Job satisfaction and work values: Investigating sources of job satisfaction with respect to information professionals

Valentini Moniarou-Papaconstantinou [a,*], Kalliopi Triantafyllou [b]

[a] *Department of Library Science and Information Systems, TEI of Athens, Agiou Spiridonos Street, 122 10 Egaleo, Athens, Greece*
[b] *Department of Child Psychiatry, University of Athens Medical School, Aghia Sophia Children's Hospital, Thivon and Leivadias, 115 27 Athens, Greece*

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is critical to life satisfaction, to the quality of employees' working life, and to their performance and organizational commitment. Using the theory of work values, job satisfaction of information professionals working in academic, special, public and school libraries as well as in archives and private companies is examined. Data were obtained through a questionnaire distributed to different types of information organizations. The results showed that the information professionals were satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction was predicted by intrinsic work values, namely the opportunities for learning, expression of creativity, autonomy, use of knowledge and abilities, and adoption of innovative technological developments. The analysis also indicated significant differences in the sources of job satisfaction (extrinsic, social and prestige work values) among professionals employed in four types of information organizations (academic libraries, public libraries, special libraries and archives). Professionals in special libraries were more satisfied with extrinsic work values than those in public libraries and archives. Professionals working in public libraries were more satisfied with prestige work values than those employed in academic libraries and archives. Finally, it was indicated that professionals in archives were less satisfied with social work values than their colleagues in public and special libraries. A relationship between job satisfaction and years of experience was also examined.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely examined aspects of work because of its potential effect on employees and organizations. Most studies in library and information science (LIS), and in other disciplines, have indicated that job satisfaction has positive effects on human behavior in the workplace, job performance, and organizational commitment and effectiveness (Adio & Popoola, 2010; Clugston, 2000; Koilias, Tourna, & Koukouletsos, 2012; Lim, 2008; McLean & Andrew, 1999; Peng, 2014; Saari & Judge, 2004). In addition it has consequences for the quality of the individual's working life, total well-being, and life satisfaction (Faragher, Cass, & Cooper, 2005; Landry, 2000; Locke, 1976; Saari & Judge, 2004).

Job satisfaction is influenced by the political, social, economic and cultural conditions prevailing in a country (Kaasa, 2011). One example of this is the impact the recent economic crisis had on information organizations, with budget cuts having an adverse effect on human resources (Guarria & Wang, 2011). This is particularly true in respect to Greece where such organizations, which rely mostly on public funding, have had to deal with the consequences of the economic crisis. More specifically, deteriorating labor market conditions, decreases in libraries' budgets, staff and salary reductions, and restrictions in

replacing retired staff have created new socio-economic conditions. There is evidence that in times of recession there are increased demands for information organizations to undertake a variety of functions (Julien & Hoffman, 2008; Sigler et al., 2011) and it is therefore necessary for staff to strive to meet changing users' needs. In this context, it is important to examine the degree to which information professionals are satisfied with their work, and how this relates to their work values, that is to the outcomes they feel should attain through work.

2. Problem statement

Job satisfaction is critical for employees' life satisfaction and the quality of employees' working life, as well as their performance and organizational commitment. The present recession in Greece has affected the structure of society and has created an environment of continuing instability and uncertainty, which has had a serious impact on human resources employed in both public and private sectors. Against this background, and with a need to make the most of the available resources, a clearer understanding of what keeps information professionals satisfied with their jobs is important.

The majority of studies that have examined job satisfaction have focused on academic libraries (Bernstein, 2011; Horenstein, 1993; Leckie & Brett, 1996; Leysen & Boydston, 2009; Mirfakhrai, 1991; Sierpe, 1999), and only a few have examined it with respect to information

* Corresponding author.
 E-mail address: valpap@teiath.gr (V. Moniarou-Papaconstantinou).

professionals working in a range of other organizations such as public, school, and special libraries, and archives (Alansari, 2011; Pors & Johannsen, 2002; Williamson, Pemberton, & Lounsbury, 2005). Even though the latter studies examine how satisfied employees are in a variety of organizations, they do not consider the differences in job satisfaction among them.

Hence, although there is a continued interest in the area of job satisfaction of information professionals, there is not a comprehensive study examining the differences among professionals employed in different information organizations. This study, based on the theory of work values, examines the aspects of work that contribute to job satisfaction and the differences among professionals employed in a range of organizations.

3. Literature review

Job satisfaction in general is described as individuals' emotional reaction to their work situation. It concerns personal feelings about the job and its different aspects (Spector, 1997). It is a multidimensional concept which includes the work setting, the nature of work, pay and benefits, promotions, supervision, and relations with co-workers, among other factors.

One of the most cited definitions of job satisfaction is given by Locke (1976), who captured the *affective* facet of job satisfaction when he defined it as "…a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience" (p. 1300).

Over the last two decades, a considerable amount of literature has been published on sources of job satisfaction relating to information professionals. In particular, studies have focused either on information professionals' job satisfaction in general or on the job satisfaction of librarians working in specific types of libraries and the relationship between satisfaction and particular aspects of their job (e.g. Leckie & Brett, 1996; Williamson et al., 2005).

Most studies of job satisfaction among information professionals focus on those working in academic libraries, using mainly questionnaires to collect the data (Bernstein, 2011; Horenstein, 1993; Leckie & Brett, 1996; Leysen & Boydston, 2009; Mirfakhrai, 1991; Peng, 2014; Sierpe, 1999; Togia, Koustelios, & Tsigilis, 2004). A number of studies found that academic librarians were more satisfied with the nature of their job, supervision, level of autonomy, and working conditions than with salary and promotion (Bernstein, 2011; Horenstein, 1993; Leckie & Brett, 1996; Mirfakhrai, 1991; Sierpe, 1999; Togia et al., 2004). Subjects also showed satisfaction with the sense of accomplishment and relationships with co-workers and clients (Horenstein, 1993; Mirfakhrai, 1991). A number of studies looking at the differences in job satisfaction between academic librarians with and without faculty status found inconsistent results (Bernstein, 2011; Horenstein, 1993; Leckie & Brett, 1996). Horenstein (1993) suggested that librarians with academic status were more satisfied than those with non-faculty status, while the findings of more recent studies contradict this conclusion (Bernstein, 2011; Leckie & Brett, 1996).

Other studies have investigated job satisfaction in public libraries and archives. Public library reference librarians were found to be satisfied with their work, mainly with their relationships with co-workers and supervisors and the work itself. A positive relationship between life satisfaction and job satisfaction was also identified (Landry, 2000). For young archivists under the age of 35, the health care plan, interesting work, variety of tasks, and autonomy were the important facets of a satisfying job (Cushing, 2010).

There are a few studies that have examined the job satisfaction of information professionals working in various information organizations (Alansari, 2011; Pors & Johannsen, 2002; Williamson et al., 2005). Specifically, Williamson et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between personality traits and the job satisfaction of American academic librarians, archivist, records managers, distance education librarians, public librarians, school librarians, special librarians, and systems

librarians. They found that professionals who were more optimistic, emotionally resilient, team minded, visionary in their work style, and hardworking reported higher levels of satisfaction. Additionally, Pors and Johannsen (2002) exploring job satisfaction of library directors in academic and public libraries in Denmark, finding that job content, the professionals' influence on the job, and the possibility of making decisions had a significant effect on their job satisfaction. More recently, Alansari (2011) examined job satisfaction of professional librarians working in academic, public, and special libraries in Kuwait. Recognition of accomplishment, fair performance evaluation, job security, and relationship with senior staff, co-workers, and users were ranked highly. However, these studies did not analyze the job satisfaction of information professionals based on the type of organization, therefore no conclusive remarks could be drawn on possible similarities or differences among these professional groups.

A number of studies have also examined job satisfaction in relation to years of experience, type of work, and use of technology. Studies exploring the relationship between information professionals' satisfaction and years of professional experience have shown contradictory results. It has been found that job satisfaction diminished as the number of years of working experience increased (Mirfakhrai, 1991; Togia et al., 2004), while other studies have shown a positive relationship between length of work experience and job satisfaction (Alansari, 2011; Baro, Fyneman, & Zoukemefa, 2013; Berry, 2007; Van Reenen, 1998).

Another important aspect of job satisfaction is the type of work performed (Baro et al., 2013; Landry, 2000; Leysen & Boydston, 2009; Lim, 2008). Research on job satisfaction of cataloging librarians (Baro et al., 2013; Leysen & Boydston, 2009) indicated that the majority of catalogers were satisfied with their job. The main sources of their satisfaction were benefits, personal respect, relationships with colleagues, the opportunity to learn new skills, supervision, and performance evaluation. Along the same lines, Lim (2008) examined job satisfaction of information technology workers in academic libraries in the United States. He suggested that a sense of belonging to the library, a feeling of acceptance, autonomy, and promotion opportunities were highly related to job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction of information professionals has been examined in relation to use of technology. Estabrook, Bird, and Gilmore (1990) reported that the use of technology alone was not an important factor. However, Bii and Wanyama (2001) revealed that the use of technology was a source of job satisfaction, confirming the findings of Edwards, Day, and Walton (1995).

Thus, a significant amount of literature has shown a relationship between job satisfaction and certain aspects of the job. Studies suggest that intrinsic factors such as nature of work, level of autonomy, and sense of accomplishment contribute more to information professionals' job satisfaction, while salary is not considered a primary source of satisfaction (Bernstein, 2011; Pors & Johannsen, 2002; Togia et al., 2004). However, empirical evidence about information professionals' job satisfaction working in a range of information organizations is still very limited. The investigation of job satisfaction of information professionals working in different information organizations in Greece in relation to values that individuals attribute to their work remains to be explored. The present study specifically addresses these issues as it examines which components of work are important to job satisfaction and explores the possible differences in the level of importance with respect to organization type.

4. Theoretical framework

Values are applied to various life domains: work, religion, culture, sports, and politics (Sagie & Elizur, 1996). Values are important elements of an individual's personal, social, and professional world as they affect our choices, actions, attitudes, and behaviors (Dose, 1997; Elizur, Borg, Hunt, & Beck, 1991). The values defining one's working life are denoted as work values. Work values, like basic values, are