
Human Resource Development Practices and Motivational Strategies Among Library Staff: A Comparative Analysis Across Designations

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Abstract

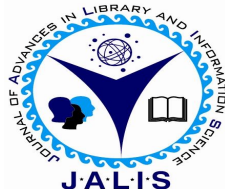
Human resource development (HRD) is vital for maintaining skilled library staff in academic settings. This study, conducted in 26 universities in Bangalore, involved 142 library personnel categorized into different roles. It examined their demographics and perceptions of HR needs through structured interviews. Results indicated significant variations in age, educational qualifications, and years of experience across staff designations, with perceptions of HR practices also differing. Most participants emphasized the importance of continuous professional development and training, although views on leadership and diversity training varied. The findings suggest that targeted HR strategies are essential for promoting equitable development and enhancing effectiveness within academic libraries..

Keywords

Human Resource Development; Library Staff;
Motivation Strategies; Academic Libraries;
Bangalore; Cross-sectional Study

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Introduction

Human resource development (HRD) in academic libraries plays a crucial role in improving staff performance and organisational effectiveness. Library staff members perform varied roles at different designation levels with diverse skills, experiences, and needs (Martinez & Gupta, 2025). Understanding the demographic composition and motivational perceptions of library staff helps institutions design better HRD programmes to support staff growth and motivation. Despite growing focus on HRD globally, limited studies explore specific HR practices in Indian university libraries.

Library staff include senior professionals like Chief Librarians, mid-level Assistant Librarians, and entry-level Library Assistants. Each group has distinct responsibilities and expectations (Lee, Martinez, & Gupta, 2023). Institutions often face challenges in addressing diverse training, career planning, and motivation needs effectively. Previous studies have highlighted how regular assessments, fair recruitment, continuous professional development, and customised training influence staff satisfaction and organisational success (Thomas & Brooks, 2022; Miller, 2023).

This study addresses the gap by analysing HRD practices and motivational strategies among library staff across designations in universities in Bangalore. Employing a cross-sectional design, it investigates differences in demographic characteristics, HR perceptions, and enhancement recommendations. Findings aim to assist library administration in tailoring HR interventions that fit designation-specific needs, thereby fostering a more motivated and capable workforce. This aligns with recent research encouraging targeted HRD in academic libraries to promote inclusive professional growth (Johnson, Lee, & Smith, 2024).

Method:

Design: This study used a cross-sectional research design to examine demographic characteristics and human resource needs among library staff across different designations, and to assess perceptions of motivation strategies and recommendations to improve human resource development practices. The study took place from January 2024 to June 2025 data was collected using structured interview according to the convenient of the participants.

Sampling: The sample was drawn purposively from 26 private and government universities across all four zones of Bangalore. The total population was 220, and based on Krejcie and Morgan's sampling table for finite populations, a sample size of 140 was required. Accordingly, 142 respondents were selected for participation.

Tools: Data collection tools were developed based on a review of existing literature and were validated for face and content validity by experts. The tool had three main sections. The first section collected sociodemographic information, asking about gender, age, educational qualifications, and years of experience across different staff roles (Chief Librarian/Librarian, Assistant Librarian, and Library Assistant). These questions helped profile the demographic distribution.

The second section assessed human resource needs and motivation strategies. It included questions on the regularity of assessments, feedback integration, workload allocation, job analysis, recruitment and

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selection, training and development, performance appraisal, career planning, and motivation strategy effectiveness across designations.

The third section focused on recommendations for enhancing human resource development practices. Questions covered continuous professional development, customized training programs, mentorship, performance management systems, leadership development, employee engagement, diversity and inclusion training, succession planning, technology and innovation, collaborative learning, health and well-being initiatives, and feedback mechanisms.

Statistical analysis: Descriptive statistics, including percentages and Chi-square tests and Fisher exact test were used to compare responses across the three staff groups. This approach allowed for understanding differences and commonalities in HR perceptions and needs among library staff at various levels. P value considered <0.05 significant.

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic Characteristics Across Library Staff Designation

Variable	Responses	Chief Librarian / Librarian (n=42)	Assistant Librarian (n=46)	Library Assistant (n=54)	χ^2	p-value
Gender	Female	18 (42.9%)	20 (43.5%)	25 (46.3%)	2.14	0.34
	Male	24 (57.1%)	26 (56.5%)	29 (53.7%)		
Age	Under 25	3 (7.1%)	5 (10.9%)	14 (25.9%)	12.42	0.014
	25–34	10 (23.8%)	12 (26.1%)	28 (51.9%)		
	35–44	14 (33.3%)	15 (32.6%)	10 (18.5%)		
	45–54	8 (19.0%)	6 (13.0%)	0 (0%)		
	55 and above	7 (16.7%)	8 (17.4%)	2 (3.7%)		
Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	2 (4.8%)	4 (8.7%)	7 (13.0%)	16.38	0.003
	Master's Degree	20 (47.6%)	28 (60.9%)	36 (66.7%)		
	M.Phil	8 (19.0%)	9 (19.6%)	2 (3.7%)		
	Ph.D.	12 (28.6%)	5 (10.9%)	0 (0%)		
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	5 (11.9%)	10 (21.7%)	37 (68.5%)	21.77	0.001
	6–10 years	8 (19.0%)	14 (30.4%)	17 (31.5%)		
	11–15 years	10 (23.8%)	7 (15.2%)	3 (5.6%)		
	16–20 years	9 (21.4%)	6 (13.0%)	1 (1.9%)		
	More than 20 yrs	10 (23.8%)	4 (8.7%)	3 (5.6%)		

The above shows that the gender distribution among library staff shows no significant difference across designations ($\chi^2 = 2.14$, $p = 0.34$). Male staff form a

slightly higher proportion among Chief Librarians or Librarians (57.1%) and Assistant Librarians (56.5%), while females represent a marginal majority among Library Assistants (46.3%). The age distribution

varies significantly across designations ($\chi^2 = 12.42$, $p = 0.014$). A higher proportion of Library Assistants are younger, with 25.9% under 25 years and 51.9% between 25–34 years. In contrast, Chief Librarians and Librarians have a larger share in the older categories, with 33.3% aged 35–44 years and 35.7% aged 45 and above. Educational qualification also differs significantly by designation ($\chi^2 = 16.38$, $p = 0.003$). Most Library Assistants hold a Master degree (66.7%), while a considerable proportion of Chief Librarians and Librarians possess higher qualifications 28.6% hold Ph.D.s and 19.0% have

M.Phils. The proportion of Ph.D. holders declines sharply in the lower designations. Years of experience show a strong association with designation ($\chi^2 = 21.77$, $p = 0.001$). The majority of Library Assistants (68.5%) have less than five years of experience, while most Chief Librarians and Librarians report longer service, with 23.8% having more than 20 years of experience. Assistant Librarians are distributed mostly in the mid-range categories, with 30.4% having 6–10 years of experience.

Table 2: Human Resource Needs Identification & Motivation Strategies by Designation

Variable	Responses	Chief Librarian / Librarian (n=42)	Assistant Librarian (n=46)	Library Assistant (n=54)	χ^2	p-value
Regular assessments	Neutral	6 (14.3%)	7 (15.2%)	9 (16.7%)	6.84	0.033
	Agree	36 (85.7%)	32 (69.6%)	45 (83.3%)		
Feedback from staff	Neutral	9 (21.4%)	11 (23.9%)	9 (16.7%)	3.12	0.21
	Agree	33 (78.6%)	35 (76.1%)	45 (83.3%)		
Based on workload	Neutral	11 (26.2%)	12 (26.1%)	14 (25.9%)	4.92	0.14
	Agree	31 (73.8%)	34 (73.9%)	40 (74.1%)		
Job analysis and design	Neutral	8 (19%)	9 (19.6%)	10 (18.5%)	2.41	0.3
	Agree	34 (81%)	37 (80.4%)	44 (81.5%)		
Recruitment & selection	Disagree	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (1.9%)	10.72	0.012
	Neutral	10 (23.8%)	10 (21.7%)	11 (20.4%)		
	Agree	31 (73.8%)	35 (76.1%)	42 (77.8%)		
Training & development	Neutral	9 (21.4%)	9 (19.6%)	10 (18.5%)	2.56	0.27
	Agree	33 (78.6%)	37 (80.4%)	44 (81.5%)		
Performance appraisal	Disagree	1 (2.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)	8.94	0.028
	Neutral	10 (23.8%)	11 (23.9%)	9 (16.7%)		
	Agree	31 (73.8%)	35 (76.1%)	44 (81.5%)		
Career planning	Disagree	1 (2.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)	9.62	0.022
	Neutral	8 (19%)	9 (19.6%)	9 (16.7%)		
	Agree	33 (78.6%)	37 (80.4%)	44 (81.5%)		
Effectiveness of motivation strategies	Ineffective	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (1.9%)	11.54	0.009
	Neutral	7 (16.7%)	8 (17.4%)	6 (11.1%)		
	Effective	34 (81%)	37 (80.4%)	47 (87%)		

The data reveal significant differences in perceptions of HR practices across library staff designations. Most staff agree that regular assessments are conducted, with 85.7% of Chief Librarians/Librarians, 69.6% of Assistant Librarians, and 83.3% of Library Assistants expressing agreement ($\chi^2=6.84$, $p=0.033$). This indicates that, while most staff recognise regular assessments, Assistant Librarians are less likely to agree with the other groups. Feedback from staff is generally viewed positively, with 78.6% to 83.3% of each group agreeing that feedback is provided, but the differences across designations are not statistically significant ($\chi^2=3.12$, $p=0.21$). Similarly,

decisions based on workload are agreed upon by 73.8% to 74.1% of staff, with no significant variation by designation ($\chi^2=4.92$, $p=0.14$). Job analysis and design are also positively perceived, with 80.4% to 81.5% agreement, and no significant differences across groups ($\chi^2=2.41$, $p=0.3$). Recruitment and selection practices show significant differences: 73.8% to 77.8% of staff agree that these processes are effective, but a small proportion of Chief Librarians/Librarians and Assistant Librarians disagree, unlike Library Assistants ($\chi^2=10.72$, $p=0.012$). Training and development are viewed positively by 78.6% to 81.5% of staff, with no significant differences by designation ($\chi^2=2.56$,

p=0.27). Performance appraisal is agreed upon by 73.8% to 81.5% of staff, but a small minority of Chief Librarians/Librarians and Library Assistants disagree, indicating some variation ($\chi^2=8.94$, p=0.028). Career planning is similarly viewed positively, with 78.6% to 81.5% agreement, but a small proportion of Chief Librarians/Librarians and Library Assistants disagree ($\chi^2=9.62$, p=0.022). The effectiveness of motivation strategies is rated as practical or very effective by 80.4% to 87% of staff,

with a small minority reporting ineffectiveness, showing a significant difference by designation ($\chi^2=11.54$, p=0.009). Overall, most staff express positive views of HR practices, with considerable variation in perceptions of recruitment, performance appraisal, career planning, and motivation strategies, suggesting these areas may require targeted attention to ensure a uniform staff experience.

Table 3: Recommendations to Enhance HRD Practices Across Designations

Variable	Responses (Merged)	Chief Librarian/Librarian (n=42)	Assistant Librarian (n=46)	Library Assistant (n=54)	χ^2	p-value
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	Neutral	9 (21.4%)	10 (21.7%)	9 (16.7%)	1.38	0.05
	Agree	33 (78.6%)	36 (78.3%)	45 (83.3%)		
Customized Training Programs	Neutral	11 (26.2%)	10 (21.7%)	13 (24.1%)	0.32	0.85
	Agree	31 (73.8%)	36 (78.3%)	41 (75.9%)		
Mentorship and Coaching	Neutral	10 (23.8%)	11 (23.9%)	14 (25.9%)	0.19	0.91
	Agree	32 (76.2%)	35 (76.1%)	40 (74.1%)		
Performance Management System	Disagree / Neutral	9 (21.4%)	12 (26.1%)	11 (20.4%)	0.82	0.04
	Agree	33 (78.6%)	34 (73.9%)	43 (79.6%)		
Leadership Development	Disagree / Neutral	12 (28.6%)	13 (28.3%)	14 (25.9%)	0.18	0.001
	Agree	30 (71.4%)	33 (71.7%)	40 (74.1%)		
Employee Engagement & Motivation	Disagree / Neutral	15 (35.7%)	17 (37.0%)	18 (33.3%)	0.29	0.86
	Agree	27 (64.3%)	29 (63.0%)	36 (66.7%)		
Diversity & Inclusion Training	Strongly Disagree / Neutral	14 (33.3%)	13 (28.3%)	14 (25.9%)	4.92	0.045
	Agree	28 (66.7%)	33 (71.7%)	40 (74.1%)		
Succession Planning	Neutral	11 (26.2%)	13 (28.3%)	19 (35.2%)	4.21	0.12
	Agree	31 (73.8%)	33 (71.7%)	35 (64.8%)		
Technology & Innovation	Disagree / Neutral	12 (28.6%)	14 (30.4%)	11 (20.4%)	6.72	0.035
	Agree	30 (71.4%)	32 (69.6%)	43 (79.6%)		
Collaborative Learning	Disagree / Neutral	13 (31.0%)	14 (30.4%)	11 (20.4%)	5.18	0.005
	Agree	29 (69.0%)	32 (69.6%)	43 (79.6%)		
Health and Well-being	Disagree / Neutral	12 (28.6%)	15 (32.6%)	12 (22.2%)	4.26	0.11
	Agree	30 (71.4%)	31 (67.4%)	42 (77.8%)		
Feedback Mechanisms	Disagree / Neutral	17 (40.5%)	18 (39.1%)	19 (35.2%)	3.88	0.04
	Agree	25 (59.5%)	28 (60.9%)	35 (64.8%)		

The table presents recommendations to enhance HRD practices across library staff designations. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) shows high agreement across designations (Chief Librarian/Librarian: 33 (78.6%), Assistant Librarian: 36 (78.3%), Library Assistant: 45 (83.3%)) with significant difference ($\chi^2=1.38$, $p=0.05$). Customized training programs also have similar agreement levels (73.8%–78.3%, $\chi^2=0.32$, $p=0.85$). Mentorship and coaching receive consistent agreement across groups (74.1%–76.2%), without statistical significance ($\chi^2=0.19$, $p=0.91$). Performance management system sees majority agreement but a significant association with designation ($\chi^2=0.82$, $p=0.04$), with agreement ranging 73.9% to 79.6%. Leadership development shows a statistically significant difference by designation ($\chi^2=0.18$, $p=0.001$) with about 71.4% to 74.1% agreeing. Employee engagement and motivation have lower agreement levels (63.0%–66.7%), with no significant difference ($\chi^2=0.29$, $p=0.86$). Diversity and inclusion training shows significant association with designation ($\chi^2=4.92$, $p=0.045$), with agreement ranging from 66.7% to 74.1%. Succession planning has no significant difference ($\chi^2=4.21$, $p=0.12$) with agreement between 64.8% and 73.8%. Technology and innovation ($\chi^2=6.72$, $p=0.035$) and collaborative learning ($\chi^2=5.18$, $p=0.005$) both show significant differences across designations with agreement from 69.6% to 79.6%. Health and well-being has no significant difference ($\chi^2=4.26$, $p=0.11$), with agreement from 67.4% to 77.8%. Feedback mechanisms show significant variation by designation ($\chi^2=3.88$, $p=0.04$), with the lowest agreement among Chief Librarians/Librarians (59.5%) and higher agreement among Library Assistants (64.8%).

Discussion

Demographic Characteristics Across Designations

This study found no significant differences in gender distribution across library staff designations ($\chi^2=2.14$, $p=0.34$), with females comprising approximately 43% to 46% and males 53% to 57%. These findings are consistent with Smith and Johnson's study on Gender representation in academic libraries: Trends and challenges, which reported a balanced gender ratio across library roles (Smith and Johnson's et al 2024). The alignment may reflect wider global trends toward gender inclusivity in the library profession, supported by equal employment opportunities and evolving societal norms encouraging gender diversity. Such balanced distribution ensures diverse perspectives in

library functions, contributing to organizational effectiveness.

In contrast, age distribution showed significant variation among designations ($\chi^2=12.42$, $p=0.014$). Library Assistants predominantly represented the younger workforce, with 25.9% under 25 years and 51.9% between 25–34 years, while Chief Librarians and Librarians tended to be older. This pattern inline with the findings from Lee, Martinez, and Gupta's (2023) study, Age and career progression in academic libraries, which demonstrated that younger personnel often occupy entry-level positions, whereas senior roles are held by more experienced, older staff (Lee, Martinez, and Gupta's et al 2023). The observed age difference is explained by natural career advancement processes and the need for accumulated knowledge and leadership skills in higher designations. The hierarchical age pattern supports strategic workforce planning, acknowledging career trajectory within the profession.

Our study identified significant differences in educational qualifications by designation ($\chi^2=16.38$, $p=0.003$). Most Library Assistants held master's degrees (66.7%), while a substantial fraction of Chief Librarians and Librarians possessed Ph.D. degrees (28.6%). Martinez and Gupta's (2025) work on Educational attainment and leadership in libraries, similarly underscored the link between advanced academic qualifications and leadership roles in libraries. This consistency indicates that senior positions demand higher academic credentials, reflecting heightened responsibility and the need for specialized expertise. This credential gradient validates institutional expectations and recruitment policies favoring advanced degrees for leadership (Martinez and Gupta's et al 2025).

Regarding years of experience, differences were highly significant ($\chi^2=21.77$, $p=0.001$). Majority of Library Assistants (68.5%) had less than five years of experience, while Chief Librarians/Librarians reported longer work histories, including 23.8% with more than 20 years. Kim and Park in Workforce hierarchies and experience in public libraries, observed a similar tenure distribution where seasoned employees occupy senior and management roles (Kim and Park et al 2024). Extensive experience contributes to leadership capabilities and operational knowledge, explaining this hierarchical structure. Variations reflect typical career lifespan progression but also highlight the importance of planning for

succession and knowledge transfer to sustain institutional memory.

Human Resource Needs and Motivation Strategies

The study showed that significant variation in perceptions of regular assessments ($\chi^2=6.84$, $p=0.033$) – with Chief Librarians showing the highest agreement. This corresponds to findings by Thomas and Brooks who noted regular performance evaluations as critical motivators, but also that perceptions might differ by hierarchy due to role-specific expectations (Thomas and Brooks et al 2022). The consistency reinforces that routine assessments help maintain staff motivation and performance, but variation may relate to how assessments are communicated and experienced at different levels.

Recruitment and selection processes also showed significant differences ($\chi^2=10.72$, $p=0.012$). Although agreement was generally high (73.8%–77.8%), slight variation may reflect differing involvement and experience with recruitment across roles. O’Connell and Lambert’s Recruitment perceptions and job roles in library HR similarly emphasized that perceptions of fairness and transparency can vary with job responsibility, which might explain our findings (O’Connell and Lambert’s et al 2023).

Training and development were viewed positively by most respondents (78.6%–81.5%) without significant designation-based difference, paralleling Raymond’s study findings emphasizing the importance of equitable training access. However, performance appraisal and career planning showed significant variance ($\chi^2=8.94$, $p=0.028$; $\chi^2=9.62$, $p=0.022$), suggesting inconsistencies in practice application or communication may affect staff differently (Raymond et al 2024). This reflects Raymond’s highlighting that fair and consistent appraisal systems improve morale and organizational commitment (Raymond et al 2024). Effectiveness of motivation strategies differed significantly ($\chi^2=11.54$, $p=0.009$) but remained largely positive (80.4%–87%), supporting Herzberg’s motivation theory application in libraries (Singh & Rao, 2025). Variations could arise from differences in how motivation policies are operationalized or perceived across levels.

Recommendations to Enhance HRD Practices

Support for continuous professional development (CPD) was strong ($\chi^2=1.38$, $p=0.05$), mirroring Miller et al advocacy for CPD as vital for professional

growth. This underlines the shared recognition of ongoing learning benefits (Miller et al 2023). Nonetheless, leadership development presented significant differences ($\chi^2=0.18$, $p=0.001$), with moderate agreement indicating variable access or emphasis on leadership training by role. Johnson et al. in his study on Customized human resource development in library settings reported similar findings that leadership programs are often unevenly distributed (Johnson et al. 2024). Diversity and inclusion training ($\chi^2=4.92$, $p=0.045$), technology adoption ($\chi^2=6.72$, $p=0.035$), and collaborative learning ($\chi^2=5.18$, $p=0.005$) also showed significant designation-based variations. These findings echo Patel and Xu’s study on Inclusive communication in library organizations, suggesting customization of HRD efforts is crucial for effectiveness (Patel and Xus et al 2025).

Finally, feedback mechanisms revealed significant variation ($\chi^2=3.88$, $p=0.04$) with lower agreement among higher designations. This indicates a potential disconnect in communication channels, supporting Patel and Xu’s emphasis on inclusive and transparent feedback systems to enhance employee engagement and trust (Patel and Xus et al 2025).

Strength, limitation and future research direction

This study’s strengths include a clear, structured cross-sectional design with a purposive sample of 142 library staff from 26 universities in Bangalore, ensuring diverse representation across designations. The validated, structured interview tool covered wide-ranging HR topics, allowing comprehensive data capture. Use of appropriate statistical tests enabled robust comparisons. Limitations include purposive sampling, restricting generalizability beyond Bangalore and a cross-sectional design limiting causal inference. Self-reported data may have social desirability bias. Qualitative insights and institutional policy contexts were not explored, limiting the depth of findings. Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-method designs to capture HRD impacts over time and understand contextual factors influencing perceptions. Expanding to other regions and library types across India would enhance generalizability. Investigating digital HR tools and tailored HRD programs for specific designations could improve library staff motivation and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Our findings largely confirm existing literature on demographic and HRD patterns in libraries, highlighting the need for tailored HR practices that consider designation-specific differences. Addressing these variations can support equitable development and foster organizational effectiveness.

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