

# Stress management in Digital Library Environment

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## Abstract:

*Stress has become a major concern of the modern times and exists in almost every working and living environments. Previous researchers have already discussed about the job stress in the library professionals. In the present era, the medical library professionals are faces with constant challenges in their working environments. Medical Library professionals have to learn about the new advanced technology of digital library. This article mainly attempt to discuss about the stress in the digital library environment of medical library professionals. It describes about the types of stress, factors causing stress, methods of stress management, however, to reduce stress the work processes in library should be made simple and easy to handle. Stress management in library should support the library professionals by designing and maintaining work processes that could help the library professionals to overcome their stress levels.*

**Key words:** Digital, Library, Stress, Technology.

## Introduction

Stress is the changes which our body experience to adjust in the changing and demanding environment. In psychology, stress is a feeling of strain and pressure. Less amount of stress may be desired, beneficial and even healthy. Larger amount of stress may result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger and depression which develop frustration to work and several health problems such as headaches, high blood pressure, heart disease, mental disorders, sleeplessness etc. According to Aldwin (2007), stressors can be in the form of workload, speed of work, dangerous working environment, interpersonal discord with supervisors, colleagues and discrimination based on age and sex. Library staff in medical colleges library

exposed to considerable amount of stress to carry out the duties of acquiring, processing and preserving library materials for accessibility to staff, students and researchers. Ilo (2009) described libraries as the heart of institutions which are expected to maintain standard books, journals and audio-visual collections. With the development and application of information technologies, the library environment has changed from the traditional library to computerized library, then automated library and recently to digital library. The library professionals experience stress as they readjust their lives with the changing library environment, job rotation, job promotion etc. Stress in library professionals causes adverse effects on library staff as well as on the parent institution so strategies can be put forward for stress management.

### **Kinds of Stress in Digital Libraries:**

In digital library environment, stress can be divided into following types:

**1. Technological stress:** Main reason of stress in library professionals is the development and addition of application of information technologies (IT). Library professionals are not having knowledge new techniques of computer hardware and software. Further due to financial, technological constraints, it is difficult to keep pace with the changing technologies. Besides the change in information storage media, from print to electronic, then digital media have resulted in the storage space facilities.

**2. Physical stress:** The digital library environment has changed the physical environment of the library. Work on the computer for long hours, sitting and working for long hours in air-conditioned environment also affect the physical health of the library staff and increased the stress related illness. Mental stress can be traced to a person's mental state of mind which involves expectation, fears, regrets etc. According to Routray and Satpathy (2007) stress has both physical and emotional effects on people and can create positive or negative feelings.

**3. Job security stress:** The new techniques of IT have compelled the library professionals to acquire new knowledge along with the traditional library functions and services. But there are limited facilities like training program courses available for learning of new techniques of IT to library professionals. This causes the stress among library professionals. Further appointment of information technology (IT) professionals into the library profession also increased the fear and stress among library professionals for their job security in future.

#### **Literature review:**

**Routray & Satpathy (2007)** described the types of stress in digital library and divided them into technological, physical, mental and situational. Technological stress is due to the development and application of information technologies among library staff. Thus, there is the necessity to keep pace with the changing technologies which due to financial, time or technological constraints. **Lemu AA (2007)** described that stress in library professionals is the byproduct of the difficulties encountered in performing their

duties and responsibilities. However, to reduce stress the work processes in library should be made simple and easy to handle. **Ilo P (2016)** examined the various causes and management of stress among librarians. Unmanaged stress in academic libraries reduces output and may lead to ill-health and death. **Vij R (2017)** analysed the best way to manage the pressures and stress of library professionals in digital library environment. Library professionals can manage or reduce their work stress by various personal, planning, team work and organizational strategies.

#### **Stress causing factors in library professionals:**

Stress can be derived from three sources such as physical, mental or psychological and situational. Physical stress can be occurred due to over workload, restlessness and imbalanced diet. Psychological or mental stress can be traced to a person's mental state of mind. Situational stress is occurred due to interaction with the modern techniques like application of digital library. The digital library environment

has exhibited a drastic change in the work and functions of libraries. There are many more factors which are causing stress in the library professionals.

**1. Change in library environment:** Library environment changed from older manual system to automated systems and recently to digital library system. Library professionals have facing lots of problems to understand new techniques of digital library which increases the stress in library professionals.

**2. Technological change:** The information and communication technology (ICT) is a fast changing phenomena which cause the drastic changes in the library environment and become the factor of stress among library professionals.

**3. Change in physical facilities:** With the increased use of electronic systems and formats in digital library, space required is also increase, so library authorities are reluctant to expand facilities to manage with increasing space requirements. But these hybrid types of libraries having both print and non-print documents

facing lots of problems due to change in physical facilities of the library.

**4. Change in type of document:** Digital library are having hard copies of documents as well as in alternative formats such as CD-ROM, electronic documents or digital format. These materials which were once handles on an ad hoc basis, must now be incorporated into the normal acquisitions workflow.

**5. Low staff strength:** Due to addition of digital library, library environment become restructured, layoffs, reduces the staff positions and increases the workload. Due to low staff strength in the library has been a source of stress with the increasing workload.

**6. Changing user demands:** With the development of various micro subjects, information explosion and time bound academic programmes changes the attitude of users towards the pin pointed information.

**Effects of stress:**

Stress factors cause the following changes in an individual:

**1. Physical effects of stress:** Physical stress causes headache, heart palpitations, stomach pain, diarrhea, nausea, changes in blood pressure, respiration, intestinal motility etc.

**2. Mental effects of stress:** This stress shows the symptoms of memory lapses, difficulties in concentrating, fatigue, irritability, loss of sense of humor and de-motivation.

**3. Emotional effects of stress:** This type of stress shows the symptoms of aggression, indecisiveness, loss of sense of humour, irritability etc.

**4. Behavioural effects of stress:** shows disturbed sleep, loss of appetite, reduced performance, low self esteem, increased use of stimulants and increased absenteeism.

#### **Management of stress among library professionals:**

Individuals make various attempts to reduce the discomfort associated with stress. Library

professionals should manage the sources of stress positively and changing the library and information science professionals reaction to it.

**1. Aware about the sources of stress and their reactions:** Stress reaction is triggered by the perception of danger, which may be physical and emotional. In such situation, it is better to reduce the intensity of emotional reactions to stress. To maintain emotional reserves, stress prevention requires a joint effort at work, as stress is a shared responsibility.

**2. Organized:** If library professionals are unorganized in their work in library, then they become unbalanced physically, emotionally and mentally. Library professionals become more organized and prioritizing at library work greatly increase energy level and decreases stress level.

**3. Meditation:** Library professionals focus on their mind, thoughts, breathing and body posture allows them to fully relax physically, mentally and emotionally. Meditation is one of the best tools for library professionals have to counteract

stress and their brain's bias to hold on to negativity.

**4. Balanced and nutritious diet:** Everybody has different nutritional requirements. Nourishing of body with right food will give energy needed to manage the problems properly including stress. Library professionals must adopt the habit of eating balanced and nutritious food to tackle with the sources of stress.

**5. Positive attitude:** All library professionals have maintained positive attitude towards the stressful situations and send out positive vibes of energy and the same will return to you.

**6. Maintain balance between workplace and personal work:** Library professionals should engage themselves into the activities and work which helps them to relax their body and mind and to forget their worries. Library professionals should maintain balance between home life and work life to make stress free environment.

**7. Support among library professionals:** Staff members are responsible for contributing to well-being and collaboration in the workplace

by clarifying roles and responsibilities within the group and with the supervisor.

**8. Restful sleep:** Restful sleep is an important key to keep library professionals healthy and strong. When they are well-rested, then they can approach stressful situations more strongly at their workplace.

### **Conclusion:**

The negative impact of stress on library professionals and their output cannot be overemphasized. This causes ill-health, low productivity in the library professionals. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce the stress in library professionals at the workplace by following the stress management methods and create the healthy and peaceful working environment at library. Today's fast-paced library environment called upon to do more than what the professionals did in the past both in their personal or professional lives. It is simply not possible to remove all sources of stress in digital library workplace but the library supervisor can manage stress among their staff

members which will help to reduce its consequences such as poor morale, reduced performance and team conflict. The best method to manage stress in the digital library environment are recognize the methods of stress, appreciate people's differences, create a supportive culture, resolve problems and social support. Thus, it is necessary for library professionals to aware about the stressors and their emotional and physical reaction for better stress management. Work stress can be minimized by copying strategies such as effective communication within the environment integrating new skills into professional responsibility, maintain physical health, learn new technological skills, and this increased feelings of confidence and competence among library professionals and help to reduce the stress.

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