Coping with Stress in Librarianship: A Case Study of Academic Librarians in Universities in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract
The study has tried to identify the not needed, redundant sources of job related stress and coping strategies among academic librarians in universities in South-east Nigeria.The design of the study was a survey. The study population consisted of all the 89 academic librarians in universities in South-east Nigeria. A Stress and Stress Management Inventory (SSMI) was developed, validated and pilot-tested by one senior librarian and 2 assistant librarians from Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Comments and responses led to a small number of editorial changes designed to improve clarity in the questions that were administered to the respondents. A total of 67 useable copies of the questionnaire were returned by the respondents, percentage cross-tabulation was used to analyze the data. The following findings were made: (a) Academic librarians in universities in South-east Nigeria experience considerable stress on the job irrespective of their sex, designation, and place of work. (b) Majority of the librarians are dissatisfied with their conditions of service. (c) Coping strategies employed include: maintaining a sense of humours, delegating responsibility, relaxation and stress management techniques. Library administrators needs to recognize the importance of creating stress-free working environments not only to satisfy their legal obligations but also to ensure the long and healthy working life of library employees. A study that called for academic librarians to find strategies to manage stress that affects them in their work environment.
Keywords: Coping strategies, stress, academic librarians, management.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Academic librarians in the universities face very busy and highly unpredictable work days with many individuals and groups competing for their time. Shaughnessy (1997) writes that "if asked jobs that are stressful, it is doubtful that the average person would ever think of librarianship as a stress-filled job". Similarly, writing on the hazardous nature of the library profession, Atkins (2005) observed that "library work does not immediately come to mind". Nevertheless, working in libraries has its fair share of risks. Many jobs in a library require staff to lift, carry and shelve heavy books and push or pull carts loaded with books. All of these activities can put stress on various parts of the musculoskeletal system and, specifically, can cause injuries of the upper extremities and back.

Library jobs are repetitive in nature; therefore, doing a monotonous job that lacks variety no doubt leads to high occupational stress levels. Technology was supposed to shorten the working period and thereby give the librarian more leisure time, but in library settings the reverse seems to be the case. Many academic librarians are finding themselves struggling to keep up with the pace of change engendered by modern technology.

Some studies have highlighted different manifestations or indications of stress associated with an individual. Occupational stress may result in increasing absenteeism, decreasing commitment to work, increasing staff turnover, impairing performance and productivity, increasing unsafe working practices and accident rates, increasing complaints from clients and customers, adversely affecting legal claims and actions by stressed workers, damaging the organization, and externally (WHO, 2004). Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenges their ability to cope.

Research has shown that how an academic librarian behaves makes a difference for library users. If this is true, then certain things the librarian does may lead to positive results while others may bring negative outcomes. Some conditions in a library operate to improve a librarian's productivity, while others tend to reduce his level of performance. When a librarian is unable to cope with the demands and expectations of the work environment, he starts experiencing negative aspects of library work. Thus, a potential for stress sets in within the librarian's work environment. It is necessary to also define stress and to situate its meaning to the library profession situations". A normal library workday can be described as a continuous round of interruptions. The repetitive nature of library work induces monotony; boredom can easily set in by doing things over and over again, making the worker a prime candidate for burnout. Do academic librarians actually suffer stress in their work place? Many scholars have echoed a similar refrain as the one expressed by Shaughnessy (1997). For example, evidence from literature on the impact of stress on librarianship constitutes a litany of woes, which can lead to death (see Siamian et al 2006, Bergin & Sohman 1988; Gmelch 1983; Helbert 1987). In fact stress has been identified as a serious disability phenomenon that adversely affects the health and life style of individuals. A healthy job is likely to be one where the pressures on employees are appropriate in relation to their work and

to the support they receive from people who matter to them. Health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity but a positive state of complete being (WHO, 2004). Therefore, it is pertinent that the university library should address the problem of stress   since it can not be avoided. Identification of effective coping strategies may provide academic librarians in southeastern Nigeria with tools which can be used to reduce the amount individual. In view of the importance of the role of librarians and the adverse effect that stress can have on the librarian's wellbeing and effectiveness   . The specific research questions which guided these investigations are:

a).   what stress factors do academic librarians perceive as sources of stress?
b).   what kind of major stressors are perceived by academic librarians on the job?
c).   what are the most common coping techniques utilized by academic librarians to ameliorate the effects of stress?

Literature Review

For this investigation stress is viewed as the internal force generated within a solid body by action of any external force which tends to distort the body. The term stress has been categorized as a stimulus, as a response or reaction and, as in this study, as a transition between the person and the environment.

Kupersmith (2009) believes that stress is a response to change in the environment as perceived by the individual. According to him, moderate stress can be beneficial and stimulating, but severe and prolonged stress can have harmful physiological and psychological effects. On the other hand, occupational stress is stress at work.

Stress is defined in terms of its physical and physiological effects on a person (or thing). Stress is mental, physical or emotional strain or tension or it is a situation or factor that can cause this. (Wikipedia 2009). Technostress is well reported in the library literature. Technostress is stress caused by working with multiple and rapidly changing computer systems and the demand of one's organization, staff, costumers and personal life (Kupersmith 2009).

Kupersmith (2003) conducted an online survey on technostress (computer – related stress) among library staff members. He found that 59 percent of survey participants said their level of computer – related stress has increased in the past 5 years, 34 percent felt it has not changed much, and only 4 percent believed it has decreased. The findings also revealed that 65 percent of participants reported that this type of stress is a somewhat serious problem to them, 8 percent said it is very serious, while 27 percent felt it is not at all serious.

Hasan, Aesaneh, Vahedi, Red, Majid and Yazdani (2006) provide a logical starting point by noting that in organizations various factors cause stress. One of the immediate outcomes of psychological stress is the phenomenon of burnout. Some of the causative agents of burnout, are presence of severe and improper working condition in the organization, improper leadership style practice in the organization, and marital status.

Many researchers and authors, depending on their orientation, have highlighted different types and manifestations of stress relating to the individual's work or occupation. Studs (1985) cited by Shaughnessy (1991) notes that "stress is also increased when work is so routine as to be mind-numbing". He described this type of work as a Monday through Friday sorting of dying. Cooper and Marshall (1991) found that a major source of stress at work has to do with the type of relationship one has with his boss, colleagues and subordinates. They defined poor relationship as "having to do with less trust, low support and less interests in listening to and trying to deal with the problems of any organizational members. In addition they asserted that mistrust of persons one worked with was positively related to high role ambiguity. Also, emotional exhaustion is associated with higher levels of efforts. As Lee and Ashforth (1993) noted, as the quantitative level of the workload increases demands on the worker increase, particularly if a worker has insufficient time. Jackson, Turner and Brief (1987) argued that "higher levels of the role conflict imply dealing with multiple demands, and consequently higher levels of effort are necessary ".

In a library environment, Routray and Sunil (2007) explore the perceived definition of stress. They stated that stress is the change which our bodies experience as we adjust to our continually changing environment. It has been an integral part of our daily life since prehistoric times and library and information science personnel are not immune to it. Thus we cannot avoid stress in our life; rather, the best policy is to manage it properly to increase our efficiency.

Siamian et al (2006) argued that in recent years, there is growing research supporting the existence of burnout among academic librarians. There are many suggestions to prevent or remedy this condition in librarians; some of the solutions are targeted at the individual. In sum, they noted that very little has been done to measure the effectiveness of these remedies in preventing, ameliorating or eliminating the problem of burnout in librarianship.

A number of studies have provided insight into coping strategies in various disciplines. The exact coping process is elusive. Researchers from the disciplines of medicine, psychiatry, psychology and the behavioural science, have studied the phenomenon of stress, its consequences, and coping responses. Gmelch and Swent (1981) Selye (1976) opined that in spite of all that has been said about stress and coping strategies

there is no ready made formula that will suit everyone. Gmelch; (1988) states that the solution in reducing stress lies in holistic interventions to combat stressful situations. He in addition stated that administrations need to develop comprehensive sets of coping strategies.

Research Method

This study surveys stress and burnout as they affect academic librarians in universities in South-East Nigeria. Although the author initially considered surveying a broader population including academic librarians in polytechnics and colleges of education, it was concluded that there would be inadequate support to manage the data that will be generated from the larger group; hence the decision to focus specifically on those in the universities.

This investigation was carried out as a survey of the entire population of academic librarians in universities in South-East Nigeria. The researcher chose 4 university libraries out of 9 federal and state university libraries in the zone. They include Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, (UNN) and Enugu Campuses; Federal University of Technology, Owerri; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; and Imo State University, (IMOSU) Owerri. Private universities located in the zone were excluded because they are still in their infancy.

The researcher developed a 54 question survey instrument to gain insights into the stress and burnout which affect academic librarians and their work environment. Seven questions dealt with basic demographic and biographic information: institution's name, respondent's sex, marital status, working experience, qualification, the section where he/she works, and designation.

The Demographic & Biographic Inventory (DBI) was designed for this study in order to obtain information about a number of variables related to academic librarians and their work environment. The demographic variable identified characteristics related to the person. The Work Stress Index (WSI) was developed to identify sources of occupational stress, specifically among academic librarians. Working Condition Stress Index (WCSI) also was developed to identify working conditions that cause stress among academic librarians. Finally, the Coping Preference Scale (CPS) was based on reviews of the literature on various suggested methods for dealing with job-related stress.

The questionnaire was then validated and pilot-tested to establish reliability before being administered to the subjects by 1 senior librarian from UNO Section, 2 assistant librarians from Reference section and an assistant librarian from Serials Section, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Survey results were analyzed using percentage tabulation. Our analysis focused on evaluating response frequency and valid percentage.

Finding

Table 1: Return rate of instrument

	UNN	FUTO	NALA	IMOSU
University Librarian	-	1	1	1
Deputy University Librarian	-	-	-	1
Principal Librarian	7	-	-	-
Senior Librarian	4	2	2	1
Librarian I	9	5	3	
Librarian II	5	3	1	
Assistant Librarian	14	13		3
Total	**39**	**24**	**7**	**6**

Table 1 above indicated the designations of librarians that participated in the study. University Librarians were 3. One Deputy University Librarian was involved, 7 Principal Librarians, 9 Senior Librarians, 17 Librarian 1, 9 Librarian II and Assistant Librarian were 30.

Response Rate

The author personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents at their various libraries located at Nsukka, Enugu, Owerri and Awka. 76 questionnaires were returned, which translates into an actual response rate of 85.4 percent. 7 percent of returned questionnaire had to be discarded due to the fact that they were uncompleted. A total of 67 respondents were usable, resulting in a 67.76 percent response rate.

Gender

In total, 46 of the respondents were female and 21 were male. Women are clearly the majority of the respondents. In all, 86 percent (40) of the females are married while only 13 percent (6) were not married, 85 percent (18) of the males were married, while only 14 percent (3) were not married.

Working Experience

The participants were not asked their exact working experience, but rather to indicate what category they are in. In all, 40 percent (27) had worked between 21-30 years and above, 20 percent (13) had worked between 11-20 years. 18 percent (12) were in 6-10 years range and 22 percent (15) of the respondents were under 1-5 years working period.

Qualifications

The demographic information that survey respondents supplied gave a clear picture not only of their background but also of their qualifications. 6 percent (4) of them had Ph.D. while 64.2 percent (43) had MLS, and the other 30 percent (20) had first degree in various disciplines. From the analysis it is obvious that majority of the respondents had Masters of Library Science degree (MLS).

Job Duties

In order to gauge the job duties in the sample, the researcher provided eight categories for the respondents to best describe their main work section. The categories were administration, Reference, Acquisitions, Cataloguing, Serials, Circulation, Special Collections ant ITC. 6 percent (4) were in Administration, 15 percent (10) worked in Reference, 12 percent (8) worked in Acquisition, while Cataloguing has the largest number of 23 percent (15). 15 percent (10) of the respondents worked in Serials. 13 percent (9) worked in Circulation. 10 percent (7) of the respondents worked in Special Collections. Only 6 percent (4) of the respondents worked in ITC Section.

Designation

In total 3 were University Librarians, 1 was a Deputy University Librarian, 8 principal Librarians, 11 Senior Librarians, 13 were Librarian I, Librarian II were 11 and Assistant Librarians were 39.

Research Question 1: What stress factors do academic librarians perceive as sources of stress?

Table 2: sources of stress on academic librarians

S/N		EXTREME STRESS		HIGH STRESS		MODERATE STRESS		NO STRESS		Total %
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	User/staff misbehaviour	27	40	21	31	9	14	10	15	100
2	Having inexperience users	13	20	39	59	8	12	6	9	100
3	Higher working load	12	18	42	63	12	18	1	1.0	100
4	External pressures	8	12	16	24	38	56	5	8	100
5	More time with users	35	52	21	31	8	12	3	5	100
6	Technological change	10	15	9	13	42	63	6	9	100
7	Unavailability of required information by users	41	61	19	28	7	11	-	-	100
8	Attitudes and actions of library management	31	46	15	22	12	18	9	14	100
9	User's expectation within the library	14	21	39	58	8	12	6	9	100
10	Excessive work demands in available time	15	22	48	71.6	4	6	-	-	100
11	Social change	12	18	11	17	35	52	9	13	100
12	A quick response time to reference questions	18	27	36	54	10	15	3	4	100
13	Lack of opportunity to participate in library decision making	36	54	21	31	8	12	2	3	100
14	Difficulty of setting and maintaining standards	12	18	17	25	32	48	6	9	100
15	Feeling of powerlessness	8	12	6	8	44	66	9	14	100
16	(Related stress computer) techno stress	17	25	25	37	18	27	7	11	100

Table 2 describes options for sources of stress on academic librarians. The respondents were asked to indicate if user/staff misbehaviour is a source of stress on them. 40 percent (27) of the respondents opted for 'extreme stress', this is more than half of the total participants. Only 14 percent (10) indicated 'no stress'. On the question of 'having inexperienced users', 59 percent (39) indicated 'high stress', while only a percent (6) opted

for 'no stress'. Higher work load attracted higher score of 63 percent (42) of the participants. Whereas 1 percent (1) chose 'no stress'.

With regard to the 'external pressure' the respondents seemed generally positive to 'moderate stress'. 56 percent (38) indicated so. Only 8 percent (5) opted for 'no stress'. On 'more time with users' 52 percent (35) garnered 'extreme stress'. Only 5 percent (3) indicated 'no stress'. In an attempt to determine the effect of technological change on stress. Of those who responded, 63 percent (42) chose 'moderate stress'. Only 9 percent (6) indicated 'no stress'. On 'unavailability of required information by users' 61 percent (41) of the respondents indicated 'extreme stress' and 11 percent (7) chose 'moderate stress'. With regard to 'attitudes and actions of library management' of the respondents, 46 percent (31) indicated 'extreme stress', whereas only 14 percent (9) chose 'no stress'. On user's expectations within the library, 'high stress' was most popular option respondents chose (58 percent or 39). When the question was asked of 'excessive work demands in available time', high stress was the most favored option (72 percent or 43). Moderate stress had the least (6 percent or 4). On 'social change', although most of the participants 52 percent (35) believed they would be affected 'moderately' and 13 percent opted for 'no stress'. With regard to 'lack of opportunity to participate in library decision making', item 13 shows that 'extreme stress' had the largest number of respondents (54 percent or 36). The least was 'no stress' (3 percent or 2)

In terms of difficulty of setting and maintaining standards, 'moderate stress' topped the list with 48 percent (32). Those that indicate 'no stress' came last with 6 respondents representing 9 percent. On 'feeling of powerlessness' respondents with 'moderate stress topped the list with 66 percent (44) while respondents with extreme stress came distant last with 12 percent (8). Lastly, 37 percent (25) agreed that techno stress gives them 'high stress', only 10 percent (7) agreed that the item does not give them stress.

Research Question 2: what kind of major stressors are perceived by academic librarians on the job?

Table 3: Some stressors related to poor working conditions/poor library structured time

S/N	SOURCES OF STRESS	EXTREME STRESS		HIGH STRESS		MODERATE STRESS		NO STRESS		TOTAL %
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
17	Poor promotion opportunity for librarians	43	64	19	28	5	9	-	-	100
18	Having to publish papers for promotion	49	73	13	19	4	6	1	2	100
19	Inadequate salary	21	31	29	43	12	18	5	8	100
20	Delayed promotion and stagnation	43	64	19	28	5	8	-	-	100
21	Poor incentives including lack of staff development	18	27	41	61	8	12	-	-	100
22	Lack of effective consultations	8	12	12	18	37	55	10	15	100
23	Low status of librarians	8	12	28	42	31	46	-	-	100
24	Lack of consensus on minimum standards	12	18	13	20	27	40	15	22	100
25	Lack of time for research	19	29	41	61	5	7	2	3	100
26	Lack of time to accomplish task	2	8	23	34	39	58	-	-	100
27	Bureaucratic interference	22	33	36	54	7	10	2	29	100
28	Lack of recognition for good work and extra work	41	61	20	30	6	9	-	-	100
29	Poor staff relation	7	10	2	3	38	57	20	30	100
30	Difficulty in dealing with library work	14	21	15	22	38	57	-	-	100

Table 3 provides an analysis of stressors related to poor working condition/ poor library structure. 64 percent (43) indicated that poor promotion opportunity for academic librarians is an 'extreme stress' for them. The study confirmed that what the academic staff regarded as publish or perish syndrome gives them 'extreme stress' (73 percent or 49). As item 19 indicates, 'inadequate salary' 'causes majority of the respondents' 'high stress' (43 percent or 29). Item 20 dealt with 'delayed promotion and stagnation'. The largest number of survey respondents indicated 'extreme stress' (64 percent 0r 43), whereas only 8 percent or 5 opted for 'moderate stress'.

Item 21 is on poor incentives including 'lack of staff development'. It reveals that majority of the respondents opted for 'high stress'. Only 12 percent or 8 indicated 'no stress'. Similarly, available statistics (item 22) showed that the respondents were more in favor of 'moderate stress' which attracted 55 percent (37) of the respondents. The least was 'extreme stress' with 8 representing 12 percent of the total respondents. As item 23

demonstrates, 42 percent (28) of the respondents it is 'moderate stress', to them (46 percent or 31). Only 12 percent (8) opted for 'extreme stress'. In terms of lack of consensus on minimum standards, approximately 40 percent (27) of survey respondents indicated 'moderate stress'. Results of the analysis on item 25 and 26 indicated that the majority of the respondents indicated 'high stress' and moderate stress respectively (61 percent or 41 and 58 percent or 39).

With regards to 'bureaucratic interference' and 'lack of recognition for good work and extra work', 54 percent (36) are for 'high stress and 61 percent or 41 are for 'extreme stress' respectively. More than half of the study population opted for 'moderate stress' with regard to poor staff relation. Results of the item 30 analysis confirm that majority of the respondents indicated 'moderate stress'.

Research Question 3: What are the most common coping techniques utilized by academic librarians to ameliorate the effects of stress?

Table 4: ways academic librarian deal with job pressure

S/N	COPING STRATEGIES	ALMOST		SOMETIMES		ALMOST NEVER		NEVER		TOTAL %
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
32	Maintain a sense of humour	36	54	19	28	8	12	4	6	100
33	Talk with family members or close friends	12	19	33	43	15	24	7	14	100
34	Work harder including evenings and weekends	2	3	9	14	19	28	37	55	100
35	Delegate responsibility	43	64	19	28	5	8	-	-	100
36	Maintain regular sleep habits	18	27	41	61	8	12	-	-	100
37	Engaging in recreation and activities such as sport, music listening, staff club	19	28	41	62	5	7	2	3	100
38	Set realistic goals (recognize job limitation)	22	33	36	54	7	10	2	3	100
39	Reading newspapers, magazines, books	21	31	29	43	12	18	5	8	100
40	Smoking cigarette and or other intoxicant	19	28	39	58	-	-	9	14	100
41	Watching television, film	15	22	36	53	12	19	4	6	100
42	Approach problems optimistically and objectively	14	21	29	58	8	12	6	9	100
43	Engage in active non-work activities eg. Gardening, painting etc	15	21	31	46	15	21	9	12	100
44	Use relaxation and stress management techniques	18	27	43	64	6	9	-	-	100
45	Take mini-vacation	16	24	29	43	16	24	6	9	100

To better understand the coping strategies and/or techniques utilized by academic librarians, several statements were proposed and the participants' options were recorded. As can be seen in table 4 above, majority of the respondents (54 percent or 36) maintain a sense of humour. Only very few, 6 percent (4) opted for 'never'. 41 percent (33) 'sometimes talk with family members or close friends but 10 percent (7) 'never'. 55 percent (37) of the respondents chose 'never' for 'working harder including evenings and weekends'. Majority of the respondents, i.e. 64 percent or 43, 'delegate responsibility'; 'almost' 8 percent or 5 'almost never'. Not feeling strongly that academic librarians can benefit from 'maintaining regular sleep habits', 61 percent (41) of the sample responded 'sometimes'. Nearly 62 percent (41) of the responding academic librarian believed that by 'engaging in recreation and activities such as sports, music listening, staff club' 'sometimes' helps them to cope with stress in their work place'.

On item 38 which is on 'set realistic goals (recognized job limitation) the study found that over 87 percent of the academic librarians answered 'never'. On reading newspapers, magazines, books, etc, the most frequent response was 'sometimes' (43 percent or 29) with 'almost always', 28 (19) indicated 'sometimes', 12 percent (8) opted for 'almost', lagging behind was 'never' (8 percent of 5).

The next option (item 40) addresses the issue of 'smoking cigarettes and other intoxicant as a coping

strategy [see item 40] Almost 86 percent opted for almost or. 'Sometimes' 9 represented by 13 percent indicated never. Watching television film is another option. 53 percent of the surveyed academic Liberian agreed on "Sometimes" with minority of the respondents indicating (6 percent or 4) indicating "never". "Approach problems optimistically and objectively" is also another important options for coping strategy. Sometimes topped the list of the four opting with 39 represented by 58 percent. "never" came last with 9 percent or 6. in the same vein, options on engage in activation – work (e.g . Gardening, Painting etc sometimes had the highest percentage of 46 percent (31) with new having the least percentage of 13 or 9. and finally on coping strategy employed by the academic Liberian, of the studied institutions, option 44 and 45 which is on "use relaxation and stress management techniques, and take mini, the data found that an average of 54 percent answered "almost".
 topped the list with 58 percent or 29. In the same vein, item 43 which in an 'engage in active non-work activities e.g. gardening, painting etc had 'sometimes' as the highest percentage of 46 percent (31) with 'never' having the least percentage of 12 percent (9). Items 44 and 45 are on 'use relaxation and stress management techniques' found that an average of 54 percent answered 'almost'.

Summary, Conclusion & Recommendation

This study dealt with the stressor and stress coping strategies of academic librarians in universities in South-East Nigeria. Studies of numerous authorities on stress and stress management are of the view that academic librarianship is a stress-laden profession. Users demand too much from academic librarians and the economic situation in the country and working environment are not helping issues. Sources of extreme stress include: user/staff, misbehaviour, more time with users, unavailability of information required by users, attitudes and actions of library management and lack of opportunity to participate in library decision-making.

This is in line with the findings of Charles Bunge who in the middle 1980's surveyed some 800 librarians selected from all types of libraries in the Midwest U.S.A. on the causes of stress in their job. The public services librarians indicated patrons and their demands, followed by workload. For technical services librarians indicated patrons and their demands, followed by workload. For technical services librarians the chief cause was workload.

The study further revealed that the sources of librarians' stress are multidimensional and in general, derive from poor working condition such as poor promotion opportunity for librarians, having to publish academic papers for promotion, delayed promotion and stagnation, and lack of recognition for good work and extra work. Librarians, irrespective of their qualifications, years of service and ranks are dissatisfied with their conditions of service. All the above mentioned are extremely stressful

From responses to the coping strategies, it can be seen that librarians attempt to moderate the effects of stress by adopting and applying various coping strategies. The main coping strategies used by academic librarians include: maintaining a sense of humour, delegate responsibility, engaging in recreation and activities such as sport, music-listening, staff club, reading newspapers, magazines, books, watching television and the use of relaxation and stress management techniques. There is no doubt that when librarians use more extensive coping strategies, they will be in better health and experience lower level s of stress and it can be concluded that the effect of work related stress, for librarians will decline. As rightly stated by Gamelch (1988) "coping with stress is a holistic and polytechnic proportion". He further argued that "effective coping consists of building a repertoire of techniques equally distributed among all of the coping categories".

In conclusion, stress or terms like burnout, stress out, over-whelmed, angry, irritable, depressed, anxious, and on verge of losing it can be described as the body reaction to any change that requires an adjustment. Library administrators need to recognize the importance of creating stress-free working environments not only to satisfy their legal obligations but also to ensure the long and healthy working life of library employee.

The researcher reviewed the theoretical concept of stress which embodies various definitions of stress, stressors and stress reactions. Studies of numerous authorities on stress were also highlighted. Types, prevalence and sources of stress is reported to manifest in situations which evoke psychological responses in the form of anxiety, tension, panic, a feeling of frustration, hopelessness, etc. Role conflict, role ambiguity, qualitative and quantitative work overload were shown to be related to symptoms of stress. These stressory would result to decrease in work performance in terms of low productivity. Studies suggest that poor working conditions, users misbehaviour, overcrowded workrooms, poor incentive and poor health, among others, have adverse effects on abilities of academic librarians to perform effectively in the library.

The researcher, therefore, would utilize some of the approaches in this review to find out the prevalence and sources of stress as well as the strategies used by academic librarians in Nigeria to cope and manage stress.

Recommendation

In the light of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

(a).   Library management should ensure that promotions are concluded and made available to staff as and when due.

(b).   There is need for continuous staff development programme and in-service training especially for newly employed librarians.

(c).   The perception on the states of librarians serves to emphasize the importance of professional training, and the need for library management to provide other needed support to the library profession.

(d).   War against indiscipline in the Nigerian society should be extended to and enforced in academic libraries in order to reduce user misbehaviour.

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