

Influence of Motivational Factors and Attitude in the Formation of Library Consortium Services rendered by the University Librarians in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The paper is derived from the combination of results of two studies conducted on motivational factors on career development of university library professionals and on building library consortium among Sri Lankan university libraries. One of the findings of the first study was that the formation of consortium is influenced by attitude of human resource and its capacity. It drew attention on stabilizing the attitudinal framework of the professionals to work in cooperation to manage the financial and physical issues involved in providing efficient information services. The main purpose of the second study was to find the effects of motivational factors on career development of university librarians, where it was found that the biggest management challenge faced by the universities, at present, is to motivate the library professionals towards the common goals, such as effective information services to reach maximum level of user satisfaction.

First study emphasized on the influence of attitude and human resource competency to provide better services in the line of depleting and/or limited resources. The findings in the second study indicated that there was a positive but moderate correlation between motivational factors and the attitude of the professionals. It was also found that the attitude of the professionals and career development is also positively correlated. Thirdly, in the same study, motivational factors and attitude of the professionals are positively dependent on career development of the library professionals.

In conclusion, the paper infers that positively motivated professionals with positive attitude will be effectively engaged in career development that will ultimately enhance the effectiveness of information services. Whilst, the attitudinal change and career-orientation will influence the library professionals to devise innovative and cooperative function to combat the obstacles in effective information services to cater to the ever-growing user demand.

1. Introduction

In the era of electronic information environment, more focus is concentrated on digital library services and the like. However, the need for an effective human resource to manage all the requirements in the library is inevitable. Therefore, enhancement of professional capabilities as well as positive attitude is the key aspect in sustaining the motivation of the library staff. Although the information services are being shifted to the electronic facet, the involvement and management of such services yet fall in the hands of human resources of libraries.

Teeming digitized information resources are strongly corresponding with a high demand of technologically qualified library professionals in the information centers, whereas, enhancement of professional qualification and life-long learning are intertwined by motivation and positive attitude of the personnel. Highly motivated manpower is a boon for any institution to execute innovative and effective changes. With respect to that, the library professionals are encouraged to work towards new realms of information services, in this case, library consortium to rationalize the expenditure and to increase the level of customer satisfaction.

In a research on consortium building among university libraries in Sri Lanka (Ramanan & Jayasuriya, 2010), it was found a number of obstacles and barriers that hinder the libraries/librarians from working in cooperation. Whilst, another study on motivation, attitude and career development (Shanmugathasan & Silva, 2008) found that those variables are positively correlated with one another. Hence, the following content will be discussing on the issues and remedies in the context of information services in cooperative frameworks.

2. Motivational Factors and Library Professionals

There are a number of factors that influence the motivation of library professionals, namely: compensation, incentives, awards, pleasant working environment, promotion, recreational activities, and so forth.

The mechanism of motivation is explained by Luthans (1998). As he says, in a system sense, motivation consists of three interacting and interdependent elements: needs, drives and incentives. Incentive could be anything that will alleviate a need and reduce a drive. Thus, attaining an incentive will tend to restore physiological or psychological balance and will reduce or cut off the drive.

Motivation is the basis of positive attitude. Nevertheless, application of motivation techniques towards achieving positive attitude should be different from person to person. Therefore, the result cannot be satisfactory if motivational factors are applied in general to all the staff, as the employees' attitude would depend on such factors as basic needs, work, culture, education, experience, competence, expectations, and ambitions.

Unless the services of adequate qualified staff are available to the library, the presence of rich collection in the library or the availability of latest gadgets, tools and equipments can hardly produce the desired results and render quality of service to the clientele. Besides this, library staff should work with an attitude of open mindedness, free from conservatism and ready to adopt new and better techniques and procedures (Saxena, 1989). This indicates the need to have changes in information professionals towards positive attitude.

Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Hypothesis on Motivational Factors on Attitude

Techniques		Statistics	Interpretation
Mean	Motivational Factors Attitude	37.25 68.20	Above the average
SD	Motivational Factors Attitude	4.44 4.67	Scattered around the mean
Simple Correlation (R)		0.528	Moderate correlation
Coefficient of determination (R ²)		0.279	Only 27.9% of the variance is explained.
Regression Analysis		β 0.528	Positive and moderate relationship.
Significance of H ₁ (Model 01)		0.000	Reject null hypothesis and accept alternate (stated) hypothesis.

Source: Shanmugathasan and Silva, 2008.

Table 1 explains as to how the motivation factors affect the attitude of library professionals, thus, as shown in the interpretation, motivational factors positively correlate to the attitude of library professionals. Hence, attitude of professionals could be altered through positive motivation to earn benefits of creative information services.

2.1 Obstacles to Motivation in Sri Lanka

According to the motivation study (Shanmugathasan & Silva, 2008), the majority of the university library professionals (86%) are not considerably satisfied with the recognition and appreciation for the better accomplishments in their profession, whilst some professionals argued even recognition of the university library profession is questionable. Silva (1998) stated that university librarians in Sri Lanka belong to the academic staff but on certain occasions they are denied of the benefits of the faculty members.

Saxena (1989) states that when the role of librarian is not given due importance and the organization fails to realize the role of librarian, it affects the professionals' working attitudes and behaviour, which in turn leads to affect the career development of the library professionals. Dissanayake (1984) in his research job satisfaction among university teachers in Sri Lanka has found that the university teachers are not satisfied with the jobs, since they are not satisfied with their salaries.

Nevertheless, the above situation is being changed from the recent past, as the government of Sri Lanka has increased the salaries of academics (Jayasundere, 2011), and actions were taken on bringing the library profession up to the academic recognition and higher standards (Jayasuriya, 2011). Therefore, the motivation should be more inert than from external influences. For instance, awards to best research in the field, contribution to the profession, and the positive impact exerted on the society could be executed to catalyze the human resource's efficiency.

2.2 Motivation Factors

Motivation factors, as Chandan (1998) lists, are: the work itself, achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement. These factors are related to the nature of work (job content) and are intrinsic to the job itself. These factors have a positive influence on morale, satisfaction, efficiency and higher productivity.

In a study conducted by Shanmugathan and Silva (2008), the university library professionals (82%) stated that they are pleasure to work in an academic environment at their liberty. And, they further stated that the working conditions of the university libraries are adequate and promotional schemes are fairly handled. Furthermore, the majority of professionals (86%) responded to the open-ended questions stated that they are prepared to contribute their maximum efforts for the better performance.

Like it or not, university librarians have to rely more on scholarship (knowledge and skills, in general), since every individual, in the era of information technology, has become his/ her own librarian (Ranasinghe, 2010). It is obvious that library professionals need to secure their identity by working towards higher goals, for which they ought to be driven by motivation. Self-driven impetus for working towards institution's goals along with external catalysts will improve the level of user satisfaction. In this regard, the authors perceive that cooperative setups will eliminate the obstacles that reduce the degree of motivation and positive attitude.

3. Attitude Leading to Change

Since the attitude is vital for university libraries to achieve the excellence in information services, the human resource must be kept motivated towards the goals of the institution, for which salary, promotion, grants, recognition and training will help to fill the gaps. In this regard, the cooperative efforts to initiate novel practices are of great concern.

The term 'library consortia' refers to cooperation, co-ordination and collaboration between, and among libraries for the objective of sharing information resources. However, some barriers such as poor technological and communication infrastructure, inadequate finances, culture and context, attitudes toward consortia and multiple efforts are reported to be limitations of consortia activities in developing countries (Moghaddam & Talawar, 2009).

Attitude is an individual's characteristic way of responding to an object or a situation. It is based on experience and leads to certain behaviour or the expression of certain opinions (Graham & Bennett, 1998). Therefore, any programme in an organization needs to focus on honing the attitude of its human resource to cope up with the change to be taken place.

In a study (Ramanan & Jayasuriya, 2010), the attitude-related barriers were the outstanding factors to hinder the formation of library consortium in Sri Lanka. Those factors include: egoistic grounds, fear of losing autonomy, ownership challenges, status consciousness, and traditional barriers (See Table 2). In addition, the lack of expertise and human resource strength are also stated as challenges. According to Sridhar (1995), psychological and egoistic barriers are covert in nature and they may arise due to inertia, indifference or unwillingness to change. He continues on, resource-sharing could be seen as a threat to status or personality differences or strong and dominant personalities and strong authority drive in the group.

Despite of that, it was interesting to note that most of the professionals (78%) prefer to perform extra tasks towards the achievement of department's goals. It was further observed that most of professionals are aware that their potential for continued growth and individual development in the career path of the library profession, hence they showed interest for hard work to achieve higher performance (Shanmugathan & Silva, 2008). This encourages the initiatives to enhance the service qualities of the university libraries in Sri Lanka.

Table 2: Weighted scores for the barriers to formation of library cooperation

Barriers to Consortium	Weighted Score <i>n = 41; Σ = 164</i>	% Rank	Rank
Ownership is challenged	133	81 %	1
Size & status consciousness	96	58.5 %	2
Egoistic barriers	95	58 %	3
Physical/ geographical barriers	94	57.3 %	4
Desire of autonomy	92	56 %	5
Urgency of user needs	92	56 %	6
Administrative barriers	92	56 %	7
Traditional barriers	89	54.2 %	8
Legal & political barriers	81	49.3 %	9
Discouragement from the past	73	44.5 %	10

Source: Ramanan and Jayasuriya, 2010

4. Improving Attitude

Majority of the library professionals expressed that there are very few opportunities available for training and development. Some professionals regretted that there is no dedicated funds available in the universities to send their professionals for training and staff development

programmes. A few raised questions as to whether everyone gets equal opportunity to attend those training programmes. However, library professionals showed their enthusiasm in following additional educational/ training courses that help their professional development. Unfortunately, as they responded, there is no organizational arrangement available for university librarians to participate in the periodic training programmes (Shanmugathan & Silva, 2008).

As the above facts evince that there need to be an organized arrangement for managing fund-related issues and developing human resource. On this platform, a well-established library consortium will effectively manage those problems and pave opportunities for the professionals to gain trainings through technological transfers, and recognition in the academic society.

4.1 Motivation Needs

The quality of a library depends on its staff. They are the key element to the supply of value-added information services. Human resource management plays an important role in any service-providing organization. Moreover, difficulties in finding places for training and financial assistance, lack of encouragement from the institutions, lethargy in self-driven learning are some of the drawbacks of library professionals (Seneviratne, 1999). Thus the expertise is essential in information business, which should be highly motivated to carry out efficient user services in the library when it comes to venturing new realms.

In a study by Shanmugathan and Silva (2008), almost all the university librarians (92%) stated that they seek seminars, workshops, conferences and training programmes developed in light of emerging needs for developing new skills and knowledge applicable to the current digital era. They further added to enjoy in-house training programmes for keeping them motivated.

Saxena (1989) stated that the library staff should develop an inquisitive mind and be always in search of new ideas, new techniques, new technology which may improve the efficiency of the library and provide better service to clientele. The code of practice laid down in the final draft by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (2006) clearly emphasized on the development of library human resources for the continuous quality improvement.

Hence, to reap the potential outcome from the information professionals, proper trainings should be made available to enhance their skills, knowledge, attitude, modern technology and team spirit in the university libraries.

4.2 Working in Cooperation to Motivate

Studies concerned in this paper have two distinguishable findings among other inferences, which are: i) library professionals need to be motivated along with positive attitude towards

the institutional goals, as a result of that they improve their career and services, ii) attitude and expertise are playing vital role in the formation of library consortium in Sri Lanka.

Library-Friends network (a Yahoo group) available to connect library professionals in Sri Lanka and elsewhere is a great opportunity to interact with interested individuals in the information profession. This group encourages knowledge sharing and exchange of personal interests among the members (Gamage, 2011). The involvement and success of the group has shown that university librarians are being motivated and working with positive attitude. This implies the obstacles are volatile at efforts towards motivating the library staff.

An environment of effective communication and involvement, once fostered, can create trust and respect among colleagues (Green, Chivers & Mynott, 2000). Therefore, the recognition and responsibilities are coming side-by-side.

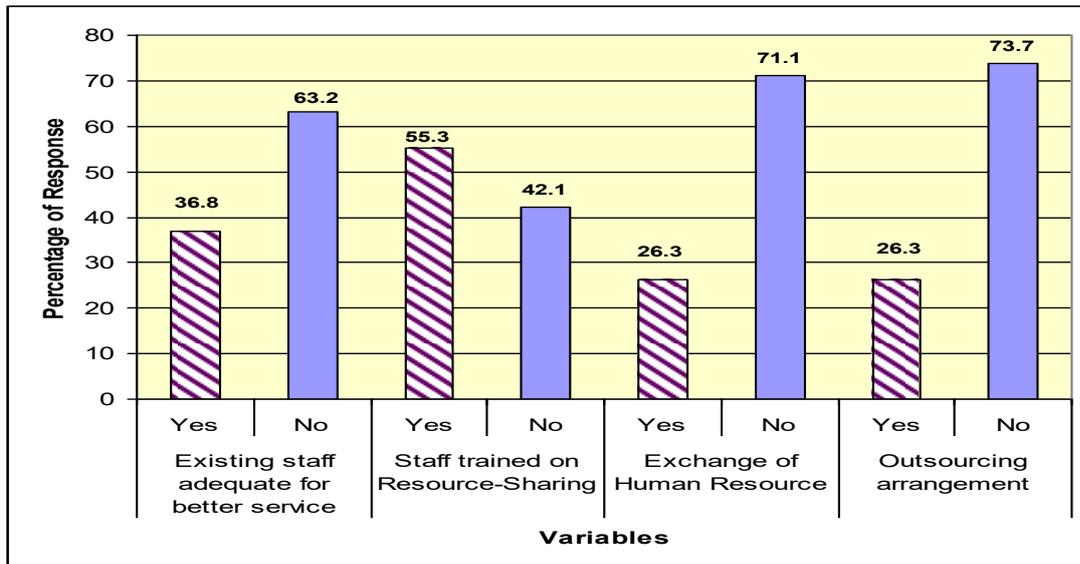
Table 3: Cooperative Library Practices

No.	Variables	statement	percentage
01	Collection Development (CD) Policies	Yes	78.9 %
		No	18.4 %
02	Cooperative CD Policies	Yes	23.7 %
		No	71.1 %
03	Cooperative Acquisition on Campus	Yes	15.8 %
		No	78.9 %
04	Cooperative Acquisition with other University Libraries	Yes	0 %
		No	94.7 %
05	Price model for purchase	Yes	15.8 %
		No	76.3 %

Source: Ramanan and Jayasuriya, 2010.

As shown in Table 3, cooperative practices are not quite in practice among the university libraries in Sri Lanka. The reasons for this are coupled with human resource development and staff motivation. If personnel strength is motivated at its best, the quality of information services will be improved along with rationalization of funds in the university libraries.

Fig. 1 Training, Exchange and Outsourcing of Human Resources (at the time of survey: 2009/10)



Source: Ramanan and Jayasuriya, 2010.

It is obvious that one of the primary hindrances to the formation of library cooperation is falling in the human resource part that encapsulates *attitude*. Thus, motivation programmes will be highly useful in altering the situation that curtails the opportunities for Sri Lankan university libraries to render efficient information services at the standards abreast to their global counterparts.

5. Conclusion

Employees' commitment to the organization comes with a belief that organizational development is through the growth of employees. This will lead to a culture that promotes proactive participation of individuals in the entire organization by molding employees to work with a positive attitude towards constructive changes.

University librarians are seen as both professionals and managers. The combination of knowledge and skills of them will enable appropriate and quality services to be delivered to clients (Rochester & Nicholson, 1998). This implies the significance of life-long-learning and need for librarians to develop managerial parts of the information services. In order to improve the existing human expertise, the librarians should be motivated through programmes such as seminars, workshops, counseling and training programmes, through which attitude of the professionals to change will be modified and improved. This would make information professionals and university administrators being aware of the importance of, and burning need for, collaborative efforts such as resource-sharing between libraries and their information suppliers.

Cooperative staff development programmes to educate on resource-sharing and other electronic resources and services should be designed along with the aim to motivate the library professionals. Evaluation of staff performance should be appraised frequently in order to ensure the effective services and positive attitude. Consortium arrangement could utilize the available manpower by exchanging human resources and technological advancements. This is only possible with inculcated positive attitude towards change.

In appreciating the extra efforts and the commitment of the university library professionals, it is suggested to implement performance-based reward systems. Authorities should make attempts to create the environment conducive for professionals to recognize their professional values, which will in turn encourage making the professionals more committed.

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