

**AN ASSESSMENT OF JOB BURNOUT AMONG LIBRARIANS IN ACADEMIC  
LIBRARIES IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA**

**Oluwatobi. I. Omotunde Ph.D**

Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State

**Ifeoma Abigail Ajie Ph.D**

National Open University of Nigeria

**Adeboboye Joshua Aderiye**

Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State

**Abstract**

*The study investigates job burnout among library personnel in academic libraries in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The population of the study was made up of 73 librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti state. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. Reliability and validity test were conducted on the instrument. A total of 73 (100%) copies of questionnaire were returned and found usable. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis such as percentage counts and mean. Findings revealed a moderate burnout among library personnel in terms of obtaining research incentives, publication for promotion, and relationship with university and library leadership behavior. Furthermore, the result revealed the major causes of job burnout among library personnel to be the introduction and use of new technology, high expectation from bosses and office politics. Also, findings revealed major techniques used by librarians in managing job burnout to include clarification of ambiguous role and early warning signs of aggression in co-workers and users. Finally, result on consequences of job burnout reveals low productivity, feeling unappreciated and loss of creativity. This study therefore, concluded that library management can manage burnout at some extent by adopting a flexible organization policy which create a supportive workplace atmosphere. It is recommended that the institutional and library management should provide congenial work environment to help reduce job related stress among the library personnel.*

**Keywords:** Academic Libraries, Job Burnout, Librarian

**Introduction**

Academic libraries are made of universities, polytechnics, and college of education libraries. These libraries are established to meet the information needs of the institutions communities, to enhance effective information as it relates to their institutional curricula. Academic libraries are at the forefront in the actualization of their functions through effective timely and related information provision to serve the varied needs of their users. An academic library typically comprises of one or more physical library buildings opened to students, lecturers and the host community providing a range of services designed to support learning and research. Furthermore, in recent years, libraries have been providing services through the virtual space via the use of technology to update knowledge and improve the standard of teaching, learning and research.

Academic library anchors on providing high quality information services and this depends greatly on the disposition of its employees, who are the library staff. Notwithstanding the abundance of physical and financial resources human resources

otherwise known as human capital is the most important factor in any organization, library inclusive. The success of any academic library is paramount on the wellbeing of its workforce. Library personnel in academic libraries play a crucial role in satisfying the information needs of its parent institution. They are charged with wide range of tasks which include acquiring, organizing and providing information resources required to support learning, teaching and research activities of the institution. Also, they serve as intermediaries between the information resources and users, by keeping track of information needs provision of variety of information services, responding to requests of users, managing library staff, managing budgets and projects, and promoting the library resources. However, one of the factors that could probably hinder library personnel in the provision of quality information services to their users is stress. Stress has become a major problem in today's challenging and turbulent environment (Ahmad et al., 2018). Stress can also be referred to as burnout. It negatively influences the emotional and psychological wellbeing of an individual which undermines the potentials of an organization workforce.

Burnout originated from the "caring – professions" and was developed due to a chronic stress or distress which has a negative implication on both the mental and physical well-being of the individual (McCormack, et.al, 2018). Burnout can be used interchangeably with stress and distress but when explained to the extreme, they do not mean the same thing. Stress in its simplest form can be seen as a situation that can motivate one or inspire one to do more so in other words, it is a positive factor when looked at on surface level, (Siamian, et. al, 2006). Furthermore, Job burnout can be seen as a psychological expression that is used to describe a negative attitude, negative morale and behaviour when the person is faced with stress at the work place which affects the person's physical, emotional and mental well-being. (Biglu, Abotalebi, & Ghavami, 2016).

Job burnout as explained by Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001), can be described as elongated response to a chronic emotional and interpersonal stress encountered on the job. They further described three dimensions of burnout as exhaustion, feeling of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. Exhaustion can occur as a result of stress that is unattended to. In relating it to library which is a service-oriented organization, a librarian can be exhausted as a result of attending to users for extended hours and multitasking. Depersonalization is another word to describe detachment from one's service-oriented job that is when a librarian is callous towards the requests of users. When there is sufficient mix of exhaustion and detachment from the job, there is bound to be ineffectiveness in delivering duties as well as lack of accomplishment.

Olalude & Popoola (2013) associated job burnout of librarians with different kinds of problems on the job such as absenteeism, job dissatisfaction and high turnover and poorly designed job. Libraries and information centers have a growing request for services from users and there is a plague of understaffing, occupational interference and heavy workload which lead into burnout among librarians (Barlett, 2018). In a typical library setting, there are different job roles to be carried out by the librarians and being that they are customer service oriented, they need to have versatile skills to meet up with the users' demand which in most instances is quite demanding. Job burnout may spring up as a result of difficulty in defining specific jobs for each librarian and additional roles for librarians to play in the organization. It is pertinent to note that job burnout causes a spillover of reactions as it affects the librarians work outside the office. As a result of occupational job burnout working extra hours at work for an extended period of time, may affect the way the librarian responds to family and societal demands. An instance where things are a bit balanced in the library for the librarian,

invariably, may become positive and productive at the work environment and outside the work environment.

Job burnout can be detrimental to librarians' health which can lead to mental illness, high blood pressure, physical disorder and other health complications. These health complications can negatively influence a librarian's attitude to work leading to a low morale and low job performance (Akinola & Mayowa-Adebara 2020). Some of the commonly investigated stressors on job burnout of librarians are overload of task to carry out, patrons, technological stress, isolations and management feedback problems (Lindén, Salo & Jansson 2018). Librarianship has formerly been referred to a helping profession which belongs to the human services where short term contacts with the users are the major primary sources of stress which could lead to burnout (Salyers, et. al, 2019). Some of the factors that affects librarians which could lead to burnout are gender, age, personality, locus of control, expectations and other organizational activities (excessive workload, underemployment, employee conflict and role conflict) (Kolachev & Novikov 2020). According to McCormack and Cotter (2013), a stress factor that disturbs library worker is the boredom that is associated with the routine nature of library work and little intellectual stimulation.

The academic library professionals experience stress as they adjust their lives with the changing academic library environment, job rotation, job promotion, etc. While adjusting to such changes happening in the academic library environment, stress will either help or interrupt depending on how the academic librarians react to it. There is a pressure on the academic libraries professionals to adopt new technologies along with traditional method of functions and services. But there is a limited or no scope for training programs, higher studies, refresher courses and this becomes a cause of stress among academic librarians.

Due to job stress and burnout among academic librarians in the academic libraries, librarians could face challenges like physiological body functions such as physical exhaustion, fatigue, insomnia, headaches, gastrointestinal problems/ulcers, hypertension, high cholesterol, coronary disease and impaired speech. These challenges lead to low job satisfaction, decreased communication, high job turnover, increased absenteeism, loss of enthusiasm for job, increased drugs and alcohol use, increased marital and family conflicts, accident proneness, forgetfulness, poor concentration, workaholics among others. Thus, this study tends to evaluate job burnout among librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti State. Job burnout is a global phenomenon that affects all categories of workforce including librarians in the academic library. Librarians in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges in their attempt to provide effective service delivery to users in their respective institutions. This is as a result of librarians feeling emotionally drained from work, feeling that they work too hard at their jobs achieving less than what they should, lack of substantial electricity supply, inadequate information communication technology equipment to assist the librarian to carry out their routines in the library and working overtime. Furthermore, poor response to librarians with job burnout symptoms by the library management usually results from diverse job-related challenges such as role ambiguity, role conflict, workload and work pressure, lack of requisite interpersonal skills and interpersonal relationship.

Librarian's experiences of job burnout might negatively play a role on their ability to function effectively in their duties to achieve the library goals and objectives leading to rendering poor services to users. In view of the above, the study set out to make an assessment of the level of job burnout among academic libraries in Ekiti State. Professional librarians are the main focus in this study, in other words, librarians with at least a degree and

training in the field of library and information science. Furthermore, the research is limited to academic libraries in Ekiti State which includes; Federal University Oye Ekiti (FUOYE), Ekiti State University (EKSU), Federal Polytechnic Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State Polytechnic, Isan Ekiti, and Bamidele Olomilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti.

### Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the job burnout among librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti State. Specific the objectives are to:

1. Determine the causes of job burnout among library personnel in academic libraries in Ekiti State.
2. Find out the consequences of job burnout among library personnel in academic libraries in Ekiti State.
3. Investigate the technique employed by library personnel in managing job burnout in academic libraries in Ekiti State.
4. Ascertain the level of job burnout among library personnel in academic libraries in Ekiti State.

### Methodology

The survey research design of a descriptive type was adopted for this study. The population comprised of 73 professional librarians in academic libraries in the area of the study. The entire 73 population was sampled and used in consonant with the total enumeration sampling technique. A questionnaire titled “Assessment of Job Burnout among Librarians in Academic Libraries” (AJBLAL) was used as an instrument of data collection. A standardized instrument by Ugonwanyi and Yamarat (2014) was adopted in developing the items of the instrument. The questionnaire is divided into five sections to address each of the objectives in this study. A reliability test was carried out on the instrument of the study. To, affirm whether each item of the main construct measures its actual value. Cronbach Alpha test was used to determine the reliability of main construct in the instrument. The result of the Cronbach alpha test were; Level of Job Burnout = 0.876, Causes of Job Burnout = 0.526, Techniques Used in Managing Job Burnout = 0.762, Consequences of Job Burnout = 0.757 respectively. Furthermore, the validity of the instrument was determined through face and content validity with the guide of experts in the Department of library and information science. Data obtained for the study was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, and percentages; mean and standard deviation) with the aid of Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS V12).

### Result and Discussion

Out of the 73 questionnaire distributed all were returned duly completed. This high response was as a result of the easy accessibility to the respondents because the primary researcher is a colleague of theirs hence, the high response rate.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic Factors of Librarians**

<b>SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
<b>Name of Institution</b> FOUYE	23	31.5
EKSU	21	28.7
FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC ADO	18	24.7

BOUESTI	7	9.6
EKITI STATE POLY	4	5.5
<b>GENDER</b>		
MALE	28	38.4
FEMALE	45	61.6
<b>WORK EXPERIENCE</b>		
0-5YEARS	7	9.6
6-10YEARS	47	64.4
11-15YEARS	7	9.6
16YEARS AND ABOVE	12	16.4
<b>Educational qualification</b>		
BSC/BA/BLIS	40	54.8
MLS/MLIS	3	4.1
MPHL	19	26.0
PHD	11	15.1
<b>Job Description</b>		
Assistant Librarian	31	42.5
Librarian 2	30	41.1
Librarian 1	7	9.6
Senior Librarian	2	2.7
Principal Librarian	3	4.1
Chief/University Librarian	-	-

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by socio demographic factors. Majority, 23(31.5%) respondents worked in FOUYE, majority 45 (61.6%) respondents are Females, 47(64.4%) most respondents have work experience of 6-10 years, and 40 (54.8%) respondents are BSC/BA/BLIS degree holders while 31 (42.5%) respondents are Assistant Librarian.

**The level of Job burnout among librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti State**

Table 2 below shows the findings with regards to job burnout of the librarians. The data was collected using likert 4 point scale.

S/N	ITEM	HB	MB	LB	NB	Mean	SD
1	Having the required publication for promotion	16 (21.9%)	49 (67.1%)	8 (11.0%)	-	3.11	.567
2	Advancement/promotion criteria	18 (24.7%)	43 (58.9%)	12 (16.4%)	-	3.08	.640
3	Obtaining research /conference incentives	10 (13.7%)	54 (74.0%)	9 (12.3%)	-	3.01	.514
4	State of office accommodation/facilities	25 (34.2%)	34 (46.6%)	14 (19.2%)	-	2.82	.788
5	Academic workload stress	21 (28.8%)	21 (28.8%)	29 (39.7%)	2 (2.7%)	2.84	.882
6	Participation in	17	38	18	-	2.96	.772

	institutional administration	(23.3%)	(52.1%)	(24.7%)			
7	Leadership behavior of university executives	12\ (16.4%)	48 (65.8%)	13 (17.8%)	-	2.96	.676
8	Relationship with the heads of departments in the library	17 (23.3%)	46 (63.0%)	10 (13.7%)	-	3.10	.605
9	Relationship with students	20 (27.4%)	45 (61.6%)	8 (11.0%)		3.16	.601
1	Administrative behavior of departmental heads in the library	16 (21.9%)	48 (65.8%)	9 (12.3%)		3.10	.581

(HB = High Burnout, MB = Moderate Burnout, LB = Low Burnout, NB = No Burnout)

This study revealed that majority of the respondents burnout for obtaining research /conference incentives, having the required publication for promotion, leadership behaviour of university executives and administrative behaviour of departmental heads in the library, while some of the respondents indicated low burnout for Academic workload stress as the level of Job burnout among librarians. There was a generally low level of job burnout of librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti State. All this indicates that there is a relationship between librarians and in-role performance. Taris (2006) and Bakker & Heuven (2006) investigated the relationship between burnout and objective performance revealing a clearest pattern from the dimension of in-role performance.

**The Causes of Job burnout among librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti State**

Table 3 below show the findings with regards to causes of job burnout among librarians. The data was collected using likert 4 point scale

S/N	CAUSES OF JOB BURNOUT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1.	Non-conductive working environment	26 (35.6%)	20 (27.4%)	8 (11.0%)	19 (26.0%)	2.71	1.230
2.	Inability to meet deadline	19 (26.0%)	26 (35.6%)	28 (38.4%)		2.85	.861
3.	Increased work load/long working hours	18 (24.7%)	31 (42.5%)	24 (32.9%)		2.89	.826
4.	High expectation from bosses	15 (20.5%)	47 (64.4%)	11 (15.1%)		3.03	.687
5.	Office politics	14 (19.2%)	45 (61.6%)	14 (19.2%)		2.95	.780
6.	Co-workers	7 (9.6%)	58 (79.5%)	8 (11.0%)		2.96	.564
7.	Client needs	13 (17.8%)	52 (71.2%)	8 (11.0%)		3.04	.633
8.	Introduction/use of new technology	15 (20.5%)	50 (68.5%)	8 (11.0%)		3.07	.653
9.	Membership of many committees	15 (20.5%)	42 (57.5%)	12 (16.4%)	4 (5.5%)	2.90	.853
10	Lack of training/ continuing professional education opportunities	28 (38.4%)	26 (35.6%)	11 (15.1%)	8 (11.0%)	2.97	1.093

11	Lack of promotion/advancement opportunities and promotion requirement	14 (19.2%)	33 (45.2%)	5 (6.8%)	21 (28.8%)	2.52	1.156
12	Lack of appreciation/ understanding of work done	13 (17.8%)	27 (37.0%)	12 (16.4%)	21 (28.8%)	2.42	1.117

(SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)

The above table revealed that Majority, 65(89.1%) respondents agreed that Co-workers, Client needs and Introduction/use of new technology 62(84.9%) respondents agreed that High expectation from bosses, 59(80.8%) respondents agreed that Office politics among others are causes of burnout at their job. This is similar Nawe (2002) findings that non-conducive and crowded work environment are stressful agents to the individual that works in the library. Increased work load/ working hours is another major cause of job burnout in the library. Onyia (2016) finding revealed that long working hours, heavy work load and over whelming feeling in every area of life are causes of job burnout. Library personnel run shift duties and work on weekends. This is probably the reason respondents in this study indicated long work hours a cause of job burnout. High expectations from bosses as stressor received diverse response from the library personnel. This finding is in congruence with the study of Cartwright, Tytherleigh and Robertson (2007) which reported that 50 percent of Britons workers blame bosses for making their blood boil and giving them anxiety at work. The study maintained that nearly one in every four bosses in the United Kingdom is bad or dreaded. However, para-professionals and the non-professionals are most affected from the study. Introduction/ use of new technologies were also indicated as one of the major causes of job burnout in this study. This finding corroborates the study of MacBride-King and Bachmann (1999) where they found that the greatest work concerns to Canadians are adaption of new technologies especially for older workforce and those in low-skill jobs.

**The techniques used by librarians in managing Job burnout in academic libraries in Ekiti State.**

Table 4 below shows the findings with regards to techniques used by librarians in managing job burnout. The data was collected using likert 4 point scale.

S/N	TECHNIQUES	U	O	S	N	Mean	SD
1.	Breaking challenging piece of work	25 (34.2%)	11 (15.1%)	35 (47.9%)	2 (2.7%)	3.14	.769
2.	Learning to identify early warning signs of aggression in coworkers and clients/users	27 (37.0%)	17 (23.3%)	26 (35.6%)	3 (4.1%)	3.05	.880
3.	Seeking more information in order to clarify ambiguous role	33 (45.2%)	18 (24.7%)	22 (30.1%)	-	3.21	.816
4.	Flexible work time	9 (12.3%)	13 (17.8%)	48 (65.8%)	3 (4.1%)	2.84	.764
5.	Developing	13	18	38	4	2.82	.788

	interpersonal skills that dissipate aggression	(17.8%)	(24.7%)	(52.1%)	(5.5%)		
6.	Job sharing	23 (31.5%)	24 (32.9%)	19 (26.0%)	7 (9.6%)	2.77	1.061
7.	Taking coffee/short break during work hours	24 (32.9%)	12 (16.4%)	23 (31.5%)	14 (19.2%)	2.77	1.137
8.	Job delegation	6 (8.2%)	19 (26.0%)	29 (39.7%)	19 (26.0%)	2.29	.979
9.	Going on vacation/sabbatical leave	5 (6.8%)	15 (20.5%)	31 (42.5%)	22 (30.1%)	2.25	.997
10.	Physical exercise/fitness	13 (17.8%)	26 (35.6%)	32 (43.8%)	2 (2.7%)	2.77	.773
11.	Relaxation and meditation	9 (12.3%)	28 (38.4%)	32 (43.8%)	4 (5.5%)	2.60	.846
12.	Training and retaining	11 (15.1%)	28 (38.4%)	27 (37.0%)	7 (9.6%)	2.55	.929
13.	Alcoholism and use of drug	3 (4.1%)	16 (21.9%)	34 (46.6%)	20 (27.4%)	2.25	.969
14.	Socializing and keeping friendship	9 (12.3%)	21 (28.8%)	21 (28.8%)	22 (30.1%)	2.23	1.021

(U = Usually, O = Occasionally, S = Sometimes, N = Never)

Table 4 reveals the job related stress management techniques employed by male and female academic library personnel. Seeking more information in order to clarify ambiguous role and learning to identify early warning signs of aggression in co-workers and clients/users, were the major techniques used by librarians in managing Job burnout. This finding is in congruence with the work of McShane and Glinov (2000) that suggested a number of strategies to help cushion the effect of stress. They identified stress as work-focused and emotion - focused and held that both situations be addressed. Their work clearly revealed that work focused stress could be matched with role clarification, time management, job delegation, search for more information and direct task help, cooperative work strategies and finally departure from work when it became unbearable. Flexible work time also attracted high mean from both sexes, though the females develop a better healthy lifestyle than the males. Both sexes positively respect setting realistic goals.

**The consequences of Job burnout among librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti State**

**Table 5** below shows the findings with regards to consequences of Job burnout among librarians

	CONSEQUENCES	AGREE	DISAGREE	Mean	SD
1.	Low productivity	49 (67.1%)	24 (32.9%)	1.71	.540
2.	Loss of creativity	40 (54.7%)	33 (45.2%)	1.56	.527
3.	Feeling unappreciated	41 (56.2%)	32 (43.8%)	1.56	.500
4.	Headaches, back pains	39	34	1.53	.502



	and HPB	(53.4%)	(46.6%)		
5.	Sleepless night	27 (37.0%)	46 (63.0%)	1.37	.486
6.	Drinking and smoking excessively	10 (13.7%)	63 (86.3%)	1.14	.346
7.	Lack of career progression	27 (37.0%)	46 (63.0%)	1.37	.486
8.	Frustration	31 (42.5%)	42 (57.5%)	1.41	.523
9.	Dread going to work	31 (42.5%)	42 (57.5%)	1.41	.523
10.	Get irritated easily	35 (47.9%)	38 (52.1%)	1.48	.503

Table 5 shows the Consequences of Job burnout among librarians. Majority, 49(67.1%) respondents agreed that Low productivity, 41(56.2%) respondents agreed that Feeling unappreciated, 40(54.7%) respondents agreed that Loss of creativity and 40(54.7%) respondents agreed that Headaches, back pains and HPB while 63 (86.3%) respondents disagreed that Drinking and smoking excessively, 46(63.0%) respondents disagreed that Sleepless night and Lack of career progression, 42(57.5%) respondents disagreed that Frustration and Dread going to work, and 38(52.1%) respondents disagreed that Get irritated easily are the Consequences of Job burnout among librarians. In other words, librarians in the contexts of this study agreed that low productivity, feeling unappreciated, loss of creativity and headaches, back pains are some of the major consequences of job burnout. However, majority of the respondents disagreed that drinking and smoking excessively, sleepless night and lack of career progression, are contributing consequences of Job burnout among librarians.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The research surveyed the level, cause, consequences, management of job burnout among academic librarians in academic libraries in Ekiti State. Burnout can happen in any type of library environment, and it is not possible for the library personnel to remove all causes of job burnout in the present library workplace but, the library management can manage burnout at some extend by adopting various measures like flexible organization policy, by creating supportive workplace atmosphere, by recognize the sign of stress and by giving financial incentives etc. which will help to reduce some of job burnout consequences such as: poor morale, reduced performance and team conflict.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following;

1. The authorities and library management of the institutions studied should provide congenial work environment such as standard offices, cooling systems and basic facilities in the libraries in order to reduce job related stress among the library personnel.
2. The management of the university libraries studied should ensure a reduction in the workload of the library personnel in order to reduce the incidence of job burnout to the barest minimum.
3. Efforts should be made by the university authorities and library management to provide training on new technology to the library personnel, especially the older ones.
4. Prototype stress management packages as formalised management tips like seminars, talk shops and interactive sessions should be integrated should be and adopted as

policy for librarianship in all institutions of learning and at corporate level for library personnel to air feelings, cross fertilize ideas on job burnout.

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