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EXAMINING JOB SATISFACTION AMONG LIBRARY ASSISTANTS IN SRI LANKA: INSIGHTS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

This research paper conducts a comprehensive examination of job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka, drawing insights from various scholarly works related to job satisfaction in the library profession. The study explores factors contributing to job satisfaction and the unique challenges faced by library assistants in the Sri Lankan context. The literature review includes references from multiple sources, such as Dambawinna (2012) on management style and job satisfaction, Lim (2008) on job satisfaction among information technology workers in academic libraries, and Marasinghe and Wijayarathne (2016) on generational differences in job satisfaction among university library professionals in Sri Lanka. Additionally, Punyawardena (2016) discusses the influence of salary and other benefits on job satisfaction among university library assistants in Sri Lanka. Pushpakumari (2008) explores the impact of job satisfaction on job performance, offering valuable insights. The research also considers Ranaweera and Li's (2018) studies on job satisfaction in staff working in university libraries in Sri Lanka, their work on job satisfaction in university libraries (2018), and their study on library staff job satisfaction in university libraries in Sri Lanka (2018). Furthermore, Wanasinghe (2020) evaluates job satisfaction among public library librarians in the north-central province of Sri Lanka, while Wijeweera (2005) examines job satisfaction among professionals and paraprofessionals in agricultural libraries in Sri Lanka. Wijetunge (2012) investigates work-related stress among university librarians in Sri Lanka, adding a unique perspective to the study. This research paper synthesizes the findings from these diverse sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka. The study aims to identify common trends, challenges, and potential areas of improvement in the field of library assistance in Sri Lanka, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of job satisfaction and the overall well-being of library staff in the country.

KEYWORDS: *Library Staff, Academic Libraries, Public Libraries, Job Challenges and Professional Well-being*

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is a cornerstone of employee well-being, impacting their motivation, productivity, and overall quality of life. This critical factor is especially pertinent in the realm of library assistants in Sri Lanka, where it plays a pivotal role in shaping the effectiveness of library services and the professional growth of individuals contributing to this field.

This expansive review aims to delve deeply into the intricate web of factors that influence job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka. Our investigation draws upon a diverse range of research papers and studies, both domestic and international, shedding light on the nuanced facets that contribute to job satisfaction within this specific context. By synthesizing this wealth of information, we endeavor to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play, thereby offering valuable insights that can guide policy-making, refine management practices, and set the agenda for future research in the library profession.

In this review, we will scrutinize multiple dimensions of job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka. Our analysis will encompass themes such as management styles, salary and benefits, generational disparities, performance correlations, library setting variations, and stress factors. Through this extensive examination, we aim to paint a detailed picture of the factors that either bolster or undermine job satisfaction in the Sri Lankan library landscape, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of library services and the well-being of library professionals.

This comprehensive review aims to delve into the findings of various research papers and studies related to job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka, as well as relevant international research, with a focus on understanding the factors that influence job satisfaction in this specific context. In the following sections, we will delve deeper into each of these studies to extract key findings and implications.

1. MANAGEMENT STYLE AND JOB SATISFACTION

(Dambawinna, 2012): In his study on the management style and job satisfaction of library staff at the University of Niigata, Japan, Dambawinna explores how different management approaches can impact job satisfaction. While the study is not specific to Sri Lanka, it provides valuable insights into the broader concepts of management and leadership that can be applied to the Sri Lankan library context. Understanding the influence of management styles on job satisfaction is crucial for improving working conditions and job contentment among library assistants.

In this study on the management style and job satisfaction of library staff at the University of Niigata, Japan, explores how different management styles can impact job satisfaction. While the study is not conducted in Sri Lanka, its findings can provide valuable insights into the broader concepts of management and leadership that can be applied to the Sri Lankan library context.

Key Findings

- The study identifies various management styles, including autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, and their potential effects on job satisfaction.
- Autocratic management styles, characterized by top-down decision-making and limited employee involvement, can lead to lower job satisfaction among library staff.
- In contrast, democratic management styles, which involve employee participation in decision-making processes, are associated with higher job satisfaction.
- The study emphasizes the importance of effective communication and collaboration between library assistants and their supervisors.
- Employee involvement in decision-making and a supportive work environment contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction.

Implication of Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, where libraries play a vital role in education and research, the findings from Dambawinna's study highlight the importance of adopting democratic and collaborative management approaches. Library administrators and supervisors should involve library assistants in decision-making processes when appropriate, fostering a sense of ownership and job satisfaction among staff. Effective communication and a supportive work environment are key factors in promoting job satisfaction.

2. INFLUENCE OF SALARY AND BENEFITS

(Punyawardena, 2016): Punyawardena's research investigates the influence of salary and other benefits on job satisfaction among university library assistants in Sri Lanka. This study is particularly relevant in a country where economic factors can significantly affect the job satisfaction of individuals. The findings underscore the importance of fair compensation in enhancing job satisfaction and retaining skilled library professionals.

In this research investigates the influence of salary and other benefits on job satisfaction among university library assistants in Sri Lanka. This study is particularly relevant in a country where economic factors can significantly affect the job satisfaction of individuals.

Key Findings:

- Salary and benefits are critical factors that influence job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka.
- Insufficient compensation and limited benefits can lead to dissatisfaction and potentially impact employee retention.
- The study highlights the need for fair and competitive salary structures in the library profession to attract and retain skilled professionals.
- Other benefits, such as health insurance, professional development opportunities, and work-life balance initiatives, also contribute to job satisfaction.

Implications for Sri Lanka

Addressing the issue of compensation and benefits is crucial in the Sri Lankan library context. Library administrators and policymakers should consider implementing fair and competitive salary structures and providing additional benefits to enhance job satisfaction. This can help attract and retain highly qualified individuals in the library profession, ultimately improving the quality of library services.

3. GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES AND JOB SATISFACTION

(Marasinghe & Wijyaratne, 2016): Marasinghe and Wijyaratne's study delves into the impact of generational differences on job satisfaction in university library professionals in Sri Lanka. As generational dynamics continue to shape workplaces, understanding the unique needs and expectations of different generations in the library profession is essential. Adapting management strategies to accommodate these differences can contribute to higher job satisfaction and more harmonious work environments.

In this study examines the impact of generational differences on job satisfaction in university library professionals in Sri Lanka. As generational dynamics continue to shape workplaces, understanding the unique needs and expectations of different generations in the library profession is essential.

Key Findings:

- Different generations in the library workforce may have distinct preferences and priorities when it comes to job satisfaction.
- Younger generations, such as millennials and Generation Z, may prioritize opportunities for career growth and development.
- Older generations may place a higher value on job security and stability.
- The study suggests that adapting management strategies and policies to accommodate generational differences can lead to higher job satisfaction and better employee retention.

Implications for Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, where library assistants come from diverse age groups, it is essential to recognize and address generational differences to enhance job satisfaction. Library administrators and supervisors should consider tailoring professional development opportunities, job security measures, and communication approaches to meet the varying needs of different generations in the workforce.

4. JOB SATISFACTION AND JOB PERFORMANCE

(Pushpakumari, 2008): Pushpakumari's empirical analysis examines the impact of job satisfaction on job performance. While not specific to library assistants, the study's findings have broader implications for assessing the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity among library professionals in Sri Lanka. The

connection between job satisfaction and job performance is a critical consideration for employers seeking to maximize the efficiency of their workforce.

In this case, empirical analysis examines the impact of job satisfaction on job performance. While not specific to library assistants, the study's findings have broader implications for assessing the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity among library professionals in Sri Lanka.

Key Findings:

- Job satisfaction is positively correlated with job performance.
- Satisfied employees tend to be more motivated, engaged, and productive in their roles.
- High job satisfaction can lead to lower absenteeism and turnover rates.
- The study suggests that organizations should prioritize strategies to enhance job satisfaction as a means of improving overall job performance.

Implications for Sri Lanka

The connection between job satisfaction and job performance is a critical consideration for library administrators and policymakers in Sri Lanka. Fostering a work environment that promotes job satisfaction can have a positive ripple effect on the productivity and effectiveness of library assistants. Investments in training, professional development, and job enrichment can contribute to both job satisfaction and performance.

5. JOB SATISFACTION IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

(Ranaweera & Li, 2018): Ranaweera and Li have conducted several studies exploring job satisfaction among staff in university libraries in Sri Lanka. Their comprehensive research provides insights into the specific challenges and opportunities within academic library settings. These studies consider factors such as workplace conditions, relationships with colleagues, and opportunities for career development. Understanding the dynamics of job satisfaction in university libraries is essential, as these institutions often serve as the backbone of educational and research support in the country.

Ranaweera and Li have conducted several studies exploring job satisfaction among staff in university libraries in Sri Lanka. Their comprehensive research provides insights into the specific challenges and opportunities within academic library settings.

Key Findings:

- Workplace conditions, including the availability of resources and technology, play a significant role in job satisfaction among university library assistants.
- Positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors contribute to higher job satisfaction.
- Opportunities for career development and advancement are essential factors in retaining talented library professionals.
- The study emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique needs and challenges of university library staff.

Implications for Sri Lanka

Given the critical role of university libraries in Sri Lanka's education and research landscape, understanding job satisfaction in this context is vital. Library administrators should focus on creating supportive work environments, fostering positive relationships, and providing opportunities for professional growth to enhance job satisfaction among university library assistants.

6. EVALUATION OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PUBLIC LIBRARY LIBRARIANS

(Wanasinghe, 2020): Wanasinghe's case study, conducted in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, evaluates job satisfaction among public library librarians. Public libraries play a crucial role in providing access to information and knowledge to the general public. Examining job satisfaction among public library professionals offers a broader perspective on job satisfaction within different types of libraries. This research can shed light on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by those working in public library settings, which may differ from academic or specialized libraries.

Wanasinghe's case study, conducted in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, evaluates job satisfaction among public library librarians. Public libraries play a crucial role in providing access to information and knowledge to the general public.

Key Findings

- Job satisfaction among public library librarians in the North Central Province is influenced by factors such as workload, work-life balance, and recognition of their contributions.
- Challenges in resource availability and infrastructure can affect job satisfaction.
- The study underscores the need for improved support and resources for public libraries to enhance job satisfaction among librarians.

Implications for Sri Lanka

Public libraries are essential community resources in Sri Lanka, and the job satisfaction of librarians in these settings is crucial. Policymakers and library authorities should prioritize the allocation of resources and infrastructure improvements to support public libraries and enhance job satisfaction among their librarians.

7. WORK-RELATED STRESS AMONG UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS

(Wijetunge, 2012): Wijetunge's research focuses on work-related stress among university librarians in Sri Lanka. Stress is a significant factor that can negatively impact job satisfaction and overall well-being. Understanding the sources of stress and their effects on library assistants is crucial for addressing and mitigating these stressors. This study highlights the importance of creating a supportive and healthy work environment.

Wijetunge's research focuses on work-related stress among university librarians in Sri Lanka. Stress is a significant factor that can negatively impact job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Key Findings

- University librarians in Sri Lanka may experience stress due to factors such as high workload, tight deadlines, and demands for continuous learning.
- Work-related stress can lead to decreased job satisfaction, burnout, and potential health issues.
- The study emphasizes the importance of stress management and support mechanisms within library settings to mitigate stress-related impacts on job satisfaction.

Implications for Sri Lanka

Addressing work-related stress is essential to improving job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka. Library administrators should consider implementing stress reduction programs, providing resources for skill development and time management, and fostering a supportive and empathetic work culture.

8. JOB SATISFACTION OF AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

(Wijeweera, 2005): Wijeweera's study explores job satisfaction among professionals and paraprofessionals working in agricultural libraries in Sri Lanka. Agricultural libraries serve a specific sector with its unique demands and challenges. Examining job satisfaction in this context provides insights into how different types of libraries may require tailored approaches to enhance employee contentment and productivity.

The findings from these studies collectively contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities for improving job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka. To enhance job satisfaction in this field, it is crucial for library administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders to consider the insights provided by these studies and address the specific needs of this workforce.

Wijeweera's study explores job satisfaction among professionals and paraprofessionals working in agricultural libraries in Sri Lanka. Agricultural libraries serve a specific sector with its unique demands and challenges.

Key Findings

- Job satisfaction among agricultural library professionals is influenced by factors such as job content, relationships with colleagues, and opportunities for professional growth.
- Access to relevant resources and technology is crucial for job satisfaction in agricultural libraries.
- The study highlights the importance of recognizing the specialized nature of agricultural libraries and tailoring strategies to enhance job satisfaction in this context.

Implications for Sri Lanka

The findings from this study suggest that agricultural libraries in Sri Lanka should receive specific attention when it comes to addressing job satisfaction. Tailored strategies, including investment in specialized resources and training, can contribute to higher job satisfaction among professionals in agricultural libraries.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka is a complex and multifaceted issue influenced by various factors, including management style, compensation, generational differences, workplace conditions, and stress levels. The studies and research mentioned in this comprehensive review collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for improving job satisfaction in the library profession in Sri Lanka.

To enhance job satisfaction among library assistants in Sri Lanka, it is crucial for library administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders to consider the insights provided by these studies and address the specific needs of this workforce. Some key takeaways for improving job satisfaction in the Sri Lankan library context include:

1. Adopting Democratic and Collaborative Management Styles

Encouraging participatory decision-making and effective communication can enhance job satisfaction among library assistants.

2. Addressing Compensation and Benefits:

Fair and competitive compensation, along with additional benefits such as professional development opportunities and work-life balance initiatives, are essential for improving job satisfaction.

3. Recognizing Generational Differences:

Tailoring management strategies and policies to accommodate the unique needs and expectations of different generations in the workforce can contribute to higher job satisfaction.

4. Promoting Job Performance through Job Satisfaction:

Understanding the positive correlation between job satisfaction and job performance emphasizes the importance of investing in strategies to enhance job satisfaction.

5. Focusing on Specific Library Settings:

Different types of libraries, such as university libraries, public libraries, and specialized libraries, may require tailored approaches to address job satisfaction based on their unique challenges and opportunities.

6. Mitigating Work-Related Stress:

Implementing stress reduction programs and providing support mechanisms can help reduce stress-related impacts on job satisfaction.

7. Specialized Library Contexts:

Recognizing the specialized nature of certain library settings, such as agricultural libraries, and tailoring strategies to enhance job satisfaction in these contexts is crucial.

By considering and implementing these recommendations, library administrators and policymakers in Sri Lanka can create more satisfying and supportive work environments for library assistants, ultimately leading to improved library services and the professional development of library staff. In doing so, Sri Lanka can continue to strengthen its library sector and its contribution to education, research, and knowledge dissemination in the country.

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