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Proficiency of Information Professionals working in the Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala, India: A study

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Proficiency of Information Professionals working in the Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala, India: A study

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Abstract

The study investigated the proficiency in human relation skill among the Information professionals working in the Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala. The study based on a questionnaire survey of Information professionals employed in the Government Engineering Colleges. The analysis revealed that the Information Professionals in the Government Engineering Colleges moderately good level in the human relation skill. All the professionals expressed positive attitudes towards keeping a good relationship with their clientele.

Key Words: Proficiency, Competency, Behaviour, Human Relation Skill, Information Professionals

1. Introduction

The information professionals are well aware of the proficiency of human relation skill to ensure for the aim is achieved and that consequently, readers provided with the best possible service. The information professionals never failed to recognize the need for satisfying relationships with their clientele in the interest of making their libraries happy places in which to provide better service and, therefore, useful in providing the human and physical environment in which their resources could exploit. One must take account also of the adoption of new methodologies such as the feedback studies to determine the user satisfaction level to achieve the best relationship with the clientele for fulfilling their information needs. Proficiency is the ability to work effectively as a human member and to build a cooperative effort within the library. Proficiency could develop without any formalized training for some. Many others are to be individually aided by their immediate superiors who themselves should possess the human skill to be able to impart that. You may probably improve your human skill of rating people for their effectiveness as you become more experienced in this art. Nowadays, librarians must be customer-oriented. He can demonstrate a sincere commitment to customer service. Always he must try to observe customer needs and strive to provide their desired information on time. Through

continual design and improve user-oriented information products and competencies, he can offer them better customer services.

Human relational skills involve communication and attention to relationships with others. Not only is patience necessary to clienteles, who often reach out to support when they are confused and frustrated. If you deal with clientele daily, be sure to stay patient when they come to you, stumped and frustrate, but also be sure to take the time to figure out what they want genuinely. The ability to listen to customers is so crucial for providing exceptional service for many reasons. More importantly, you need to be careful about how some of your communication habits transform to the clientele, and it is best on the side of caution whenever you find yourself questioning a situation. Your ability to make minor changes in your conversational patterns can truly go a long way in creating happy clienteles. Human relation skill is an integral part of the personalisation process as well because it takes knowing your clientele to create a personal experience for them.

2. Review of Related Literature

Literature establishes with a few studies have been conducted to explore the human relation skill among information professionals.

Balakrishnan, Gopalakrishnan, and Pattabhiraman (2014) in their study human relation skills among the Library and Information Professionals in higher educational institutions in and around Chennai particularly concerning concepts of human behaviour, user interpersonal skills, and new roles of LIS professionals in motivating, avoiding conflict, job satisfaction, empowerment among LIS staff environment. The LIS professionals have realized the necessity of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and problem-solving skill.

Balakrishnan, Gopalakrishnan, and Pattabhiraman (2014) in their study changing dimension in skills among the LIS Professionals: An empirical research highlights the leadership skill and decision making at the workplace of the library. The human relation skills such as leadership skill and decision making skills among the LIS professionals working in higher educational institutions in around Chennai took up for the study. Out of 425 LIS professionals, 376 responded, and the response rate is 88.47%. The LIS professionals have realized the necessity of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and problem-solving skills.

Namvaran, Rabav, and Avarsin (2013) performed a study to investigate the relationship between human skills and the effectiveness of schools managers from the viewpoint of teachers. The research method was descriptive-correlative. The finding of this study showed that there were significant relationships between human skills and effectiveness of the managers.

Alarm, Gale, Brown, and Khan (2010) investigated the effectiveness of a British Project Management Professional Development Programme (PMPDP) case study. The paper investigates the extent to which the knowledge gained from the PMPDP affects the behaviours of delegates and graduates. The soft skills of a control group were explored. The results deal with particular improvements in most of the behavioural competencies of representatives and graduates, which the control group could not develop in the same way.

Pant and Baroudi (2008) approach the significance of human skills in project management success and the apparent lack of emphasis placed on this within the background of university education. The discussion will call upon the viewpoints of many notable authors concerning the human or soft skills that are necessary for the management of projects. The study will identify that it predominantly emphasises the required hard skills (technical skills) at the expense of the soft skills (human skills). Subsequent discussion will highlight the need for a balance between hard and soft skills within project management education in Universities. The study emphasise the importance of incorporating human skills aspects into their educational programs.

Pors (2008) conducted a study is to explore possible relationships between adoption of management tools in a broad sense, the organisational culture, the character of leadership in libraries, and major studies done on these topics to raise awareness about the complex relationships and context that influence chance processes in libraries. The main findings support some of the newer theoretical literature concerned with the isomorphism, translation, and diffusion of standards and recipes, namely that the variation is significant and that some of the processes heavily influenced by the organisational culture in which leadership plays an important role.

3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the types and levels of human relation skills required to have to perform their tasks according to the requirements set by users, the most demanding segment of which is the academic community. Information professionals must identify the ways to learn new concepts

and ideas and continuously seek new opportunities to learn additional skills and acquired systematic knowledge with scholarly application in all fields of information.

3.1 Objectives

1. To assess the level/extent of different aspects of human relation skill among information professionals

2. To evaluate the attitude of Information Professionals towards the human relation skill in the Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala.

3. Identify the human relations ability and skill level of the information professionals.

4. To study the training and development programs in human relation skill

4. Methodology of the Study

The study will adopt a survey method for the collection of primary data of Information Professionals working in the Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala. A structured questionnaire based on the objectives of the study conducted. The proficiency associated with Human Relation skills only considered for this study. The structures questionnaire consists of both optional type questions and statements in the five-point Lickert Scale. The study comprises all the Information Professionals working in the Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala. The study population consisted of 31 Information professionals working in the 9 Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala. The collected was scrutinised, classified and tabulated for better understanding for analysis. The collected data analysed through Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet.

5. Analysis

The study comprises 31 Information Professionals working in the 9 Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala. Out of the 31 questionnaires distributed, 26 questionnaires received back.

5.1 Gender Distribution

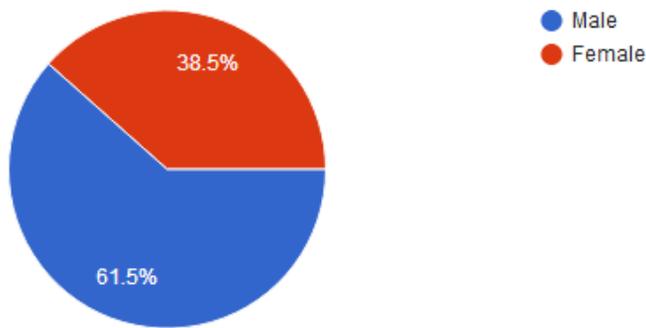Figure 1 shows the gender-wise analysis of the data.

Figure 1-Gender Distribution

The 61.5% (16) are male respondents and 38.5% (10) are female respondents. It shows that the majority of Information Professionals working in the Government Engineering Colleges in Kerala are male. The study also reveals that all information professionals working in the Government Engineering Colleges were married.

5.2 Age Group

The convenient of study, the population was divided into four age groups. Table 1 shows the age-wise distribution of the respondent.

Table 1- Age wise distribution

Sl No	Age Group	No. of Respondent
1	Below 30 years	0
2	31-40 years	4 (15.4%)
3	41-50 years	12 (46.1%)
4	Above 51 years	10 (38.5%)
	Total	26 (100%)

The analysis shows that the majority of the Information Professionals fall in the age group between 41-50 years (46.1 %) at the time of the survey. The Information Professionals in the age group of above 51 years are 38.5 %, and the remaining 15.4% are in the age group of 31-40 years. The study shows that not one to be working in the age group of below 30 at the time of the survey.

5.3 Professional Qualifications

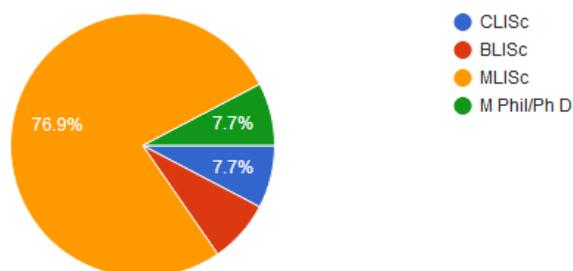The professional qualifications of the respondents outline in figure 2.

Figure 2-Professional Qualifications

It is evident from the study 76.9% (20) of the respondents have Post Graduate degree in Library and Information Science. It shows that M.Phill/Ph. D in Library and Information Science, CLISc, and BLISc are equal in this study of each 7.7 % (2).

5.4 Professional Experience

The overall professional experience of the information professionals participated in the study revealed in table 2.

Table 2- Professional Experience

Sl No	Expereince	No. of Respondent
1	Below 10 years	4 (15.4%)
2	11-20 years	10 (38.5%)
3	21-30 years	12 (46.1%)
4	Above 31 years	0
	Total	26 (100%)

The analysis shows that 15.4% of respondents have below 10 years of experiences only. The 38.5% respondents have 11 to 20 years, and 46.1% have 21 to 30 years. The study shows that there was no one has above 31 years of professional experience.

5.5 Time spend on dealing with user issues

An essential part of the study is the dealing of respondents with the clientele. The time duration sparing for clients' issues expressed in table 3.

Table 3- Time spend on dealing with user issues

Sl No	Time spend on dealing user issues	No. of Respondent
1	Below 1 hour	4 (15.4%)
2	2 hours	2 (7.7%)
3	3 hours	4 (15.4%)
4	4 hours and above	16 (61.5%)
	Total	26 (100%)

Table 3 shows 61.5 % of respondents are spending 4 hours dealing their client's issues every day. 15.4% of Information professionals participated in the survey engaged around 3 hours, and the same percentage of respondents also involved below one hour. Rest of the 7.7% percentage involved 2 hours per day.

5.6 User's criticisms

The users sometimes criticise towards the behavior/service of information professionals. The psychology of respondents towards the criticism was revealed in table 4.

Table4-User's criticism

Sl No	User's criticism	No. of Respondent
1	Welcome as a opportunity to improve	24 (92.3%)
2	Personal grudge against the user	0
3	No answer	2 (7.7%)
	Total	26 (100%)

Most of the information professionals (92.3%) agreed that the user's criticism taken as an opportunity to improve ourselves, and rest of them (7.7%) are no response in this case. All the respondents are contradictory with the criticism is taken as a personal grudge against the clientele.

5.7 User's satisfaction

The users should monitor positively response if they are getting a better service from the information professionals. The user's satisfaction towards the respondents expressed in figure 3.
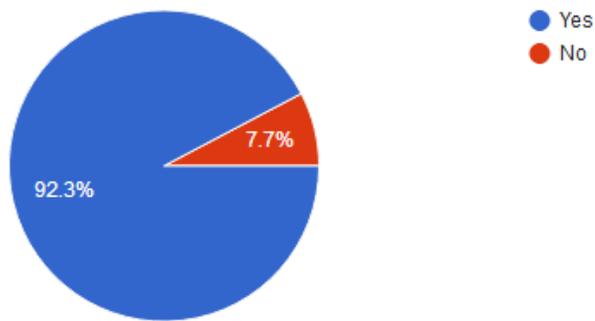
Figure 3-Users Satisfaction

Figure 3 shows that the 92.3% (24) information professionals participated in the study, the users are satisfied with their behavior, and only 7.7% (2) says that the users are dissatisfied with their behavior. The 75% of user satisfaction identified through the body language of the users, and 25% users give their satisfaction through the words of compliment.

5.8 Training Programmes for improving Human Relation Skill

The response to the necessity of training programme for improving human relation skills represented in the figure 4.
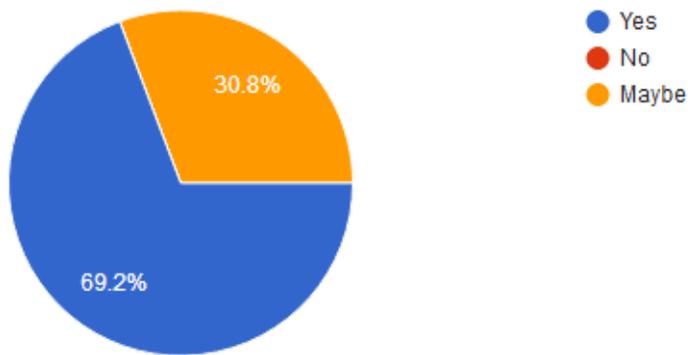

Figure 4-Response to Training Programmes

Figure 4 shows that 69.2% (18) agreed that their Human Relation Skills could be developed /improved through the regular and systematic training, and 30.8% (8) of respondents have any surety through this training. None of the respondents have contradictorily with the training programmes.

5.9 Impact of Human Relation Skills

The impact of human relation skill to the information professionals participated in the study and its importance expressed in table 5.

Table 5-Impact of Human Relation Skill

Sl. No.	Impact	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	Human relation skill represent a reason for your career success	16 (61.5%)	8 (30.8%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
2	Human relation skill is less important than technical skill	2 (7.7%)	4 (15.4%)	2 (7.7%)	18 (69.2%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
3	Communication skill improves Human relation skill	8 (30.8%)	18 (69.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)

The majority of the Information Professional participated in the study are identified that the importance of human relation skills in their career and depicted in Table 5. Most of them (61.5%) are strongly agree, 30.8% agrees that human relation skill represents a reason for their career success, but 7.7% respondents are undecided that the influence of human relation skill for career success. The 69.2% respondents disagree with Human Relation Skill is less important than technical skills, but some of them agree with this. Majority of the respondents (69.2%) agree that communication skill improves the human relation skill, and 30.8% strongly agreed with this.

5.10 Understanding user attitudes

Every user was different from one another, and information professionals have a proficiency in managing at every touchpoint of a user.

Table 6-Understanding user attitudes

Sl No	Understanding user attitudes	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1	I understand my service methods and how to change it to meet the needs	6 (23.1%)	18 (69.2%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
2	I can list and use motivation techniques	2 (7.7%)	18 (69.2%)	4 (15.4%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)

3	I understand how to develop a positive organizational culture and climate.	2 (7.7%)	22 (84.6%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
4	I can handle a complaint using the complaint model.	2 (7.7%)	16 (61.5%)	2 (7.7%)	2 (7.7%)	2 (7.7%)	26 (100%)

How to understand the user attitude is a difficult task. Table -6 shows that understanding of user attitudes and how to handle. 69.2% agree that they know their service methods and change it whenever the need for meeting with clientele requirements, and 23.1% strongly agree with this. The majority of (69.2%) of respondents agree, and 7.7% strongly agree with the use of motivation techniques, but 15.4% have no response, and 7.7% of respondents disagree with us. Majority 84.6% of respondents are agreeing, and 7.7% strongly agreed to create and develop a positive organizational culture and climate in the Libraries. The information professionals participated in the study, 61.5% agree, and 7.7% strongly agree that they are using a complaint model to solve the client issues. But 7.7% of respondents disagree and the same percentage also strongly disagree with us, 7.7% any response with us.

5.11 Human Relation Skills

The information professionals are well aware of the proficiency of human relation skill to ensure for the aim is achieved and that consequently, readers provided with the best possible service. Table 7 expresses the response of the information professionals who participated in the study.

Table 7-Human relation skills

Sl No	Human relation skills	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1	Listen to your clientele	18 (69.2%)	8 (30.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
2	Flexible to adopt the decisions Patience	10 (38.5%)	16 (61.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
3	Politeness	6 (23.1%)	18 (69.2%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
4	Kindness	22 (84.6%)	4 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
5	Praise and encourage people	8 (30.8%)	16 (61.5%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)

6	Help users when they need?	12 (46.2%)	14 (53.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)
7	Try to solve human relations problems rather than ignore them?	10 (38.5%)	14 (53.8%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)

The 69.2% respondents are strongly agreed, and 30.8% agreeing that they listen to their clientele. Among the 61.5%, respondents agree, and 38.5% strongly agree with their flexibility in the decisions on client issues. The majority of the respondents (69.2%) agree with politeness, and 84.6% strongly agree with kindness. The respondents of 61.5% agree with praise and encourage their clientele, and 53.8 % of respondents agree, and 30.8 % strongly agree with their help to the client when needed. The respondents of 53.8 % agree, and 38.5% strongly agree that they try to solve human relation problems rather than to ignore the issues. It reveals that the formation professionals participated in the study is well aware of the human relation skills.

6. **Findings**

The survey exhibits the following findings given below:

6.1 The study reveals that 61.5 % of information professionals are spending more than 4 hours for dealing with their clientele issues every day.

6.2 The majority of the information professionals (92.3%) agreed that the user's criticism taken as an opportunity to improve ourselves.

6.3 The 92.3% of respondents participated in the study says that the users are satisfied with the behavior of information professionals.

6.4 Most of the information professionals agreed that their Human Relation Skill could be developed /improved through regular and systematic training.

6.5 Majority of the information professionals agrees that human relation skill represents a reason for their career success.

6.6 The majority of respondents agree that Human Relation Skills is vital than technical skills.

6.7 All respondents are agree that communication skill improves human relation skill.

6.8 The majority of the respondents say that they can understand user attitudes; they know their service methods and change it whenever the need for meeting with clientele requirements.

6.9 The information professionals participated in the study are well aware of the human relation skills.

6.10 The information professionals agree that they try to solve human relation problems rather than to ignore the issues.

7. Suggestions

The observations through the study and comments offered by the respondents have enabled the investigations to offer some feasible suggestions for better Human Relation Skill for Information Professionals.

- Information Professionals can understand and be empathetic to keep good relations and networks and capable of communicating politely. He/She must be user/client-focused, rather than a library-centered mind-set. The ability/aptitude to continually identify how new technologies harnessed to the former. To be able to work methodically, accurately, with attention to detail, so that (all) outputs are reliable and factual/evidence-based where possible.
- Users are different from one another, so we provide good/right service exact time. We focused to built a work ethic or proficiency to balance/manage at every touchpoint of a user. Support/cooperation of supporting staff plays a pivotal role to build up a link between users and service Provide/make a chance to our users to provide feedback. To make sure that or find out the good, bad, and the ugly experiences for our customers suffer to find out the right information/source at the right time from our library.
- Human relation skills improved through formal training programmes, including personality development programme.

8. Conclusions

Information Professionals must identify the ways to learn new concepts and ideas and continuously seek new opportunities to learn additional skills for keeping a good relationship with their clientele. The main aim of an Information Professional is to encourage and motivate the client to put in their best environment. Besides, the skill enhancement will enable the LIS professional to meet the social and psychological satisfaction, Group behavior at work, Cooperative work, avoiding conflict, Secure economic, empowerment among staff, and job satisfaction. We propose to get more information about the values and attitudes of human beings who interact in library and information processes. They are based on social conditions, as well as on individual cognitive and behavioural features. Information science should reflect the transition from the universal approach (unified representation, organization,

presentation) to multiple knowledge levels, contexts, interpretations. It has to accept principles of different domains, topics, communities. Multidimensional, multifunctional knowledge and interaction confirm the natural human complexity of information-related activities.

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