. The study's revelation on stress coping strategies for library personnel tallies with the position of Vij (2015) who noted that stress management in library personnel is crucial and can be achieved through restful sleep, regular exercise and meditation which thwart stress and counter the brain's bias to hold on to negativity. The findings of this study implied that the coping strategies library personnel will adopt in easing work related stress will be directly influenced or predicted by the specific causes of work related stress they experience.

Moreover, the study revealed that certain expectations are required of library management from the personnel in order to provide a stress free environment. Training and development programmes top the list, followed by employing more staff, sufficient support and opportunities for career development ranked second. Thus the respondents recognized the place of capacity development in managing stress as well as the need for more staff to shoulder the excess work load capable of inciting work stress. According to Nordin and Ahin (2016), on occupational stress and strategies, employees need to learn new skills through continuous training programmes and development of human resources in order to effectively manage work stressors. Raja (2011) noted that stress among librarians keep increase due to lack of training among other factors. Thus, providing library

personnel with apt training on library activities, new technology and stress management will help curtail further prevalence of work related stress among library personnel. While, the library needs to provide coping resources, atmosphere and capacity development, the personnel must consciously make personal effort to develop coping skills in order to safely sail through the pressures of work life.

Lastly, the study showed that work stress does not have negative effect on the job performance of the respondents. This negates the stance of some previous studies (Ilo, 2016; Dina, 2016; Amir & Kihoro, 2014 and Nordin & Ahin, 2016) that stress will negatively affect the performance of personnel in workplaces. However, it is the position of the researchers of this study that whether stress will have a negative, neutral or even positive relationship with performance will be dependent on how such stress is managed. This seems to be the position of Nekoranec and kmošena (2015) when they suggested the possibility to alter stressors in a way that will not pose harm or will not negatively affect performance. Also, in agreement with the finding of this study, Routray and Satpathy (n.d) noted that stress does not necessarily have negative influence on performance. On the flip side, stress could also be a predictor of high performance among personnel. This is why Raja (2011) noted that certain (level of) stressors are desirable to produce enthusiasm, creativity and productivity which leads to high job performance; concluding that stress could be either beneficial or detrimental.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following are recommended:

- i. Library authorities should set up structures (like job redesign and rotation) that enhance stress free work environment.

- ii. Library management should regularly organize capacity building program in the form of trainings for library personnel to develop their professional, technological and stress management skills.
- iii. Adequate support system and facilitating conditions should be set in place to accommodate the physical and psychological needs of library personnel.
- iv. Library personnel should develop their emotional capabilities to refute stress and adopt personal strategies to unwind stress when necessary.
- v. Library management and their personnel should give adequate attention to physical health through activities like regular exercise and yoga training to reduce stress.

8. Conclusion

Work stress is unavoidable in workplaces and it often arises from work environment and the employee's inability to handle work related pressures. This means that the concept of work stress is relative to employees. The determining effect on the employee's job performance can be influenced through adequate human capacity development. Therefore, whether work related stress will have negative or positive effect on job performance will be predicted on the stress management of the employee which use a function of their capacity development. The study examined work stress and job performance of library personnel in Edo State. It is conclusive to state that the library personnel experienced some work related stressors which did not have negative effect on their job performance. Though, they have some expectations from library management to provide a more stress free work environment.

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