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The effect of Librarians' Happiness Program on the Quality Services of Iranian Public Libraries from the Perspective of the Users

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Abstract:
The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of librarians' happiness programs on the service quality from the perspective of Iranian public library users. To this end, 25 active users' two libraries were randomly placed in the control and experimental groups. The result showed that although the theoretical part of the research could not achieve significant predicted results, the beginning and planning of applied and operational research fosters creativity and innovation in this social institution such as public libraries. Achieving this requires the provision of preliminaries, including the creation of authoritative scientific texts in the field of public libraries in Iran, are required. Considering that in previous studies, the relationship between happiness and human resources has been evaluated. Using a quasi-experimental method, this study investigated the effect of happiness program training on the quality of public library services from the users' point of view, which is a thematic innovation of the present study and can be a roadmap for conducting basic theoretical and practical research in Iranian public libraries.
Keywords: The quality of services, effective services, librarians' happiness, Fordyce principles, public libraries

1. Introduction

Public libraries as a social institution in today's societies can not meet the needs of clients just by maintaining the current status (Mc Clure & Jaeger, 2013) rather, improving the quality of service delivery is a fundamental effort in maintaining customer satisfaction. Strengthening the capabilities of modern and effective technical manpower in order to improve the productivity of the organization by utilizing the potential of employees (Farhadimahalli,

2013). Therefore, happiness is effective in the ability and performance of people and improves personal and professional life (Siyadatian, Qamarani, & Yaghobian, 2013).

In fact, the criterion for measuring the performance of a library is the amount of quality services provided to users, and this criterion is considered as the most comprehensive criterion for measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of a library (Mohammad Bigi & Hassanzadeh, 2009). As a result, service quality has become a distinguishing factor and in fact the most competitive tool of service organizations (Seyyed Javadin, Fattahi, & Vasegh, 2006; Sabzipoor, Ahmadizad, & Esmaeili Givi, 2011).

Therefore, measuring the quality of services not only helps the management of libraries, but also justifies the continuation of services and the absorption of government budgets against costs and inputs, and also encourages libraries to improve the variety of services and ultimately improve their performance in relation to customers(Seifi & Alidoust, 2019).

In libraries and information centers, due to the type of organization and service, communication with customers is very important. Therefore, customer satisfaction has a significant contribution in determining the success rate of the quality of services provided. Customer satisfaction makes sense in evaluating the quality of services (Keyser& Lariviere, 2013).

Quality of service includes three dimensions of physical, situational and behavioral, ie the quality of service is a combination of how it is provided in the form of customer service (Ross & Juwaheer, 2003).

Due to the competitive environment, librarians in libraries for the awareness of the efficiency of the library should know the users and their needs and expectations. This is so important that the quality of service is one of the main and perhaps the key success of libraries to attract customers and earning income (Seifi & Alidoust, 2019; Mohammad Bigi & Hassanzadeh, 2009). Today, more than ever, libraries are expected to prove their importance and value to their stakeholders. Many libraries, like other institutions, plan to identify the information needs of their community and to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats that affect their success. Measuring the quality of services is the estimation of the extent to which certain goals have been achieved, and the information obtained from it can be used to prove the value and importance of the library.

Various theories have been proposed for human resource empowerment. Quinne & Speritzer (1997) by field study at the level of middle managers of leading companies, they identified

two mechanical approaches and an organic approach to empowerment. Thomas & Velthouse (1990) to explain the concept of empowerment, they have used the term internal work motivation and have defined empowerment as a process of internal work motivation. Whetten & Cameron (1998) while emphasizing the multifaceted nature of empowerment, they have added the dimension of trust to other dimensions. But what is emphasized today, especially in service organizations such as public libraries, is to strengthen individual and organizational morale, or in other words, increase employee happiness. In other words, in these organizations, it is possible to advance the path of empowerment by strengthening the individual and organizational morale and by providing happiness training to individuals (Helen, 2010; GholamaliLavasani et al, 2014; Pardakhtchi, Ahmadi, & Arezoomandi, 2009).

According to Fordyce (1983), one of the professionals in the field of happiness, happiness is a positive or emotional emotion that is described by satisfaction and well-being. Happiness in the profession, as stated by Pryce-Jones (2010), refers to a process that allows a person to maximize his or her performance by amplifying potential positive forces. Fordays proved through research and experimentation that happiness is a lesson that to be learned and it is possible to improve one's happiness by providing training (Hellén & Sääksjärvi, 2011; Zare Ghiasabadi, Mehdizadeh, & Ganji 2014). Happiness gives people the opportunity to reach their full potential, while seeking to make employees more active in the social arena (Salas-Vallina, Alegre, & Fernande, 2017).

In a study conducted by Seif Hosseini et al. (2015), the results showed that with the Fordyce happiness training program, motivation and job satisfaction of employees has increased. Research by Lane et al. (2012) has shown that happiness has a positive effect on a person's quality of life. Happy employees have more positive outputs and will attract customers because they maintain the foundation of their satisfaction, and in fact happiness will be effective and useful for service providers in having long-term relationships with customers (Hellén & Sääksjärvi, 2011). According to the positive results of the research, it can be expected that similar improvements will be made by teaching happiness programs to librarians in the Iranian public libraries.

The results of Zarei Matin, Jandaghi and Haghgooyan (2009) showed that in organizations, the components of organizational learning, openness, participation, justice, positivity and meaningfulness of work, interest in work, safety in the workplace and interaction with colleagues is in the middle extent. Research on the quality of work life of librarians (Rasuli, Naghshineh, Fahimnia, 2014; Jalilipur, Akbari Shadeh, & Piroozfar, 2013; Morgan, 2014, Seifi & Asgari, 2016) indicates an undesirable level of organizational happiness. In the

research of Tajeddini et al. (2011), the happiness of librarians has been obtained at a moderate level. Therefore, public libraries should pay more attention to actions and efforts to create an efficient environment and help their employees to achieve career success. Organizations can work with effective practical and training programs to improve working conditions to achieve the desired quality of professional life (Aziz et al, 2011).

Research on happiness training by Fordyce method (Moradi, Jafari, & Abedi, 2007; Pardakhtchi, Ahmadi, & Arezoomandi, 2009; Kajbaf, Aghaei, & Mahmoudi, 2011; Abdollahi, Mehrabizadeh Honarmand, & Sudani, 2012; Sanei, & Moghimi, 2014; GholamaliLavasani et al., 2014; and Ahadi, et al., 2015) show that happiness training is effective on the quality of personal and professional life of individuals.

It should be noted that today more than ever librarians need a change in their traditional role and serious participation in educational processes (Soleimani Nandandar & Saadati Shamir, 2014). It is essential to implement a program that fits the needs of librarians and services and their plans to improve service quality; because it leads the organization to a learning and knowledge-based organization. Fordyce training program can be effective in creating human happiness, but in the research conducted in the field of public libraries in Iran, little attention has been paid to training program in order to increase the happiness of librarians. Studies have been conducted to assess the relationship between librarians' empowerment and their psychological components and happiness (Fotouhi, & Ghaffari, 2016; Tajeddini et al. 2011; Latifi, & Sayyamin, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this study is the effect of librarians' happiness program on the quality of public library services from the perspective of users in Iran.

2. Research hypotheses

The first hypothesis. Happiness training program has a positive effect on librarians' happiness.

The second hypothesis. Librarians' Happiness Training Program has a positive effect on the effectiveness of services from the perspective of users.

3. Methods

The method of the present study is quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest design with control group. The target population of the study is active users of public libraries in Khorasan Razavi province.The sample size of the study includes active users of public libraries of Razavi Khorasan Province, from which two accessible libraries were selected

based on the approved degree of Iran Public Libraries. The library of the experimental group was the public library of Shahid Beheshti in the city of Torbat-e Heydarieh with a selected grade of 4 and included 3 librarians and had 3400 active users. Twenty-five active users were randomly selected for the the experimental group. Dr. Hori Library of Mashhad city with a selected grade of 4 and had 3 librarians and had 3400 active users and 25 active users of the control group were randomly selected.

Using the Oxford questionnaire, librarians' happiness was measured in two groups of control and experimental. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire has 29 items. Each question has 4 options that range from 0 to 3; therefore, the maximum total score of the test is 87 and the minimum is zero. Argyle, Martin & Lu (1995) developed the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire to measure happiness.

LibQual questionnaire was used to assess the quality of services from the perspective of users before and after the training program. LibQual tools are used in more than 1164 institutions worldwide (Lane et al., 2012). Libqual encompasses three main dimensions: the first dimension of service effectiveness, users' perceptions of useful, competent, trustworthy, and customer-oriented staff in the library (Condit Fagan, 2014). The second dimension is the information control and refers to whether users independently can obtain the information they need in the library as they wish and the third dimension, the library as a place, means that the physical environment of the library for individual and group study is an inspiring environment for research (Association of Research Libraries, 2012). In the present study, the effectiveness of services was measured from the perspective of users.

In the study of Alipour & Nourbala (1999), in order to evaluate the reliability and validity of the Oxford questionnaire with 101 students of Allameh and Shahed universities (62 females and 38 males), its reliability using Cronbach's alpha was 0.93 and also the method of retesting the questionnaire after three weeks for a sample of 25 was 0.79. Its validity was obtained using the opinion of experts. The construct validity of the questionnaire using the internal consistency of the questionnaire showed that all 29 items had a high correlation with the total score. Also, the use of factor analysis led to the extraction of 5 factors that explained 57.1% of the total variance. In the present study, using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.91.

Librarians' Happiness Program (Hassanzadeh, 1397) which was adapted based on the functions and social and non-social activities of Iranian public libraries and was in line with

the activities and practical actions of national and international public libraries were trained to librarians of the selected libraries. The happiness program was trained six sessions of 90 minutes once a week and in each session, one or two principles were trained. Traning program was conducted for experimental group for a period of one and a half months.

4. Findings

The first hypothesis. Happiness training program has a positive effect on librarians' happiness.

In this study, two groups of control and experiments were used to investigate the effect of happiness program training on librarians' happiness. Because the sample size was small, non-parametric Wilcoxon test was used to evaluate the effect of training.

Table 1: Wilcoxon test of librarians' happiness in the control and experimental groups

Group	Sig	Z
Experimental	0.76	-0.30
Control	0.89	-0.12

The value level of significance of the test variable is equal to 0.76, which is higher than the error level of 0.05. Also, the significance level of the control variable is equal to 0.89, which is higher than the error level of 0.05, so at the 95% confidence level of the happiness training program, there was no significant effect on librarians' happiness.

Table 2: Mann-Whitney test of librarians' happiness in two groups of control and experiment

Source	Sig	Z
Group rank differences	0.98	-0.04

The value level of significance of the test variable is equal to 0.98 which is higher than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, at the 95% confidence level of the happiness training program, there was no significant effect on librarians' happiness.

The second hypothesis. Librarians' Happiness Training Program has a positive effect on the

effectiveness of services from the perspective of users.

In this study, to investigate the effect of librarians' happiness training program on the effectiveness of services from the perspective of users, covariance analysis was used.

Table 3: The effect of training program on services from the perspective of users

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Pretest	38.98	1	38.98	4.75	0.000
Group	0.41	1	0.41	0.43	0.51

Table 4: Adjusted Mean scores of services from the perspective of users

Group	Mean	Standard Erorr
Experimental	7.56	0.21
Contorl	7.35	0.21

Table 3 shows that the value of the significance level of the test is equal to 0.51, which is higher than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, at the 95% confidence level, librarians 'happiness program had no significant effect on the effectiveness of services from the perspective of users.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

According to vision plan of 2025 Iran public libraries foundation, public library is a research-oriented, innovative and creative institution and benefits from the participation of elites and scholars and fosters the spirit of creativity and innovation in society. Achieving this requires the provision of prerequisites, including the creation of authoritative scientific texts in the field of public libraries, along with the use of interdisciplinary scientific texts.

Happiness has been proposed as a measure of contributing to a society's social policies since the 1980s. Happiness is a standard in the social welfare of society. Since the foundation of Iranian public libraries is a social institution, attention to organizational happiness is needed for the happiness of librarians. Therefore, the existence of a librarians 'happiness action plan in line with public libraries' human resource empowerment strategies, in order to achieve the strategic goals of the foundation of public library and increase the quality and quantity of public library services can be considered by policy makers and trustees of public libraries.

Considering that in previous studies, the relationship between happiness and human resources

has been evaluated, this study used a quasi-experimental method to investigate the effect of happiness program training on the effectiveness of services from the perspective of public library users, which is a thematic innovation of this study. This study could be a roadmap for conducting basic theoretical and practical research in field of public libraries in Iran.

In the present study, the significance level of the experimental variable is equal to 0.76, which is higher than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, at the 95% confidence level, the happiness training program had no significant effect on librarians' happiness; but since the librarians' happiness program has been approved by relevant experts, a review will probably be needed to make it effective.

The results of the research of Zarei Matin, Jandaghi & Haghgoyan, (2009) which has examined the components of vitality in the executive organizations of Qom. To a large extent, they are in line with Fordyce's principles of happiness; so if librarians are given more time to apply the principles of training in the library, desirable result may be achieved. Because of the short opportunity for training, librarians could not get proper time to practice the training program. Therefore, if a test before and after the training the happiness program to measure the level of each of the principles taught to librarians, the effectiveness of the program will be calculated more accurately.

On the other hand, the results of some studies show that the quality of professional life of librarians also indicates an inappropriate level of organizational happiness (Seifi and Asgari, 2016; Marvesti & Saeed Ardakani, 2015; Jalilipur, Akbari Shadeh, & Piroozfar, 2013, Morgan, 2014); because by improving the quality of librarians' working life, performance and service will improve.

But since the level of happiness of employees depends on their positive and negative perceptions of events (Hellén & Sääksjärvi, 2011), one can expect librarians to resist the expression of their feelings. Therefore, Iranian public libraries need librarians who are polite and humble and have a compassionate attitude in solving users' problems in order to gain their satisfaction with the profession (Tahari-Mahjerdi, Mirfakhreddini, & Zarei Mahmoud Abadi, 2012) and as a result the happiness of their professions.

It is possible that librarians' happiness training program at a broader and different level of library degree could indicate its more accurate effectiveness. Another possible

reason for the lack of significance of the research result is probably due to the unrelated specialty of the academic field of the librarians in the experimental group. Since librarians' happiness training program is designed based on the professional functions and plans of librarians and in accordance with their professional life, it can be expected that the lack of professionalism in understanding professional programs will complicate the implementation process. Therefore, employment of professional librarians can provide an important role in providing quality and effective services.

According to the research of Jalilipur, Akbari Shadeh, & Piroozfar (2013), the perception of employees about social responsibility in the organization, self-knowledge and the use of various professional skills and access to relevant information among librarians had a weak position. While these components were among the happiness training program. Therefore, happiness should not be considered as a technical issue but a social factor that is related to the welfare and quality services of the organization. The result of Dias Semedo, Matos Coelho, & Pereira Ribeiro (2017) is consistent with some of the principles of Fordyce happiness, which considers the existence of organizational happiness for employees to create spirit of friendship, trust, credibility and honest communication and provide learning opportunities and thus employee creativity.

To test the second hypothesis of the research, the statistical method of analysis of covariance was used. The obtained results showed the non-significance (0.51) of F-statistic, which indicates that the hypothesis is not confirmed. The results of research (Bagheri, 2015; Rastegar, Abdollahi, & Shahkholian, 2015; Zare Ghiasabadi, Mehdizadeh, & Ganji, 2014; Seif Hosseini et al, 2015; Sanei & Moghimi, 2014; Siyadatian, Qamarania, & Yaghobian, 2013) showed the presence of happiness has effect on a life and a profession of people. Also, the results of research by Hellén & Sääksjärvi (2011) indicate that the existence of happiness in the work environment affects the quality of services provided by organizations. However, the results of the present study showed that the happiness trianing program had no effect on the effectiveness of services from the perspective of users in the experimental group.

It should be noted that each library in the present study had up to 3,000 active

members, providing services to all active users and also benefiting them from the services requried time.Therefore, such research will require the follow-up of service quality measurements over the times. From the active user's perspective, it is possible that the services of these public librares, only was lending books and reading rooms so that has caused the public library users not to be aware of the provision of social services.

On the other hand, the possibility of providing new services in public libraries requires more than two months to plan and coordinate to implement and receive its effectiveness from the users' point of view. According to IFLA and UNESCO standards and guidelines, libraries in the global community contain philosophical and scientific ideas to enhance the library's ability to meet the educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs of adolescents in a way that suits their development. Services that should be developed as much as possible with the participation of adolescents themselves. Services that help adolescents grow by giving them the opportunity to participate in the planning and implementation of their own library programs and services, and to provide opportunities for them to volunteer to help others (Gill, 2001).

According to the results of Esfandiari Moghadam, RazmiShendi, & Nowruzi, (2013) libraries in all dimensions of LibQual have not been able to provide desirable and ideal services and in many cases have responded to the minimum services and sometimes even lower than the minimum level expected by users. So the importance of planning for the happiness of librarians and the satisfaction of active users in public libraries are required in the providing services.

Also, the findings of Ziaee, & Partovi Moghadam, (2014) indicate that according to librarians, training, performance appraisal, motivation and creativity have the most role in the quality of service, respectively. Although in the theoretical part of the research could not achieve significant predicted results, but the beginning and planning of applied and operational research fosters the spirit and creativity and innovation in the foundation of public libraries. Achieving this requires providing the

basics, including the creation of authoritative scientific texts in the field of public libraries, and it will be possible when knowledge is translated into our native language to be able to think in a disciplined and methodical scientific way about phenomena. To this end, this study aimed to equip Iranian librarians with up-to-date and applied knowledge related to their professional duties. Therefore, it is not possible to play the social roles of public libraries in a cold and dry, dull and unattractive atmosphere.

It is suggested that public library managers have a plan to create an environment conducive to human happiness and user satisfaction, using training and investment to increase human resources and user satisfaction by creating a participatory-social environment and also using the program training librarians' happiness in hiring young professional librarians to take full account of their abilities, ethical and behavioral characteristics, and their interest in the profession.

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