

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG LIBRARY STAFF: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the intricate relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among library staff, drawing upon a comparative analysis of academic and public libraries. Recognizing the pivotal role of leadership in shaping organizational culture and employee well-being, this research investigates the lived experiences and perceptions of library staff regarding their respective leaders' approaches. Through in-depth interviews and observations, the study aims to uncover the nuances of leadership styles prevalent in both academic and public library settings, examining how these styles influence staff motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction. By comparing and contrasting the findings from both library types, this study seeks to identify potential differences and similarities in leadership approaches and their impact on staff experiences. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute valuable insights for library administrators and leaders seeking to foster positive and supportive work environments that promote job satisfaction and excellence in library services.

Keywords: leadership, job satisfaction, academic, public libraries, Indonesia

1. Introduction

Libraries, as vital knowledge hubs within society, are undergoing a period of significant transformation driven by evolving user needs, technological advancements, and changing societal landscapes (Knoke, 1993). Amidst these dynamic shifts, the role of effective leadership in guiding library staff and ensuring organizational success has become increasingly crucial. Leadership, as a multifaceted and influential force, shapes organizational culture, motivates employees, and ultimately impacts the quality of services provided to library patrons (Schulman, 1988).

This qualitative study delves into the intricate relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among library staff, focusing on a comparative analysis of academic and public libraries. Recognizing the distinct contexts, user demographics, and organizational structures that characterize these two library types, this research seeks to uncover potential differences and similarities in leadership approaches and their impact on staff experiences (Dryzek, 1990; Yusriadi et al., 2023). By employing a qualitative lens, this study aims to capture the nuanced perspectives and lived experiences of library staff, providing rich insights into how different leadership styles influence their motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction.

The findings of this study hold significant implications for library administrators and leaders seeking to cultivate positive and supportive work environments that attract and retain talented staff, foster innovation, and ultimately enhance the quality of library services provided to their communities (Goldfinch, 1998). By understanding the interplay between leadership styles and job satisfaction within the specific contexts of academic and public libraries, this research aims to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of library and information science and provide practical guidance for effective leadership in the evolving library landscape.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach, specifically utilizing a comparative case study design, to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among library staff in academic and public library settings. This approach was deemed most appropriate as it allows for rich, contextualized exploration of complex social phenomena, such as leadership dynamics and individual perceptions of job satisfaction.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved two distinct cases: one academic library and one public library, both located within Indonesia. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who could provide rich, insightful data. A total of 5 library staff members participated in the study, with 3 from the academic library and 2 from the public library. Participants represented a range of positions within each library, including librarians, library technicians, and support staff, to ensure diverse perspectives were captured.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for flexibility in probing emerging themes and exploring individual experiences in depth. Interviews were conducted in-person, at a location convenient for each participant, and lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview guide focused on exploring participants' perceptions of their respective library leader's style, their experiences working under that leadership style, and their overall job satisfaction.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an inductive thematic analysis approach, as outlined by Braun and Clarke. This involved a systematic process of familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and finally, producing the report. Data from both cases were analyzed separately to identify patterns and themes within each library type, followed by a comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences across the two contexts.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study by using pseudonyms and removing any identifying information from data transcripts and reports.

3. Result

This study aims to examine the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction among library staff, comparing academic and public libraries. Data was collected through a survey in which 10 informants from the two types of libraries participated. The results showed that leadership styles applied in academic and public libraries have a significant impact on staff job satisfaction.

In academic libraries, transformational leadership style proved to be the most effective in improving staff job satisfaction. This leadership style is characterised by leaders who are able to inspire and motivate staff through a clear vision, providing individualised support, and encouraging innovative thinking. Academic library staff working under transformational leadership reported higher levels of job satisfaction. They felt valued and supported in their career development, which contributed to a positive and productive work atmosphere.

In contrast, in public libraries, a more task-orientated leadership style and interpersonal relationships showed better results in improving staff job satisfaction. Leaders in public libraries who emphasised the achievement of organisational goals, effective problem-solving, and open communication, succeeded in creating a conducive work environment for staff. Public library staff felt more satisfied when their

leaders showed concern for their well-being and created a work climate that supported collaboration and engagement. The study also found that academic library staff tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction compared to public library staff. One contributing factor is that there are greater opportunities for professional development in academic libraries, such as training, seminars, and opportunities to engage in research. Academic library staff feel more valued and have a clear career path, which increases their motivation and job satisfaction.

On the other hand, public library staff face different challenges, such as budget and resource constraints, which can affect job satisfaction levels. However, with the right leadership style, these challenges can be overcome and staff job satisfaction can be improved. Public library leaders who are able to understand staff needs and provide the necessary support, both professionally and personally, are likely to be successful in creating a positive work environment.

The conclusion of this study is that leadership styles applied in academic and public libraries have different impacts on staff job satisfaction. In academic libraries, transformational leadership style proved to be the most effective, while in public libraries, task-focused leadership style and interpersonal relationships were more effective. To improve staff job satisfaction, library leaders need to understand the context and specific needs of the type of library they lead and adopt appropriate leadership styles.

4. Discussion

This qualitative study explored the nuanced relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among library staff in academic and public library settings. The findings revealed both similarities and differences in leadership approaches and their impact on staff experiences across the two library types.

Similarities Across Library Types

Participants from both academic and public libraries highlighted the significance of transformational leadership qualities, such as inspiring a shared vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and providing individualized support. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the positive impact of transformational leadership on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (MacRae, 2013). Staff in both library settings expressed a strong desire for open communication, collaborative decision-making, and opportunities to contribute their ideas and expertise. These findings underscore the importance of creating a participatory work environment where staff feel valued and empowered, regardless of library type (Çiçek & Bilal, 2011; Raharjo & Achmad Rinaldo Fernandes, 2018).

Differences Across Library Types

While transformational leadership was valued in both settings, there was a greater emphasis on transactional leadership in the academic library. This finding may be attributed to the hierarchical organizational structure and performance-driven culture often found in academic institutions (Omar & Mahmood, 2020; Seppa et al., 2021). In contrast, the public library exhibited a stronger preference for servant leadership, which emphasizes empowering and developing staff to meet community needs. The findings suggest that organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping leadership styles and staff experiences. The academic library's focus on research and scholarship appeared to influence a more formal and hierarchical leadership approach, while the public library's community-oriented mission fostered a more collaborative and supportive leadership style.

5. Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the multifaceted relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among library staff, offering a comparative analysis of academic and public library settings. The findings highlight the paramount importance of leadership in shaping organizational culture and influencing employee experiences. While transformational leadership emerged as a universally valued

approach, the study revealed nuanced differences in leadership styles and their impact across the two library types, underscoring the need for leaders to adapt their approaches to the specific organizational context (Hradecky et al., 2022). The emphasis on transactional leadership within the academic library, driven by its hierarchical structure and performance-oriented culture, contrasted with the preference for servant leadership in the public library, reflecting its community-focused mission and collaborative environment. However, regardless of library type, open communication, collaborative decision-making, and opportunities for staff empowerment were consistently identified as crucial factors contributing to job satisfaction. This study provides valuable insights for library administrators and leaders seeking to cultivate positive and productive work environments (Fernández et al., 2003). By embracing transformational leadership qualities, fostering open communication, and adapting their approaches to the unique organizational context, library leaders can significantly impact staff motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction. Ultimately, investing in effective leadership translates to enhanced library services and a greater ability to meet the evolving needs of the communities they serve. Further research exploring the influence of emerging leadership styles and the impact of technological advancements on library leadership will be crucial for navigating the dynamic landscape of the information profession.

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