Work Environment in the Libraries: A Study

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide the view of LIS professionals regarding the work environment present in their libraries. The study was carried out in eight libraries grouped into academic, special, public and technical libraries. Likert scale based questionnaire was used to obtain responses from the professionals working in these libraries holding positions equivalent to or greater than assistant librarian. Total 58 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 43 were returned back with response rate of 74.1%. Work environment of the libraries was studies by dividing this facet into 12 further sub facets such as working conditions, grievance redressal, social environment, colleague support, communication etc. The study finds that the cumulative percentage for 'Work Environment' facet is 71.3% with WAM of 3.6 which depicts the positive perception of 66.5% professionals towards it.Majority of the respondents (79%) are happy with the working conditions in their libraries, also 67.4% are satisfied with the social environment. There is strong consensus among 81.4% professionals that their job is prestigious and respectful. Public libraries (DPL & DSL) are found to be best with 72.9% score followed by special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL) scoring 72.2%. Among libraries, least is scored by IIT central library (50%). However, libraries should focus on involving employees in various recreational activities.

Keywords: work environment, physical environment, social environment, job security.

INTRODUCTION

Gerber defined working condition as ''working conditions are created by the interaction of employee with their organizational climate, and it includes psychological as well as physical working conditions.'' According to business dictionary, the term working condition refers to "working environment and all existing circumstance affecting labor in the work place, including job hours, physical aspects, legal rights and responsibility organizational climate and workload."(Ali, 2013) Working environment consists of safety to employees, job security, good relations with co-workers, recognition for good performance, motivation for performing well and participation in the decision making process. Once employees realize that they are considered to be them important, they will have high level of commitment and a sense of ownership for their organization. Also there are different factors within the working environment such as wages, working hours, autonomy given to employees, organizational structure and communication between employees & management. (Raziq, 2015) Library personnel work for long hours daily, hence, it is important to provide for them a conducive and stress free environment which Paul (2002) affirmed enhances employee productivity. The work environment comprises three sub-environments: technical, human and organizational environments. Technical environment comprises tools, equipment, infrastructure and other technical elements; the human environment comprises peers, and colleagues with whom employees relate, team and work group, interactions, the leadership and management, while organizational environment, on the other hand, includes systems, procedures, practices, values and philosophies. (Opperman, 2002) Work environment of an organization can also be categorized into internal and external work environment. The totality of these environments has influence on the job performance of librarians. (Amusa, 2013)The nature of the physical condition under which employees work is important to output, libraries that are too hot and ill ventilated are unbearable to work. There should be enough supply of good protective clothing, drinking water, rest rooms, toilets, first aids facilities etc. (Yesufu, 1984) Bornstein states that in organizations where employees are exposed to stressful working conditions, productivity are negatively influenced and that there is a negative impact on the delivery of service. On the other hand if working conditions are good, productivity increase and there is a positive impact on the delivery of service. The working conditions are very important to the organization. If the employees have negative perception of their working conditions, they are likely to be absent, have stress related illness, and their

productivity and commitment tend to be low. On the other hand, organizations those have a friendly, trusting, and save environment, experience, Greater productivity, communication, creativity, and financial health. (Ali, 2013) The most important workplace environment factors that either lead to engagement or disengagement are: Goal-setting, performance feedback, role congruity, defined processes, workplace incentives, supervisor support, mentoring/coaching, job aids, environmental factors such as temperature, lighting and ventilation can have a direct impact on health, and physical factors such as poor layout or overcrowding can lead to common types of accident such as tripping or striking against objects. (Chandrasekar, 2011)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Amusa (2013)investigated the work environment and job performance of librarians working in public universities in South-West, Nigeria and established that there is significant correlation between work environment and job performance of the librarians. Work environment is the physical, social, psychological and technological conditions present in a work places. Environment could be internal or external having direct or indirect impact on the performance of job. Environmental factors include social interaction, power supply, physical facilities, lighting level, motivation.(Babalola, 2012).Bakers (2015)in her paper discussed about the positive organizational behaviour the aim of which is to promote the strengths and proficiencies of the human resource in order to increases work productivity and boosts employee morale while decreasing stress and employee burnout. Edwards and Fisher (2002) stated that there should be a balance between naturally ventilated libraries with fresh air and sunshine. Khoso, Kazi, Ahmedani, Ahmed,&Khoso (2016) investigated the impact of workplace environment on the performance of the health care employees of five private hospitals of Hyderabad. The study reveals that all three factors (supervisor support, job aids, and physical workplace environment) are positively correlated with employee performance. Lombardo & Condic (2001) emphasized that library needs to be a comfortable place for staff and students. Raziq&Maulabakhsh (2015) analysed the impact of working environment on employee job satisfaction. The results indicate a positive relationship between working environment and employee job satisfaction. Taiwo (2010) suggested that it is necessary to explore the ways of improving and updating infrastructural facilities in order to make work environment more conducive for enhancement of labour productivity in oil and gas industry in Lagos.

SCOPE

This article covers work environment present in the eight libraries which are categorised as following:

a.   Special: National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC) and National Science Library under National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NSL).

b.   Technical: Delhi Technological University Central Library (DTU) and Indian Institute of Technology Central Library (IIT).

c.   Academic: Delhi University Library (DU) and Jawaharlal University Library JNU).

d.   Public: Delhi Public Library (DPL) and Dayal Singh Library (DSL).

OBJECTIVES

a.   To identify the view of LIS professionals towards the work environment present in their libraries.

b.   To study the different facets of work environment among the libraries understudy

c.   To compare the level work environment present in the four categories of libraries under study.

d.   To relate the perception towards work environment among the staffs of different libraries.

HYPOTHESIS

For this study following hypothesis were formulated:

First hypothesis: "The social environment of the libraries is satisfactory."

Second hypothesis: "Majority of the staff feels that their job is respectful and prestigious."

METHODOLOGY

A Likert scale questionnaire (comprising 12 questions) was used to obtain responses from the professionals working in the eight libraries (categorized into four). The professionals holding positions equivalent to or greater than assistant librarian were surveyed. Total 58 questionnaires were distributed out of which 43 were completed and returned with a response rate of 74.1%. The 5-point Likert scale has been scored as follows: SA =5; A = 4; N=3; D=2; SD=1.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Work Environment: View of Respondents

S. No.	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM	%
1	Working conditions, lighting & ventilation in the library is comfortable.	15 (30.8)	19 (44.1)	1 (2.3)	3 (6.9)	5 (11.6)	3.9	**76.9**
2	Employees inherently dislike wok and whenever possible try to avoid it.	0 (0)	7 (16.2)	16 (16.2)	9 (20.9)	10 (23.2)	2.4	**48.4**
3	Employees will shirk responsibilities and seek formal direction whenever possible.	0 (0)	20 (46.5)	7 (16.2)	8 (18.6)	7 (16.2)	2.9	**57.6**
4	You get quick redress to your grievances if any, by the head.	7 (16.2)	25 (58.1)	3 (6.9)	4 (9.3)	4 (9.3)	3.7	**73.9**
5	The social environment of youth library is satisfactory.	9 (20.9)	20 (46.5)	6 (13.9)	7 (16.2)	1 (2.3)	3.7	**73.4**
6	You are supported by your colleagues and senior when you need some help.	12 (27.9)	27 (62.7)	2 (4.6)	2 (4.6)	0 (0)	4.1	**82.7**
7	Job security is fully guaranteed in this job.	16 (37.2)	23 (53.4)	3 (6.9)	1 (2.3)	0 (0)	4.3	**85.1**
8	Employees are encouraged to have open communication with their superiors in the library.	11 (25.5)	23 (53.4)	5 (11.6)	4 (9.3)	0 (0)	4.0	**79.1**
9	The actual job duties are shaped more by the employees than by the formal job descriptions.	9 (20.9)	26 (60.4)	6 (13.9)	2 (4.6)	0 (0)	4.0	**79.5**
10	Recreational activities, culture tours are organised in order to let the employee show their creativity and enjoy.	4 (9.3)	15 (34.9)	6 (13.9)	10 (23.2)	7 (16.2)	2.9	**58.1**
11	Any kind of favouritism exists in your library.	6 (13.9)	12 (28.2)	3 (6.9)	10 (23.3)	12 (27.9)	2.8	**55.4**
12	Job is respectful and prestigious	19 (44.1)	16 (37.2)	8 (18.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.3	**85.1**
	Average	**108 (21.1)**	**233 (45.4)**	**66 (12.8)**	**60 (11.7)**	**46 (8.9)**	**3.6**	**71.3**

Majority of the respondents**(79%)** said that working conditions, lighting and ventilation in their libraries is comfortable. 44.2% respondents 'disagreed' with

this statement that employees dislike work and try to avoid it.46.5% agreed that employees sometimes shirk responsibilities and try to get formal direction whenever possible. While 34.9% disagreed to this.Majority of the staff (74.4%) agrees that they get timely redressal to their complaints. 67.4% respondents agrees that the social environment of their libraries is satisfactory.90.7% agreed that they are supported by their colleagues and senior in the time of need. Majority of the staff (90.7%) responded in agreement towards the job security guaranteed in their job.79% of the respondents agreed that they are encouraged to have open communication with their superiors.Majority of the staff (81.4%) said that actual job duties are shaped by the employees rather sticking to the job descriptions. Recreational activities, culture tours are not that much organized in the libraries for the staff, with lest in the technical libraries as44.2% agreed while 39.5% disagreed to this statement.Majority of the respondents(51.2%) disagrees with the statement that favoritism exists in their library. Majority of the staff (81.4%) feels that their job is prestigious and respectful.Overall, 66.5% (more than half) respondents agree towards the various dimensions of 'work environment' facet which shows that there exists a clear picture among the staffs of all the libraries. Following figure shows the average response from all the respondents towards 'work environment' facet. X-Axis is showing the responses from the table 1 and Y-Axis the corresponding percentages from the same table.
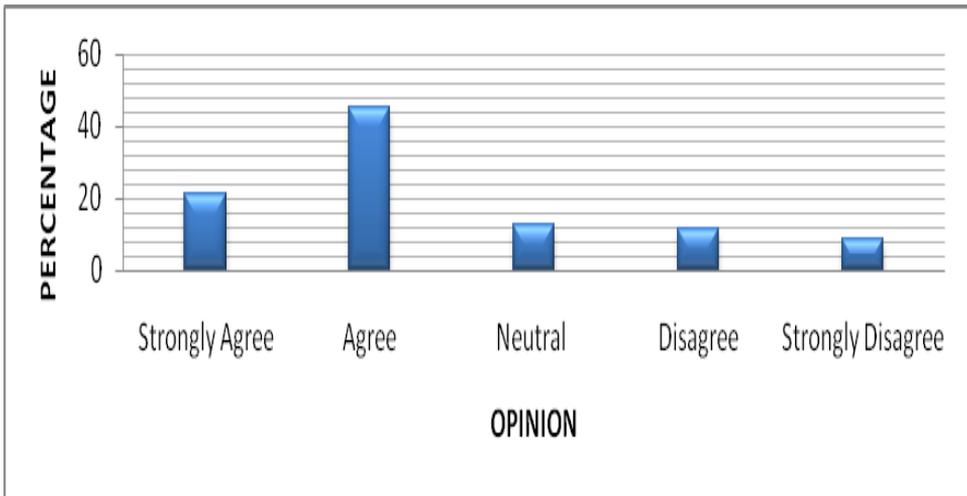

Figure 1: Work Environment: View of Respondents

Table 2: Work Environment: Category-wise Response

S. No.	STATEMENT	SPECIAL			TECHNICAL			ACADEMIC			PUBLIC			TOTAL % (WAM)
		NASSDOC	NSL	TOTAL	IIT	DTU	TOTAL	DU	JNU	TOTAL	DPL	DSL	TOTAL	
1	Working conditions, lighting & ventilation in the library is comfortable.	80 (4.0)	86.6 (4.3)	**83.3 (4.2)**	55 (2.8)	100 (5.0)	**77.5 (3.9)**	51.1 (2.6)	68 (3.4)	**59.5 (2.9)**	95 (4.8)	80 (4.0)	**87.5 (4.4)**	**76.9 (3.9)**
2	Employees inherently dislike work and whenever possible try to avoid it.	52 (2.6)	60 (3.0)	**56 (2.8)**	50 (2.5)	20 (1.0)	**35 (1.8)**	44.4 (2.2)	58 (2.9)	**51.2 (2.5)**	47.5 (2.4)	70 (3.5)	**58.8 (2.9)**	**48.4 (2.4)**
3	Employees will shirk responsibilities and seek formal direction whenever possible.	52 (2.6)	60 (3.0)	**56 (2.8)**	50 (2.5)	20 (1.0)	**35 (1.8)**	51.1 (2.6)	68 (3.4)	**59.5 (2.9)**	52.5 (2.6)	70 (3.5)	**61.3 (3.0)**	**57.6 (2.7)**
4	You get quick redress to your grievances if any, by the head.	56 (2.8)	86.6 (4.3)	**71.3 (3.6)**	50 (2.5)	100 (5.0)	**75 (3.8)**	68.8 (3.4)	76 (3.8)	**72 (3.6)**	85 (4.3)	80 (4.0)	**82.5 (4.1)**	**73.9 (3.7)**
5	The social environment of youth library is satisfactory.	80 (4.0)	86.6 (4.3)	**83.3 (4.1)**	45 (2.3)	100 (5.0)	**72.5 (3.6)**	68.8 (3.4)	78 (3.9)	**73.4 (3.7)**	62.5 (3.1)	80 (4.0)	**71.3 (3.5)**	**73.4 (3.7)**
6	You are supported by your colleagues and senior when you need some help.	84 (4.2)	86.6 (4.3)	**85.3 (4.3)**	55 (2.8)	100 (5.0)	**77.5 (3.9)**	84.4 (4.2)	82 (4.1)	**83.2 (4.1)**	85 (4.3)	70 (3.5)	**77.5 (3.9)**	**82.7 (4.1)**
7	Job security is fully guaranteed in this job.	88 (4.4)	80 (4.0)	**84 (4.2)**	45 (2.3)	100 (5.0)	**72.5 (3.6)**	93.3 (4.6)	84 (4.2)	**88.7 (4.4)**	85 (4.3)	80 (4.0)	**82.5 (4.1)**	**85.1 (4.3)**
8	Employees are encouraged to have open communication with their superiors in the library.	80 (4.0)	80 (4.0)	**80 (4.0)**	50 (2.5)	100 (5.0)	**75 (3.8)**	71.1 (3.6)	84 (4.2)	**77.5 (3.9)**	85 (4.3)	80 (4.0)	**82.5 (4.1)**	**79.1 (4.0)**
9	The actual job duties are shaped more by the employees than by the formal job descriptions.	80 (4.0)	80 (4.0)	**80 (4.0)**	50 (2.5)	100 (5.0)	**75 (3.8)**	84.4 (4.2)	82 (4.1)	**83.2 (4.1)**	72.5 (3.6)	70 (3.5)	**71.3 (3.5)**	**79.5 (4.0)**
10	Recreational activities, culture tours are organised in order to let the employee show their creativity and enjoy.	52 (2.6)	80 (4.0)	**66 (3.3)**	45 (2.3)	40 (2.0)	**42.5 (2.1)**	62.2 (3.1)	78 (3.9)	**70.1 (3.5)**	57.5 (2.9)	50 (2.5)	**53.8 (2.7)**	**58.1 (2.9)**
11	Any kind of favouritism exists in your library.	60 (3.0)	20 (1.0)	**40 (2.0)**	35 (1.8)	20 (1.0)	**27.5 (1.4)**	53.3 (2.6)	64 (3.2)	**58.7 (2.9)**	72.5 (3.6)	50 (2.5)	**61.3 (3.0)**	**55.4 (2.8)**

| 12 | Job is respectful and prestigious. | 76 (3.8) | 86.6 (4.3) | **81.3 (4.1)** | 70 (3.5) | 100 (5.0) | **85 (4.3)** | 60 (3.0) | 86 (4.3) | **73 (3.6)** | 90 (4.5) | 80 (4.0) | **85 (4.3)** | **85.1 (4.3)** |
| Total | | 70 (3.5) | 74.4 (3.7) | **72.2 (3.6)** | 50 (2.5) | 75 (3.8) | **62.5 (3.1)** | 66.1 (3.3) | 75.7 (3.8) | **70.9 (3.5)** | 74.2 (74.2) | 71.7 (3.6) | **72.9 (3.6)** | **71.3 (3.6)** |

NOTE: Figures indicates percentage and those in the brackets represent weighted average mean.

Working conditions, lighting and ventilation in their libraries is comfortable. The percentage obtained for this statement is 76.9% with WAM of 3.9. Among libraries, public libraries (DPL & DSL) have best conditions with 87.5% followed by special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL) with the 83.3%.The values of statement 2 & 3 are 48.4% and 57.6% respectively which means employees do not **dislike work** and try to avoid it but employees do sometimes **shirk responsibilities** and try to get formal direction whenever possible. Technical libraries (IIT &DTU) disagree with both the statements with 35% score.The staff gets **timely redressal** to their complaints by the head. The value of this statement is 73.9% which is in 'agree' zone, mean score for this statement is 3.7. Staff of public libraries (DPL & DSL) highly agree with this statement by scoring 82.5%.The value obtained for statement 12th is 55.4% and for 5th is 73.4% which means that there exists almost **no favoritism** is the libraries and hence social environment of the libraries is satisfactory. This correlation is found to be best in technical libraries (IIT &DTU) with the values of 40% and 83.3% for 12th and 5th statements respectively.For statement number 6 and 9, the percentage obtained is 82.7% and 79.1% respectively. Hence we can say that the staff are **supported by their colleagues** and senior in the time of need and are encouraged to have open communication with their superiors. Special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL) scored best in this case with an average of 82.6%. In the case of **job security** being guaranteed in the job, the staff of academic libraries (DU & JNU) was found to be most satisfied(88.7%) followed by special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL) with 84%. This statement obtained the percentage score of 85.1% with WAM of 4.3 which lie in 'strongly agree' zone.**Actual job duties** are shaped by the employees rather sticking to the job descriptions. This statement obtained 79.5% and WAM for this statements is 4.0. Academic libraries (DU & JNU) strongly agree with this as they scored 83.2%.**Recreational activities, culture tours** are not that much organized in the libraries for the staff, with least in the technical libraries (IIT & DTU) with 42.5%. The average score was fund to be 58.1% with WAM of 2.9.Job is **prestigious and respectful**. This statement has scored the percentage of 85.1% and WAM score for this statement is 4.3 both of which lie in 'strongly agree' zone. Technical libraries (IIT &DTU) and public libraries (DPL & DSL) strongly agree with this statement by scoring 85% each followed by special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL)

having 81.3% and least is scored by academic libraries (DU & JNU) with the score of 73%.The cumulative percentage for 'Work Environment' facet is 71.3% with WAM of 3.6 which depicts the positive perception of employees towards it. Public libraries (DPL & DSL) are found to best with 72.9% score followed by special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL) scoring 72.2%. Among libraries, least is scored by IIT central library (50%).

Following figure depicts the library wise response towards each statement. X-Axis is showing the number of respective statements from the table 2 and Y-Axis the corresponding percentages from the same table.
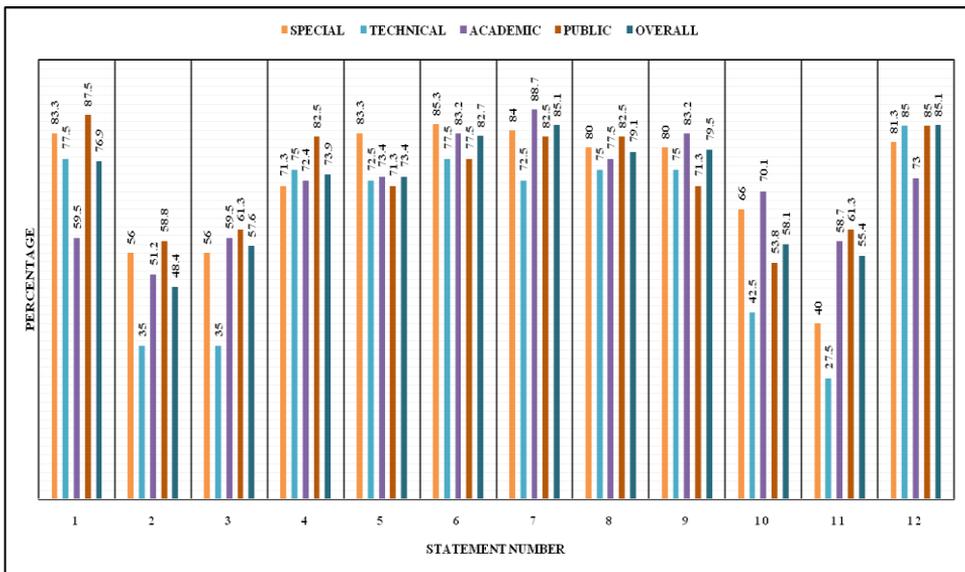

Figure 2: Work Environment: Category-wise Response

HYPOTHESIS TESTING
a.   From the tables 1 and 2 it is evident that the first hypothesis *"The social environment of the libraries is satisfactory"* stands supported as the majority of the respondents (67.4%) agreed to the statement with 73.4% and WAM of 3.7.
b.   Also from these tables second hypothesis *"Majority of the staff feels that their job is respectful and prestigious"* stands supported as the majority of the respondents (81.4%) agreed to the statement with 85.1% and WAM of 4.3.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Majority of the respondents said that working conditions, lighting and ventilation in their libraries is comfortable. Among libraries, public libraries (DPL & DSL) have best conditions followed by special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL).
2. Employees do not dislike work and try to avoid it but employees do sometimes shirk responsibilities and try to get formal direction whenever possible. Technical libraries (IIT &DTU) disagree with both the statements.
3. The majority of the staff gets timely redressal to their complaints by the head, particularly the staff of public libraries (DPL & DSL).
4. There exists almost no favoritism is the any libraries and hence social environment of the libraries is satisfactory. This correlation is found to be best in technical libraries (IIT &DTU).
5. The staffs are supported by their colleagues and senior in the time of need and are encouraged to have open communication with their superiors. This can be seen most positively in Special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL).
6. Majority of the staff responded in agreement towards the job security guaranteed in their job. The staff of academic libraries (DU & JNU) was found to be most satisfied followed by that of Special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL).
7. Recreational activities and cultural tours are not that much organized in any of the libraries, least in the technical libraries.
8. Majority of the staff in Technical libraries (IIT &DTU) and Public libraries (DPL & DSL) feels that their job is prestigious and respectful followed by special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL), however, minimum staff agreed in academic libraries (DU & JNU).

CONCLUSION

The study clearly reveals that the sound work environment yields more qualitative work instead of a non-conducive and derogatory work environment. From the survey, it can be concluded that there is a conducive work environment in the libraries under study. Libraries should organize various activities and encourage library staff to participate in those activities which will in addition to breaking boredom from daily work schedule also enhance their personality and skills. Public libraries (DPL & DSL) followed by Special libraries (NASSDOC & NSL) are found to have best environment among all the four categories.

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