



## STRESS MANAGEMENT AS CORRELATES OF CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The study investigated stress management strategies as correlates of contextual performance of librarians. The study was guided by 2 research questions and null hypotheses.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is librarians, consisting of administrative librarians and non-administrative librarians. The entire population of 191 librarians was studied; therefore, no sampling was made. Data were collected with a set of questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to analyze data. Standard linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses on a 0.05 level of significance.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that there is high between individual stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians. There is a high relationship between organizational stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians.

**Implications:** The effect of stress on the human body could affect the behaviour and attitude of librarians towards their job. There is therefore need for librarians to employ stress management strategies in order to be emotional and psychologically balanced to carry out library house-keeping functions effectively.

**Originality and Value:** It was recommended that the library management should provide a complaint box, web complaint platform, committees, etc to collect users' complains about the attitude of librarians which will require exigent action to address them etc.

**Paper type:** Empirical research

**Key Words:** Librarians, Contextual Performance, Stress, Stress Management Strategies, University Libraries, South-East, Nigeria

### Introduction

Good attitude and personality are some of the driving forces to maintaining good and positive customer relationships in any service institution. When employees develop, build and maintain good relationships with customers/users, they will be pleased to continually patronize the goods and services of that service institution. As naturally social creatures, MindTools (2019: para. 3) states, "we crave friendship and positive interactions, just as we do food and water. So it makes sense that the better our relationships are at work, the happier and more productive we're going to be."

McFarlin (2019: para.5) pointed out that a good relationship in the workplace leads to increased employee productivity, "a happy and well-adjusted workforce is a productive one. By feeling more connected to their place of employment, workers naturally want to try harder to help keep the company going and to help it grow." The university library as an information service institution provides services that support the academic, research and social information needs of users in the university community. The main focus of library services should not be to satisfy the information needs

of general users but should be to satisfy the specific information needs of individual users. This requires offering personal assistance to users. For the librarians to provide personal assistance to the users, they ought to cultivate good relationship traits.

Global best practice in librarianship demands selfless and volunteering services that go beyond the job specification or roles in order to satisfy the information needs of the users. Fogaça, Rego, Melo, et al. (2018) argue that work performance, in a multidimensional perspective, should be defined in terms of behaviour rather than results and includes only those behaviours that are relevant to the organization's goals. Library managers desire to recruit and pay more attention to librarians that are charismatic, possess flair and knack qualities, have good personality traits to relate very well with customers and colleagues. Librarians who are able to deliver their job duties by going beyond the task specifications are referred by Bish and Kabanoff (2014) as "star performers." Groysberg (2010) suggests systematically identification of outstanding performers, the 'stars' who consistently demonstrate superior performance in relation to others. Librarians ought to be star performers in order to be outstanding information service providers or information experts. Such librarians make outstanding efforts by going beyond their job scope to ensure that customers are satisfied. Such librarians are energetic, creative, inventive, and rational in their ideas that appeal to the taste of users. Such librarians possess the flair to add glamour to aesthetic library services.

From the foregoing discourse, it is pertinent for librarians to cultivate an aptitude for team spirit, teamwork, collaboration, mentorship, constructive critiquing, and motivating others as the major keys to maintaining good relationships with users and colleagues in the

library complex. Markus (2019: para. 1) states, "one of the main objectives of any working professional, whether it be a manager or an employee, is to deliver high performance on the job and to support your fellow peers, teams, and co-workers to do the same." Conversely, so many factors distort the personality of many librarians. Such factors include poor users' attitude, poor attitudes from colleagues, poor leadership styles, inadequate resources, poor incentives, and stress exposure. The symptoms of stress exposure can manifest in the behaviours and attitudes of librarians such as emotional outbursts, overreactions to flimsy issues, quick to anger, inability to communicate very well, etc.

Stress is one of the factors that negatively affect the personality and relationship traits of librarians. Stress also affects the general performance of librarians in the university library although in some cases it could spur them to do what they are supposed to do. Arguably, stress is a double-edged sword in the sense that it can be productive and counter-productive. Vijayan (2018: 21) states that, "job stress is a double-edged sword. It can be both productive and counter-productive. It can be productive when it helps or motivates people to work more and perform well. It can be counter-productive when external factors create more pressure to work but do not lead to a concrete outcomes." However, the harmful effects of stress are enormous. Jadoun, Kushwah, Barodiya et al. (2017) aver that stress accounts for 80 percent of all illnesses either directly or indirectly. Fonkeng (2018) found that 68.75% of respondents affirm that stress affects their occupational performance, and find it difficult to perform well under stressful conditions. Consequently, Dina (2016) found that stress affects the performance of librarians contextually. Therefore, since stress can affect the performance of employees, there is need

for stress management that will help them in dealing and handling stress and its effects.

This study was essential because there is need to determine the relationship between stress management practices and the occupational performance of librarians.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The specific objectives and research questions of the study were to determine the:

1. relationship between individual stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians;

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between individual stress management strategies and contextual performance librarians?

2. relationship between organizational stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians.

**RQ2:** What is the relationship between organizational stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested on 0.05 level of significance:

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between individual stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between organizational stress management strategies and the contextual performance of librarians.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Contextual Performance of Librarians**

The performance of librarians is an important factor in the library system. The performance of librarians in university libraries determines the extent library services are meeting the research and academic information needs of the users.

“The progress of any organization or establishment can obviously be measured by the performance of workers” (Olorunsola, 2013: 285). The performance of employees is the most critical subject which plays an important role in accomplishing organizational goals (Wang, Yen and Liu, 2015). Muchhal (2014) declares that librarians’ performance is important for organizations as their performance leads to business success. It is also important for individuals, as achieving tasks can be a source of satisfaction. Librarians can be underperforming when they are not meeting the expectations of users and the library management from them. However, Bar and Jarus (2015) found that job performance affects mental health and life satisfaction. Therefore, librarians can perform credibly when they carry out their duties effectively, when the users are satisfied with the services of the library, and when they use their skills, expertise, and competences in ensuring that the services of the library are appealing and tasteful to the users’ community.

Job performance dictates how well or bad a librarian is doing or contributing to helping a university library achieve her goals and objectives. Job performance according to Fogaça, Rego, Melo et al. (2018) are skills, professional competences, and expertise applied in the context of a duty or task or to the way individual acts in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, promoting the accomplishment of organizational results and mission. Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) view job performance as the result of an employee’s motivation and ability, and how he/ she adapts to the situation constrains and the uncongenial environment. In essence, job performance is the extent librarians contribute to the effective services of the university library by carrying out their assigned duties very well, by rendering personal and selfless services to the users and by achieving goals amid changes and emergencies

occurring in the university library. Markus (2019) confirms that in recent years contextual performance is viewed as an integral part of overall job performance. These performances relate to how well librarians use of their expertise, knowledge, and skills to carry out their professional duties for effective services that support and promote academics and research in universities.

Contextual performance is the voluntary actions librarians take in order to enhance the library services which are not specified in their job roles and duties. This aspect of performance has to do with the personality, charisma, and flair of the librarians which are evident in the way they attend to issues in the libraries. Contextual performance is voluntary actions exhibited by librarians that contribute to effective service delivery and achievement of the objectives and goals of the libraries. Contextual performance is not part of job specifications, rather, they are personal inputs, creative thoughts, extra efforts or decisions and sterling behaviors that add more value to the library's statutory functions. Reilly and Zvi (2012) identified the characteristics of contextual performance as cooperating and helping others, voluntarily performing extra-role activities, persevering with enthusiasm and extra determination to complete assignments successfully, defending the organization's goals and adhering to organizational policies even when this is inconvenient. Contextual performance according to Borman and Motowidlo (1997) have to do with the performance that is not formally required as part of the job but that helps shape the social and psychological context of the library. Contextual performance is connected with the personality traits of the librarians. Such personality traits associated with contextual performance include extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and emotional stability.

Librarians whose contextual performance is high are more valued, recognized and appreciated than those who only concentrate on their assigned duties. Contextual performance has to do with the personality of the librarians. The personality of librarians plays an important role in the high level of their contextual performance. Such personality traits as being jovial, charismatic and free with people are qualities of contextual performance. Alibegovic, Hawkins and Parmar (2009) posit that interpersonal facilitation and job dedication behaviours were also proved to be distinct behaviours within the contextual performance. Delgado-Rodríguez, Hernández-Fernaud, Rosales et al. (2018) found that conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, as well as self-efficacy, have a relationship with contextual performance. Gellatly and Irving (2001) found that extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness as personality traits that relate to contextual performance.

From the foregoing views, it is lucid that contextual performance involves exceptional behaviors, characters, and attitudes which are aimed at adding value to job specifications and supporting the entire library system for effective library service delivery. However, Mwanza (2016) found that poor work relationships, lack of support at work, and poor planning negatively affected productivity.

Contextual performance is more of volunteering gestures and selfless services. It is worthwhile to note that the management of private organizations pays more attention to the employees' contextual performance than the management of government-owned institutions. In fact, the former prefer employing persons with sterling and charismatic qualities. Contextual performance according to Gellatly and Irving (2001) are behaviours that go beyond formal technical role requirements. Librarians who are able to deliver their job duties by going beyond the task specifications

are referred by Bish and Kabanoff (2014) as “star performers.” Groysberg (2010) advises library managers to systematically identify outstanding performers, the ‘stars’ who consistently demonstrate superior performance in relation to others. Volunteering for additional responsibilities towards users, adhering to organizational rules and policies, maintaining a good relationship with colleagues and users, effective communication skills, etc are attributes of contextual performance

### **Stress Management Strategies**

Stress management is used to help librarians deal with stress especially at the early stage because if stress is ignored it will degenerate to illnesses and diseases. Therefore, Rajabi, Jahangiri, Molaeifar, et al (2018) suggest that effective control measures are required to reduce and manage stress factors, in order to improve performance and efficiency. Smith and Perez (2018) advocate for the establishment of baseline levels in order to plan, implement and evaluate successfully manage stress. Keller (2013: 13) buttress on the need for stress management based on the negative effects of stress. In essence, stress as a natural occurrence in the body can beset the entire body system or components if not properly managed. Hence, stress management becomes an imperative activity that must be part of daily routines.

Stress management is a global interest that every human being must appreciate in order to maintain a healthy life and prosperous well being. The concept of stress and stress management is increasingly gaining recognition in literature and the globe (Imeokparia and Ediagbonya, 2013). Affirming the effective result achieved through stress management, Brewerton and Woolley (2016) report that they spent an afternoon working with the finalists to reduce their stress levels, to get them in the right frame of mind for revision to make them more successful students. The library

management can get the best from the librarians and other library staff, make them more efficient and productive by creating strategies for managing stress management in the university libraries.

This could involve creating and introducing stress management programs for the librarians. Tew and Idris (2016) stress management programs that are collective in nature also provide greater opportunities for friendship and social interactions, mutual teaching and learning, voluntary work and moral support, all of which contribute toward a more wholesome lifestyle for retirees. In consonance with this finding, Nnaeto and Ndoh (2018) found that there is a significant relationship between some stress management techniques and staff contextual performance. McPheat (2010: 9) argues that with out effective stress management, the problem tends to increase in a snowball effect until absenteeism, disability, injury on the job, poor communication skills, and poor relationships at work results. The library management could develop plans to include stress management programs as part of the services they deliver to the users. This will go a long way in boosting the confidence and level of satisfaction users derive from the university libraries.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Some related studies have been conducted on stress management strategies and occupational performance. Kihara and Mugambi (2018) examined the effect of stress management strategies on employees’ performance in the public service. The findings reveal that counselling services, flexitime programs, meditation techniques, and relaxation techniques strategies, which had an effect on employees’ performance explaining a variation of 91.1% and that there was a strong relationship between employees’ performance and stress management strategies. The

regression model also indicated that there was a positive relationship between employees' performance and the factor variables studies of relaxation techniques and counselling services.

Soegoto and Narimawati (2017) studied the contribution of stress management and good employee performance towards the success of a company. The results revealed stress management significantly influences employees' performance. Path coefficient = 0.524 with (P= 0.000), this implies that good stress management behaviour of employees at company X is majorly shaped with commitment and love for the job, supported by good work relationships with peers; and based path coefficients as stress management among workers at company X increases, the level of performance also increases.

Enekwe, Agu and Eziedo (2014) examined stress management techniques in banking sectors in Nigeria. The study sort to find out the relationship between female and male coping mechanisms during stress. The result shows that male and female bank employees will not significantly cope with stress management techniques in a Nigerian banking industry. It also shows that male and female bankers were found not to differ significantly on their stress management technique and that stress management is not gendered-sensitive or gender-centric.

Nnabuiife, Onyeizugbe and Onwuka (2012) conducted a study on stress management and occupational performance among female lecturers in Nigeria. The finding shows that job stress affects the health of female academics in Nigerian Universities. The health of female lecturers the intellectual output of female lecturers will continue to dwindle as a direct result of the absence of stress management programs in universities.

Ugwuja(2009) conducted a study on preferred stress management strategies adopted by the

administrative staff of tertiary institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The results of the study showed that administrators admitted that all the items were sources of stress to them. All the preferred job-related stress management strategies were accepted by administrative staff except, items 1, 2, and 10. In the preferred personal characteristics stress management strategies by administrative staff items 1, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10 were accepted as management strategies. The administrative staff adopted the entire items in the preferred general stress management strategies.

### Methodology

The correlational survey research design was adopted in the study which was conducted in South East, Nigeria. The population of the study is 191 librarians. The sample size is 191; the entire population was studied, therefore, no sampling was made. Data were collected with a pair of researcher-made questionnaire. The first questionnaire with 41 items is titled Stress Management Strategies Questionnaire (SMSQ) and the second questionnaire with 16 items is titled Contextual Performance Questionnaire (OPQ). Cronbach Alpha method was used for the reliability test. The overall reliability result for Stress Management Strategies Questionnaire (SMSQ) is .89 and .91 for the Contextual Performance Questionnaire (OPQ). Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient (r) (PPMCC) was used for the data analysis. Linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results for the correlational analysis were calculated and interpreted as follows: 0.00 - 0.20=very low relationship; 0.21 - 0.40= low relationship; 0.41 - 0.60= medium relationship; 0.61 - 0.80 = high relationship; and 0.81 and above = very high relationship.

**Results**

strategies and contextual performance of librarians?

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between individual stress management

**Table 1: Pearson’s Moment Correlation Co-efficient Analysis of the Relationship between Individual Stress Management Strategies and Contextual Performance of Librarians**

Variable	Mean	Std	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Individual Stress Management Strategies	63.69	9.46	146	0.61	0.38
Contextual Performance	52.28	8.59			

Table 1 shows that the correlational coefficient (r) between individual stress management strategies and librarians’ contextual performance is 0.61. This implies that a high relationship exists between individual stress management strategies and librarians’ contextual performance. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) associated with the

correlational coefficient (r) 0.61 is 0.38. This is an indication that 38% of stress management strategies predict the contextual performance of librarians.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no statistically significant relationship between individual stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians.

**Table 2: Standard Regression Analysis of Individual Stress Management Strategies and Librarians’ Contextual Performance**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
Regression	4104.922	145	4104.922	89.576	0.00	Rejected
Residual	6598.996		45.826			
Total	10703.918		45.826			

Table 2 shows that the obtained F-ratio 89.576 is associated with an exact probability value of 0.00. The null hypothesis was rejected because 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance 0.05 set for the study. Therefore, it can be inferred that individual stress management strategies

significantly relates to the contextual performance of librarians.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between organizational stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians?

**Table 3: Pearson’s Moment Correlation Co-efficient Analysis of the Relationship between Organizational Stress Management Strategies and Contextual Performance of Librarians**

Variable	Mean	Std	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Organizational Stress Management Strategies	63.95	11.66	146	0.62	0.39
Contextual Performance	53.03	12.45			

Table 3 shows the correlational coefficient (r) between organizational stress management strategies and librarians’ contextual performance is 0.62. This indicates that a high relationship exists between organizational

stress management strategies and librarians’ contextual performance. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) associated with the correlational coefficient (r) 0.62 is 0.39. This signifies that 39% of organizational stress

management strategies predict the contextual performance of the librarians.

management strategies and contextual performance of librarians.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no statistically significant relationship between organizational stress

**Table 4: Standard Regression Analysis of Organisational Stress Management Strategies and Librarians’ Contextual Performance**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Dec
Regression	4151.732	145	4151.732	91.244	0.00	Rejected
Residual	6552.185		45.501			
Total	10703.9918					

Table 4 shows that the obtained F-ratio 91.244 is associated with an exact probability value of 0.00. The null hypothesis was rejected because 0.00 is less than the level of significance 0.05. Therefore, it can be deduced that organizational stress management strategies significantly relates to a contextual performance of the librarians.

librarians on a daily basis should implement stress management strategies in dealing and coping with stress. This will help them develop and grow good personality or charisma required for rendering personal assistance to the users.

**Discussion**

The first result shows the relationship between individual stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians. The finding agrees with Soegoto and Narimawati (2017) who found that stress management significantly influences employees’ performance. Path coefficient = 0.524 with (P= 0.000), this implies that good stress management behaviour of employees at company X is majorly shaped with commitment and love for the job, supported by good work relationships with peers; and based path coefficients as stress management among workers at company X increases, the level of performance also increases. Selfless and volunteering actions that contribute to achieving the objectives of university libraries are expected of the librarians. Conversely, when librarians develop physiological or psychological problems resulting from stress exposure, they will exhibit poor attitudes and behaviour to the users and colleagues. To prevent this from happening; it is advisable and seemly that

The second result shows that there is significant relationship between individual stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians. This finding implies that librarians who practice individual stress management strategies are prone to relate well with users and make selfless sacrifices in order to achieve goals. In relation to this finding, Soegoto and Narimawati (2017) maintain that there is a positive and significant relationship between stress management, commitment, and work performance. Alibegovic, Hawkins and Parmar (2009) posit that interpersonal facilitation and job dedication behaviours were also proved to be distinct behaviours within the contextual performance. Contextual performance is not part of job specifications but are personal inputs, creative thoughts, extra efforts or decisions and sterling behaviors that add more value to the services of the university library. Librarians need to show dedication and commitment that will help the library management to achieve the objectives of the university library. When stress is well managed, librarians’ work commitment also increases, good relationship approaches are built and good initiative becomes predominant, all these

will yield effective library service delivery in the university library.

The third result shows the relationship between organisational stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians. In concurrence with this finding, McPheat (2010: 9) argues that without effective stress management, the problem tends to increase in a snowball effect until absenteeism, disability, injury on the job, poor communication skills, and poor relationships at work results. In corroboration with this view, Tew and Idris (2016) stress management programs that are collective in nature also provide greater opportunities for friendship and social interactions, mutual teaching and learning, voluntary work and moral support, all of which contribute toward a more wholesome lifestyle for retirees. Stress management at the organizational level will help librarians in developing: good relationship culture with the users and colleagues; spirit for selfless services, and the passion to render volunteering services to users and colleagues. For librarians to be able to achieve these, their minds, souls, and bodies need to be sound and healthy, achieving this requires proper stress management at the managerial level.

The fourth result shows that there is significant relationship between organisational stress management strategies and contextual performance of librarians. This finding implies that librarians who work in libraries where stress is managed by the library management are bound to make selfless and volunteering inputs in the library system. In consonance with this finding, Nnaeto and Ndoh (2018) found that there is a significant relationship between some stress management techniques and staff contextual performance. Conversely, Mwanza (2016) found that poor work relationships, lack

of support at work, and poor planning negatively affected productivity. Unless staff motivation is properly executed, organizations and their managers will always suffer employees' negative attitudes at workplaces. In order to maintain a balance between the personality of the librarians and their zeal to make positive contributions in the university library, the library management needs to create healthy welfare packages, ensure role specifications, grant leave, and vacations when due, provide incentives and ensure that salaries and other benefits are duly paid.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The library management should provide a complaint box, web complaint platform, committees, etc to collect users' complains about the attitude of librarians which will require exigent action to address them.
2. Human relationship experts such as psychologists should be engaged to sensitize librarians on approaches to building and maintain good relationships with the users and colleagues.
3. Librarians who have distinguished themselves through outstanding performance, volunteering, and selfless services should be recognized, appreciated and rewarded appropriately.
4. The library managers should set up committees that will look into and address complaints and conflicts among library staff without delay.

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