Chapter 18

Technostress: Effects and Measures Among Librarians in University Libraries in Nigeria

Owajeme Justice Ofua
Delta State University, Nigeria

Tiemo Aghwotu Pereware
Niger Delta University Library, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study examines technostress, its effects, and measures taken to avoid it among librarians at university libraries in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted and 5 (five) university libraries in Edo and Delta States were used for the study. The sample size for the study was 79, using the purposive sampling technique, a questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection, and simple percentage and Chi square were used to analyze the data collected. The authors found that technostress could be avoided by librarians, by taking the following measures: purchasing user friendly interface software, regular staff training on ICTs, and developing positive attitude toward technology, and so forth.

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) has undoubtedly brought along many changes in libraries environment today, technological revolution in organization has not only improved efficiency but also helps reduces the problems or boredom in the workplace (Vieitez, Garcia, & Rodriguez, 2001). The application of ICTs has immensely improved the effectiveness of library activities such as acquisition, circulation, Cataloging, references and serial services (Bichteler, 1986; Murthy & Cholin). The ability of libraries to offer access to digital information regardless of location and time has given birth to the term “Virtual Library”, “Electronic Library” or “Digital library” (Saunders, 1999; Gorman, 2001.).

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ICTs is the sine-qua-non for effective modern library management and services (Wombo & Abba, 2008). According to Aina (2004) Information and communication technology (ICT) has radically transformed most of the services provided by library. ICT is heavily utilized in the storage, processing and dissemination of information. It has made the organization of information very efficient, the delivery of basic information services more effective and the dissemination of information to users easier. It has eliminated a lot of routine and repetitive tasks in a library. ICT is now a core component of any library and information science curriculum at all levels. Any modern library and information professional must be knowledgeable in library automation, networking, internet surfing, database management processing software, statistical software, etc.

Although, technology has allowed work to be carried out faster and more efficient, many employees are not comfortable with the implementation of this technology and it involves changes and uncertainty. As a result, they experience additional stress known as techno-stress which may have negative consequence in the library activities.

Technostress is the general feeling of anxiety and the negative impact on thoughts, behavior, attitudes and body when a person is expected to deal with technology (Kupersmith, 2007, Weil & Rosen, 2000). The usage of computer integrated system, CD-ROMS and multiples database, the internet and World Wide Web (WWW) and the rapid changes of information technology has also caused enormous amounts of strain on librarians (Davis-Milles, 1998; Kupersmith, 2007).

Although, Brod (1984) looked at technostress as a disease, other researchers considered it more as an inability to adopt to change brought by technology. Davis-Milles (1998) identified technostress as a condition whereby a person has to adapt to new technology especially when there is inadequacy of the equipment, support, or the technology itself.

In the same vein, Clark and Kalin (1996), sees technostress as a resistance to change”.

TECHNOSTRESS IN LIBRARIES

While technostress is well documented in libraries the world seems unaware of library work as computer related (Clute, 1998). Interestingly, Poole and Emmett (2001) explain that the 1994 job rated almanac ranked librarianship among the 25 least stressful occupations, thereby reinforcing a publicly held image that library work is not a technological field. However, in the process of adapting to the increasingly complex technologies, more users and staff have been experiencing physical and emotional stress (Saunders, 1999).

This resulted in higher level of absenteeism and turnover, higher cost for retaining new staff and increase in litigation costs related to workplace stress (Harper, 2000). Bichteler (1986) discovered that as a result of library automation some librarians feel that their personalities has changed, in which they became more computer oriented. They were easily irritated and impatient when dealing with unorganized or illogical people and found it hard to communicate with non programmers. The pressure to use the equipment efficiently and to stay on schedule has reduced their opportunities for conversation and let them to isolate themselves from other people. Moreover, the librarian also felt frustrated when there is incapability between micros and mainframe, inaccessible and unhelpful sales representative, lacking of training and inadequate time provided to practice what they have learned (Ahmad, Amin, & Ismail, 2009).

Research Questions

The research work will be guided with the following research questions: