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# Cultural Proficiency and Multitasking Behavior: Implications on Librarians' Job Performance

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**ABSTRACT:** *Librarians who have a strong understanding of cultural differences and who demonstrate multiple task skills properly serve their users' demands. This study aimed to determine the level of cultural proficiency and multitasking behavior on the job performance of library and information professionals. Eighty-five (85) librarians and eighty-five (85) head librarians participated in the study. In this descriptive-correlational study, a research questionnaire was utilized and the gathered data was subsequently analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The study indicates that librarians' cultural proficiency and job performance were rated high, suggesting a strong foundation for cultural competence and effective task completion. Multitasking behavior was rated moderate, indicating a tendency to multitask during deadlines or meetings. Job performance in task completion, job knowledge, adaptability, and technology adeptness were also very high, suggesting adaptability and openness to learning and trying new approaches. The study concludes that cultural proficiency and multitasking significantly influence job performance, with involvement in metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behavior leading to more effective task completion, a better understanding of issues, and more innovative ideas at work. The study underscores that librarians' high cultural proficiency and moderate multitasking skills significantly enhance their job performance, with their adaptability, willingness to learn, and innovative thinking fostering efficient task completion and a comprehensive understanding of their professional responsibilities. Future studies might consider investigating the effects of targeted training initiatives designed to boost librarians' cultural proficiency, multitasking capabilities, and adaptability to ascertain whether such interventions could substantially enhance job performance and task execution efficiency.*

**KEYWORDS:** cultural proficiency, multitasking behavior, job performance

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## INTRODUCTION

Libraries uphold a vital commitment to provide equitable access to all, especially marginalized groups facing barriers (Smith, 2020). This necessitates embracing diversity and cultural proficiency to serve evolving patron demographics effectively (Williams, 2019). Studies demonstrate that cultural intelligence allows librarians to construct inclusive spaces, programs, and responsively handle multifaceted job demands (Thompson, 2021; Brock et al., 2020).

Additionally, academic librarians often exhibit complex, multitasking skills across areas like circulation, reference, and cataloging. However, intense concurrent task switching can increase errors (Williams, 2022), lower productivity (Patel, 2021), and impact user service quality. As patron diversity rises, administrators must evaluate sustainable workloads so staff can manage demands without detrimental effects.

Furthermore, given libraries' critical public role, it is essential to assess if existing expectations for librarian multitasking can maintain excellent services amid growing community diversity (Johnson, 2021). Although past research has separately examined cultural proficiency and multitasking impacts on librarians, there is a gap in understanding their combined influence.

Specifically, as academic librarian roles expand and student populations diversify, there is a need to explore if cultural competency enables managing multifaceted work effectively (Brock et al., 2020). Studies must investigate how cultural proficiency affects handling complex cognitive loads from concurrent, diverse patron demands.

This research aimed to address this gap by examining how cultural proficiency and multitasking behaviors impact academic librarian performance. Informing policies that uphold quality, inclusive services is vital for libraries to continue serving as cornerstones of democracy and learning.

### Framework

This study posits that a librarian's job performance is significantly influenced by their level of cultural proficiency and the degree of their multitasking behavior. The theoretical underpinnings of this research are grounded in three key concepts: Cultural Proficiency as outlined by Masrek et al. (2021), Multitasking as discussed by Halim and Halim (2023), and Job Performance as defined by Nwokike & Unegbu (2019).

Cultural proficiency, defined as effectively interacting across cultural differences (Masrek et al., 2021), relies on cultivating four developmental dimensions: metacognition, cognition, motivation and behavior. Metacognition involves critically examining one's own cultural perspectives, assumptions and biases. Building this self-awareness facilitates recognizing how internalized worldviews unconsciously shape external engagement. Studies demonstrate integrating

metacognitive reflection into training heightens capacities for equitable service delivery (Thompson, 2021; Johnson & Johnson, 2020). Next, motivation constitutes the inner intention and commitment to understand diverse groups' unique histories and experiences on their own terms. Research shows that persistently applying this drive to learn inclusively leads to environments catering to marginalized needs (Smith & Smith, 2018; Brock et al, 2020). Furthermore, cognition means actively seeking knowledge on the values, norms and communication styles of other cultures. Such learning enables nuanced, sensitive engagement across difference and superior fulfilling of diverse patron requirements (Patel & Moore, 2022; Williams, 2019). Finally, behavior entails demonstrating adaptable cross-cultural communication abilities respectfully applied across diversity. Studies reveal practical skill building here expands capacities for dispute reconciliation and constructive service of diverse patrons (Silva et al., 2022; Lee & Lee, 2020).

Additionally, librarians handle multifaceted technology-oriented roles requiring extensive multitasking. Studies focused on academic and special libraries provide consistent evidence of high prevalence of interleaved daily tasks spanning systems toggling, information searches, cataloging, query processing and literature reviews (Halim & Halim, 2023; Batubara, 2021; Dhanavandan & Tamizhchelvan, 2021). However, such intense simultaneous cognitive processing risks decreased productivity by over 20 minutes hourly (Patel, 2021) and 19% more errors (Williams, 2022). This suggests implementing structural changes to help judiciously manage extreme demands.

Furthermore, key drivers of librarian job performance include successfully completing core specialized tasks like research support through assisting in relevant information source identification (Peterson, 2018); actively applying acquired professional knowledge around areas such as metadata standards, database structures, and community analysis techniques (Khan & Aldoghaim, 2021); demonstrating adaptability to reconfigure services, workflows and outreach channels amid evolving landscape; and utilizing technology to enhance access through automation of workflows and streamlining information retrieval (Kergroach et al., 2022).

Globally, librarians fulfill performance expectations in responsibilities like reference services, research assistance, information literacy guidance and collection development (Ndinoshiho, 2022). In the Philippines, findings confirm academic librarians complete quality readership services (Cerezo & Valdez, 2019) while public librarians showcase versatility during constraints like the pandemic (Parcon & Corcoran, 2022). Boosting relevant competencies will empower libraries to uphold duty to equitable access.

As libraries uphold a vital access, inclusion and lifelong learning mission amidst growing diversity and complexity of patron needs, exploring the intersection of these concepts is key. Specifically, this study undertakes to investigate whether cultivating cultural competence aids librarians meeting extensive job expectations effectively, including through balancing intensifying

technology-oriented demands. Building this understanding provides a foundation to improve strategic support, enabling the profession to address contemporary challenges.

Ultimately, this research offers vital awareness on dynamics shaping contemporary librarians' capacity to excel in serving communities, especially those facing marginalization, with quality and inclusion. The insights will empower strategic initiatives and policy improvements centering librarians' competency building, thereby allowing libraries to fulfill their democratic purpose as valued communal institutions providing empowerment through knowledge access. Findings aim to sustain the profession's ability to continuously expand its duty to support communities' growth, self-determination and prosperity.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study determined the level of cultural proficiency and extent of multitasking behavior influence the librarians' job performance. It answered the following research questions:

1. What is the level of the participants' cultural proficiency considering the following: Metacognition; Cognition; Motivation; and Behavior?
2. What is the extent of the participants' multitasking in the library?
3. What is the participants' level of job performance in terms of the following: Completion of Specific Tasks; Job Knowledge; Flexibility and Adaptability; and Adeptness to Technology?
4. Do the participants' cultural proficiency and extent of multitasking significantly influence their job performance?

### **Methods**

A descriptive-correlational research design was used involving 85 librarians and 85 head librarians to assess relationships between cultural proficiency, multitasking behavior, and job performance. Purposive sampling targeted the participants who come from higher education institutions in Northern Mindanao, Philippines.

The survey instrument has 3 sections evaluating cultural proficiency, multitasking capabilities, and performance facets adapted from Villagran (2020) and Abao (2016). Establishing validity and reliability was done through expert reviews and pilot testing with 30 librarians, yielding high Cronbach's alpha consistency scores from 0.876 to 0.981 across domains.

Data gathering involved disseminating digital questionnaires after obtaining ethical clearances. Standards were upheld by using informed consent, confidential data, voluntary participation, and open communication. Moreover, analysis entailed descriptive statistics determining frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Regression analysis examined the impact of cultural proficiency and multitasking behavior on job performance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 offers insight into librarians' high level of cultural proficiency across four key areas: metacognitive awareness (4.43), cultural knowledge (4.05), intrinsic motivation (4.35), and external behaviors (4.23). Scores reveal librarians rate themselves as adept at navigating multicultural contexts through self-reflection, cross-cultural understanding, internal drive, and real-world actions. The minimal deviation in scores also speaks to the reliability and generalizability of these findings.

**Table 1**  
*Summary of Librarians' Cultural Proficiency*

Cultural Proficiency	Mean	Interpretation	SD
Metacognition	4.43	High	0.54
Cognition	4.05	High	0.73
Motivation	4.35	High	0.70
Behavior	4.23	High	0.87
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>0.59</b>

Furthermore, these synergistic capabilities empower librarians as equitable guides to facilitate diverse patrons' growth, underscoring their vital role. As Dali and Caidi (2017) emphasize, cultural competencies allow librarians to ensure libraries remain inclusive, enabling self-directed learning. Thus, academic librarians with multifaceted cultural proficiencies can effectively serve today's diverse educational communities.

Table 2 showcases the frequency, percentage, and mean distribution of participants' multitasking behaviors. The data reveals a moderate level of multitasking, as evidenced by an overall mean of 2.96. This is further supported by 89.41% of the participants (equivalent to 76 individuals) engaging in such behaviors. This suggests that librarians are reasonably experienced in multitasking at work, capable of focusing on and completing specific tasks while simultaneously managing others.

**Table 2**  
*Frequency, Percentage and Mean Distribution of the Participants' Multitasking Behavior*

Range	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51-5.00	Very High	0	0.00
3.51-4.50	High	1	1.18
2.51-3.50	Moderate	76	89.41
1.51-2.50	Low	8	9.41
1.00-1.50	Very Low	0	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>2.96</b>	
<b>Interpretation</b>		<b>Moderate</b>	
<b>SD</b>		<b>0.27</b>	

However, Contributor (2021) cautions about the potential pitfalls of multitasking. Tasks that demand full attention, such as answering phone calls, checking emails, and writing reports, can suffer when performed concurrently. Multitasking can lead to fragmented concentration, resulting in poorer performance. It may increase the time needed to refocus on a task, difficulty in recalling the last point of progress, and the necessity to reorient mental processes.

Table 3 shows the summary of the librarian's job performance. The data indicates a high level of job performance among librarians in completing specific duties and tasks, as evidenced by an overall mean rating of 4.76 from head librarians. The vast majority, 80%, were ranked very highly in fulfilling responsibilities. Similarly, performance was high for job knowledge, with a mean of 4.63 and almost 66% earning very high assessments in managing library services informed by training. Together, this reflects effective duty completion and specialized expertise.

**Table 3**  
*Summary of Librarians' Job Performance*

<b>Job Performance</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>SD</b>
Completion of Specific Task	4.76	Very High	0.36
Job Knowledge	4.63	Very High	0.45
Adaptability & Flexibility	4.79	Very High	0.36
Adeptness with Technology	4.60	Very High	0.52

Additionally, findings show librarians demonstrate high adaptability, scoring an average of 4.79, with over 78% rated very highly for openness to new approaches and community interactions. They also exhibit adeptness with technology, with a mean of 4.60 and over 62% judged as very strong in leveraging systems and tools for tasks. This versatility and tech proficiency enables responsive services.

Table 4 shows the Regression analysis of the participants' cultural proficiency and multitasking skills significantly predict superior job performance ( $F = 4.96, p = .009$ ), aligning with Nwokike's (2019) findings. This demonstrates the importance of competency building to address multifaceted workplace demands. In particular, cultural proficiency, encompassing understanding of diverse perspectives, emerged as a key driver, with a 0.180 job performance increase per unit change. This reinforces Khanh's (2021) model outlining behavioral, cognitive, motivational and metacognitive facets of cultural intelligence as performance determinants.

However, these factors accounted for only 8.6 percent of job performance variability. The remainder depends on unexamined elements like incentives, recognition and development opportunities, pivotal for productivity, innovation and service quality. Additionally, metacognitive strategies to elevate confidence and success in information literacy initiatives can further expand libraries' educational mission and effectiveness within learning communities. Overall, continuous

motivation and upskilling focused on inclusion and multifaceted competencies are essential for libraries to excel in increasingly complex, diverse environments.

**Table 4**

*Regression Analysis on the Influence of the Participants' Cultural Proficiency and Multitasking on their Job Performance*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.54	.477		9.54	.000
Cultural Proficiency	.180	.063	.298	2.85**	.006
Multitasking	-.208	.138	-.157	-1.51	.136
Model Summary					
R = .328	R <sup>2</sup> = .108	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .086	F = 4.96**	p = .009	

\*\*significant at 0.01 level

## CONCLUSION

The recent study in library science has established a significant correlation between cultural proficiency, multitasking behavior, and job performance among librarians. It confirmed that cultural proficiency significantly enhances a librarian's ability to multitask effectively in diverse environments. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous cultural proficiency training for library staff, given the diverse communities they serve. It also highlights the need for strategies promoting diversity and inclusivity within the library workforce, which are essential for fostering an inclusive community and for the comprehensive development of library professionals.

The research underscores the importance of multitasking abilities in librarians, suggesting that this skill can lead to more dynamic and efficient library operations. It recommends a shift towards more flexible and adaptive job designs and task allocations that utilize librarians' multitasking skills. The study also provides recommendations for school administrators, librarians, and future researchers. It suggests that administrators allocate resources for ongoing cultural proficiency training, encourage diversity and inclusivity initiatives, and consider multitasking capabilities when designing tasks. Librarians are advised to seek professional development opportunities, create an inclusive environment, and enhance their multitasking abilities. Future researchers are encouraged to further explore the impact of cultural proficiency and multitasking on librarians' job performance and career progression.

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