

Dimensions of Job Satisfaction of Library Professionals: A Qualitative Exploration

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed at investigating the underlying causes of job satisfaction of the library staff at a large public university in Malaysia. A qualitative methodology, namely, hermeneutic phenomenology, approach is undertaken with Herzberg's two-factor theory employed in designing the interview protocol. Twelve full-time librarians take part in the interviews for this purpose. Despite in a few cases, the study reveals a general concord with Herzberg's reasoning vis-à-vis the factors leading to staff satisfaction or dissatisfaction. One striking feature of the finding relates to the religious values and environment contributing to the staff satisfaction to a great extent. Some recommendations and possible future research areas are also suggested.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Librarians, Herzberg's theory, Qualitative methodology

1. Introduction

The current environment of intense competition requires an organization to pay utmost attention to its human resources in order to perform at a higher level and become a more thriving enterprise (Updegraff, 2004). Within libraries specifically, people are *the* resource in ensuring that performance par excellence, thus achieving organizational objectives (Patterson, 1999). Social and psychological factors in the work environment would interplay a pivotal role in recruiting and retaining professionals in work places like libraries (Pors and Johannsen, 2002). An appreciation of the requirements of the working librarians and making efforts in meeting their job satisfaction have an effect on the quality of service provided by libraries (Rizi and Kazempur, 2010). Library directors are thus saddled in their positions with the (un)enviable task of acquainting themselves with different profiles of the library staff, and of grappling with the potential drivers of their job satisfaction (McManus, 2003).

In its quest to engender a knowledge-based society, the central library of the public university under study in Malaysia would require to cater to the needs of its stakeholders on an urgent basis,

as it stands on the threshold of sweeping technology changes taking place in the arena of information science. However, for this to achieve, the presence of a vibrant and competent workforce, their attitude and perception on their job satisfaction are, therefore, immensely vital and call for a detailed investigation. With this perspective in mind, the objective of this research is set to unravel, through a qualitative exposition, the meaning and underlying causes of job satisfaction as perceived by the university library staff.

2. Literature Review

In this section, there is a review of the extant literature offering a brief outline on the studies of the relationship between job satisfaction and a number of other variables in a library setting and presenting the research questions developed for this study.

2.1 Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

An abundance of research articles on job satisfaction of library managers and staff is found in the literature review. A brief review of this wide array of literature relating to personal and organizational factors of job satisfaction in the context of library is provided below.

2.1.1 Personal Factors

Age and Gender

Berry (2007) conducts a wide-ranging survey among the library staff of public and academic libraries, and mentions that compared to the younger age group, the older library workers are happier on their jobs. Contrary to the findings of Berry (2007), Albanese (2008) reports that an overwhelming majority of the respondents in academic libraries across all age groups are satisfied with their jobs. From a gender perspective, according to Marjanja and Kiplang'at (2003), vertical occupational segregation exist when both men and women work in the same job categories; this is manifested in the fact that men are commonly found to be doing the more skilled or better paid work, affecting the job satisfaction of their female counterparts. This is echoed in studies done by Maxwell *et al.* (2004) and MacLean (2006).

Religion and Race

There are a number of studies done that capture the role of religion and racism affecting job satisfaction of library staff (McGinn, 2003; Thornton, 2000). According to McGinn (2003), the religious beliefs of African American librarians would mold their job satisfaction significantly. A revealing finding of the study points to a large number of the respondents' experience of being discriminated based on ethnicity and age, making the staff satisfaction a prime casualty; this finding validates the earlier studies (Thornton, 2000; Estabrook *et al.* 1990).

2.1.2 Organizational Factors

Leadership

Within the limited body of literature on leadership in librarianship, a number of researchers emphasize the diverse skills of library leaders toward ensuring the job satisfaction of their staff (Pors and Johannsen, 2002; Mullins and Linehan, 2006). According to Pors and Johannsen (2002), the factors correlating directors' job satisfaction such as job autonomy and authority in delegating decision-making could permeate job satisfaction to all levels of the organization. This view is corroborated by a similar study executed later on by Mullins and Linehan (2006).

Organizational Change & Technology Innovation

The study explored by Leong (2008) in an Australian setting reveals that the staffs respond positively towards change by exuding satisfaction and enthusiasm for new areas of work and providing improved service. This would come in line with that of Pors (2005) performed on Danish library managers; though their working environment has undergone a rapid change resulting in a decreased sense of job security, about half the respondents express their high satisfaction with their jobs.

In case of developing countries, Bii and Wanyama (2001) examine the impact of automation on the job satisfaction among librarians in Kenya. According to the authors, the staff members view automation as enrichment and a source of satisfaction to their jobs. It would be, however, worth mentioning that a particular challenge confronting the librarians in developing countries would relate to a good deal of fear and negative attitudes regarding ICT implementation (Popoola, 2002).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The new developments and trends in technologies emphasize the need for institutions to set goals for staff development for their enhanced satisfaction on their jobs by providing opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD) and training in the workplace (Todaro and Smith, 2006). The study by Adanu (2007) reveals a concord among the managers and the staff in that the respondents on both sides agree to the fact that the active involvement in CPD enhances their job satisfaction, competence and career advancement. The study done by Cossham and Fields (2007) on the library staff in New Zealand offers, however, a different picture, as the opinions of employees and the managers seem to vary greatly regarding the impact of CPD on their satisfaction and personal growth.

Recruitment, Rotation & Retention

According to Olorunsola (2000), in academic libraries, job rotation is a cardinal necessity as it would create an opportunity to ward off the monotony and enable the staff to acquire more skills that would spur satisfaction in them (Malinski, 2002). In order to gauge the impact of job rotation on staff satisfaction in Nigerian university libraries, Adomi (2006) performs a study among 52 professional librarians, who are rotated on their jobs. It elicits a positive response from the majority of the participants that would translate into higher staff productivity. Having employed both positivistic and phenomenological approaches, MacLean (2006) finds that the flexible deployment of staff would stimulate job satisfaction of the employees and encourage them to better utilize their skills. This would improve retention rates & facilitate the optimum use of HR should any budgetary constraint arise (Orlando and Johnson, 2001).

Working Environment, Communication and Commitment

A number of studies is performed relating to how working environment and communication separately or simultaneously, can nurture staff satisfaction; the absence of which would lead to a reduced organizational commitment (Moser, 1997). This is corroborated by the study done by Adio and Popoola (2010) on the relationship between job satisfaction and career commitment of librarians in Nigerian federal university libraries; the authors attempt to get an insight into the dissatisfaction of the library users and managers regarding the issues of insufficient funding, lack of promotion and recognition, and poor condition of service. The study shows that job satisfaction as well as the demographic attributes of the respondents has a significant impact on career commitment of the librarians. The authors thus suggest that the library managers and administrators would do well in formulating sound policies vis-à-vis adequate working facilities, conducive working environment, and various work incentives, such as provision of car and housing loans, study leave allowance, etc. that would improve job satisfaction resulting into enhanced career commitment of the librarians.

The fact that the declining organizational commitment is likely to be a precursor to their quitting the jobs (Alexander, Lichtenstein and Hellman, 1997) is supported by Burd (2003), according to whom, the librarians in organizations that cultivate participatory management, open communication, and relationships built on honesty and trust, are more satisfied, more committed and less likely to leave.

Salary

There are quite a good number of studies done on the impact of salary and satisfaction (or the lack of it) librarians enjoy on their jobs. Odunlade (2012) conducts a study on, inter alia, the relationship between job satisfaction and compensation and benefits among the academic librarians; the study reveals a positive relationship between the two as about two-thirds of the respondents express their satisfaction with the amount of salary received by them. On the other hand, the aspect of low salary leading to high dissatisfaction prominently comes to the fore in the studies of Albanese (2008), Lim (2007), Marjanja and Kiplang'at (2003), and Abifarin (1997). Albanese (2008) reports that almost half the respondents consider their pay package as the primary cause of their dissatisfaction. However, contrary to the findings in the studies mentioned above, a prominent feature of the study (McGinn, 2003) is that the salary does not emerge as a factor for either job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the library staff.

Stress

According to Topper (2007), the impact of stress would considerably dwindle the satisfaction of library employees, stressing the need of lessening the impact of stressful situations, such as unsatisfying physical environments, routine works, heavy workload of the staff (Paque, 2005) staff attitude to using the new technologies (Shaugnessy, 2006), etc. In another study done between the library managers of Great Britain and Canada, Pors (2003) argues that the level of stress would be a significant predictor in relation to job satisfaction with British managers being more stressed than their Danish counterparts.

3. Research Methodology

Qualitative research would belong to the genre of research methods wherein the researcher would wield an active role in interacting with the participants (Muchinsky, 2003), offering a portrayal of people's experiences and feelings in their lives and in organizational settings (Beins, 2004). This present research would employ hermeneutic phenomenology – a qualitative research methodology – by delving deeper into the tacit knowledge & spoken descriptions offered by the participants regarding this particular phenomenon of job satisfaction.

Hermeneutics, derived from the name of Greek God Herms, is a general methodology of interpretation. In interpreting a phenomenon, hermeneutic process would comprise three stages – pre-understanding, understanding and explanation (Gummesson, 2003). In interpreting staff job satisfaction in the library, this research would employ the same with Herzberg (1966) two-factor theory used as a guide in designing the interview protocol for the respondents of this study.

3.1 Sample and Sampling Method

A total of 15 respondents take part in the interview session covering all the sections of the university library. They comprise the head of three divisions, a couple mid-level executives of varying experience and a few staff with around 2 years of length of service. In order to suit some specific criteria for interviewing the respondents, a purposive sampling technique is employed. First, all the respondents are full-time professional librarians. Second, the profile of the

respondents would encompass a wide spectrum of their age and experience ranging from the newly employed to a veteran of more than two decades. Third, despite an overwhelming tilt towards female presence in the library, it is intended to make a heterogeneous sample by capturing the opinions of the male respondents as well.

As discovered later on that 3 of the respondents are not professional librarians, additional interviews are conducted to compensate for this non-fulfillment of the first requirement of the sample choice. Ultimately, 12 responses are considered with a split of 7 female and 5 male respondents.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Permission is sought from the Chief Librarian with a letter bearing the signature of the course instructor and stating the purpose of conducting this research that would call for interviewing the library staff. After having received the stamp of her approval, the various departmental heads are approached. All the interviews are conducted at the convenience of the respondents' time and place.

During the first meeting with the potential respondents and prior to each interview session in particular, the consent of the respondents is secured. They are also informed of ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality of their views and opinions. For the purpose of the interview, a semi-structured questionnaire is developed to ensure that all the relevant topics of job satisfaction are covered while maintaining the freedom and flexibility for the respondents to talk about their experiences and gather a depth of information (Polit and Hungler, 1987). Each interview lasts around 35 minutes, on an average. And each interview is audio taped and then transcribed soon after the interview by listening to the recorded words multiple times.

The authenticity of data is ensured by returning to the participants concerned and relaying to them the preliminary findings from their interviews. Their replies are compared side by side and one by one along with their non-verbal expressions noted down during interview sessions in order for various themes of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction to emerge.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Job Satisfaction Defined

According to the respondents' views vis-à-vis various dimensions of job satisfaction (Table-1), it is found that the importance of working environment features high among 50% (six out of twelve) of the respondents' minds. Four respondents consider factors like job content and relationship with supervisors, colleagues and subordinates main facets of job satisfaction. Three respondents deem factors like customer satisfaction, self-advancement and salary as prime sources of satisfaction. These are followed by other factors as illustrated in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Opinions of the respondents regarding various dimensions of job satisfaction

| Job Satisfaction Dimensions | Frequency (Total no. of respondents: 12) |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Environment | 6 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job content/specification • Relationship with supervisors and colleagues/subordinates | 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Self-advancement • Salary | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition • Sense of accomplishment • Communication and Management | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job freedom • Job security • Religious and family values | 1 |

The following abstracts would capture the respondents’ opinions regarding the importance as well as the preference of working environment in their own words:

If I am offered with a job, I’ll not look for salary first; working environment will be the first choice....

Working environment...office equipment, staff environment, enough office space....

Working environment...staff support...yeah, that is very important also---I have been lucky actually, having a good staff—whenever I join this dept, I say this that this dept, it’s our dept “Jato Bangun” of dept., you fall or you are up; it’s not on me, it’s on everybody---so, I always say, we as a group, as a team to work, we should work to go up....Alhamdulillah, my staff is very good, very, very supportive---

Regarding the bearing of job content on job satisfaction, the respondents express their views as follows:

Job satisfaction....if you are satisfied with the job you do, that is job satisfaction; it’s related to quality and quantity of the thing we do.

A clear job specification, a clear instruction for anybody assigned to do....so that we are able to do what we are asked to do.

We do something...we feel comfortable in doing something, in terms of job task....

Below are the comments of one female and one male respondent respectively relating to the effect of the scope of self-advancement on job satisfaction:

For me, as long as I can further my career, it is job satisfaction to me; I can develop myself, learn new skills – if I can develop myself in these skills, it satisfies me enough; every year, as long as I can see myself advanced in my skills, it’s my job satisfaction.

I look for the future in the job ... yes, self-advancement.

About the importance of religious and family values, what is striking was the respondent’s impromptu response mentioned as follows:

Yes, of course, we as Muslims, I have to set up my principles that whatever we do, it has to be a blessing from God; and in fact, I give my salary to my family, to me, it’s satisfaction.

4.2 Level of Staff Satisfaction

When asked whether they are satisfied on their jobs, the respondents express their level of satisfaction that range from moderate to extremely high (Table-2).

Table 2: Frequency of the respondents with their level of satisfaction, service length and grade level

| Satisfaction Level | Frequency | Length of service (Years) | Level of Grade |
|--------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Extremely high | 4 | All above 10 | 3 in S-41, 1 in S-44 |
| High | 4 | 3 respondents below 5, 1 above 10 | 3 in S-41, 1 in S-44 |
| Moderate/Low | 4 | 3 respondents around 5, 1 above 20 | 3 in S-41, 1 in S-44 |

The way the respondents express their level of satisfaction fall into the three categories that can be captured in terms mentioned below:

Extremely high: *'Yes, of course'*

High: *'Yes, I am satisfied'*

Moderate/Low: *'Sometimes yes, sometimes no', or, 'Yes, I am o.k.'*

4.3 Causes of Job Satisfaction

The various causes of job satisfaction as emerged from the views of the respondents are as follows:

Theme One: Meeting and Helping the Customers/Clients

Ninety percent of the respondents mention that 'meeting and helping the customers' give them their greatest satisfaction on their jobs. This source of highest satisfaction ranges across the entire spectrum from the relatively new to one of the most veterans in the library. Respondents articulate their satisfaction in different ways as in the following:

You know, when students come asking how to find information pertaining to his/her subject area, for ex. social sciences, I try to help him using 'this' database, I teach step by step. And when he comes tomorrow with his friends, he becomes a trainer; I feel so happy to see that.

When I can help them at the right time with the relevant information and guide them to search with the very useful keyword...guide them proper way instead of a general way...that gives me great satisfaction

When I have a chance to meet my customers outside the library, for ex, I am a liaison librarian – I represent library to Faculty of Architecture. I always e-mail them, what are the new things happening; at the same time, we act as intermediaries between the suppliers and academicians – this interaction, the communication gives me most satisfaction.

Theme Two: A Prospective Vocation, A New Field

Majority of the respondents (all four with moderate/low satisfaction and three with high satisfaction) are actually found to have a second thought of having embraced this profession. Circumstances like unstable economic situation (inflation), being unemployed, and a bleak job market in their respective field prompt them to look for alternative options with higher prospects. And they find in it (library science) aplenty. They portray their situations in the following words:

Actually, this was not my ambition to become a librarian, it was a sudden decision. When I graduated from my bachelor degree, I was thinking what to do; at that time, the market for the IRK was not very good; I started thinking what to do; I decided to continue my studies in MLIS, then about one and half years during my study, I thought this was the best decision – in terms of the job market.

It was a coincidence. Because I graduated from 1st degree in UPM in 1987 in resource economics; at that time, there was heavy inflation, economy was not stable, and...I was unemployed...unemployed in the sense that I did a temporary job with my friends in my home state. We formed a company, offered motivation course la!...motivating students,...for people in the plantation...but salary-wise not enough. In 1990, I did my post graduate diploma...yes, in library science from UITM...I thought there was prospect.

However, those nurturing high and extremely high job satisfaction are raring to go, even at a young age, to explore what they term a new field, a unique profession. Here are the views from one female and a male respondent respectively:

Librarianship is a new field... so, I wanted to explore, I wanted to venture this new field and be part of it. Librarianship...it's a new area, very different compared to last 10/20 years; last 10-20 years, librarianship is more related to hard copy – like you can see with your eyes, you can touch it. It has now evolved...and the resources in the library are not restricted to hard copy version any more; it has evolved to electronic and digital sources, for ex., you can have online databases; that's why, I wanted to join this new field, wanted to explore all these new things.

I was a school librarian during school time; I feel there is more to librarianship other than shelving the books and working up and sleeping in the library, so I wanted to learn more...I am not sure whether I felt there was job prospect, but because of I love information, I wanted to learn what's more in the library; even though I was doing my study or my practicum in this department....I saw people, bosses doing meetings...I was curious, what they were doing, it prompted me, you know...

Theme Three: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The usefulness of various courses offered for the library staff for their professional development is a key to their job satisfaction. In this technology-driven environment, the staff would have to be technology-savvy. The respondent with two decades of experience emphasized on this aspect in the following way:

Knowledge in this field keeps changing....before it was the microfilm, now it's electronic...it's how people contain information – printer to microfilm to electronic; unless you have people knowing IT, it faces obsolescence; if you don't equip yourself with knowledge, all these can be replaced by IT people--

Speaking metaphorically, one respondent succinctly puts the usefulness of these courses offered in the following words:

From time to time, they arrange for courses, we attend the courses....you know, for a woodcutter, the tool has to be sharp; if we keep on cutting without sharpening, productivity will decline...

Theme Four: Religious Values

When asked about the impact of religious values, ten respondents consider religion playing a major role in having and strengthening job satisfaction in them. The impact of Islamic values that they hold dear to their heart and are inculcated with seems to be a powerful force to make them stick to this environment. And this feeling is palpable among the recent recruits and the experienced alike as expressed below:

Religion plays a part. While in private sector, I could not perform 'salat'(prayer), there were heavy smokers, you cannot hear 'azan'(call for prayer), 'surau'(place for prayer) very small – I really appreciate working here.

Religion – of course, is most attractive. I can perform my duties as a Muslim; nobody bothers me, there are facilities, management support, seminars on spiritual aspects.

Of course, I can serve to the Ummah (community)...students from outside Malaysia; I can contribute to students doing their research....a lot of students are from IRK, my

background also is in religious subjects – I am happy to assist them, some of them don't understand Roman standard. I feel I am responsible to finish their tasks and assignments.

4.4 Causes of Dissatisfaction

The various causes of dissatisfaction as articulated by the respondents are as follows:

Theme One: Promotion – Few and Far Between

A prime source of dissatisfaction stems from the fact that there are very few promotional opportunities available. All the respondents voice their dissatisfaction – from moderate to extreme – regarding this particular aspect. Following is the comment mingled with frustration by a mid-level staff:

To get a higher position is very low; we are competing with each other, availabilities of vacancies are less; in other places, in other divisions or centers, they are in N-scheme, they can move on if the position is available, but not me – I am in S-scheme.

Even after passing the CLA (Competency Level Assessment) test required for promotion to S-44 grade, one respondent still finds herself in the same position; worse, she does not even know when it would materialize. Though smiling, she can hardly hide her frustration as she says:

I passed the CLA exam...CLA – competency level assessment – in January this year; one of my friends asked MSD about my promotion, but they said that they don't know about promotion....you know, it has to be transparent, right?...yes, there is frustration!

Frustrations brewing from promotional logjam could even threaten retention of the employee at the university. Here is a response from a female respondent with a 5-year length of service:

If I have an opportunity, I think I am going to go somewhere else, because of promotion; I have been here only for 4 years, some of them are for 10 years, still they are in the same post; you have a queue here and less scope for promotion; if other organization offers higher promotion, I'll go.

Theme Two: Public Perception of Low Image

A key source of dissatisfaction that pervades the minds of the respondents lies in public perception of low image of this library profession per se. According to the participants in the study, people harbor a negative opinion about what librarianship is all about; they do not consider librarians as professionals like doctors, engineers, lawyers etc. Their frustration is obvious as manifested below in their own words:

We are professionals – the librarianship is a profession; people know engineers more, doctors more, architects more, we are professionals too, even though the field is still new...

People always look low about librarians; they think that it is not a professional job, they believe everyone can become a librarian. One of the neighbors asked my mother about what I was doing; she did not say that I am a librarian...my mother told her that she was an officer. Then she said "O.K.".... You know, when [the university] gave an advertisement for librarians with a masters degree,...students, people were saying, 'why you need masters?'...they just look us down.

When asked that given such public perception, why she opts for this profession, she replies in the following terms:

I want to change the perception. You know, only three universities – UIA, UITM and UM – are offering librarianship posts...it's not just about books, not just focused on printed materials; it's about e-books, digital information, online databases – it's about information management.

The views of another respondent mirror the above as he underscores the importance of librarianship as follows:

We can be information scientists! Yeah, those with expertise in information; for those who need information, we can find out, we can fulfill their needs; they play the role of a researcher...

Drawing a similitude between the staff of a library with those of a hospital, he wished people could realize the difference among the people working in the library! He expresses it as follows:

You know...in a hospital, there are doctors, nurses, supporting staff; similarly, we also have librarians and supporting staff; we have to differentiate, because the task of librarians is challenging, not everyone realizes this....

Theme Three: Constraints of Facilities and Space

A potential concern that generates job dissatisfaction among the library staff related to the constraints of space and facilities. The Head of a division expresses her dissatisfaction regarding this as follows:

Office environment not up to my satisfaction, it's located at the corner...not easy access to our necessity, office space is not enough...

A mid-level staff vented her frustrations in the following words:

For my case, they should make enough facilities, if you want to get your job properly done, you must provide enough facilities---it has to be a conducive environment---yes, I ask for it...but they say 'no budget' for this.

Theme Four: Communication –The Stumbling Block

Inadequate and skewed communication appears to be a potential source of staff dissatisfaction. Here are the comments from two disgruntled staff – one, a recent recruit and the other, an experienced of a decade – respectively:

There is a poor communication between administration and staff...for ex., a cost memo from administration...some staff are getting earlier, some get late---they distribute the memo late....not suitable for those staff; poor skill in leadership...they don't know how to communicate, how to please staff... knowledge sharing is not effective in this library...

Through my observation and opinion, there is a lack of 'staff charity'. By that what I mean...our job is to meet customer satisfaction, but the staff are also customers; we cannot just oversee the administrative work; we should meet the staff regularly, hearing what they say, we should be open-minded....

5. Discussion of the Findings

The current research employs Frederick Herzberg's two-factor (motivation-hygiene) theory to discern from the interviews of the participants the reasons of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction on their jobs. According to this theory, there are a number of factors that would lead to satisfaction (for example, achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth) and dissatisfaction (for example, company policy, supervision, relationship with supervisor, work conditions, salary and relationship with peers). As demonstrated in Table-2, the level of the respondents' satisfaction would fall into one of three categories – extremely high, high and moderate/low. Below is a brief description vis-à-vis the reasons of these distinct levels of staff satisfaction in line with the Herzberg's two-factor theory:

(i) Level – Extremely high: Four respondents (respondent no. 2, 6, 8 and 12) express their extremely high satisfaction on their jobs. The reasons cited by them comprise the factors like work itself (respondent 6 and 12 – the first one doing 'very valuable' Arabic manuscript, the second one having 'a lot of creativity' in his work in the digital section), recognition (respondent 8 and 12 – the first one yearning for recognition from the customers and the second one from his boss) and

responsibility (respondent 2 – the liaison librarian responsible for representing the library to Faculty of Architecture). All these factors – work itself, recognition and responsibility – according to Herzberg (1966), would lead to satisfaction, which is the case for these respondents.

(ii) Level – High: Four respondents (respondent no. 5, 7, 9 and 11) express their high satisfaction on their jobs. The reasons mentioned by them consist of the factors like recognition (respondent 5 and 11 – the first one desiring for recognition from supervisor for ‘getting the job done well’, and the second one for her opinions and suggestions being valued by her boss), responsibility (respondent 7 – entrusted with the responsibility of the Head of a section), achievement (respondent 9 – achieving his daily target in cataloguing section) and advancement/growth (respondent 11 – getting promotion in the first ¾ months in her career ‘quite an honor’ to her). All the above factors, according to Herzberg, would lead to satisfaction, which is true to these respondents.

(iii) Level – Moderate/Low: Four respondents (respondent no. 1, 3, 4 and 10) express their moderate or low satisfaction on their jobs. The reasons center on the factors like working conditions (respondent 1 and 10 – the first one expressing her dissatisfaction for being hamstrung in her work by the glitches in the software/ system/machines and the second one for being given inadequate office space as well as having to bear with shortage of computers for her staff in the inter library loan section), promotion (respondent 1 and 3 – the first one toying with the idea of switching to other place should the promotion take place too late, and the second one breathing frustration for having to compete with too many for vacancies too few), and salary (respondent 4 – saying the ‘salary not being enough like in private sector’ and for staying in KL, where the ‘standard of living is high’). While the lack of a decent working condition and salary contributes to the dissatisfaction of the respective participants and would fall in line with Herzberg’s reasoning, the fact that the lack of promotional opportunity contributes so much to the dissatisfaction of the staff concerned runs counter to the argument of the two-factor theory.

In general, it could, however, be safely argued that the findings are in great harmony with the Herzberg’s two-factor theory, notwithstanding the fact that there are a few instances when they come at variance with each other. As for example, respondent no. 6 though perceives her salary not being commensurate to her work and at par with her peers’, it does not generate dissatisfaction in her mind. It is rather caused by her feeling of being discriminated against by the management. According to her, ‘salary is on one side and my job is on another side; I leave it (salary) to them.’ In case of respondent no. 10, an otherwise moderately satisfied employee, the salary scale seems to generate satisfaction in her mind; the positive impact of salary is also clearly manifested in the words of respondent no. 8, 9, 11 and 12 – all extremely satisfied staff.

Effect of Age and Gender

Regarding the effect of age on their job satisfaction, it is found that the former has no impact on the library staff – highly satisfied or lowly satisfied, thereby contradicting the findings of Berry (2007), who reports older-younger differing views on their job satisfaction. As for gender effect, there is again no palpable sign of any (dis)satisfaction or discrimination in terms of position or salary; this would stand at odds with an earlier finding (Marjana and Kiplang’at, 2003). A recent study by Somvir and Kaushik (2012) also concurs with this view where it is found that the job satisfaction of the library professionals in engineering and management colleges is related to the supervisory climate and the nature of job itself, and not to the gender of the respondents.

Causes of Job Satisfaction

The prime source of job satisfaction of the library staff was the sense of their accomplishment they experienced when they can help their customers or clients meet their expectations and

queries. They would also like to impart their help and knowledge to them in a prompt, positive and constructive manner. This sense of their job satisfaction resulting from helping people is evident in prior studies as well such as Albanese (2008). The implication of this is that in this technology-driven, customer-focused environment, they have to keep themselves abreast of innovative technologies as well as cultivate a positive demeanor while dealing with them.

The opportunity of staff-development through job rotation and their participation in numerous courses and conferences germane to their job content appears to be a significant cause of job satisfaction of the respondents. Extant literature would bear a strong testimony to the above (Adanu, 2007; Adomi, 2006; Olorunsola, 2000); the positive response of the participants in this study, however, runs at variance with that of Cossham and Fields (2007) with the latter highlighting divergent views of the management and staff about the efficacy of these programs.

The various social events, for example, family gathering, 'hariraya' gathering, spot carnival, etc. act as a catalyst in boosting staff job satisfaction. This would be consistent with the findings of the study carried out by Ballard and Blessing (2006); this study would speak volumes of the effectiveness of socialization processes on job satisfaction of library staff beginning with a strong orientation program aimed at fostering physical and emotional attachment with their organization.

The presumption that religion could play a key role among library staff in nurturing high job satisfaction is clearly manifested as an overwhelming majority of the respondents cited its influence in this regard. As pointed out in the literature review, this factor is addressed in the study of McGinn (2003) that also employs a phenomenological approach; its finding concerning the impact of religious beliefs on staff job satisfaction would closely mirror that of this study. However, mere providing opportunity of practicing one's religious beliefs would not be enough; the management, as suggested by one respondent, would be well advised to practise as much as possible discouraging 'office politics' in their working environment.

Causes of Job Dissatisfaction

The foremost cause of dissatisfaction amongst the respondents of this study relates to the scant promotional opportunities that they could aspire for in the various tiers of the library. Prior studies also report that the library staffs consider this limited scope of promotion and self-advancement contributing greatly to their job dissatisfaction (Husain, 2011; Bernstein and Leach, 1985). In this study, all the respondents ventilate their frustrations in this regard and wonder why they would be deprived of promotion particularly when their counterparts of MSD division in various faculties frequently enjoy the same. So deep-rooted is such frustration that this might lead to an exodus of staff to other places.

A unanimous source of dissatisfaction center on the public perception of low image towards the library profession and the librarians per se. According to them, people cannot differentiate between a library profession and a support staff. This view would exactly mirror the findings of the earlier researches (LenZini, 2002), validating the argument that people are not clear of the value that a professional librarian would bring to the information transaction.

A secondary source of job dissatisfaction emanates from ordinary facilities and space constraints that the library staffs have to contend with. The congestion of office space and the dearth of personal computers can considerably lower staff job satisfaction (Abifarin, 1997). Lack of adequate funding in this environment of sweeping technological advancement would exacerbate the situation to a great extent.

A recent study performed by Husain (2011) on Kuwaiti librarians regarding the career choice, satisfaction and perceptions about the image of their profession confirm the above findings. The study demonstrates that the respondents are found to be moderately satisfied with their dissatisfaction stemming from the factors such as, promotions, working conditions, salary and benefits as well as low public image. Besides, while various extrinsic measures such as, recognition of accomplishment, fair performance evaluation, job security feature prominently, intrinsic factors such as nature of work do not in the job satisfaction of the librarians.

Inadequate communication between the management and subordinate appears to be a stumbling block in nurturing a high job satisfaction among the library staff. This finding corroborates the earlier studies (Mardie *et al.*, 2006; Sierpe, 1999). Employing both a questionnaire survey and a qualitative investigation, Mardie *et al.* (2006) finds a positive correlation between communication satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. The current study underscores the need of proper communication, which would leverage optimum team performance (Jones, 1997) and generate a more collegial atmosphere in the library (Lister, 2003).

A revelation of the study would be the prevalence of discrimination perceived by a few staff of the library. Prior studies on discrimination and its concomitant effect upon staff dissatisfaction are well stated in the literature. In a wide-ranging survey conducted among the library staff of public and academic libraries, Berry (2007) mentions that the discrimination based on age and ethnicity registers high in the minds of the respondents that cause a diminishing return on their job satisfaction. Though not prevalent at that level, this perception on the part of the respondents would still pose a threat to the sense of job satisfaction among the library staff; this has far-reaching consequences as discriminating organizations may have less committed workforces and high operating costs due to turnover, absenteeism, job dissatisfaction and poor reputation with diverse customers (Wright *et al.*, 1995).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study is performed to investigate the underlying causes of various sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of staff.

As it reveals, the sources of their job satisfaction lies (i) in meeting and helping people in a prompt, positive and constructive manner, (ii) in their participation in various courses and conferences as part of their continuous professional development and practices of job rotation, and (iii) the religious environment they work in.

Staff dissatisfaction on their jobs stems from inordinate delay in promotional opportunities, low public perception about the library profession, the lack of space, and lack of facilities, lopsided and infrequent communication between the management and the staff and the shadow of discrimination and favoritism.

6.1 Challenges Facing the Management

While, in general, majority of the library staff harbor job satisfaction, there are a few areas that call for urgent attention on the part of the management:

- It has to tackle and take on the issue of staff promotion head-on. It has to forcefully argue with the MSD about the necessity of promotion of its own staff – to S-44 level – citing that of other administrative personnel working elsewhere in the university.
- It has to take technology in great consideration as it constantly keeps changing, exponentially. While the staffs remain content with the multitude of courses offered, an

exposure to IT issues ought to be in place, lest they should become obsolete in near future.

- It needs to make sure that staff are entitled to a decent working environment and budgetary deficit should not stand in the way when it would come to abiding by the 'one person, one PC' policy.
- The management has to improve on the way communication is being rendered across the organization. In order to attain organization's objectives, it is imperative on the part of the management to listen to the voice of the subordinates. Knowledge dissemination should be fool proof and any official instruction should reach all the persons concerned. Except for matters of security implications, it should take into cognizance the opinions of the staff regarding its immediate and distant plans. It can do so through placing a suggestion box, group e-mails, and meetings once in every three months, etc.
- In order to change public perception regarding the librarians as well as the profession itself, it has to embark upon a well thought-out action program; this would entail a number of aspects, such as: participation in campus events introducing and recruiting the younger generation at an early age to this profession, highlighting the job prospects and types of jobs performed by librarians, sending the professional to various conferences and writing articles in various journals, etc.

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of the current research are based on opinions and expressions – verbal and non-verbal – offered by the twelve library professionals working at the library. During the study, a number of constraints are encountered that would pose as limitations of the study. These comprise of the small sample size, inability for not covering all the library sections, etc. A possible future research should keep an eye to these factors and might focus on issues such as:

- Marketing aspect on the part of the management in order to create better public awareness regarding library profession;
- The leadership style being pursued by the management and its effect on the morale and satisfaction of the library staff;
- Conducting a quantitative study along with this qualitative one to make it more comprehensive;
- Conducting a study on satisfaction among library professional of different university libraries to gauge their similarities and the differences.

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