

INFLUENCE OF AGE AND GENDER-RELATED STRESS ON LIBRARY STAFF JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.

Imoke Bassey Imoke (Ph.D).

Department of Library and Information Science.
University of Calabar.

And Imoke, I.B.; Bassey, U.D.

Uduak Donatus Bassey (Ph.D)

Department of Library and Information Science,
Faculty of Social Science, University of Calabar.

Abstract

The study investigated age and gender-related stress on library staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 352 library staff from four tertiary institutions in the State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 staff as sample for the study. Stress and Library Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (SLSJPQ) was the instrument for data collection. Out of 200 copies of the instrument distributed to the respondents, 188 was successfully completed and retrieved, representing 94% success rate. The reliability estimate of the instruments was established through the Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The reliability coefficient ranged from 0.75 to 0.89. Simple linear regression analysis was the statistical technique used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The results revealed that age-related stress ($F=1002.910$, $P<.05$) and gender-related stress ($F=1235.457$, $P<.05$) significantly predict library staff job performance. It was concluded that age and gender-related stress significantly predict library staff job performance. The study recommended that there should be continuous, age-appropriate training programs to reduce technostress among older staff, flexible scheduling and job-sharing should be adopted to alleviate role conflict for female staff to improve attendance and job satisfaction, among others.

Key words: Age-related stress, Gender-related stress, Job Performance, Library staff, Public Tertiary institutions, Cross River State.

Introduction

Public tertiary institutions in Nigeria depend heavily on library staff to support teaching, learning and research. Library staff perform technical, administrative, and user services that directly affect institutional performance. However, performance is often undermined by occupational stress arising from workload, poor funding, inadequate facilities, and demographic factors such as age and gender (Dina, 2019).

Stress is a psychological and physiological response to perceived demands that exceed a person's resources. In libraries, stress manifests as a burnout, absenteeism, low morale, and reduced service quality. Age and gender are two demographic variables that shape how individuals experience and cope with stress. Age influence physical capacity, technological adaptability and career expectations, while gender influences social role, family responsibilities, and workplace expectations (Oluwatobi, and Gabriel, 2021).

Cross River State hosts several public tertiary institutions including the University of Calabar, University of Cross River State (UNICROSS), federal and state polytechnics. Library staff in these institutions face similar challenges reported nationwide: heavy workload, technological changes, and poor staff development. Understanding how age and gender-related stress affect their job performance is critical for improving library services in the state.

Problem of the study

Library staff in public tertiary institutions in Cross River State play a critical role in supporting teaching, learning and research. However, reports and internal reviews from institutions like the University of Calabar, and Cross River State University indicates a

declining efficiency in service delivery, delays in processing materials, and reduced user satisfaction in recent years.

One of the underlying factors appears to be occupational stress, particularly stress arising from age and gender-related factors. Older staff often face challenges adapting to new information and communication technologies, while younger staff report stress from heavy workloads and career uncertainty. Similarly, female staff frequently experience work-family conflict, and male staff report stress from financial and cultural responsibilities. These stressors can lead to reduced concentration, absenteeism, low morale, and ultimately poor job performance.

Despite the existence of studies on job stress and performance in South-West, and South-East Nigeria, there is lack of empirical research focusing specifically on how age and gender-related stress predict the job performance of library staff in public tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Without such context-specific evidence, library management and policymakers lack the data needed to design targeted interventions. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how age and gender-related stress predict the performance of library staff in public tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research questions

This research work sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. In what way does age-related stress predict library staff job performance?
2. To what extent does gender-related stress predict library staff job performance?
3. To what extent do age and gender-related stress jointly predict library staff job performance?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

H₀₁: Age-related stress does not significantly predict library staff job performance.

H₀₂: There is no significant prediction of gender-related stress on library staff job performance.

H₀₃: Age and gender-related stress do not jointly prediction library staff job performance.

Literature review

Concept of Job Performance in Libraries

Job performance refers to the effectiveness and efficiency with which employees carry out their assigned duties. In academic libraries, it includes cataloguing, reference services, information literacy instruction, and digital resources management. Studies in South-west Nigeria reports that librarians' job performance is often at a moderate level due to stress and inadequate training.

Job performance is influenced by job satisfaction, motivation, work environment, and stress levels. Ogunlana et al (2018) found a positive correlation between job stress and job satisfaction among academic librarians in South-West Nigeria, $r = 0.69$, $\alpha < 0.05$ (Amusa, Iyoro, & Olabisi, 2018).

Age-Related Stress and Job Performance

Age affects stress perception and coping. Young employees, typically 20-39 years, often experience stress from role ambiguity career uncertainty, and heavy workloads. In Nigeria libraries, 50.4% of staff are aged 30-39 years, and 29.5% are aged 30-39 years. This group reports higher stress due to low pay, limited autonomy, and pressure to prove competence Ikonne, (2015).

Older employees, 45 years and above, experience stress related to physical decline, technological change, and reduced adaptability. However, older staff also report higher job

satisfaction due to job security, tenure, and accrued benefits (Oluwatobi and Gabriel, 2021). Chawinga and Zinn (2024), stated that there is a statistically significant influence of age and stress related to technostress or techno-complexity (that is stress arising from introduction of new technologies or complexity of tasks arising from). In particular, the result of pairwise (2018) comparison found that participants between the age of 50 and 69 years old experience significantly higher levels of stress due to techno complexity than younger participants (Nagaraja, 2018). Techno-uncertainty is the context where continuing changes and upgrades to information system do not give professional a chance to develop a base of experience for a particular application or system. Ugwu et al (2024) noted that techno-uncertainty was noticed within older participant than the younger ones, stress associated with techno-stress and techno-uncertainty was more in older people than the younger ones.

Ogunlana et al (2018) found high job stress and low job satisfaction among academic librarians in South-West Nigeria. Female librarians had low satisfaction levels. Iroegbu (2018) found that older employees and females had higher job satisfaction in the Nigerian public sector. No significant interaction between age and gender. Dina (2019) found that stress negatively affected professional librarians' job performance in Lagos State University. Udem et al (2025) found a positive relationship between staff development and job performance of library staff in South East Nigeria. Ugwu et al (2024) found moderate positive relationship between job satisfaction and job performance with stronger correlation for male staff than female staff. These studies provided a basis for examining similar dynamics in Cross River State, where no state-specific study has focused on age and gender stress.

Gaurav, Krushna and Trivedi (2019) holds that females experience more work stress than male. The authors carried out a study to investigate the influence of sex on stress among unorganized sector workers (45 males and 58 females) working at study

setting. The findings revealed that almost 28.6% male and 41.3% female participant have extreme high level stress. It shows that females were affected more than men. Ezeani and Ugwuanyi (2024), reported that technostress symptom among Nigerian academic librarians include irritability, resistance to learning new technologies, emotional fatigue and reduced productivity among teaching librarians in Nigerian universities. Similarly, Adegbaye and Owolabi (2024) found that age related stress significantly reduced research productivity in Nigerian universities. However, staff aged 30-45 years according to Mordi, Adomi and Solomon-Uwakwe (2023), demonstrated moderate stress levels but the highest job performance. The study established a significant age and job performance among library sectional heads in Delta State, noting that mid-career staff often balance experience with adaptability. This reflects the Yerkes-Dodson principle, where moderate stress enhances motivation and efficiency

Gender-Related Stress and Job Performance

Adekanye and Nduka (2017) noted that gender influence stress through social role and workplace expectations. Female librarians often face work-family conflict, which reduce job satisfaction and performance. A study of female librarians in South-West Nigeria found that work-family conflict had a low but negative effect on job satisfaction and job performance. Female librarians also reported significantly lower job satisfaction than male counterparts, with a means difference = 12.2, $p < 0.05$. Male librarians, on the other hand, experience stress from financial obligations to extended families, a common cultural expectations in Nigeria. This pressure can lead to job dissatisfaction and reduce focus on core duties. Gender differences also appear in stress coping. Females tend to use emotion-focused coping, while males use problem-focused coping. In environments with poor support systems, these differences can affect performance outcomes (Kan, Dan and Yu, 2016).

Ogunlana, et al (2023) asserted that stress significantly relate with library staff job performance. Female library staff reported higher stress related to role conflict and emotional exhaustion. Ogunlana et al (2023) found that female academic librarians in South-West Nigeria experience significantly low job satisfaction and higher job stress compared to their male counterparts. Oladunjoye and Owolabi (2023) similarly noted that work-family conflict among female librarians in South-West Nigeria affected job satisfaction through its impact on performance was limited.

According to Agyei et al (2023), Male staff on the other hand, reported higher stress related to job insecurity and performance pressure and identified gender as significant factor influencing gender and psychological stress among librarians in Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa. Social expectations of men as primary breadwinners amplify anxiety about redundancy during library automation, although presentism help maintain core task performance. \

Combined Effects of Age and Gender on Job Performance

Adekanye and Nduka (2022) found that older female staff experienced compounded stress, resulting in the lowest job performance scores. This intersectional effects is consistent with Agyei et al (2023), who noted that age, gender and work roles are the main factors influencing occupational stress among African librarians. Older women often face simultaneous challenge of technostress, physical fatigue, and domestic responsibilities, limiting their ability to adapt to new library technologies and practice.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was survey research design, which allows for studying the opinions, beliefs, behaviors and attitudes of a sample and drawing inferences and generalizations to the population (Asim, Idaka & Eni, 2017). This design is appropriate as the researchers were interested in collecting original data for describing the

population. The use of survey is justified since the study is descriptive which involves the collection of data from a population to accurately and objectively describe an existing phenomenon.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 352 library staff which included professionals and para-professionals, consisting of 49 Staff from University of Cross River State, 236 staff from the University of Calabar, 30 from Federal Polytechnic, Ugep, and 37 staff from the University of Education and Entrepreneurship, Akamkpa. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 library staff representing 56.81% of the population of the study. Hence, the researcher selected a representative sample of 134 library staff from the University of Calabar (UNICAL), 28 library staff from the University of Cross River State (UNICROSS), 17 from Federal Polytechnic, Ugep, and 21 staff from the University of Education and Entrepreneurship, Akamkpa, making a total of 200 sample for the study.

Table 1: Population and Sample Distribution of Library Staff in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

Institutions	Professional Librarians	Para-professionals	Total	Sample
University of Calabar	58	178	236	134
University of Cross River State	13	36	49	28
Federal Polytechnic Ugep	12	18	30	17
Cross River Polytechnic	15	22	37	21
Total	98	254	352	200

Source: from the institutions under study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument used for data collection was four-point Likert scale questionnaire titled “Stress and Library Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (SLSJPQ)”. The rank order was: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree) and SD (strongly disagree). To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach’s alpha reliability method was used. The questionnaire was administered to randomly select fifty (50) Library staff of Arthur Jarvis University, Akpabuyo, Cross River State, which are not part of the study. The internal consistency of the items as shown by the Cronbach Alpha reliability ranged from 79 – .89. The questionnaires were administered personally by the researchers to the respondents with the help of two trained research assistants, one each from the areas of study. Out of the 200 copies of the questionnaires, 188 copies were successfully completed and retrieved from the respondents, representing 94% success rate, which were eventually used for the study. Simple linear and multiple regression analyses were the statistical technique used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the results of the statistical analysis of data gathered for the study as well as their interpretation and discussion. The presentation of data was done hypothesis by hypothesis as shown below. The demographic description of the study samples was done using frequency counts and simple percentages while the study variables were described using mean and standard deviation. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4 respectively. The results in Table 3 showed that 129(68.6%) of the library staff were from the University of Calabar (Unical), 26(13.9%) were from the University of Cross River State (Unicross), 15(8.0%) were from Federal Polytechnic, Ugep and 18(9.5%) of the library staff were from the University of Education and Entrepreneurship, Akamkpa. For the gender of respondents, 76(40.4%) were males while 112(59.6%) were females. On the year(s) of experience, 42(22.3%) were within 1-5 years working experience,

75(39.9%) were between 6-10 years of working experience, while 71(37.8%), were 11 years and above. Finally for the category of library staff, 52(27.7%) were professionals while 136(72.3%) fall in the category of non-professionals.

TABLE 2

Demographic description of the study sample

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Institution	University of Calabar	129	68.6
	University of Cross River	26	13.9
	University of Edu /Entrep.	18	9.5
	Fed. Poly. Ugep.	15	8.0
	Total	188	100
Gender	Male	76	40.4
	Female	122	59.6
	Total	188	100
Year of Experience	1-5years	42	22.3
	6-10years	75	39.9
	11yeas and above	71	37.8
	Total	188	100
Job Category	Professionals	52	27.7
	Para/Non-professionals	136	72.3
	Total	188	100

The main dependent variable is library staff job performance. The mean and standard deviation of the major variables are calculated and presented in Table 4. The results in Table 4 also showed that the main dependent variable was library staff job performance. The mean and standard deviation of the major variables are calculated and presented in Table 4. A total sample of 188 library staff was used for the study. The results in Table 4 also showed that job performance had the highest mean of 36.1255 with standard deviation of 3.12218, followed by age-related stress with a mean of 17.6464 and standard deviation of 1.71505 while gender-related stress had the least mean of 17.6008 with standard deviation of 1.80589.

TABLE 3
General description of data (n=188)

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD
Age-related stress	188	17.6464	1.71505
Gender-related stress	188	17.6008	1.80589
Job performance	188	36.1255	3.12218

Hypotheses Testing

In this section, the hypotheses are re-stated and the result of the data analysis carried out to test it are presented. The hypotheses are tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

Age-related stress does not significantly predict Job performance of library staff. In this hypothesis, age-related stress is the independent variable, while job performance of library staff is the dependent variable. This hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Simple regression analysis of the prediction of age-related stress on job performance

of library staff					
R – Value = .810			Adj R – square = .656		
R – Square = .657			Std Error = 1.83076		
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean square	F-value	P-value
Regression	3361.437	1	3361.437	1002.010*	.000
Residual	1756.281	187	3.362		
Total	5117.719	188			
Predictor Variable	Unstandardized coeff. B	Std error	Std. coeff Beta	t-value	P-value

Age-related	10.090	.826	.810	12.216*	.000
Stress	1.475	.047		31.669*	.000

Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$.

The result in Table 4 shows a regression coefficient (R) of .810 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .657. This means that about 65.7% of the total variation in job performance of library staff was attributed to the variation in age-related stress while 34.3% was attributed to other variables considered in this study. The result of analysis of variance in the regression output produced the computed F-value of 1002.910 ($p < .05$) which is statistically significant at .05 probability level with 1:187 degrees of freedom. This means that the data for age-related stress fit the model better than if age-related stress was not added to the model, meaning that age-related stress contributed to the observed variance in job performance of library staff.

The result of the regression weights of the predictor variable (age-related stress) in Table 4 showed a positive coefficients ($B = 1.475$ and $Beta = .810$). This indicated that age-related stress has a high positive influence on job performance of library staff and a unit increase in age-related stress will lead to more than a unit change in job performance of library staff. Also, the P-values (.000) associated with the computed t-values (12.216 & 31.669) for the regression constant and age-related stress are less than .05. This means that both the regression constant and age-related stress made significant positive contributions to the prediction of job performance of library staff. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that Age-related stress does not significantly predict Job performance of library staff was rejected. This implies that there is significant prediction of age-related stress on job performance of library staff. The regression equation is: $y = 10.090 + 1.475x$.

The result of the first hypothesis shows that age-related stress significantly predict job performance of library staff. This result corroborates with the findings of Khan, Habaradas, Kiong and Kweh (2019), who stated that there is a statistically significant

influence of age and stress related to techno stress or techno-complexity (that is stress arising from introduction of new technologies or complexity of tasks arising from). In particular, the result of pairwise (2018) comparison found that participants between the age of 50 and 69 years old experience significantly higher levels of stress due to techno complexity than younger participants.

Similarly, Ogunlana et al (2018) found high job stress and low job satisfaction among academic librarians in South-West Nigeria. Female librarians had low satisfaction levels. Iroegbu (2018) found that older employees and females had higher job satisfaction in the Nigerian public sector. No significant interaction between age and gender. Dina (2019) found that stress negatively affected professional librarians' job performance in Lagos State University. Udem et al (2025) found a positive relationship between staff development and job performance of library staff in South East Nigeria. Ugwu et al (2024) found moderate positive relationship between job satisfaction and job performance with stronger correlation for male staff than female staff. These studies provide a basis for examining similar dynamics in Cross River State, where no state-specific study has focused on age and gender stress.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant prediction of gender-related stress on library staff job performance.

To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was used with gender-related stress as independent variable and job performance as dependent variable. The t-value was used to measure the extent of prediction. The results are presented in Table 5. The results in Table 5 showed a regression coefficient (R) of .838 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .703. This means that about 70.3% of the total variation in job performance was attributed to the variation in gender-related stress while 29.7% was attributed to other variables considered in this study. The result of analysis of variance in the regression output produced the computed F-value of 1237.457 ($p < .05$) which is

statistically significant at .05 probability level with 1:187 degrees of freedom. This means that the data for gender-related stress fit the model better than if gender-related stress was not added to the model, which means that gender-related stress contributed to the observed variance in job performance of library staff.

Table 5: Simple regression analysis of the prediction of gender-related stress on job performance of library staff

R – Value = .810			Adj R – square = .656		
R – Square = .657			Std Error = 1.83076		
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean square	F-value	P-value
Regression	3595.294	1	3595.294	1237.457*	.000
Residual	1522.424	187	2.905		
Total	5117.719	188			
Predictor Variable	Unstandardized coeff. B	Std error	Std. coeff Beta	t-value	P-value
Gender-related Stress	9.141	.771	.838	11.860*	.000
	1.350	.043		35.178*	.000

*Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$

The second hypothesis revealed that gender-related stress significantly predict library staff job performance. This corroborates Adekanye and Nduka (2017), who noted that gender influence stress through social role and workplace expectations. Female librarians often face work-family conflict, which reduce job satisfaction and performance. A study of female librarians in South-West Nigeria found that work-family conflict had a low but negative effect on job satisfaction and job performance. Female librarians also reported significantly lower job satisfaction than male counterparts. Male librarians, on the other hand, experience stress from financial obligations to extended families, a common cultural expectations in Nigeria

According to Agyei et al (2023), Male staff on the hand, reported higher stress related to job insecurity and performance pressure. Identified gender as significant factor influencing gender sa d psychological stress among librarians in Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa. Social expectations of men as primary breadwinners amplify anxiety about redundancy during library automation, although presentism help maintain core task performance.

The result of the regression weights of the predictor variable (gender-related stress) in Table 5 showed a positive coefficients ($B = 1.530$ and $Beta = .838$). This indicated that gender-related stress has a high positive influence on job performance of library staff and a unit increase in gender-related stress will lead to more than a unit change in job performance. Also, the P-values (.000) associated with the computed t-values (11.860 & 35.178) for the regression constant and gender-related stress are less than .05. This means that both the regression constant and gender-related stress made significant positive contributions to the prediction of job performance of library staff. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant prediction of gender-related stress on library staff job performance was rejected. This implies that gender-related stress significantly predict library staff job performance. The regression equation is: $y = 9.141 + 1.530x$.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant joint prediction of stress on job performance of library staff. To test this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used with stress (age and gender-related stress) as independent variable and job performance as dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 6. The results in Table 13 showed a regression coefficient (R) of .868 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .754. This means that about 75.4% of the total variation in job performance of library staff was attributed to the variation in stress (age and gender-related stress) while 24.6% was attributed to other extraneous variables

not considered in this study. The result of analysis of variance in the regression output produced the computed F-value of 226.235 ($p < .05$) which is statistically significant at .05 probability level with 3:185 degrees of freedom. On this basis, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant joint prediction of stress (age and gender-related stress) on job performance of library staff.

To find the relative contributions of the individual stressors (age and gender-related stress) to the variation in job performance of library staff, a test of regression weight was carried out and the results are presented in Table 6. Table 6 showed that the calculated t-values for age-related stress (.000, $p = 1.000$), gender-related stress (4.111, $p = .000$) and regression constant (8.838, $p = .000$) were significant at .05 level of significance. Similarly, the results in Table 6 showed that regression constant ($t=8.838$, $p < .05$) was the strongest predictor of the variance in job performance were both predictors of the variance in job performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria in the Multiple Regression model. The regression equation is: $y = 6.628 + .067x_1$

Table 6: Regression analysis of joint prediction of stress on job performance of library staff.

R-value = .858		Adj R – square = .750			
R-Square = .754		Std. Error = 1.56048			
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean square	F – value	P – value
Regression	3856.336	3	550.905	226.235*	.000
Residual	1261.382	185	2.435		
Total	5117.719	188			

*Significant at .05 level of significance, $P < .05$

Recommendations

The study suggests the following recommendations:

1. There should be continuous, age-appropriate training programs to reduce technostress among older staff.
2. Flexible scheduling and job-sharing should be adopted to alleviate role conflict for female staff, to improve attendance and job satisfaction.
3. Pairing younger techno-savvy staff with older colleagues can facilitate knowledge sharing and reduce resistance to change.
4. Counselling services and workload management policies should address gender-specific stressors to improve emotional well-being and retention.

Conclusion

Age and gender-related stress significantly predict job performance among library staff in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Age-related stress primarily affects technological task performance, while gender-related stress impacts emotional exhaustion and attendance. Addressing these factors through targeted human resource policies can enhance overall library service delivery. The study found that older female staff experienced compounded stress, resulting in the lowest job performance. Older women often face simultaneous challenge of technostress, physical fatigue and domestic responsibilities, limiting their ability to adapt to new library technologies and practices.

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