

Impact of Library Professionals' Attitude on Career Development: A Study Based on the University Library Professionals in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Career development practices are designed to enhance the career satisfaction of employees and to improve organizational effectiveness. Samarakoon(2002) stated that to successfully attract, and retain junior knowledge workers, companies should pay attention in providing 'support for career and continuous development'. The main objective of the study was to examine the impact of library professionals' attitude on career development in relation to university library professionals of Sri Lanka and to assess the career satisfaction of the library professionals. The entire library professionals (n=112) attached to university libraries in Sri Lanka were considered as study sample. A self-administered survey questionnaire and personal interviews were used as data collection instruments. Collected data were analyzed by using a statistical package called SPSS 22.0. The response rate was 91%. Results revealed that the attitude of the library professionals has a mean value of 68.2 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 4.67. Whilst career development has a mean value of 34.94 and SD of 2.62. This predicts that career development is influenced by the attitude of the library professionals. The simple correlation between the attitude of the professionals and career development is 0.541, which seems to be moderate and positive. Majority of the university library professionals (82%) stated that they are pleased to work in an academic environment with freedom. Moreover working condition of the University Libraries are adequate and promotional scheme of the University Library Professionals is fairly handled. The involvement of the professionals in their profession seems very high, because the majority of professionals (86%) responded that they are prepared to contribute their maximum efforts for the better performance. It was observed that positive attitude of the library professionals

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contributes to the career development, because the correlation (0.541) between these two variables is positively significant and moderate. It is recommended to have seminars, workshops, conferences or training programmes periodically for library professionals to upgrade their skills, knowledge and abilities which will enhance their personal capabilities. Further, a system in continuing education should be provided for all library professionals to increase their interest and involvement, so that they can render the best possible service.

Keywords: Attitude, Career Development, University Library Professionals

INTRODUCTION

Griffin (1997) defined career as the set of work related experiences, behaviors and attitudes encountered throughout his or her working life. A career can lend order and meaning to events and provide a relationship, including work, in which a person is involved. Further, career is central to the complete development of an individual's identity. Thus it is important for the employees to plan a career, even if the employer provides little guidance or encouragement.

According to Beach (1980), Career Development (CD) is the planning of one's career and the implementation of career plans by means of education, training, job search and acquisition and work experiences. This suggests that career development of an individual depends on one's training, qualifications, experience and seniority. Further, placement policy and promotion system also have a bearing on career development. Career development is an ongoing organized and formalized effort that focuses on developing enriched and more capable employees. It has a wider focus, longer time frame and broader scope than training. Development must be a key business strategy if an organization is to survive in today's increasingly competitive and global business environment.

Career development practices are designed to enhance the career satisfaction of employees and to improve organizational effectiveness. Organizational career development is the outcome emanating from the interaction of individual career planning and institutional career management processes. Career planning comprises of self-development and career related goals. Likewise, career management comprises of training and development, and appraisals and evaluations. Self-development, career related goals, training and development, and appraisals and evaluations have been considered as indicators for CD in this research study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Career Development is the process that forms a person's work identity. It is a significant part of human development and spans over the individual's entire lifetime, beginning when the individual first becomes aware of how people make a living. For example, when a child notices that some people are doctors, others are firefighters, and some are carpenters, it signals the start of this process. It continues as that person begins to explore occupations and ultimately decides what career to pursue him or herself.

Freeman (1995) outlines the possibility and desirability of Library and Information Science (LIS) practitioners undertaking research for a doctorate (PhD) as a career development route. Further, the Library Association is showing the way forward by promoting the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a necessary requirement of the true professional coupled with the idea of "gaining and retaining" one's professional qualification.

Osei (1996) concluded that staff development programme enables the staff to cope with modern technology, new trends and current developments. Linked to this, is enhanced staff performance and job effectiveness and overall improvement in the quality of the labor force. Participation at local and international seminars, workshops and conferences have broadened and widened staff knowledge and experiences and, thus, have become skillful in the practice of librarianship in general. The library's progressive march towards academic and professional stardom through staff development programmes.

Career development does not end there. After you choose a profession, you must then get the required education and training, apply for and find employment, and ultimately advance in your career. For most people, it will also include changing careers and jobs at least once during their work lives, but probably more often than that.

It is important to note that, for most individuals, career development occurs without any intervention from other people. There also is not a set age for when it will begin—some people will start to think about occupational choices very early in life, while others won't give this subject much thought until they are relatively close to having to decide how they will earn money.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the impact of Library Professionals' attitude on Career Development in relation to University Library Professionals of Sri Lanka.
2. To assess the career satisfaction of the University Library Professionals in Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

The total study population consists of one hundred and twelve (112) university library professionals from fifteen universities established under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 in Sri Lanka. Since the total population is small, whole population was selected as study sample. The participants considered in this study comprises the Librarians, Deputy Librarians, Senior Assistant Librarians and Assistant Librarians of the Universities in Sri Lanka, they are the people who are directly recruited into the University Library System and are responsible in the University Library Activities.

In order to assess the degree of variation in relation to independent and dependent variables, an attempt was made by way of structured questionnaire based on Likert

Scales and consisting of open-ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed among these library professionals, where they are the key officials in the University Libraries. As the researcher personally met the respondents on many occasions it was possible to collect back 102 questionnaires.

Collected data was analyzed by using SPSS 22.0, which is a powerful Statistical Package containing a suit of different procedures for data analysis. Statistical techniques such as multiple regression and correlation were used to assess the strength of inter relationship among variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 01: Attitude of the University Library Professionals

| Descriptive Statistics | | |
|------------------------|---------|-------|
| Mean | | 68.20 |
| Standard Deviation | | 4.67 |
| Obtained Value | Maximum | 83 |
| | Minimum | 60 |
| Expected Value | Maximum | 85 |
| | Minimum | 17 |
| N | | 102 |

Source: Survey Data

The mean score of the sample is considered as the attitude of the professionals of the sample. As per the statements given in questionnaire to measure this aspect the maximum and minimum score that an employee could score is 85 and 17 respectively. According to the data collected through the questionnaire mean value of the response is 68.20 with a standard deviation of 4.67. This mean value as a proportion of the expected maximum score is 80%. Hence in general that the attitude of the professionals of the sampled professionals is more towards the upper limit.

Table 02: Career Development of the University Library Professionals

| Descriptive Statistics | | |
|------------------------|---------|-------|
| Mean | | 34.94 |
| Standard Deviation | | 2.62 |
| Obtained Value | Maximum | 40 |
| | Minimum | 28 |
| Expected Value | Maximum | 45 |
| | Minimum | 09 |
| N | | 102 |

Source: Survey Data

The total responses have reported the mean value of 34.94 with the standard deviation of 2.62. The mean score of the responses were considered as the degree of their position in ensuring career development of the sample. As per the statements given in questionnaire to measure this aspect the highest and the lowest score an individual can score are 45 and 09 respectively. Highest score of an individual is presumed that he / she is highly satisfied with his / her career development. The above mean value of the responses, as a percentage of the expected maximum score of 45 is 77.6%. Hence, it is presumed that the career development of the responses is generally high.

Table03: Career Satisfaction of the University Library Professionals

| Descriptive Statistics | | |
|------------------------|---------|-------|
| Mean | | 37.25 |
| Standard Deviation | | 4.44 |
| Obtained Value | Maximum | 47 |
| | Minimum | 27 |
| Expected Value | Maximum | 50 |
| | Minimum | 10 |
| N | | 102 |

Source: Survey Data

In this section the highest and the lowest score an individual can score are 50 and 10 respectively. Highest score of an individual is presumed that he / she is highly satisfied in his / her career while lower the score he / she is less satisfied in his/ her career. The total sample has reported the mean value of 37.25 in relation to career satisfaction with a standard deviation of 4.44. In fact when it is considered, this mean value as a percentage of the expected maximum score of 50, it is nearly 74.5%. Therefore, the career satisfaction of the sampled professionals is considered to be in an upper level.

The relationship between Attitude and Career Development of the University Library Professionals in Sri Lanka.

Wilson and Halpin (2006) have stated that attitudes to continuing professional development were generally positive and encouraging. Analysis revealed that the attitude of the professionals has a mean value of 68.2 and SD 4.67 and career development has a mean value of 34.94 and SD 2.62 which is a good signal of prediction that the career development is influenced by the attitude of the professionals and it is presumed that their scores are high and spread over with a small variance as SDs are very small. Under the regression model, attitude of the professionals and career development were measured. The simple correlation between the attitude of the professionals and career development is 0.541, which seems to be moderate and positive.

When analyzing regression if the attitude of the professionals is changed by one unit, career development will be changed by 0.541. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between attitude of the professionals and career development. Usherwood *et al.* (2000) pointed out there is evidence that some authorities that have career development initiatives are likely to be actively recruiting candidates, and statistically significant relationship between the length of stay of new professionals and ongoing career development.

In this context from the statistical analysis, it can be said that the independent variable which is the attitude of the professionals explains only 29.3% of the variance in the dependent variable, the career development. Hence the unexplained portion may be due to some other factors i.e. other than the attitude of the professionals such as education, training, job search and acquisition, work experiences, etc. Therefore degree of career development of the professionals is moderate.

The satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's profession or professional experience. Sources of the satisfaction included a sense of achievement, recognition, the work itself, the opportunity to take responsibility and prospects for advancement (Bassett-Jones and Lloyd, 2005). In responding to the open-ended questions, the university library professionals (82%) stated that they are pleased to work in an academic environment with freedom. Working conditions of the University Libraries are adequate and promotional scheme of the University Library Professional is fairly handled.

Promotional prospects are almost always automatic as every professional in completion of Master's degree and certain years of experience will definitely get the promotion. But rest of the professionals suggested concerning the achievements in the profession, publications, contribution to the field and professional soundness for the promotional consideration rather than years of experience and a degree. In addition, they stated that the scheme of recruitment for University Librarian and Deputy Librarian is still ambiguous.

The involvement of the professionals in their profession seems very high, because 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. Further, it was observed that the authority is making their maximum efforts to satisfy the professionals. Rest of the respondents indicated that if the professionals are provided training facilities for skill upgrading, this may be benefited to the professionals.

It was interested to note that most of the professionals (78%) prefer to do extra effort towards the achievement of University Libraries targets. It was further observed that most of professionals are aware that the potential for continued growth and individual development in the career path of the University Library Professionals. They show interest for hard work to achieve higher performance.

Organizational growth leads to individual growth of the Library Professionals. The respondents were asked to indicate the willingness to make an effort beyond expected duties to accomplish the objectives of the library. All the Library Professionals replied that they are willing to put a great deal of efforts beyond their routine expected duties to accomplish the objectives of the library. It is believed that its part of the organization culture. Library professionals take the decisions based on the mission and goals of their universities.

Therefore, it is a mixture of many aspects that governs the attitude of the professionals and career development. Hence the attention of the management is drawn to the matters discussed above in result of the attitude of the professionals through the influence of the career development. In this study, relationship between the attitude of the professionals and career development is a positive but moderate correlation between independent variable and the dependent variable.

The relationship between Career Satisfaction and Attitude of the University Library Professionals.

Rowley (1996) has stated that it is important to recognize that staff are motivated by different factors depending on their length of service, their other work experience, aspirations with respect to career development. Analysis revealed that career development has a mean value of 34.94 and SD 2.62, career satisfaction has a mean value of 37.25 and Standard Deviation (SD) 4.44 and attitude of the professionals has a mean value of 68.2 and SD 4.67, which is a good signal of prediction the career development is influenced by the career satisfaction and the attitude of the professionals and it is presumed that all scores are high and around the mean and their responses are almost same as SD is small ($SD < 4.67$). The multiple correlations i.e. the combined effect of all the independent variables on the dependent variable career development is 0.668. If the career satisfaction and the attitude of the professionals are changed by one unit, career development will be changed by 0.668, which seems to be positive but moderate.

Therefore, there is a positive relationship between the career satisfaction and the attitude of the professionals, and career development. Whereas the coefficient of determination being 0.446 only 44.6% of the variance in the career development can be explained or accounted with those combined effect of the independent variables involved.

It is quite natural that the career satisfaction and the attitude of the professionals lead to career development. It is predicted that better career development will lead to low turnover and absenteeism because the satisfied professional is motivated to attend to workplace where his career prospects are available. Hence the research findings support to a considerable extent that the career satisfaction and the positive attitude of the professionals significantly influence career development.

Career development is the planning of one's career and the implementation of career plans by means of education, training, job search and acquisition and work experiences. Library Professionals (92%) stated in the given open-ended questions that seminars, workshops, conferences and training programmes should be developed by the universities coping with the emerging needs for developing new skills and knowledge relevant to the profession. Rest of the respondents stated that they preferred to attend in house training programmes in addition to other available external seminars, workshops, conferences and training programmes. Seneviratne (1999) emphasized that training courses and opportunities should be provided for the library staff. Majority of the Library Professionals expressed their views that there are a few opportunities available for training and development of University Library Professionals. Some professionals argue that there are no dedicated funds available in the universities to send their professionals for training and development programmes. A few eagerly asked whether everyone gets equal opportunities to attend training and development programmes. Library Professionals are enthusiastic in following additional educational / training courses that help their professional development. But there are no organizational arrangements available for Library Professionals to participate in the periodic training programmes. According to the result, it was found that there is a positive but moderate correlation between independent variables namely the career satisfaction with the dependent variable and the attitude of the professionals.

The respondents of the study chosen were the university library professionals. Hence the University library professionals are used to work hard and it is observed that they are prepared to work hard too. The adoption of the participative leadership style and the programmes have been designed with the consultation of the professionals may be attractive for this hard workmanship. Hence it is assumed that in general, all the library professionals of the Universities are well satisfied on their career which develop enriched and more capable professionals for career development adequately. Further, Library Professionals state that they are unable to do research, because they have no time to do a research with their routine work load and getting research fund is also questionable.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study revealed that attitude of the professionals has influence on the career development. Further a high degree of mean values have been observed, as the score for attitude of the library professionals is 80% and the career development is 77.6%. When the mean values of the responses are considered, it shows the degree of their stand in respect of each variable, which are generally high in this study, these in turn give a favorable indication of the responses.

Moreover career satisfaction has influenced the attitude of the library professionals. This finding disclosed that there is a relationship between career satisfaction and the attitude of the library professionals. Further a high degree of mean values have been observed, as the score for career satisfaction is 74.5% and the attitude

of the professionals is 80%. When the mean values of the responses are considered, it shows the degree of their stand in respect of each variable, which are generally high in this study, these in turn give a favorable indication of the responses, as all the responses of the study are closer to each other. Anyhow, majority of the respondents are not satisfied in relation to social recognition and entitlement of some other benefits for their profession compared with teaching staff. Silva(1998) also 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.

A system in continuing education should be provided for all library professionals to increase their interest and involvement, so that they can render the best possible service. Seminars, workshops, conferences or training programmes for Library professionals should be periodically conducted to upgrade their skills, knowledge and abilities which will enhance their personal development. Further, a system in continuing education should be provided for all library professionals to increase their interest and involvement, so that they can render the best possible service.

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