

Stress & Techno-stress Management among LIS professionals in Academic Libraries: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Today, in the 21st century, stress has become a significant issue in all facets of life as it's a fact of life for human beings. Even after the COVID-19 pandemic, Library operations have certainly changed significantly due to the use of new technologies across all services. As a result, academic LIS professionals experience stress along with technostress, which may have an adverse effect on library operations. Extreme stress has detrimental consequences for our physical and emotional well-being, as well as for our productivity at work. Investigations stated that the intensity of stress will be increased in future libraries having a digital environment, if not properly addressed or managed. This study examines the various types of stress that occur in libraries, as well as their origins and remedies. Along with its management strategies, it also highlights the elements that lead to technostress among academic LIS professionals.

KEYWORDS: Stress, Technostress, Stress Management, Technostress management, LIS Professionals, ICT skills, Physical and mental Health, Academic libraries etc.

INTRODUCTION

Stress has taken the position of other significant diseases of the modern world. The term 'stress' derives out of the Latin term 'strictus' which means tight or compressed. Its modern sense was first applied in the 17th century when it was applied to a physical strain or pressure. It is estimated that 75-90 percent of all existing illnesses in the modern society may be as a result of stress. Librarians are subjected to very low levels of stress compared to the professionals like doctors, police, etc. and have a smaller amount of stress in general. Since the tasks of the planning, procurement, preparation and budgeting are usually handled by the top positions including administrators, library professionals usually expect library administrators to be subjected to a lot of stress.

Stress and Technostress are two similar concepts which may present in the life of academic libraries and LIS professionals. Stress is the natural response of a person to pressure or demands and it may be initiated by various factors, including workload, deadlines, interpersonal ties, and organizational change. In college libraries, the stress

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levels may be especially high as the work is fast, dynamic and the responsibility is multiple with the added expectation of the library users and stakeholders that can be extremely high in many cases.

Technostress, however, is a form of stress, which is as a result of the application of technology. It is the adverse psychological and physiological impact that might arise as a result of utilizing digital devices and software, or when the user experiences excessive, or insufficient, in his/her capacity to use the technology. It may come in various forms in the academic library i.e., implementation of new software or systems, necessity to maintain with the ever changing technologies and the need to offer the users smooth digital services. The implementation of new technologies or systems may be exceptionally stressful to the members of the academic library staff that might lack the training and support needed to make them work. Also, the digital services demand may be too great so other adverse consequences may ensue. Information overload, time management, customer services, finance, advanced technology and professional development etc. are the causes of stress among LIS professionals.

The result of this Stress on the library professionals is a lack of job satisfaction, high turnover, and increased absenteeism. Libraries should identify and deal with such sources of stress so as to create a healthy and enabling work environment among their employees. Academic libraries should identify and mitigate both stress and technostress as a way of ensuring that members of staff are well-tuned or functioning and offer quality services to users. This may include training and equipping personnel to overcome stress, developing a good organizational culture and good technology management measures. Technostress may induce poor physical health in form of headaches, eye strain, muscle tension, as well as mental health manifesting itself in form of anxiety, irritable behavior, and burnout. It may also cause reduced productivity, low job satisfaction and absenteeism in the work place. Such steps as establishing boundaries in regards to technology usage, having frequent breaks with digital gadgets, and finding support in coworkers or mental health services may help the individuals to deal with the issue of technostress.

THE STUDY HAS THE FOLLOWING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the key triggers of stress among Library and Information science (LIS) practitioners.
2. To examine the causes behind the technostress in LIS professionals.
3. To examine how stress and technostress affect the life of LIS professionals.
4. To examine the stress management methods and techniques that were embraced by LIS professionals to be able to cope with stress and technostress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data is gathered by way of books, web materials, research articles, e-journals and e-books.

Need and Scope of Study

Stress and technostress management is a burning problem of numerous professions and library professionals are not an exception. Libraries are significant establishments which facilitate learning, research and community involvement. Nevertheless, the job is sometimes stressful, as the librarian is a person who has to contend with various requests, such as administration of resources, service to clients, and adaption to new technologies.

Technostress is the emotional and psychological reaction that is brought about when new technologies are introduced to them or when they are compelled to utilize technology at a level they do not feel very comfortable with. The process of changing technology implementation has become a part of academic libraries, and the necessity of researching technostress in academic libraries has become an issue of increased importance. The environment of Academic libraries is now seen to be stressful and Techno-stressful that can affect the performance and job satisfaction of library employees. It may also influence the quality of services delivered to patrons in the library and this can cause low patron satisfaction as well as usages of library services.

It is thus important to discover the technostress in academic libraries to ensure the success of such institutions. The necessity of the research concerning the stress management in the library professionals has increased. To begin with, stress may cause burnout and that may translate to high turnover rate and reduction in quality of service offered by libraries. Second, libraries are not financed properly and the librarians usually have huge workloads and insufficient resources and this can be a stressor. Third, librarians have experienced increased stress during the COVID-19 pandemic because most of them are forced to learn how to handle new methods of delivering services and assisting patrons.

THE CONCEPT OF STRESS

Stress can be defined as any change that causes physical, emotional, or mental discomfort. Your body's reaction to anything that demands focus or action is stress. Everyone goes through periods of stress. Yet, how you react to a stressful circumstance can have a significant impact on your general level of enjoyment. Stress can be either mental or physical. The mind and body are both disturbed by stress. Unexpectedly, stress can be advantageous. In truth, we require stress in order to complete tasks and be secure. It might inspire us or provide us the opportunity to take charge of issues in our lives. But, excessive stress can also have a negative impact on one's physical and mental health. The actions you take to manage stress can improve your physical and emotional health and make you feel less overwhelmed.

Your ability to handle or manage the issue has more to do with stress. Stress is mostly what we experience when we react to change, which is a constant element of life. Even when various people encounter the same kinds of circumstances, some people experience extreme anxiety while others maintain their composure. Everything depends on how conscious we are of our capacity to overcome obstacles and deal with stressful situations. Stress can have either a beneficial or negative effect. Positive stress inspires, concentrates energy, enhances performance, and gives you a boost of energy. It usually gives a person positive energy. Negative stress, on the other hand, creates anxiety, is perceived as unpleasant and chronic, beyond our ability to cope. However, because of the nature of human beings, there will be numerous reactions to certain situations, making it difficult to differentiate between positive and negative stress.

TYPES OF STRESS

1. Acute Stress (Short-Term): The most prevalent kind, brought on by current or upcoming demands, such an impending deadline, a traffic bottleneck, or an unexpected fear. Although it triggers the "fight or flight" reaction, it typically goes away soon without causing any lasting harm.

2. Frequent Episodic Acute Stress: This type of acute stress occurs when it occurs frequently or on a regular basis. This personality type frequently leads chaotic lives, is always running, and feels overburdened, all of which can contribute to stress burnout.

3. Chronic Stress (Long-Term): This type of stress is persistent and debilitating and arises from long-term circumstances such as poverty, a bad marriage, or a work that one despises. It is thought to be the most detrimental kind, causing major problems with both mental and physical health.

4. Eustress: Eustress is known as positive stress which is a healthy type of stress that focuses energy, inspires, and is thrilling rather than terrifying. Getting promoted, purchasing a home, or going on an exhilarating ride are a few examples.

LIS PROFESSIONALS ARE STRESSED BY THE FOLLOWING FACTORS

According to the results of several researches, there are other stressful variables and causes in addition to workload that are not good for employees' health. Like many other institutions, libraries have undergone rapid changes over the years. The e-library environment has significantly altered the roles and services of libraries. Consequently, the demands and stresses experienced by LIS professionals in various programs contribute significantly to stress factors. Unhappy employment, inadequate management, inadequate staff of library, inadequate salary, a challenging task or too much responsibilities in libraries are some of the main causes and contributing factors. Other factors and sources of stress for LIS professionals, include working long hours, taking a passive role in decision-making, facing discrimination, and working in hazardous conditions. According to Schneider (1991), additional causes of stress in libraries include family problems such as marriage, divorce, economic obligations, job loss, emotional problems, chronic illness, attitudes and perceptions, and impractical expectations. Therefore, the following causes are considered while stressing and straining the current twenty-first century LIS professionals:

1. Change in Technology: Implementation of new technology is a rapidly changing phenomenon. As a result, the use of said technology in libraries is developing at an alarming rate, putting pressure on library staff. According to Routray and Satpathy's 2007 description, there are four types of stress in the e-library context: technical, physical, psychological, and situational. Among library and information professionals, technology stress is defined as the stress caused by the creation and use of information technology.

2. Complex systems: Library management systems, electronic resources, and other technological tools can be complex and difficult to use. LIS professionals may struggle to navigate these systems, leading to frustration and stress.

3. Heavy reliance on technology: Academic libraries rely heavily on technology to provide services to patrons. When technology fails, it can lead to delays and disruptions, causing stress for both library staff and users.

4. The reliability of hardware and software: Growing technology requires proper hardware and software requirements. So it depends on the reliability of hardware and software facilities. If not fulfilled the requirements, it can create technostress among academic library staff members.

5. Lack of training: Inadequate training on technology can contribute to technostress. Library staff may feel overwhelmed and stressed when they lack the knowledge and skills needed to use technological tools effectively.

6. Change in Library Collection: From Print to non-print material, libraries are now acquiring electronic documents i.e. In digital format. This drastic change has affected from positive and negative point of view. Thinking on positive side, e-collection is available from anywhere anytime, on the other hand from acquisition to management

of e-collection may cause stress on LIS professionals. Many factors are responsible for this stress such as adequate budget, proper selection of vendors, cost of e-books etc.

7. Changing need and high expectations of readers: With the expansion of new ICT skills, the demands of readers are changing day by day. The attitude of readers towards pin pointed information has become important. As a result, acquiring, organizing, and retrieving needed information within less time has caused huge stress on the minds of LIS professionals. Readers expect quick and easy access to information, and technology is often seen as the solution to meet these expectations. However, when technology fails or is not working as expected, it can lead to stress and frustration for both staff and patrons.

8. Increased workload: Due to advanced technology development and performing various functions, it results in increasing workload. Completing assigned task within time framework creates technostress among staff members of academic libraries.

9. Number of inadequate staff: Inadequate number of staff in library is a major problem to stressful situations at library. Doing more work with less number of staff members has become very common which creates a strong source of stress due to over workload.

10. Infrastructure Change in Libraries: Changes in physical infrastructure have become a crucial need in today's libraries. The higher management authorities are reluctant to develop facilities to meet with rising need for space requirements. And others are moving into smaller spaces or losing space to other library activities in new buildings.

11. The Library Environment Has Changed: Many libraries have moved from older, manual systems to automated systems, and more recently to the newest, most cutting-edge digital library systems. Because to the nature of the academy, the obligation to offer user service to students, and the strain to satisfy promotion and term criteria, the symptoms of tired stress can impact all sorts of academic librarians, professional staff, and supporting staff (Huprich, 2007). To deploy the new system, staff must comprehend it and abandon outdated practices.

SYMPTOMS AND EFFECTS OF STRESS OR TECHNOSTRESS ARE AS FOLLOWS

The effects of stress and technostress are almost same and it affects both mental as well as physical health. Physical health affects as a result of severe Headache, heart problems, dizziness, stomach pain, diarrhea, nausea, increased infection and chronic disease, These physical illnesses results in adverse effects on mental health such as Hypertension, Anxiety, Memory loss, lack of concentration, lack of direction, thought congestion, feelings of tiredness/exhaustion, bad temper. As mental health disturbs, disturbed sleep changes human behavior, loss of hunger, low presentation, low confidence, indecision, introversion, anger and aggressiveness, make use of of stimulants.

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF STRESS AND TECHNOSTRESS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

1. Yoga, Meditation and Exercise: To overcome from physical problems, yoga, meditation and exercise on daily basis must be done. Taking a walk at least for half an hour during a day with cool mind, Taking a deep breathing, Giving time for self also works on reducing stress levels. During exercise, stretching relaxes muscles and helps to reduce stress.

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- 2. Positive thinking:** To be positive in each and every situation really works. Positive thinking improves work efficiency and impacts positively. Remembering good things in life also reduces stress.
- 3. Time Management:** Following time management techniques at work also reduces heavy workload. It helps for setting boundaries between work life and personal life.
- 4. Reading:** Regular reading can also help to cope up with difficult situations. Reading for at least six minutes has been found to lower stress levels by up to 68%, surpassing even the effects of exercising or listening to music. By promoting a condition of "cognitive escape," it reduces cortisol levels, heart rates, and muscle tension.
- 5. Provision of adequate technical training:** To reduce technostress, it is important to provide adequate training to library staff for using of technological tools. This can include training on new software or systems, as well as refresher training on existing tools. These types of training must be repetitive after every six months so that staff will get familiar with that type of technology.
- 6. Appointment of Specialized staff:** To implement advanced technology tools, there must be specialized staff in library such as information officer. This position must be there in academic libraries, those who want to make severe changes in working environment of academic libraries and fulfill the diverse need of its users.
- 7. Offer support:** Providing support to staff while facing problems with technology can help reduce technostress. Libraries can offer technical support, help desk services, or training on how to troubleshoot common issues.
- 8. Set realistic expectations:** Setting realistic expectations for staff and patrons can help reduce stress. Libraries can communicate expected wait times for services, provide guidance on using technology effectively, and manage patron expectations for response times.
- 9. Positive work environment:** Creating a positive work environment can help reduce stress and promote well-being. Libraries can offer wellness programs, workshops, provide opportunities for professional development, and recognize staff for their contributions.

CONCLUSION

Studies related to stress management among LIS professionals is necessary to promote a healthy and productive work environment. The findings of the study may suggest different ways to reduce stress and promote healthy well-being among librarians, ultimately resulting in an increase in the quality of services provided by libraries. In the twenty-first century, LIS professionals still have difficulties in their workplace. LIS professionals can manage stress among their staff members to lessen their own stress, even though it is hard to eliminate all sources of stress in the electronic workplace of libraries. Fostering a collaborative work environment, identifying stressors, addressing problems as they emerge, and encouraging teamwork in the creation of a healthy work environment are the best ways to manage stress in an electronic library context.

To determine the origins, effects, and potential treatments of technostress, academic libraries must investigate the condition. It can assist academic libraries in giving their customers better services and enhancing the wellbeing of their workers. Academic libraries need to take a holistic strategy to managing technostress that involves education, streamlining technology, encouraging breaks, providing assistance, setting reasonable goals, and creating a happy work atmosphere. Libraries may lessen technological stress and foster well-being among their staff and users by putting these techniques into practice.

The traditional idea of the library profession is undergoing quick alterations in the shifting context of contemporary technological growth. The profession's preconceived notions have been completely altered by the development of computer, software, and internet technology. The structure and nature of the library profession have undergone significant modifications as a result of these changes. When they restructure their life to accommodate the shifting library environment, employment structure, career promotions, etc., library and information professionals face stress. Of course, there are many librarians and library professionals who deal with a variety of work pressures, annoyances, and stress in the libraries for a variety of reasons. While it is not feasible to completely eliminate work-related stress for all librarians, since stress is not a disease in and of itself, library professionals can manage or reduce their work-related stress through a variety of organizational, planning, and management techniques. The goal of the current study is to not only understand the causes and effects of stress but also to offer strategies for coping with it.

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