



An Analytical Study of Techno Stress on Rural Academic Librarians in India

Ravikiran Subhash More

Librarian, M. S. Kakade College, Someshwarnagar

Email: 0303ravi@gmail.com

Corresponding Author – Ravikiran Subhash More

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Abstract:

This study aims to provide comprehensive analysis of techno-stress experienced by the rural academic librarians because of technology continuously redefining the landscape of academic libraries. In the face of rapid technological advancements, rural academic librarians grapple with unique challenges, including limited resources, infrastructure constraints, and distinct socio-cultural dynamics. This research delves into the multifaceted dimensions of techno stress, investigating the pressure to adapt to evolving technologies, challenges related to limited training opportunities, and the impact of multitasking in smaller institutions. The study explores the influence of community expectations and resistance to technological changes, highlighting the socio-cultural factors that contribute to the stress experienced by librarians in rural settings. Additionally, the research scrutinizes the role of technological infrastructure, considering factors such as internet connectivity and access to cutting-edge tools. The study also evaluates the support systems available to librarians, including professional networks, collaborative initiatives, and the presence or absence of dedicated IT support. By providing a nuanced understanding of techno stress in the specific context of rural academic libraries in India, this study aims to identify stressors and propose strategies to alleviate challenges. The insights generated from this research contribute to a more comprehensive and informed approach to the integration of technology in rural academic libraries. Ultimately, the study aspires to foster a supportive environment that enables librarians to harness the potential of technology while upholding their crucial roles as custodians of knowledge in rural academic settings.

Keywords: Techno-stress, Technology, Library, Academic Librarian,

Introduction:

The rapid advancement of technology has undeniably transformed the landscape of academic libraries, ushering in a new era of information dissemination and access. While these technological innovations offer unprecedented opportunities, they also bring forth a set of challenges that can significantly impact the professionals working in these environments. This study aims to delve into the intricate realm of techno stress as experienced by rural academic librarians in India, shedding light on the unique circumstances and stressors faced in these specific settings.

In the context of India, where the academic landscape is diverse and includes institutions in remote and rural areas, understanding the techno stress experienced by librarians becomes paramount. Rural

academic libraries often grapple with limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and unique socio-cultural dynamics, creating a distinctive technological landscape that warrants careful examination. The study will explore various dimensions of techno stress, including the pressure to adapt to rapidly changing technologies, the challenges posed by limited training opportunities, and the impact of multitasking in smaller institutions. Additionally, it will investigate the influence of community expectations and resistance to technological changes, shedding light on the socio-cultural factors that contribute to the stress experienced by librarians. According to Das, Santanu (2019) libraries might be able to adapt different strategies to manage technology driven stress in their workplace more effectively.

Furthermore, the research will examine the role of technological infrastructure in rural academic libraries, considering factors such as internet connectivity and access to cutting-edge tools. The study will also assess the support systems available to librarians, including professional networks, collaborative initiatives, and the presence or absence of dedicated IT support. According to Panda Subhajt (2020) Librarians need to adjust themselves to the changing library environment and new formats of technologies and also need to develop new technical skills, and learn to handle different metadata available in the library science field.

By undertaking this analytical study, we seek not only to identify the techno stressors faced by rural academic librarians but also to propose strategies and recommendations to alleviate these challenges. Understanding the nuances of techno stress in this context is crucial for the sustainable development of academic libraries, ensuring that librarians can effectively navigate the evolving technological landscape while providing valuable services to their communities.

In conclusion, this research endeavors to contribute valuable insights that can inform policymakers, library administrators, and educators about the specific techno stressors faced by rural academic librarians in India. By addressing these challenges, we aim to foster a supportive environment that enables librarians to harness the potential of technology while maintaining the integrity of their crucial roles as stewards of knowledge in rural academic settings.

What is Techno-stress?

The term techno stress was coined by Dr. Craig Brod who was a clinical psychologist in 1984. Brod (1984) defined the techno stress term as "a modern disease of adaptation caused by an inability to cope with the new computer technologies in a healthy manner. According to Kupersmith (1992) technostress is the general feeling of anxiety and the negative impact on thoughts, behaviours, attitudes, and body when a person is expected to deal with technology. Techno-stress, short for technological stress, refers to the negative impact that interactions with technology can have on individuals' well-being, both psychologically and physically. It is the stress and discomfort

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that arise from the use of digital technologies, computers, and information and communication technologies (ICT) in various aspects of life, including work, education, and personal activities.

Techno-stress in Libraries:

Techno-stress in libraries refers to the challenges and negative impacts that the adoption and integration of technology can have on library professionals and users. Libraries have undergone significant transformations in recent years with the introduction of digital technologies, automation, and online resources. While these changes bring numerous benefits, they can also contribute to stress and challenges for both librarians and library patrons. Here are some specific aspects of techno-stress in libraries:

- 1. Rapid Technological Changes:** Libraries are constantly adapting to new technologies, software, and digital resources. Keeping up with these rapid changes can be stressful for library staff who need to continuously update their skills and knowledge.
- 2. User Expectations and Demands:** Library users often have high expectations for access to the latest technologies and seamless online services. Meeting these expectations can create pressure for libraries to continually invest in and implement new technologies, leading to stress for library professionals.
- 3. Training and Skill Development:** Library staff may experience stress when they are required to learn and adopt new technologies. The need for ongoing training to stay current with technological advancements can be challenging, especially for those who may not have a strong background in technology.
- 4. Budget Constraints:** Libraries often operate within limited budgets, and the cost of acquiring and maintaining technology can be a source of stress. Balancing the need for technological upgrades with financial constraints can be a significant challenge.
- 5. Information Overload:** Libraries are information hubs, and the abundance of digital information can be overwhelming for both library staff and users. Managing and organizing vast digital collections can

be a source of stress, as can the expectation to assist users in navigating these resources.

6. **Security and Privacy Concerns:** The increasing reliance on digital systems and online platforms in libraries raises concerns about data security and patron privacy. Addressing these concerns and ensuring the safe use of technology can be stressful for library professionals.

To address techno-stress in libraries, it's essential for institutions to provide adequate training and support for staff, establish clear technology policies, and prioritize a user-friendly experience for patrons. Additionally, creating a culture that embraces change and innovation while acknowledging the challenges can contribute to a healthier integration of technology in library settings.

How Techno-stress can affect rural academic librarians:

Techno-stress can affect rural academic librarians in unique ways due to the specific challenges and characteristics of rural environments. Here are some factors that may contribute to techno-stress for rural academic librarians:

1. **Limited Resources:** Rural academic libraries may have limited financial resources, making it challenging to invest in and maintain up-to-date technology. Librarians may feel stressed about the lack of access to cutting-edge tools and resources available in larger institutions.
2. **Limited Training Opportunities:** Rural librarians may have fewer opportunities for professional development and training in the latest technologies compared to their urban counterparts. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and stress as they try to keep pace with technological advancements.
3. **Infrastructure Challenges:** Rural areas may face infrastructure challenges, such as slow or unreliable internet connectivity. Librarians may experience frustration when dealing with technical issues that hinder the efficient use of digital resources or online services.
4. **Isolation:** Rural librarians may feel isolated from larger professional networks, limiting their ability to share experiences and learn from colleagues facing similar challenges. This isolation can exacerbate stress related to technological issues.

5. **Multitasking Pressures:** In smaller institutions, librarians may have multiple roles and responsibilities. Balancing traditional library tasks with the demands of technology management can create stress, especially if they are not adequately staffed to handle these responsibilities.
6. **Resistance to Change:** In some rural communities, there might be resistance to technological changes or a preference for traditional methods. Librarians may experience stress when trying to introduce and integrate new technologies while respecting local preferences.
7. **Lack of Technical Support:** Rural academic libraries may lack dedicated IT support, requiring librarians to take on additional responsibilities related to troubleshooting and problem-solving. This added workload can contribute to stress.

To mitigate techno-stress in rural academic libraries, it's crucial for institutions and librarians to:

- Advocate for increased funding to support technology initiatives.
- Facilitate professional development opportunities, possibly through online platforms.
- Establish collaborative networks with other libraries to share resources and expertise.
- Develop strategies for community engagement and education to promote acceptance of technological changes.
- Prioritize a supportive work culture that recognizes and addresses the challenges associated with technology adoption in rural settings.

By addressing these factors, rural academic libraries can create a more conducive environment for librarians to navigate technological challenges and provide effective services to their communities.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the analytical study of techno stress on rural academic librarians in India has shed light on the nuanced challenges faced by professionals in these unique settings. As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, rural librarians confront a range of stressors, including limited resources, infrastructure constraints, and distinct socio-cultural dynamics. The

findings of this study reveal the multifaceted nature of techno stress, encompassing challenges such as the pressure to adapt to technological advancements, limitations in training opportunities, and the impact of multitasking in smaller institutions. Community expectations and resistance to technological changes have emerged as significant socio-cultural factors influencing the stress experienced by rural librarians. The role of technological infrastructure, including issues related to internet connectivity and access to advanced tools, has been scrutinized. Additionally, the study has assessed the support systems available to librarians, recognizing the importance of professional networks, collaborative initiatives, and dedicated IT support in alleviating techno stress. This research not only identifies techno stressors but also aims to contribute to the development of practical strategies and recommendations. By addressing these challenges, rural academic libraries can create a more conducive environment for librarians to navigate the evolving technological landscape. The insights provided by this study are crucial for policymakers, library administrators, and educators to formulate targeted interventions that empower rural librarians in effectively integrating technology while preserving the integrity of their roles as knowledge custodians. As rural academic libraries play a pivotal role in serving their communities, it is essential to foster an environment that supports librarians in embracing technology as a tool for enhancing services. By acknowledging and addressing techno stress, this study advocates for a holistic and sustainable approach to technology integration, ensuring that rural librarians can continue to fulfill their vital mission of providing access to information and knowledge in an ever-changing digital landscape.

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