Comparative Assessment of Occupational Stress of Library Professionals Working in North Indian Universities

* Kasam Ali[#]   **** Nishat Fatima**

*Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh) 202002, INDIA; Email: kali2@jmi.ac.in
**Professor and Chairperson, Department of Library & Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh) 202002, INDIA; Email: nishatfatima20@gmail.com
Corresponding author.

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Abstract

The university library plays a pivotal role in supporting the curriculum and providing assistance in research and developmental activities at the university. Workplace stress has an impact on the productivity and services provided by library professionals to their parent organisations and user communities. This study was conducted to assess and compare the occupational stress of library professionals working in North Indian central university libraries. Census sampling was followed to gather data from the targeted respondents. The data was collected through the Occupational Stress Index (OSI). The study's findings revealed a significant difference in occupational stress (F = 13.814, p.001) among library professionals based on the university variable. However, no significant difference was found in the occupational stress (F = 0.248, p> .05) of library professionals on the designation variable. Furthermore, the study concluded that the occupational stress of library professionals differs from university to university but no difference was found in the occupational stress of library professionals due to their designations.
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1. Introduction

Today, people are living in the "Age of Stress" (Pestonjee, 1992). The term 'stress' is not only discussed in our everyday lives but also becomes a pervasive feature of people's life in the 21st century. Hans Selye once said, "Without stress, there would be no life" (Olpin and Hesson, 2010). Moreover, occupational stress becomes a serious problem in many organisations and a matter of great concern to professionals and other stakeholders in organisations (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994; Varca, 1999; Ornelas and Kleiner, 2003). According to Dina (2016), workplace stress is recognised as one of the most serious issues affecting library professionals' health and well-being, commitment to their jobs, productivity and performance, and so on. Scholars have shown an interest in the issue of occupational stress because it has become a major challenge to workers' wellbeing and the health of organizations.

Library professionals play a significant role in supporting the curriculum of students and assisting the faculties and scholars in the research and development of a university. They are an important aspect of a university in terms of providing and facilitating information to the academic user community. A university library is the central agency through which the

information or reading material reaches to the user's community at different level. A university is measured highly by its library. A university cannot be sound academically, without having a strong library system in it. Therefore, the library plays a major role in the total progress of the university.

2. Occupational Stress

The term 'Stress' has been adopted from the Latin word "Stringer" which means "to draw tight." Stress can be considered as any factor, acting internally or externally, that makes it difficult to adapt and that induces increased effort on the part of the person to maintain a state of equilibrium both internally and with the external environment (Humphrey, 1992). The concept of stress was initially introduced by Hans Selye in 1936 who defined it as, the force, pressure or strain exerted upon a material object or person who resists these forces and attempts to maintain its original state (Selye, 1956; Pestonjee, 1992). Stress is the response to an inappropriate level of pressure. It is a response to the pressure, not the pressure itself (Arroba and James, 1987).

Thus, stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension that can be generated from any event or thought; that makes one feel depressed, frustrated, angry or nervous. Stress can be positive or negative. It is a normal reaction the one's body has when changes occur, resulting in physical, emotional and intellectual responses. Stress responses help to body to survive in new circumstances, keeping alert, motivated and ready to avoid danger. When stress stays long, it's harm in one's life.

3. Review of Related Literature

Review of related literature is a short analysis of related literature that gives a broader understanding and plot to conduct the current investigation on occupational stress of library professionals in central university libraries. A study by Topper (2007) highlighted the impact of stress on library professionals and found that they are working under stress. 'Overload of work' is the chief cause of stress due to the shortage of library staff. Library will continue to be a 'workplace of stress' for library professionals but to manage with stress is a balancing act. The study suggested that the library should facilitate to library professionals to alleviate some of the stress by providing training programs and to teach them how to deal with such problems. Jayaprakash et al. (2013) found that the library professionals have work related stress and physical symptoms in various institutions around India. Further, the study revealed that respondents are carrying out their activities with stress. The study recommended that the work stress can be minimized by coping strategies such as integrating new skills into professional responsibility, effective communication within the environment, giving close attention to physical health, acquiring technological skills continuously and thereby lead to increased feelings of confidence and competence, attending yoga classes and doing regular exercises to reduce stress.

Mouli and Krishnan (2014) presented empirical evidence to ascertain the work related stress among the academic librarian across the private Arts and Science College in Chennai, Tamil Nadu state. The results of the study indicated that stress does not progressively increased or decreased with demographical background of the respondents as might be expected. Out of 15 aspects of the stress examined, seven aspects of the demographical background only six aspects has significantly co-related with the overall stress of the respondents and three aspects not co-related with stress level of the respondents. Ilio (2016) study findings revealed that female librarians facing more job stress than male librarian. Job stress has significant

effects on effectiveness of librarians in university libraries on equally as results stated. The negative implications of work stress are recognized as a challenge to both librarian and organization. They reduce the workplace stress by social withdrawal, emotional regulation and wishful thinking. Research also investigated that the library management can also provide the ways to reducing stress by establishing positive rapport between librarians.

Kaur and Katharia (2018) study not found significant difference on gender and marital status among library professionals occupational stress. Study also found library professionals of central and state universities are more prone to be stressed than the library professionals of private and deemed universities. Usuka, et. al. (2020) study revealed inadequate or poor working tools and facilities, increased workload, poor incentives and few promotional opportunities from management and inadequate amenities among librarian were the causes of stress; which, results in low productivity, delay in completing assigned tasks, lack of commitment and inability to relate well with colleagues and users. A recent study by Adebamiro and Popoola (2021) found that the main causes of work stress among the library personnel were user's attitude, more workload, less recognition of good performance, lack of equipment to work with etc. Study recommended Break time, well-furnished environment, adequate working equipments and job rescheduling will help to alleviate stress at the workplace. Obinyan and Igbinovia (2021) study revealed that there were two major symptoms of job stress of library professionals' e.g. a. moodiness; and b. irritability. Major causes of stress of library personnel were workload, unsatisfied need of users and few career development programs; while, major coping strategies with stress were regular sleep and recreational activities. The study suggested that library professionals require training and development programs from management along with other facilities to reduce stress.

4. Objectives

The objectives of the present study are following:
1. To measure and compare the level of occupational stress of library professionals among different universities.
2. To assess and compare the level of occupational stress of library professionals on the basis of designation variable.

5. Hypotheses

Following hypothesis were formulated to test the reliability and significance of the study:
   o H_01: There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of library professionals of different universities.
   o H_02: There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of library professionals of different designations.

6. Methodology

A survey-type study was designed to ascertain the significant differences of library professionals' occupational stress working in select North Indian central universities. Researchers have an attempt to assess the overall occupational stress of library professionals in central university libraries.

6.1 Population and Sample

In the current study, library professionals working in five North Indian central universities were the target population. These universities have been selected on the basis of equable

number of library professionals comprehensively available in the library system required for the comparative study. The library professionals were assumed as the most significant persons to perform technical activities, library operations and services as well. The present study applied census sampling to give an equal opportunity to all library professionals to be selected as sample of the target population.

6.2 Data Collection Tool

The investigators employed Occupational Stress Index (OSI) scale in the form of questionnaire to obtain dada from the target population. The OSI scale was developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981) which has 46 statements, each to be rated on five points Likert Scale. 28 are 'true keyed' and 18 are 'false keyed' items. The validity of the OSI was determined by co-efficient of correlation of OSI with various measures of job attitudes and job behavior and found to be highly significant positive correlation. The reliability of OSI was verified in the present study and Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.88. Table 1 shows the scoring direction of OSI:

Table 1: Scoring Direction of OSI

Response Categories	True-Keyed Items Value	False-Keyed Items Value
Strongly Disagree	1	5
Disagree	2	4
Neutral	3	3
Agree	4	2
Strongly Agree	5	1

6.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data were gathered by the investigators in the year 2020 and 2021 for this study as a part of research thesis submitted in the Department of Library and Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh in the year 2022. The researchers have personally visited to the universities and their libraries for collecting data. With the permission of the university librarian, data has collected from library professionals through questionnaire. Filling questionnaires were analysed for getting better results of the present study.

6.4 Statistical Analysis

The data was analysed by using SPSS version 20.00 keeping in view the objectives of present study. The appropriate descriptive statistical analyses techniques were carried out such as ANOVA and t-test to found the mean, SD, and significant difference. Post Hoc Test (Scheffe) was also applied to confirm the significance differences.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The obtained data were properly organised and tabulated to the analysis and interpretation of data into meaningful research findings and to accomplish the objectives of this research with respect to the variables has been taken in the present study. Data analysis and interpretation are being presented in the following tables:

7.1 Questionnaires Distribution

Table 2: Distribution of Questionnaires and Response Rate

Universities	Distributed Questionnaires	Received Questionnaires	Analyzed Questionnaires	Response Percentage
DU	50	46	43	86
JMI	46	40	38	82.60
JNU	70	65	56	80
AMU	108	93	85	78.70
BHU	150	134	115	76.66
Total	**424**	**378**	**337**	**79.48**

The table 2 shows that 424 questionnaires were distributed to the working library professionals in the libraries of select central universities in North India namely DU, JMI, JNU, AMU and BHU; Out of which 378 questionnaires received back. However, 41 questionnaires were incomplete; therefore, not included in the final analysis. Total 337 questionnaires were analysed; which constitutes 79.48% response of the total distributed questionnaires.
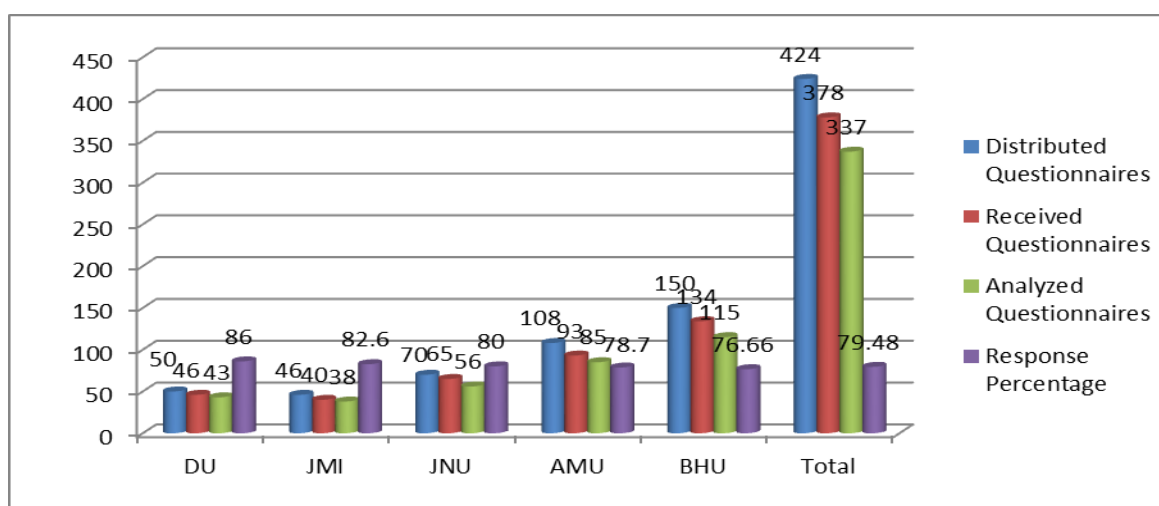

Fig. 1: Graphical Representation of Questionnaires and Response Rate of Respondents

7.2 Demographic Variables

Table 3: Population and Sample Size Distribution

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=337)		Frequency	Percentage
University	DU	43	12.8
	JMI	38	11.3
	JNU	56	16.6
	AMU	85	25.2
	BHU	115	34.1
Designation	University Librarian	5	1.5

	Deputy Librarian	15	4.5
	Assistant Librarian	22	6.5
	Professional Assistant	116	34.4
	Semi Professional Assistant	120	35.6
	Other Library Professionals	59	17.5

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents are from BHU 115 (34.1%), followed by AMU 85 (25.2%). Majority of the library professionals are Semi Professional Assistant 120 (35.6%), followed by the Professional Assistant 116 (34.4%). The total number of respondents are 337 (100%) in the present study.
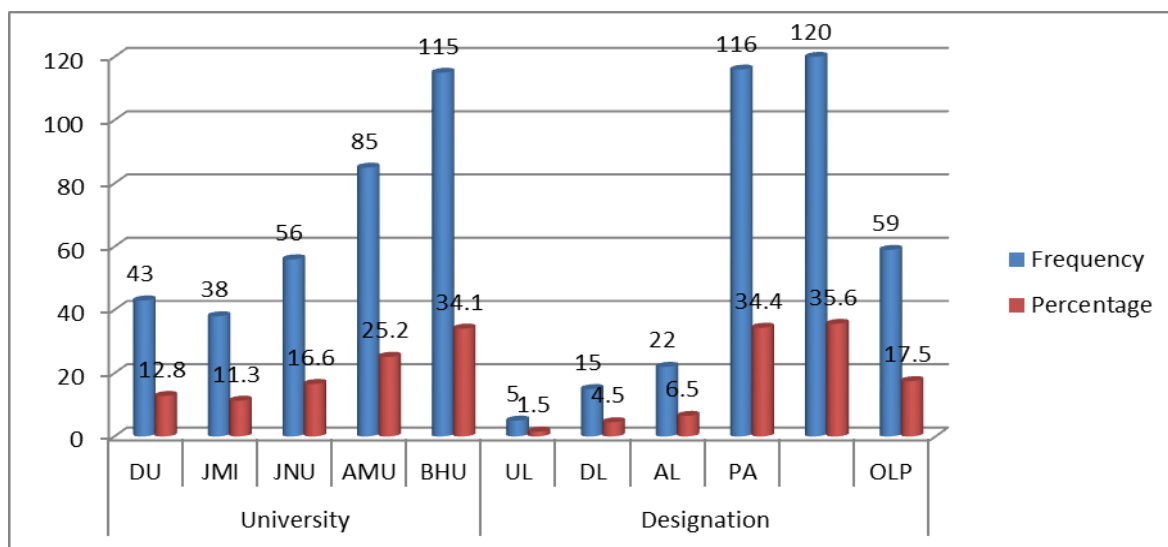

Fig. 2: Graphical Representation of Population and Sample Size Distribution on University and Designation Variables

7.3 Occupational Stress

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Occupational Stress of Library Professionals of Different Universities

Universities	N	Mean	SD
Delhi University	43	145.44	12.953
Jamia Millia Islamia	38	134.34	11.240
Jawaharlal Nehru University	56	138.05	10.284
Aligarh Muslim University	85	127.75	15.421
Banaras Hindu University	115	135.80	13.594
Total	**337**	**135.21**	**14.261**

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA on Occupational Stress of Library Professionals of Different Universities

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	9749.833	4	2437.458		
Within Groups	58580.208	332	176.446	13.814	.000
Total	**68330.042**	**336**			

Table 5 of ANOVA shows that library professionals of different universities reported highly significant difference on occupational stress (F= 13.814, p< .001). Mean scores (Table 4) suggested that library professionals of Delhi University experienced higher level of occupational stress while library professionals of Aligarh Muslim University experienced lower level of occupational stress. Therefore, hypothesis *(H₀1) "there is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of library professionals of different universities"* is rejected.
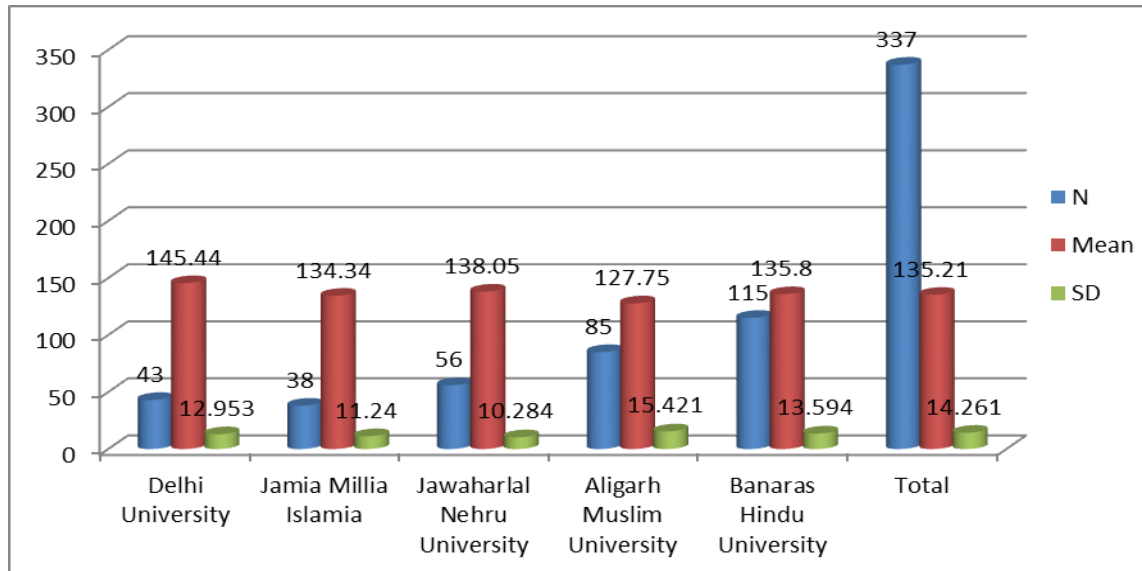

Fig. 3: Graphical Representation of Means and SDs of Library Professionals of Different University Groups in Respect to Their Occupational Stress

Table 6: Post Hoc Tests (Scheffe) for Multiple Comparisons on Occupational Stress of Library Professionals of Different Universities

Universities	Universities	Mean Difference	Std. Error	P
DU	JMI	11.100	2.957	.008
	JNU	7.388	2.693	.113
	AMU	17.689	2.486	.000
	BHU	9.642	2.374	.003
JMI	JNU	3.711	2.792	.778
	AMU	6.589	2.592	.170
	BHU	1.458	2.485	.987
JNU	AMU	10.301	2.286	.001
	BHU	2.254	2.165	.897
AMU	BHU	8.047	1.900	.002

The post hoc analyses (Table 6) indicated that the mean comparisons on occupational stress among different university library professionals. Mean scores found significant difference between DU and JMI (p< .01); DU and AMU (p< .001); DU and BHU (p< .01); JNU and AMU (p< .001); AMU and BHU (p< .01) library professionals on occupational stress. In contrast mean scores was not found significant difference between DU and JNU (p> .05); JMI and JNU (p> .05); JMI and AMU (p> .05); JMI and BHU (p> .05); JNU and BHU (p> .05) library professionals on occupational stress.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Occupational Stress of Library Professionals of Different Designations

Designations	N	Mean	SD
University Librarian	5	136.17	11.161
Deputy Librarian	15	135.47	8.219
Assistant Librarian	22	136.00	15.271
Professional Assistant	116	134.66	13.901
Semi Professional Assistant	120	134.99	12.704
Other Library Professionals	59	133.10	13.335
Total	**337**	134.65	13.160

Table 8: Summary of ANOVA on Occupational Stress of Library Professionals of Different Designations

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	217.544	5	43.509		
Within Groups	57976.836	331	175.157	.248	.940
Total	58194.380	336			

Table 8 of ANOVA showed that the library professionals of different designations reported no significant difference on occupational stress (F= 0.248, p> .05). Mean scores (Table 7) suggested that library professionals of different designations experienced almost equal level of occupational stress. Therefore, hypothesis *(H₀2) "there is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of library professionals of different designations"* is accepted.
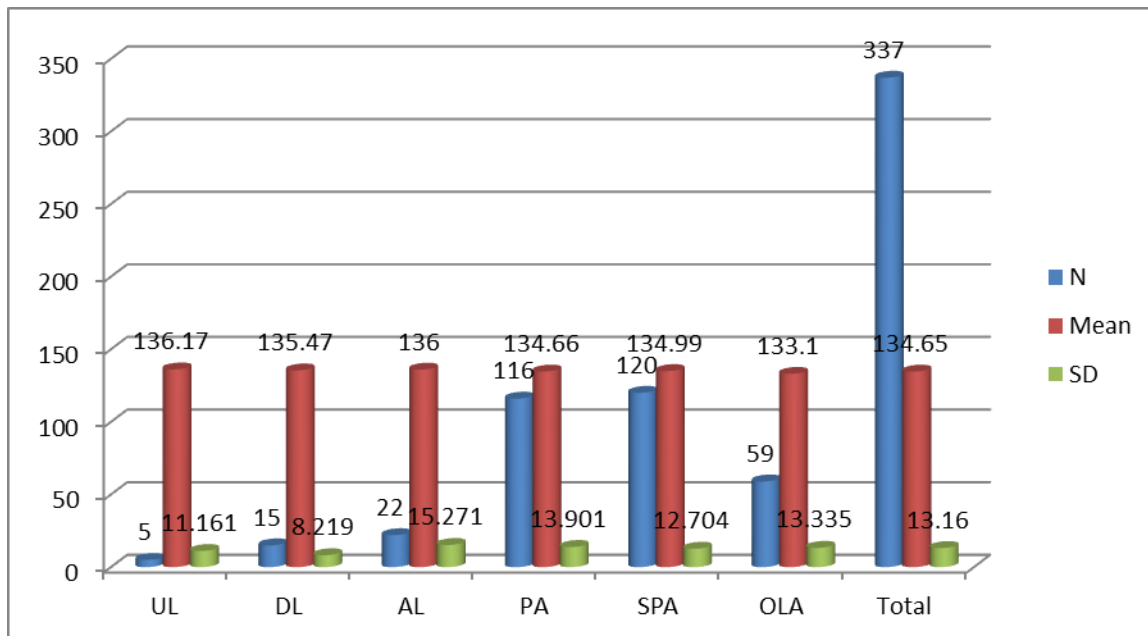

Fig. 4: Graphical Representation of Means and SDs of Library Professionals of Different Designations in Respect to Their Occupational Stress

Table 9: Post Hoc Tests (Scheffe) for Multiple Comparisons of Library Professionals different of Designations of Occupational Stress

Designations	Designations	Mean Difference	Std. Error	P
University Librarian	Deputy Librarian	.700	6.393	1.000
	Assistant Librarian	.167	6.126	1.000
	Professional Assistant	1.503	5.541	1.000
	Semi Professional Assistant	1.175	5.536	1.000
	Other Library Assistant	3.065	5.671	.998
Deputy Librarian	Assistant Librarian	.533	4.474	1.000
	Professional Assistant	.803	3.631	1.000
	Semi Professional Assistant	.475	3.624	1.000
	Other Library Professionals	2.365	3.827	.996
Assistant Librarian	Professional Assistant	1.336	3.139	.999
	Semi Professional Assistant	1.008	3.131	1.000
	Other Library Professionals	2.898	3.363	.980
Professional Assistant	Semi Professional Assistant	.328	1.723	1.000
	Other Library Professional	1.562	2.116	.990
Semi P.A.	Other Library Professional	1.890	2.104	.976

The post hoc analyses (Table 9) confirmed that the mean scores were not found significant difference between any pair of designations on occupational stress (p> .05).

8. Findings and Discussion

Following are the some major findings of the present study:

1. The study has been found that the library professionals of different universities reported highly significant difference on occupational stress (F= 13.814, p< .001) (Table 5).
2. The study also revealed that the library professionals of DU experienced higher level of occupational stress while library professionals of AMU experienced lower level of occupational stress (Table 4).
3. The post hoc analyses (Table 6) confirmed that the mean comparisons on occupational stress among different university library professionals. Mean scores found significant difference between DU and JMI (p< .01); DU and AMU (p< .001); DU and BHU (p< .01); JNU and AMU (p< .001); AMU and BHU (p< .01) library professionals on occupational stress. However, in contrast mean scores was not found significant difference between DU and JNU (p> .05); JMI and JNU (p> .05); JMI and AMU (p> .05); JMI and BHU (p> .05); JNU and BHU (p> .05) library professionals on occupational stress.
4. It has been found that there is no significant difference of library professional's occupational stress on designations (F= 0.248, p> .05) (Table 8).
5. Further, study revealed that the library professionals of different designations experienced almost equal level of occupational stress (Table 7).
6. The post hoc analyses (Table 9) confirmed that the mean scores were not found significant difference between any pair of designations on occupational stress (p> .05).

The findings of the present research are appreciated by several previous research studies, such as Akakandelwa and Jain's (2013) study, which revealed that the library staff of the University of Botswana faced more stress compared to the staff of the University of Zambia,

due to different factors. Kaur and Katharia (2018) study also found that the library professionals in private and deemed universities were more stressed in comparison to the library professionals working in central and state universities. The study was conducted by Junge and Gavali (2014), who discovered that the socio-demographic study variables, i.e., the respondent's age, gender, qualification, working place, their designation, region, and years of experience, are associated and found to influence the respondents' job satisfaction levels. Martin's (2020) study did not find any difference between librarians and library staff on the basis of gender, race, type of library, position, and work performed in the library.

9. Suggestions and Implications

The present research helps to understand current scenario of library professionals' occupational stress and on university and designation variables. Following are the some suggestions and implications of the present study:

i. To facilitate with higher grade pay and promotional opportunities timely for different level of professionals in the university libraries.
ii. Authority should create more jobs and fill the vacant posts available in the university libraries.
iii. From the side of authority, there should be improvements in the working conditions, equipment and facilities of library professionals at the workplace.
iv. Authority should be flexible to provide the opportunities to attend the conferences, workshops, seminars and training programmes; which ultimately will enhance the productivity, services and performance of library professionals.

10. Conclusion

The need for trained library professionals is growing by the day.On the other hand, it creates performance pressure on library professionals. It is very important that they should be stress free with their job and working environment. The stress free environment will help in achieving the educational goals of the institution, nation and the society. Library professionals are the central pillar for the overall growth and development of an academic institution or a university. They play an essential role in providing user-oriented services to enhance teaching, learning, and research activities with high quality academic and research resources.

This study helps to those researchers who want to study the occupational stress of library professionals in academic libraries as well as other types of libraries. The present study was carried out with 337 library professionals only on two variables, e.g. university and designation variables, which are not sufficient for the generalization of findings. Therefore, there is a need to study with more variables and a larger number of samples so that more authentic results can be found.

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