Management of employee expectations, performance and satisfaction in university library: an empirical study

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This study unfolds major implications for performance management systems and process in university libraries. The study is mainly based on the primary data collected from the professionals working in 15 university libraries (regular and deemed) of Karnataka State with the help of a pre-tested, structured, comprehensive, postal questionnaire. The respondents include professionals and semiprofessionals working in various university libraries in Karnataka. The total population considered for the current study was 218 library professionals and semi-professionals distributed across the 15 university libraries and 188 respondents submitted their filled-in questionnaire, which accounts for a response rate of 86.24%. Hence, the information, opinions, perceptions and attitudes of these library professionals were collected and analyzed. The key issues addressed in this study include: perceived importance and perceived performance of workplace attributes, performance appraisal, issues considered during appraisal, knowledge and competence of employee performance by the appraiser, opinion on performance appraisal system, suggestions to improve, respondents’ views about frequent disturbance at work, and overall satisfaction. This paper reports on the views and perceptions of university library professionals in Karnataka in respect of their job, job environment and organization in addition to identifying and analyzing the key individual, work and organizational characteristics influencing their performance expectations and job satisfaction. It is hoped that this paper will help library administrators in managing library personnel both effectively and efficiently.

Introduction

Performance management is a process designed to improve organizational, team and individual performance and is driven by line managers. The concept of performance management is quite new and began to take shape in the late 1980s. It emerged out of the realization that a more continuous and integrated approach was needed to manage and reward performance. Performance management is a continuous and flexible process, which involves managers and those whom they manage acting as partners, within a framework that sets out how they can best work together to achieve the intended results. It focuses on future performance planning and improvement rather than on retrospective performance appraisal. It provides the basis for regular and frequent dialogues between managers and individuals or teams about performance and development needs. It is a process which reflects normal good management practices of setting direction, monitoring and measuring performance, and taking action accordingly. It should be treated as a natural process that all good managers follow.

As far as employee motivation is concerned, the relevant research question is what really motivates an employee to put forward exemplary efforts with a view to producing superior work performance. In fact, the motivation-hygiene theory proposed by Herzberg1 has far-reaching managerial implications. Based on his research, it is concluded that the replies people gave when they felt good about their job were significantly different from the replies given when they felt bad. Intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth seem to be related to job-satisfaction. On the other hand, when employees were dissatisfied, they tended to cite extrinsic factors, such as company policy and administration, and working conditions. Accordingly, the present study aims at examining the discrepancies between the importance attached to various job facets and the perceived fulfillment of these factors in the work place as reported by the library professionals and semi-professionals in university libraries in Karnataka.

Review of literature

Lawler2 has identified a wide range of factors that influence productivity or job performance; the more determining factors are ability and motivation. High morale plays a key role in raising productivity. Individual traits of the role occupant and occupational differences
of the employees all have a significant effect on performance–satisfaction linkages. More studies now divert the direction of relationship from performance to satisfaction. The medium of rewards are usually linked with performance and satisfaction. In some cases, rewards cause satisfaction, and in some other cases, performance produces rewards.

Wahba in his study on motivation, performance and job satisfaction in libraries found that work as the highest source of satisfaction and satisfaction with work is highly correlated with motivation. Correlation between job satisfaction and job performance is not conclusive, but job dissatisfaction leads to negative job performance such as high turnover rate. Therefore, there is a need for future studies on the quality of the work environment in libraries.

Giving responsibilities to staff and recognition as well as suitable pay for their work in order to motivate them is also very important. A study conducted by Gibbs also shared this view when he gathered together librarians to perform the role of a counsellor. For staff to be motivated, it is necessary to pay attention to safety and health issues relating to them.

McNally conducted a survey to find out how job satisfaction is related to performance. The sample chosen by him were the Ontario reference library staff. The results showed generally moderate satisfaction with environmental conditions, but low motivation.

Katna and Saibaba in their study of “motivation in libraries”, observed that hierarchical employment structure of any organisation may be motivating job seekers to take up the job notwithstanding the opening in librarianship, as these provide motivation in the shape of chance for achieving higher wage, responsibility and career on recognition of one’s capabilities and performance. Still boredom may occupy a person who is repeatedly attending routine task unless he has been trained to link the meaningfulness of the task with respect to his social environment.

Lwehabura and Matovelo identify the library and information service managers as having a centre stage role for leading their subordinates in the process of bringing an effective management and good work output for their organizations. They stress the importance of managers and their subordinates working together through managerial roles and sharing a strategy for an effective management process. The study points out self-management, understanding individual’s behaviour, assertiveness, delegation, empowerment and good relationships as some aspects that could help to harness an effective management process to improve and strengthen productivity.

Schneider surveyed and interviewed the staff of a large urban public library system, a majority of who were paraprofessionals and worked in public services. They reported satisfaction with the nature of the work itself, co-workers, immediate supervisors, and working directly with patrons. They reported dissatisfaction with communications between staff and management, and a majority identified heavy workloads and understaffing as serious problems.

Line advocated that to prevent de-motivating the staff, the de-motivating factors ought to be avoided, namely, rigid grading structures and hierarchies ignoring staff, brushing aside suggestions, claiming credit for their ideas, showing no interest in staff as humans, criticizing but never praising them, confusing and patronizing staff, giving them unclear job descriptions, and reporting lines avoiding consultation, excluding them from any involvement, and being negative.

Results of the study by Nkereuwem indicate that Nigerian academic library staff responds to monetary rewards. Blackwell’s studies revealed that staff tended to be dissatisfied with pay and opportunities for promotion and liked more training and better communications.

Porter draws upon Maslow’s theory of motivation in order to measure managers’ perceived deficiencies in security, social esteem, autonomy and self-actualization needs. Two responses were obtained for each item: (a) how much is there now? (Minimum…maximum) and (b) how much should there be? (Minimum…maximum). Need deficiency is calculated by subtracting (a) from (b) on the assumption “that the larger the difference, the larger the degree of dissatisfaction or the smaller the degree of satisfaction” (Porter). Deficiency scores can be analyzed separately for individual items or summed across each need category as a whole.

Deficiency scores of these kinds have been used fairly widely, but few studies in the later 1970’s have employed
Porter’s measure with-out amendment. Using the original measure, Van Maanen15 examined the pattern of need satisfaction in police recruits across their initial seven months, and Gavin and Maynard16 studied correlates of bank employees’ responses. However, neither report provides normative or psychometric information. Lefkowitz17 cites mean deficiency scores for the five sub-scales in a study of 312 police personnel: Security 1.23 (s.d.2.68), Social 1.84 (s.d. 3.21), Esteem 6.00 (s.d. 5.41), Autonomy 7.29 (s.d. 6.37), Self-Actualization 6.36 (s.d. 6.09). A large number of scores are brought together by Howell, Strauss and Sorensen18, who set their data from a sample of Liberian managers into normative values from 11 other countries published by other investigators.

In this context, the present study aimed at ascertaining the employees’ perception of job satisfiers and dissatisfiers, and the researcher made an attempt to understand the discrepancy between the ‘importance attached to various motivational factors’ and the ‘actual presence of those factors’ personally experienced by the employees in their work place. It is posited that the negative discrepancy between the ‘desirable’ and actually available conditions of work and work environment will definitely have an adverse impact on the perceived job satisfaction and performance.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To review key performance management process and systems prevailing in university libraries such as performance appraisal, employee communication and involvement, and human resource development; and
2. To identify and analyze the major personal, work, and organisational factors influencing employee expectations, performance, and job satisfaction of library professionals.

**Methodology**

This quantitative-empirical study is descriptive in nature. The study is mainly based on the primary data collected from the professionals working in 15 university libraries (regular and deemed) of Karnataka State with the help of a pre-tested, structured, comprehensive, postal questionnaire. The respondents were professionals and semiprofessionals working in various university libraries in Karnataka. The total population considered for the current study was 218 library professionals and semi-professionals distributed across the 15 university libraries.
libraries. In addition to the socio-economic and demographic characteristic of the respondents, the questionnaire consisted of questions intending to elicit the responses pertaining to the perceived importance and performance of 15 attributes present in the job and job environment, performance appraisal system and job satisfaction of the library professionals. 188 respondents submitted their filled-in questionnaire, which accounts for a response rate of 86.24%. Hence, the information, opinions, perceptions and attitudes of these library professionals were collected and analyzed. Secondary data was also collected from the records of the university libraries. The field survey data and information were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics (mean, sd).

As highlighted by Herzberg, the hygiene factors responsible for preventing job dissatisfaction include: Organization’s overall policy and administration, supervision, relationship with your colleagues, relationship with your subordinates, working conditions and job security and salary status (Sl. No. 1 to 7 in Table 1). The perceived performance or fulfillment of these factors can only prevent dissatisfaction, but cannot promote employee satisfaction. On the other hand, the motivational factors include: personal achievement, recognition for the job well done, work itself, responsibility, advancement (promotions), power and authority, involvement and participation and equity and justice in treatment (Sl.No. 8 to 15 in Table 1). The perceived fulfillment of these needs would go a long way in ensuring higher job satisfaction, and in turn, superior work place performance. As indicated in table-1, the ‘need deficiency scores’ appear to be positive (difference between the ‘performance’ mean values and ‘importance’ mean values) from Sl. No 1 to 7 (hygiene factors). In contrast, the need deficiency scores perceived and reported by the respondents in respect of motivational factors (Sl.No. 8 to 15) have been significantly negative.

There existed positive discrepancy between the perceived importance of hygiene factors and their presence in the work place on the one hand, and a negative discrepancy between the perceived importance of motivating factors and their actual availability in the work place. From this analysis, it follows that if one wants to motivate people on their jobs, the management should emphasize achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and growth. In fact, these are the characteristics that people find intrinsically rewarding. Furthermore, as Herzberg has stated, the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction, as was traditionally believed. The present study also supports the existence of a dual continuum: the opposite of “satisfaction” is “no satisfaction”; and the opposite of “dissatisfaction” is “no dissatisfaction”.

From this it follows that management of university libraries in Karnataka has not yet attached importance to the provision of motivational factors, and as such, in the absence of this provision, any attempt to improve performance and job satisfaction levels of library professionals would prove to be a futile exercise.

Accordingly, taking into account the opinions of the respondents of the present study, it could be inferred that most of the library staff do not seem to suffer from job dissatisfaction because of the presence of hygiene factors in the work place. However, an overwhelming proportion of them do not appear to experience job satisfaction because of the non-availability of motivating intrinsic factors in the work place. Hence, the need of the hour is to provide a conducive and congenial job environment for the library staff to fulfill intrinsically satisfying factors such as a sense of achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibilities, advancement, and their personal and professional growth.

**Performance appraisal**

Performance appraisal has been considered as a significant and indispensable tool for an organization, for the information it provides is highly useful in making decisions regarding various personnel aspects such as promotions and merit increases. Performance appraisal/evaluation is the systematic process of evaluation of the individual’s performance/work and assessing the needs of an employee. The periodic evaluation of performance by authority recognizes hard work in the organization. Performance measures also link information gathering and decision making processes which provide a basis for judging the effectiveness of personnel subdivisions such as recruiting, selection, training and compensation. The respondents were asked to indicate the authority that makes performance appraisal in the organization, bases of evaluation, competence and knowledge of worker performance of the appraiser, the opinion on the system and the suggestions of the respondents to improve the system. Their responses are summarized in the Table 2.
The above results show that 81 (43.09%) respondents in the library said that they are appraised by the superiors in the library. 43 (22.88%) respondents expressed that they are appraised by the head of the university. While 18 (9.57%) respondents each said that evaluation is done by a committee and it was based on the contributions made by the employees respectively. About 15 (7.98%) respondents felt that it was done by external experts and remaining 13 (6.91%) respondents did not respond to this question.

Table 3 indicates that 97 (51.60%) respondents felt that performance appraisal system followed in the library is based on work performance. 42 (22.34%) respondents were of the opinion that they are evaluated based on the ability of the employees to take responsibility. Next in order, 30 (15.96%) respondents felt that evaluation was based on regularity/punctuality. About 11 (5.85%) respondents stated that performance appraisal was done by considering superior-subordinate relationship. The remaining eight (3.72%) respondents did not respond to this question.

Thirteen (6.91%) of the respondents opined that the superiors (appraisers) did not possess the required competence and that they never had the knowledge of the performance of the employees. 57 (30.32%) and 30 (15.96%) respondents felt that superiors were competent to a great extent and very great extent respectively and had sufficient knowledge of employee performance to give a fair assessment (Table 4).

As seen in Table 5, 58 (30.85%) of the respondents felt performance appraisal system adopted by the library had promoted their interest. About 34 (18.09%) respondents felt that it was highly subjective. 15.43 per cent felt that they were competent to a very limited extent. About 57 (30.32%) and 30 (15.96%) respondents felt that superiors were competent to a great extent and very great extent respectively and had sufficient knowledge of employee performance to give a fair assessment (Table 4).
that it did not reflect merit properly and 14.36 per cent stated that it has harmed their interest. 7.98 per cent stated that the system could be easily manipulated. About 25 (13.29 %) respondents did not respond to this question. In all, we find from the above analysis that 48.86 per cent professionals in the library are dissatisfied with performance appraisal system. This is a matter for serious concern as it can affect motivation of employees adversely in a big way.

It can be noticed from Table 6 that the pragmatic suggestions given by the respondents to improve the existing appraisal system include appointing competent appraisers, changing the criteria used, and linking appraisal results with career advancement of employees.

| Table 5 — Opinion on performance appraisal system adopted by the library |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sl. No. | Performance appraisal system adopted by the library | No. of responses | Percentage |
| 1. | Can be easily manipulated | 15 | 07.98 |
| 2. | Has harmed your interest | 27 | 14.36 |
| 3. | Does not reflect merit properly | 29 | 15.43 |
| 4. | Highly subjective | 34 | 18.09 |
| 5. | Has promoted your interest | 58 | 30.85 |
| 6. | No response | 25 | 13.29 |
| Total | | 188 | 100.00 |

| Table 6 — Suggestions to improve the appraisal system |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sl. No. | Suggestions to improve | No. of responses | Percentage |
| 1. | Abolish performance appraisal | 02 | 03.33 |
| 2. | Have competent appraisers | 19 | 31.67 |
| 3. | Change appraisal criteria | 21 | 35.00 |
| 4. | Link appraisal with promotion | 13 | 21.67 |
| 5. | De-link appraisal from promotion | 05 | 08.33 |
| Total | | 188 | 100.00 |

| Table 7 — Mean and standard deviation of employees frequently bothered at work |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sl. No. | Statements | Mean Std. Deviation |
| 1. | Thinking that you will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of various people over you | 3.05 | 1.17 |
| 2. | Feeling that you are not fully qualified to handle your job | 2.28 | 1.19 |
| 3. | Feeling that you may not be liked /accepted by the people you work with | 2.09 | 1.13 |
| 4. | Feeling that you have to do things on the job that are against your better judgment | 2.10 | 1.22 |
| 5. | Feeling that your job tends to interfere with your family life | 1.73 | 1.09 |

**Frequent disturbance at work — respondents’ views**

Employees may experience disquieting features in their job and job environment. This will lead to job dissatisfaction, cynicism, employee disengagement, reduced productivity and poor quality of performance. The more frequently mentioned disturbing factors bothering employees include role conflict, lack of capacity (knowledge and skill), unsound working relationships, rift between personal values and family conflict (either work interfering with family or family interfering with work or both).

As shown in Table 7 most of the respondents reported role conflict occasionally (Mean 3.05; Standard Deviation 1.17) in the form of their inability to satisfy the conflicting demands of immediate and distant
superiors in their respective organizations. On the other hand, a significant proportion of the respondents rarely felt that they were not fully qualified to handle their jobs, thereby indicating lack of proper and adequate capacity to discharge their duties and responsibility (Mean 2.28; Std. Deviation 1.19). Similarly, the other annoying factors such as the feeling that they may not be liked/accepted by the people they work with (relationship crisis: Mean 2.09; Std. deviation 1.13), the feeling that they have to do things on the job that are against their better judgment (clash between personal and departmental values: Mean 2.10; Std. Deviation 1.22), and the feeling that their job tends to interfere with their family life (work and family conflict: Mean 1.73; Std. Deviation 1.09) were infrequently experienced by the respondents. Hence, except the role conflict, which has been occasionally experienced, the library staff rarely felt other disquieting features such as lack of capacity to do the job, strained work place relations, clash between personal and departmental values, and work and family conflict.

Levels of satisfaction

Generally speaking, employees may report two forms of job-satisfaction, namely, subjective satisfactions with reference to differentiable aspects of the job and job environment on the one hand, and their overall satisfaction about the job on the other.

The most frequently cited differentiable aspects of the job and job environment include quality of supervision, autonomy, recognition for the job well done, responsibility, opportunity to use one’s own skills, performance feedback, promotional opportunity, importance given to employees by seeking suggestions and ideas from them, amount of variety in job duties and responsibilities, and empathetic personal concern shown by the superiors.

The researcher made an attempt to elicit the perceived levels of satisfaction as indicated by the respondents in respect of the above mentioned job facets on Likert’s five point scale (ranging from highly dissatisfied: 1, to highly satisfied: 5). Mean and Standard Deviation values for the data so collected are presented in the Table 8 below.

As seen from the Table 8, most of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with regard to the quality of superiors (Mean 3.65; Std. Deviation 0.91). On the other hand, they reported only moderate level of satisfaction in respect of other job aspects such as autonomy (Mean...
3.35; Std. Deviation 1.00), recognition for the job well-done (Mean 2.85; Std. Deviation 0.97), responsibility (Mean 3.34; Std. Deviation 0.99), opportunity to use skills (Mean 3.33; Std. deviation 0.99), performance feedback (Mean 3.23; Std. Deviation 1.07), importance given to the suggestions made by the employees (Mean 2.77; Std. Deviation 1.00), the amount of variety in job duties (Mean 3.01; Std. Deviation 1.01), and the personal concern shown to them by their superiors (Mean 2.99; Std. Deviation 1.11). However, it is worth noting that most of the respondents were dissatisfied about the availability of promotional opportunity in their respective organizations (Mean 2.57; Std. Deviation 1.10).

In the ultimate analysis, it could be stated that the library staff are happy with the quality of supervision and unhappy with the promotional opportunities. Furthermore, most of them experienced moderate level of satisfaction in respect of other job facets. These observations bear sufficient implications for enhancing performance and satisfaction levels of the library professionals in the area covered by this study.

Quinn and Baldi de Mandilovitch analyzed data from 11 studies of American workers. Based on this analysis, they documented a positive relationship between the workers’ educational level and overall job satisfaction. The attainment of a college degree resulted in the largest increase in overall job satisfaction.

Contrary to this, Hulin and Smith reported that job satisfaction increases in a positive linear fashion with respect to age. As workers grow older, they tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. Older workers have lower expectations than younger workers do, and they tend to be better adjusted to the work situation.

Presumably, as the age increases, the expectation of the employee would also raise leading to perceived job dissatisfaction. This could be one of the reasons for obtaining a negative relationship between the age and the job satisfaction in this study.

Satisfaction – overall assessment

At the end, the library professionals were asked to give their overall assessment of their job satisfaction in the work they are doing. The opinions obtained from them are presented in the table below.

It can be seen from the Table 9 that some of the respondents (83 - 44.10%) expressed that job and job environment is averagely satisfying. On the other hand, only 54 (28.70%) were more satisfied than dissatisfied in respect of job their attitudes. However, it is worth noting that 21 (11.20%) respondents were completely satisfied about the working environment of the library. Further, 20 (10.60%) respondents stated that job attitudes and working conditions in the library is more dissatisfying than satisfying and 10 (5.30%) were completely dissatisfied.

Conclusion

To conclude, performance management is a process for measuring outputs in the shape of delivered performance compared with expectations expressed, as objectives. That is why it focuses on targets, standards and performance measures or indicators. It is also concerned with inputs and processes the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour required to produce the required results. It is by defining these input requirements and assessing the extent to which the expected levels of performance have been achieved by using skills and competencies effectively that development needs are identified.

In the published literature on library management due importance has not been given to the management of employee expectations, performance and satisfaction in university libraries. Therefore, the present study is an attempt made by the investigator in reporting the factors that contribute to the effective performance of university library employees. It is hoped that the findings of the study help the library managers in improving the performance of library professionals. In the fitness of things, based on the need deficiency score, management of university libraries should not emphasize only hygiene factors but mainly focus on the often neglected ‘motivational factors’ in order to enhance the perceived levels of job satisfaction and superior job performance of university library professionals and semi-professionals in Karnataka.

References