

# A comparative analysis of strategic human resource management (SHRM) issues in an organisational context

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper analyses the opinions of the Botswana National Library Service's (BNLS) Headquarters (HQ) staff and staff of the Botswana public libraries on strategic human resource management issues, which were tested by six hypotheses.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The analysis was carried out by statistical means. The *t*-test was the method used for comparing the two groups' mean scores. Analyses were repeated using the Chi-squared test.

**Findings** – The study identified a number of issues where staff had differences of opinion: changing employees' expectations about work, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, performance feedback and delegation of responsibility. The paper briefly discusses the issues where the status of the library influenced staff opinions.

**Research limitations/implications** – It is to be noted that the data collected from HQ has to be used with caution because the number of respondents there was smaller than the respondents from public libraries.

**Practical implications** – The author throws light on human resource management techniques in the everyday library environment. This paper may help policy makers to identify ways in which they can motivate their employees; it may help policy planners to identify their staff's different requirements.

**Originality/value** – This paper provides a useful and insightful application of a general human resource management tool to the specific organizational context of public libraries.

**Keywords** Human resource management, Public libraries, Botswana

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The concept of strategic human resource management (SHRM) became popular in the 1980s with the development of the Harvard Business School's two models integrating strategy and human resource management, namely the matching model and the Harvard framework model. The Matching model was conceptualised by Formbrun *et al* (1984, p. 453), who were known as the first formulators of SHRM, and who identified three core elements as necessary for firms to function effectively:

- mission and strategy;
- organisation strategy; and
- human resource management.

These authors emphasised the importance aligning human resource management to organisational strategy. This view is supported by Beer *et al.* (1984), who have stated that a rapidly changing environment creates an imperative need for a more comprehensive and strategic perspective regarding human resources.

Increasingly, SHRM is becoming ever more popular. Today, human resources are seen as “the available talents and energies of people who are available to an organization as potential contributors to the creation and realization of the organization’s mission, vision, strategy and goals” (Jackson and Schuler, 2000, p. 37). Hence, SHRM is not a completely new and revolutionary field – rather its roots can be traced back to the mid-1950s.

Schuler and Jackson (1999, p. 52) defined SHRM as “the pattern of planned human resource developments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals”. This definition integrates the two main points:

- (1) linkage of human resource activities with the organisational strategy; and
- (2) harmonisation of various human resource activities.

Armstrong and Baron (2002, p. 41) have recently regarded the concept of strategic human resources as “a general approach to the strategic management of human resources in accordance with the intentions of the organization on the future direction it wants to take. It is concerned with longer term people issues as part of the strategic management processes of the business”. Points highlighted are similar to those made in 1994 by Armstrong and Long (1994, p. 38) that SHRM refers to an organisation’s decision-making about its human resources; it is an organisation’s overall plan to pursue to achieve its goals through people; where human resource management and strategic management are correlated with people being an integral component of any organisation’s corporate strategy.

SHRM, therefore, can be considered as an overall process to deal with long-term human resources issues as part of the strategic management of the organisation. This includes comprehensive concerns about structures, values, culture, quality, commitment and performance and the development of the human resources through whom the goals of an organisation are accomplished.

SHRM has the following two main perspectives.

- (1) Human resource management as an integral part of an organisational strategy, “which is chiefly about ensuring that the organisation has the skilled, committed and well-motivated workforce it needs to achieve its business objectives. It can be achieved by linking HR strategies to basic competitive strategies” (Armstrong, 2000, p. 45).
- (2) Human resource management as a strategy in itself, which means developing staff in order to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

The aim of SHRM is to provide a future direction, i.e. to manage people in an organisation in terms of the long-term planning of human resource management by aligning it with an organisation’s overall strategic plan (in this case a library’s overall plan). With this understanding of SHRM, this study tested various hypotheses within a specific organisational context to collect respondents’ perceptions on some of the SHRM issues – for instance, whether or not the type of library they are serving influences their opinions.

## Research hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated to test the following: whether a public library's employees have different perceptions of their work from headquarters' (HQ) employees on issues related to SHRM. To test the hypotheses, the participants in this study were categorised as follows: staff working in public libraries (49 participants) and staff working at the HQ (17 participants). It is to be noted that the data collected from HQ has to be used with caution because the number of respondents there was smaller than the respondents from public libraries. The following research hypotheses were investigated:

- H1.* That staff opinion on the qualities required to provide an efficient library service is independent of the status of the library in which they work.
- H2.* That the view of the competencies required by staff during the next five years is independent of the status of the library in which those staff work.
- H3.* That staff perception of the impact of external factors is independent of the status of the library in which they work.
- H4.* That staff opinion on strategic management issues is independent of the status of the library in which they work.
- H5.* That staff perception of motivational factors is independent of the status of the library in which they work.
- H6.* That the general view of staff regarding human resource strategy is independent of the status of the library in which they work.

## Aims of the paper

Although the paper is based on a Botswana library study, some of the problems can be universally applicable to any part of the library worldwide. Hence,

- this paper may help policy makers to identify ways in which they can motivate their employees; and
- it may help policy planners to identify their staff's different requirements.

## Methodology for testing hypotheses

The *t*-test is the most elementary method for comparing two groups' mean scores. It assumes that the variables in the populations from which the sample is drawn are normally distributed, and also that the populations have homogeneity and that they deviate equally from the mean.

The procedure for applying the *t*-test consists of computing the standard error for the groups to be compared. The whole idea of this formula and all calculations involved is to obtain the *t*-value which is then used in determining the statistical significance of the variance between the two groups.

The SPSS uses Levene's test for equality of variance, and was first used to compare variability in responses, because the test statistic for comparing two sample means depends on whether variation in the two groups is the same or not.

Analyses were repeated using the chi-square test. This was done as a measure of test of no association between categories of libraries and levels of knowledge/agreement.

with each concept being recorded as either critical or not critical. The SPSS results included computing relevant test statistics such as the *t*-statistic (or *f*-statistic), degree of freedom (df) and the *p*-value (significance). The *f*-ratio is the ratio of variance (used in ANOVA to test significant differences between two or more group means).

It is to be noted that the critical *p*-value was 5 per cent in all the tests.

*H1.* That staff opinion on the qualities required to provide an efficient library service is independent of the status of the library in which they work.

Following the two-sample *t*-test, this hypothesis was accepted given that the significance level of *p* = 0.178 (Table I) was higher than the set level of significance of *p* ≤ 0.05, indicating the non-existence of any relationship between perceptions about efficient services and the status of the library. Consequently, opinion about the qualities required to provide efficient services was not dependent on whether the staff worked at HQ or in a public library itself.

When the different qualities were compared across library status in cross-tabulation the results further added to the assertion that qualities required to provide efficient library services are not dependent on the status of the library. For instance, a comparison of one quality, "commitment" against the library status (Table II) shows a similar rating pattern amongst headquarter and public library staff.

These statistics all appear to suggest that the type of library in which the respondents worked had no influence upon the way a staff member perceives the qualities required to provide efficient library services. All the respondents hold similar views on the requirements of commitment, capability, innovative thinking, understanding of library aims and objectives, compliance with rules and procedures,

	<i>f</i> -statistic	<i>p</i> -value	<i>t</i> -statistic	df	<i>p</i> -value
Qualities	0.000	0.988	1.362	84	0.178
Competencies	0.309	0.580	1.161	64	0.250
Impact of external factors	0.528	0.470	3.228	64	0.002
Strategic management	0.088	0.767	2.490	64	0.015
Motivational factors	0.421	0.519	2.498	64	0.015
HR strategy	2.205	0.143	0.895	63	0.374

**Table I.**  
*t*-test for equality of means for public libraries/HQ

Commitment	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	44	16	60
Status of library (per cent)	89.8	94.1	90.9
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	5	1	6
Status of library (per cent)	10.2	5.9	9.1
<i>Total</i>			
Count	49	17	66
Status of library (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table II.**  
Cross-tabulation: "Commitment" against status of the library



positive attitude, enthusiasm, stamina, strategic approach and thinking about providing efficient library services.

In Table III, Pearson's chi-square with two-degrees of freedom further confirmed acceptance of the hypothesis at the significant level of  $p = 0.359$ , which is greater than the set value of  $p = 0.05$ . Hence, this research hypothesis was accepted. It can be concluded that the perception by staff about the qualities required to provide efficient library services is independent of the status of the library.

*H2.* That the view of the competencies required by staff during the next five years is independent of the status of the library in which those staff work.

The two-sample *t*-test accepted the hypothesis at the significant level of  $p = 0.250$  (Table I) greater than set value ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), and shows that there is no significant relationship between the status of the library and the participants' views. All the participants viewed the various competencies required by staff during the next five years to enhance library services as of equal importance, whether they worked in public libraries or the HQ.

Different competencies were compared against library status in cross-tabulation, and the results further revealed that competencies required to provide efficient library services are not dependent on the status of the library. For example, one of the competencies, "leadership", compared against library status (Table IV) shows a similar rating pattern amongst HQ and public library staff.

This suggests that the type of library in which the respondents worked did not affect the way the participants perceived the competencies required to enhance library services.

In Pearson's chi-square test the significant level of  $p = 0.573$  (Table V) further validated the acceptance of this hypothesis. All the other competencies: facilitating and implementing change, team building, coaching, cross-cultural communication,

	Value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Pearson chi-square	2.050	2	0.359

Note: Chi-square test: "Commitment" against status of the library

Table III.

Leadership	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	44	16	58
Status of library (per cent)	87.5	94.1	89.2
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	6	1	7
Status of library (per cent)	12.5	5.9	10.8
<i>Total</i>			
Count	48	17	65
Status of library (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table IV.  
Cross-tabulation:  
"Leadership" against  
status of the library

technical expertise, and mentoring were regarded as equally important to enhance library services and had a similar rating pattern. Hence, the opinion amongst staff about the competencies required by staff during the next five years is independent of the status of the library.

*H3.* That staff perception of the impact of external factors is independent of the status of the library in which they work.

A two-sample *t*-test was performed and subsequently this hypothesis was rejected at the significant level of  $p = 0.002$  (Table I), which was less than the set significance of  $p \leq 0.05$ , demonstrating the existence of some relationship between the impact of external factors and the status of the library. This suggests that the opinion about qualities required to provide efficient services was dependent on the status of the participants' library. To identify the existence of this relationship, all of the cross-tabulations on the impact of external factors against the status of the library were investigated. The difference between the employees' views was traced to "changing employees' expectations at work". This is evidenced from the following cross-tabulation (Table VI) and the chi-square test.

Table VI shows that changing employees' expectations about work were perceived as more critical by the respondents who worked in public libraries (81.2 per cent) than by those who worked at the HQ (41.2 per cent). This suggests that changing employees' expectations was more important for those who worked in public libraries.

The chi-square test (Table VII) for changing employees' expectations about work gives the significant value of  $p = 0.002$ , which is less than  $p = 0.05$ . This further confirmed the rejection of this hypothesis. This would appear to suggest that the type of library in which the respondents worked influenced their way of thinking on this issue. The other external issues: information technology, changing needs of library customers, shrinking budget, global competition and external environment were all

	Value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Pearson chi-square	1.114	2	0.573

Note: Chi-square test: "Leadership" against status of the library

Table V.

Changing employees expectations	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	39	9	46
Status of library (per cent)	81.2	41.2	70.8
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	9	10	19
Status of library (per cent)	18.8	58.8	29.2
<i>Total</i>			
Count	48	17	65
Status of library (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table VI.  
Cross-tabulation:  
"Changing Employees' Expectations About Work" against status of the library

perceived critical without any significant difference of views, whether staff worked in HQ or in public libraries. However, because of the difference of perceptions on one of the external issues it can be concluded that the belief by staff about the impact of external factors is dependent of the status of the library.

*H4.* That staff opinion on strategic management issues is independent of the status of the library in which they work.

The two-sample *t*-test established that the hypothesis was rejected because the significant level  $p = 0.015$  (Table I) was less than  $p = 0.05$ . This signifies the existence of some relationship between the respondents' views on the strategic issues and their status of the library. Their views were influenced by the type of the libraries they worked for. To trace this relationship, all of the cross-tabulations on the strategic management issues against the status of the library were examined. The difference between the views was traced to "transformational leadership". This is shown in Table VIII.

The table shows that the transformational leadership was more critical for the staff who worked in public libraries than the HQ staff. The status of the library influenced participants' views.

In addition to this cross-tabulation, Pearson chi-square test's significant level of  $p = 0.024$  (Table IX) also authenticates the existence of some relationship between the views of the respondents working in two different types of libraries.

Table VII.

	Value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Pearson chi-square	12.161	2	0.002

Note: Chi-square test: "Changing Employees' Expectations About Work" against status of the library

Table VIII.  
Cross-tabulation:  
"Transformational  
Leadership" against  
status of the library

Transformational leadership	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	41	9	50
Status of library (per cent)	85.4	56.2	78.1
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	7	7	14
Status of library (per cent)	14.6	43.8	21.9
<i>Total</i>			
Count	48	16	64
Status of library (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table IX.

	Value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Pearson chi-square	7.459	2	0.024

Note: Chi-square test: "Transformational Leadership" against status of the library

It can be concluded that the type of library in which the respondents worked had significant influence over their perception of strategic management. All the other issues: customer orientation, productivity improvement, performance measurement system, employee reward system, employee recognition system, cost control, knowledge management, and organisational culture building scored similar rating patterns from all of the participants. It can be concluded that because of the difference in perceptions on one of the strategic management issues, opinion on strategic management issues is dependent on the status of the library.

*H5.* That staff perception of motivational factors is independent of the status of the library in which they work.

This hypothesis was rejected by the two-sample *t*-test at the significant level of  $p = 0.015$  (Table I), which was less than  $p \leq 0.05$  indicating the existence of some relationship between the beliefs on motivational factors and the status of the library.

To identify the difference in perceptions, all the different motivational factors were compared against library status in cross-tabulations and the differences of views were found in the Table X.

In Table X the job satisfaction was more critical for the public library staff (89.4 per cent) than for those who worked at the HQ (70.6 per cent). This means the concept of motivational factors is dependent on the status of the library.

The significant level of  $p = 0.048$  (Table XI) confirms the existence of a relationship between the participants' views and which of the two types of libraries they worked in.

Table XII displays performance feedback was viewed as more critical by the public library staff (93.6 per cent) than by HQ staff (82.4 per cent). So the status of the library had a significant influence on participants' opinion.

The significant level of  $p = 0.025$  (Table XIII) further verifies the existence of relationship between the participants' views and which of the two types of libraries they worked in.

Job satisfaction	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	42	12	54
Status of library (per cent)	89.4	70.6	84.4
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	5	5	10
Status of library (per cent)	10.6	29.4	15.6
<i>Total</i>			
Count	47	17	64
Status of library (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table X.**  
Cross-tabulation: "Job Satisfaction" against status of the library

	Value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Pearson chi-square	6.072	2	0.048

Note: Chi-square test: "Job Satisfaction" against status of the library

**Table XI.**



Table XIV demonstrates the difference of opinion among staff. Delegation of responsibility was more critical for the public library staff (83.7 per cent) than by those who worked at the HQ (52.9 per cent). Hence, the concept of motivational factors is not independent of the status of the library.

The significant level of  $p = 0.030$  (Table XV) further confirmed the existence of relationship between the participants' views and type of library.

This all points to the fact that the type of library in which the participant worked had significant influence upon his/her views on some of the motivational factors at work. Job satisfaction, performance feedback and delegation of responsibility were found more critical for public library staff than the BNLS staff. Other motivational factors: appropriate organisational goals, participation in goal setting, conducive working environment, high morale, positive job environment, and effective communication were perceived as being of similar importance. However, this hypothesis is rejected, since due to discrepancies of opinions on the two above-mentioned SHRM issues, the concept of motivational factors is dependent of the status of the library.

**Table XII.**  
Cross-tabulation:  
"Performance Feedback"  
against status of the  
library

Performance feedback	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	44	14	58
Status of library	93.6	82.4	90.6
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	3	3	6
Status of library	6.4	17.8	9.4
<i>Total</i>			
Count	47	17	64
Status of library	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table XIII.**

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson chi-square	7.382	2	0.025

Note: Chi-square test: "Performance Feedback" against status of the library

**Table XIV.**  
Cross-tabulation:  
"Delegation of  
Responsibility" against  
status of the library

Delegation of responsibility	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	41	9	50
Status of library (per cent)	83.7	52.9	75.8
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	8	8	16
Status of library (per cent)	16.3	47.1	24.2
<i>Total</i>			
Count	49	17	66
Status of library (per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0

H6. That the general view of staff regarding human resource strategy is independent of the status of the library in which they work.

The two-sample *t*-test accepted this hypothesis concerning participants' opinions on human resource strategy at the rate of a significant level  $p = 0.374$  (Table I). Consequently, opinions on human resource strategy were not dependent on whether staff worked in the HQ or public libraries. For further proof, the different human strategic issues were compared against library status and the cross-tabulation results provided further evidence of this fact. For instance, a comparison of "the alignment of human resource strategy" against library status (Table XVI) shows a similar rating pattern amongst the HQ and public library staff.

Table XVI shows no relationship between the status of the library and staff opinions on alignment of HR strategy, all the participants viewed the issue similarly.

In Pearson chi-square test, the significant level of  $p = 0.297$  (Table XVII) further confirmed the absence of any relationship between the opinions of the respondents and the two types of libraries.

It is to be noted that each hypothesis tested a number of variables, but due to word limitations, the paper presents only one example from each hypothesis. Exceptions are made in the case of rejected hypotheses, where all the variables with difference of opinions are displayed and discussed.

	Value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Pearson chi-square	7.014	2	0.030

Note: Chi-square test: "Delegation of Responsibility" against status of the library

Table XV.

Alignment of HR strategy	Status of library		Total
	Public	HQ	
<i>Critical</i>			
Count	41	14	55
per cent within status of library	91.1	87.5	90.2
<i>Not critical</i>			
Count	4	2	6
per cent within status of library	8.9	12.5	9.8
<i>Total</i>			
Count	45	16	61
per cent within status of library	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table XVI.  
Cross-tabulation:  
"Alignment of Human Resource (HR) Strategy" against status of the library

	Value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Pearson chi-square	2.429	2	0.297

Note: Chi-square test: "Alignment of Human Resource Strategy" against status of the library

Table XVII.

### Discussion

According to the data analysis of the six research hypotheses, three were accepted and three were rejected. The hypotheses which were accepted were those which addressed issues related to staff qualities (*H1*), competencies (*H2*), and human resource strategy – all the staff, whether working in public libraries or the HQ, held similar opinions on the above issues.

The three rejected hypotheses dealt with the impact of external factors (*H3*), strategic management issues (*H4*), and motivational factors (*H5*). With the impact of external factors, we traced the difference of opinion to changing employees' expectations about work (Table VI); with strategic management issues we identified the difference of views in transformational leadership (Table VIII); and under motivational factors the difference of opinions were found in job satisfaction (Table X); performance feedback (Table XII); and delegation of responsibility (Table XIV).

All of the above issues were seen to be more critical by the staff of public libraries than by the HQ' staff. Therefore, the hypotheses on these issues were rejected and the conclusion drawn that staff opinions were indeed dependent on the status of the participants' library.

Changing employees' expectations about work was perceived as more critical by the public library participants than the HQ staff. On the one hand, we may conjecture that changing employees' expectations involves many factors, which management may not think important. On the other, sometimes management may indeed be genuinely concerned about public library employees' expectations, but they do not reflect that concern.

Since most changes will tend to be top-down initiatives originated by HQ, there may be a time delay before the same changes are effected in public libraries. That is possibly why public library staff seemed to perceive matters relating to "changing employees" expectations about work differently from HQ staff. Delayed effectiveness of decision-making on some issues might make public library staff feel as if HQ staff are not aware of and concerned about their urgent needs.

For instance with regard to library computerisation, all public libraries should benefit equally from this change. But there may well be public library staff who feel that they are lagging behind in this so-called new "information age", without adequate up to date technological facilities and training. This situation could be even more pronounced in rural areas where amenities are not the same as in towns. For example, most rural villages do not have electricity, and consequently, the libraries there do not have any access to computers. In the author's interpretation of the data analysis, it is suggested that it is important for policy makers to consult with public library staff on various issues because it is such staff who are providing services, in contrast to those who do not have practical experience of the problems encountered at that level. With public library staff input, policy makers should effect changes in such a manner that public library staff feel part of them and enjoy the changes equally and in as timely a fashion as their colleagues and counterparts at HQ.

Transformational leadership was perceived as more important by the public library staff. Transformational leaders enhance individuals' self-confidence and self-efficacy, and help them to see their environment as a source of opportunity, encouraging them to engage in "feed-forward" learning processes (Vera and Crossan, 2004). It seems as if HQ staff are well aware of what resources are available and therefore, understand the



limitations on the extent to which transformational change is possible. They try their best with available facilities to fulfill staff needs for the provision of better library services. But public library staff may not be able to appreciate the fact that the HQ staff are not fully empowered or resourced from a decision-making point of view, and they themselves at HQ level may in turn require further input from their ministry. Hence, public library staff may feel that their leaders are not transformational enough.

Truly, top performance will always require transformational leadership based on a vision of what is needed. Leaders should communicate that vision to staff so they embrace it (Hall, 2004). And of course, sometimes it is not quite possible. But even so, based on interpretation of the data above, it is the author's view that policy makers and senior management need to be more transparent, need to meet their public library staff regularly, and should update them on all the problems and restrictions on facilities which limit the capacity for transformational change, seeking their valuable opinions in order to make optimum use of resources so that the best services are provided to customers. In this way senior management will produce self-confidence, self-worth and vision among their staff, enabling them to produce more with less.

Performance feedback was more critical for public library staff according to the data analysis. The author views this as showing that employees at HQ tend to get immediate feedback on performance, but that it takes time for similar feedback to reach staff in the public libraries themselves, perhaps because management decisions pass through such a variety of channels. This is probably why performance feedback is more important for the public library staff than HQ staff. However, concrete and timely performance feedback is vital for all staff. According to Byars and Rue (2000, p. 216) "feedback facilitates employees' learning process". They argue that "keeping employees informed of their progress as measured against some standard helps in setting goals for what remains to be learned". Knowing about "well done" is as important as about "poorly done". Feedback on good performance boosts an employee's morale and feedback on poor performance provides an opportunity to improve upon one's performance and develop oneself. Therefore, "ideally, performance feedback should be an ongoing part of a manager's job" (Bohlander *et al.*, 2001, p. 348). There is a resonance here between the public library employees' opinions and the above authors' opinions. Hence, it is vital to provide all library staff with a mechanism for concrete and timely feedback for the sake of enhanced employees' development which should improve library productivity in consequence.

Delegation of responsibility provided a difference in opinion between the two library groups. Possibly the staff at HQ are able to handle important aspects of their work directly, but in public libraries there might be few such positions of responsibility, where staff feel equally satisfied in performing primary responsibilities diligently. In other words, staff at HQ might be fully enabled to utilize their education as opposed to public libraries with fewer such responsible positions. Hence, delegation of responsibility might be seen as more critical by public library staff than by HQ staff. "Being given additional responsibilities is perceived as trust in and respect for the individual's abilities. Increased status is further evidence of importance and worth to the organization. In the absence of this form of recognition managers are faced with the challenge of helping people to create a new type of vision. People still need to feel valued, trusted, and respected" (Mendes, 1996, p. 32). Clearly, the participants' views are supported by the above author. Indeed, delegation motivates and creates



self-confidence, high morale, initiative and self-esteem amongst subordinates. There is a need for a proper delegation of responsibility so that all staff have a feeling of empowerment and a sense of belonging to their libraries, and thus are encouraged to perform to the best of their potential.

Job satisfaction was viewed as more important by the public library staff. Job satisfaction is one of the most important motivational factors. Without job satisfaction, staff cannot perform their best. Job satisfaction derives from various sources such as, a conducive working environment, effective communication, participation in goal setting, performance feedback, and delegation of responsibility among others. Perhaps public library staff do not feel sufficiently involved in the various types of library activities – rather they seem to be following passively what comes from HQ. Possibly for this reason the issue of job satisfaction was more significant for them.

As Bohlander *et al.* (2001, p. 101) point out, “the motivated, satisfied and productive employee is one who: experiences ‘meaningfulness’ of the work performed; experiences ‘responsibility’ for work outcomes, and has ‘knowledge’ of the results of the work performed. Achieving these three psychological states serves as reinforcement to the employee and as a source of internal motivation to continue doing the job well”. The data analysis would support the view expressed by Bohlander *et al.* (2001). Hence, in the author’s opinion, there is a need for a more conducive working environment in the public libraries of Botswana, if libraries want to provide excellent services to their customers. If a workforce does not have this feeling of job satisfaction, it cannot perform optimally and be managed strategically.

### Conclusion

We can conclude therefore that, as a broad generalisation, library policy makers may automatically treat all of their staff similarly while their staff in fact seem to have differences of opinions on a number of issues. Consequently, this paper recommends that such policy makers should consider a whole variety of factors surrounding employee differentiation when formulating any or all policies affected by such SHRM issues. This should enable them to manage staff in such a way that the whole library community can work at optimum towards achieving the library’s goals and objectives, thus providing best services to their customers.

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