THE USE OF 360- DEGREE ASSESSMENT IN PUBLIC LIBRARIANS OF MAZANDARAN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at performance appraisal of librarians in public libraries in Mazandaran province, using 360 degree feedback. This research was applied research and used survey-analysis methodology. The data were collected by former - build questionnaires. Validity and reliability of questionnaires were in high level, Cronbach's alpha in all questionnaires were higher than 0.7. The research population was 95 librarians, 32 superiors and 95 colleagues and census method used due to limitation of population. Forth population was 95 users that was selected by random sampling. Each librarian assessed by one superior, all colleagues, one user and a Self-assessment questionnaire filled by each librarian. This research used SPSS 22 and PLS and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and ANOVA test were used for data analysis.

Librarians' performance in total (4.35) and status of their performance in moral - value skills (4.44), functional skills (4.32) and process skills (4.33) was higher than average level. There was no significant difference between the results of four groups in the moral - value index (0.097) but there was significant difference between the results of four groups in functional skills, process skills and total assessment of librarians cause significant level was lower than 0.05. Comparison of librarians' performance scores in each library showed significant level for 3 indexes and total score of performance evaluation was lower than 0.05 that showed significant difference was observed in these indexes among the 32 libraries. The status of librarians' performance in all 3 indexes such as moral values, functional skills, process skills and a total assessment of librarians were in higher than average and desirable level.

Keywords: Librarians, 360 degree feedback, performance appraisal, public libraries

INTRODUCTION

Today's organizations are formed from important elements such as capital, manpower, technology and management which according to many experts, manpower is the most important element in this regard, because the efficiency of organizations depends on true and correct implementation of duties by these manpowers in the line and headquarter circle. Since 70% of capital and resources of organizations is human resources, the maintenance of this capital requires regular training activities in all organizational levels [8],Public libraries are social institutions which provide opportunity to different walks of life to enjoy a variety of sources and information services. So, they have a privileged position among today's cultural and social institutions. These libraries not only are one of the most effective levers of social and cultural development of societies, but also, due to having a predominant role in public access to information, are considered as the most important symbols in manifestation of social justice [3].

Libraries and information centers consists of three components:

1) The physical facilities or a series of features which library functions are performed by them,

2) A set of resources,

3) The manpower for collecting and organizing resources and retrieving information required by the users.

Only the last of these three types, namely manpower can yield life to libraries and causes the library to become a vital and dynamic force for the society which it serves. The philosophy of well-trained manpower is service to users [10].

The assessment of an action is feedback of activities and comparison of them with defined criteria during which units and human factors get information from the manner of their performance and its effect on the performance of the organization and officials' comments [12],The new stress of managerial proceeding in planning the work requires that organizations make the basic information available to individuals for personal and professional development. Since the evaluation processes of individuals' performance rarely provide accurate information about their professional development to individuals, it is inevitably necessary to obtain such information from another source. 360-degree assessment process have responded to the need and provides general, useful and comprehensive information to the people to facilitate career advancement [6].

The performance evaluation using 360 degrees method is a group evaluation in which a list of personal, behavioral and operational indexs are prepared and importance coefficients are considered for them and all the people involved directly and indirectly in the organization including superiors, colleagues, subordinates and customers were asked to evaluate him based on the determined indexs . The individual who is rated, participates in the process as a self-assessor. Results obtained from total assessments are totalized and gi ven feedback to individual as a report including acquired points in every aspect, strengths and improvable points [4],Since different methods of performance evaluation are one-dimensional and the testee is evaluated from a specific dimension and the other aspects of the individual are ignored, this can make a bias in assessment. But it can be hoped that librarians are evaluated accurately with a 360-degree group assessment. With regard to the aforementioned statements, the problem of present study is the quality of librarians' performance in public libraries in Mazandaran province, using 360 degree feedback.

The advantage and significance of the study

The evaluation of staff performance is a process which is done with a philosophy of creating appropriate situation for the competent rearing and in addition to the promotion, transfer and withdrawal of staff stages, the process of attracting, employing and appointing is investigated based on the criteria. In fact, organizations as a social creature necessarily requires a rule to assess their employees' competencies in order to use it in executive decision makings, of employees' growth and development, and feedback to staff as well as organizational research [7],Out of different methods for evaluation of performance, 360 degree feedback has a comprehensive outlook toward abilities, behavior, competence and performance of the individuals in an organization through which people will be able to evaluate their own working performance as others judge[1].

The present study is investigable from two dimensions:

The first is the theoretical foundation; then policy making and the execution procedure. In terms of theory, the importance of knowledge and wisdom and the librarian's role as the most important human resources creates the necessity of using effective tools such as 360-degree feedback, along with the traditional model. Since public libraries in Mazandaran province need an inter-system and systematic assessment to foster librarians' development such a way that librarians to be motivated and develop

necessary abilities considering the role and position which have in fulfillment of objectives. In terms of executive dimension it must be said that Incorrect assessments can lead to waste of resources, the use of incorrect and misleading information, damage to relationships, loss of motivation, job dissatisfaction, desertion and unfair assessments. It is easy to conclude that since the occurrence of any of the mentioned problems will have a lot of losses for libraries, and the need to implement a comprehensive system, such as 360 degree feedback which yet minimize the amount of deviation, peers more than before. Therefore, a clear profile of librarians' occupational status is provided by group assessment of librarian's performance in public libraries of Mazandaran province and long strides preparations is taken to improve their quality by elimination of defects.

The purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the performance of librarians in public libraries in Mazandaran province using 360-degree feedback. In this regard, the following sub-objectives were examined:

The recognition of moral - value skills of librarians of public libraries in Mazandaran province

- The recognition of functional skills of librarians in public libraries of Mazandaran province

- The recognition of process skills of librarians in public libraries of Mazandaran province

The hypotheses of the study

There is a significant relationship between the performance statuses of librarians in public libraries of Mazandaran province and the average level.

2. There is significant difference between the performance evaluations of librarians in public libraries of Mazandaran province.

Research literature:

Farajpahloo, Nooshinfard and Hassanzadeh[2],have evaluated librarians' performance using 360 degree in a case Study of Gilan public libraries. This study is an analytical research and its method is a combination of survey and library study. The data collection tools were researcher-made questionnaires which was made to monitor librarians from the perspective of the four groups of chairman, colleagues, individual himself and client. The obtained results showed that there is a significant difference between librarians' self-assessment and the assessment of the other three groups in "moral-value" index. There is also a significant difference between clients' viewpoints and other appraisal groups' point of view in the process index.

In the functional index and a global assessment of librarians, there is a significant difference between the four groups of appraisers ' viewpoints. Khoshbakht, Mirkazemi and Poursoltani Zarandi [7],in their research, have tried to assess PE teachers of University of Birjand using 360-degree feedback. The present study was a descriptive-analytical research which has been implemented as a field research. The population used in this study were 8 full-time faculty members of Faculty of Physical Education in University of Birjand. The results showed that teachers' performance (self-appraiser) is desirable from viewpoints of each of the four participating groups. In communicational skills, there is a significant differences between the viewpoints of teachers and other groups' look-outs.

In this index, teachers evaluated themselves better than other groups. Regarding functional index, self-appraisers have evaluated themselves better than other groups. Mousavi Rad, Roozbahani and Roh [9],in their study, have attempted to evaluate physical education teachers' performance using 360 degree feedback in a case study of teachers of Persian city. The study was a descriptive-analytical research which was implemented as a field research. The population of the study were managers,

physical education teachers, teachers of other courses and high school students of all female schools of Persian city (10 schools). They were 1022 participants (950 students, 10 physical education teachers, 10 managers and 50 teachers of other courses). The results indicated that PE teachers' performance of Persian city was lower than average level in terms of scientific skill and research skill and in athletic, behavioral and moral skills were higher than average level. Therefore, physical education teachers are in an undesirable status in scientific and research indexes and enjoy an optimal status in the athletic, behavioral and ethical indexes and in training, teaching and social skills as well as the overall performance are in an average level. Jantti and Greenhalgh [5],in investigation of the leadership competency in a reference point for the development and evaluation entitled leadership competencies, a turning point for development and evolution, have attempted to establish an integrated and transparent approach for the development of leadership skills in order to respond to the labor force. In this study, a consultant was utilized to facilitate the Investigation of the leadership status in library of University of Wollongong. To investigate these processes and actions, various methods was used such as holding workshops, semi-structured interviews and surveying

characteristics of Lamynger's competency method using 360 degree feedback. All library staff were evaluated in this study. Evaluators consisted of managers, executive staff (librarians) and colleagues. Findings indicated that the improved confidence among managers, further readiness to deal with employees and the developmental programs in a profession had a constructive role in their management. Also, leadership performance improve significantly in good weather conditions. The results showed that some managers who were evaluated for the first time using this method, withdraw to present their views and opinions. In contrast, many of the staff, despite initial responses, shared their views.

Rai and Singh [11],tried to evaluate the study of intermediary variables in the relationship between 360 degree feedback and employees' performance. This study was an experimental research. This study included a sample of managers (N = 198) who were working in the western part of India in 4 organizations (organizations were similar in terms of their sizes, methods and systems). The evaluation was carried out by staff, senior managers, simulated rank managers and self-evaluation. The findings indicated that assessors know 360 degrees method as a good way to evaluate the performance of

managers and staff. The results also showed that interpersonal relationships and quality of working life have a mediating influence over each other. The results also indicate that that supporting superiors and others in organizations and enriching their working life causes self-development of people in the organization.

Tee and Ahmad [13],were used 360 degrees feedback as an integrated framework for learning and assessment in their study. The findings showed that when the elements in 360 degrees method were combined and integrated in the performance of feedback, they help maximize the learning promotion. Assessors were determined 6 main core to assess learning which include: timing, quality, quantity, and social pressures.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is an applied research using survey-analytical method; the data is collected by a 360 degrees former - build questionnaire which its validity has already been obtained and its reliability, based on Cronbach's alpha, is greater than 7.0 in all cases. The research population was 95 librarians, 32 superiors and 95 colleagues and census method used due to limitation of population. The forth population was 95 users that was selected by random sampling. In this study, the data were obtained using SPSS22 software and

allocation of importance coefficient to groups In order to evaluate librarians' performance and then, by calculating the mean scores of the groups, for each item, scores related to each librarian have been calculated. It is worth mentioning that weightings have been carried out based on weight to the views of four evaluators (chief, librarian, librarian's colleague and library clients). Thus, based on the advantages of 360 degrees feedback, the importance coefficient has been considered 2, 3, and 1 for viewpoints of chairman, client, the colleague and self-evaluator himself respectively.

RESULTS

Out of 95 under evaluation Librarians, 4.28 percent are men and 6/71 percent are women, Out of this number, the majority of them have a bachelor's degree (58/51%) and MA degree (40%) (9/57 percent Library Science degree and 1/42 percent non-library degree). The majority of respondents (29/47%) had less than 5 years of work experience and the lowest (21/4%) had a history of over 20 years of service. Under evaluation librarians' age frequency distribution revealed that the majority of respondents (58/31%) were in the age group of 32 to 37 years old and the lowest (05/1%) were in the age group of over 50 years old.

To answer the research questions and hypotheses SPSS22 software was used, the research findings are as follows:

To assess the performance of public librarians in Mazandaran province, the data extracted from the questionnaire were analyzed. For this purpose, the overall scores for each of the three librarians' performance indicators were obtained based on the allocation of importance coefficients to groups. Therefore, the importance coefficient has been considered 2, 3, and 1 for viewpoints of chairman, client, the colleague and self-evaluator himself respectively and scores related to each of 3 indicators are obtained by calculating the mean scores. It should be noted that in this study, the average of acquired scores were compared with the average value (4.3). The single sample student t test was used with respect to Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results and normality of the data. Results related to According to Table 1, the significance level of the test in all three indicators and the overall performance of librarians is smaller than 0/05. As a result, at confidence level of 95 percent, the hypothesis regarding equality of average of scores with the average value of (4/3) is not accepted. Considering the average values, it is the public libraries in Mazandaran province. The results can be observed in Table 2.

With regard to the fact that in the comparison coefficient of a particular group. Also, among questions, the questionnaires which had been common questions have been examined whereby the obtained results are presented below, set to receive the viewpoints of each group, 20 between the appraisers groups, the comparison conditions should be the same. The raw data obtained from the evaluation of each group will be studied regardless of the importance clear that librarians' performance status in 3 skills of moral-value, functional, and process, as well as the overall assessment of librarians is higher than the average value and is in a desirable level. Also, the one-way ANOVA was used to compare the performance evaluation of the four groups of appraisers at this test are presented in Table 1.

According to the results in Table 2, significance level for "moral value skills" index is equal to 0/097 and is greater than 0/05. Therefore, at confidence level of 95%, it follows that there is no significant difference between the assessment results of four groups in this index. However, the significant level in the "functional skills", "process skills" indexes and overall assessment of performance is smaller than 0/05 which indicates there is a significant difference in the results of the four appraiser groups. Then, Duncan test was used to investigate these differences. The results of these tests are shown in the following tables and charts. According to Figure 1, in moral-value index, there is no significant difference between the assessment results of the 4 groups. According to Duncan test results in Table 3 and Figure 2, the evaluation results of functional skills in assessment groups of chairman, colleague and self- appraiser have no significant difference and they have allocated the maximum amount for themselves. Also, the evaluation results of clients' functional skills have the lowest value and have a significant difference with remaining groups.

Based on the Duncan test results in Table 4 and Figure 3, the evaluation results of process skills in assessment groups of chairman, colleague and self- appraiser have no significant difference and they have allocated the maximum amount for themselves. Also, the evaluation results of clients' process skills have the lowest value and have a significant difference with colleagues and self- appraiser groups. But there is no significant difference between the assessment results of clients and chairman.

The results of the overall assessment of librarians have been displayed both in Table 5 and Figure 4. Concerning the Duncan test results in Table 5 and Figure 4, the evaluation results for overall assessment of librarians in assessment groups of chairman, colleague and self-appraiser have no significant difference and

they have allocated the maximum amount for themselves. Also, the results for overall assessment of librarians in assessment group of clients have the lowest value and have a significant difference with colleagues and self- appraiser groups. But there is no significant difference between the assessment results of clients and chairman. One-way ANOVA test was also used to compare librarians' performance dimensions in 32 under study libraries.

Based on the results of Table 6, the significance level for all three indexes and total performance evaluation score is smaller than 0/05 which represent the existence of a significant difference in the scores of these indexes between 32 libraries.

Table 1: Student t-test results to evaluate the librarians' performance.

library	mean	Standard deviation	T statistic amount	Degrees of freedom	Significance level	Student t-test result
Moral-value skills	**4.44**	**0.336**	**41.83**	**94**	**0.001**	**Higher than average level (3.4)**
Functional skills	**4.32**	**0.362**	**35.59**	**94**	**0.001**	**Higher than average level (3.4)**
Process skills	**4.33**	**0.365**	**35.62**	**94**	**0.001**	**Higher than average level (3.4)**
Librarians global assessment	**4.35**	**0.323**	**40.87**	**94**	**0.001**	**Higher than average level (3.4)**

Table 2: The results of ANOVA test in order to compare the performance of four appraisers

index	source	The sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	The mean of squares	F statistic value	Significance level
Moral-value skills	intergroup	2.12	3	0.708	2.119	0.097
	intragroup	125.55	376	0.334		
	total	127.67	379			
Functional skills	intergroup	8.44	3	2.813	8.717	0.001
	intragroup	121.33	376	0.323		
	total	129.76	379			
Process skills	intergroup	4.86	3	1.621	4.623	0.003
	intragroup	131.83	376	0.351		
	total	136.70	379			
Overall assessment of Librarians	intergroup	4.65	3	1.551	5.252	0.001
	intragroup	111.06	376	0.295		
	total	115.71	379			

Table 3: Findings of Duncan test for functional skills index

group	The composed homogeneous groups	
	First group	Second group
client	4.15	
chairman		4.38
colleagues		4.49
self-appraiser		4.54
Significance level	1	0.072

Table 4: Findings of Duncan test for process skills index

group	The composed homogeneous groups	
	First group	Second group
client	4.21	
chairman	4.37	4.37
colleagues		4.43
self-appraiser		4.52
Significance level	1	0.082

Table 5: Findings of Duncan test for overall assessment of librarians

group	The composed homogeneous groups	
	First group	**Second group**
client	4.24	
chairman	4.39	4.39
colleagues		4.46
self-appraiser		4.53
Significance level	1	0.079

Table 6: The results of ANOVA test to compare the performance dimensions of the 32 libraries.

| index	source	The sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	The mean of squares	F statistic value	Significance level
Moral-value skills	intergroup	7.281	31	0.235	4.69	0.097
	intragroup	3.156	63	0.050		
	total	10.437	94			
Functional skills	intergroup	9.025	31	0.291	2.63	0.001
	intragroup	6.964	63	0.111		
	total	15.989	94			
Process skills	intergroup	9.500	31	0.306	4.28	0.003
	intragroup	4.514	63	0.072		
	total	14.014	94			
Overall assessment of Librarians	intergroup	7.662	31	0.247	4.31	0.001
	intragroup	3.615	63	0.057		
	total	11.276	94			
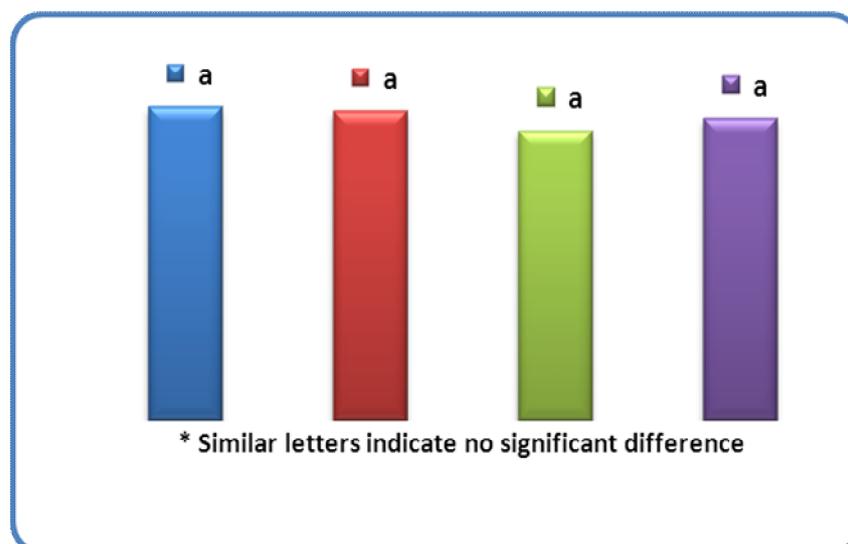
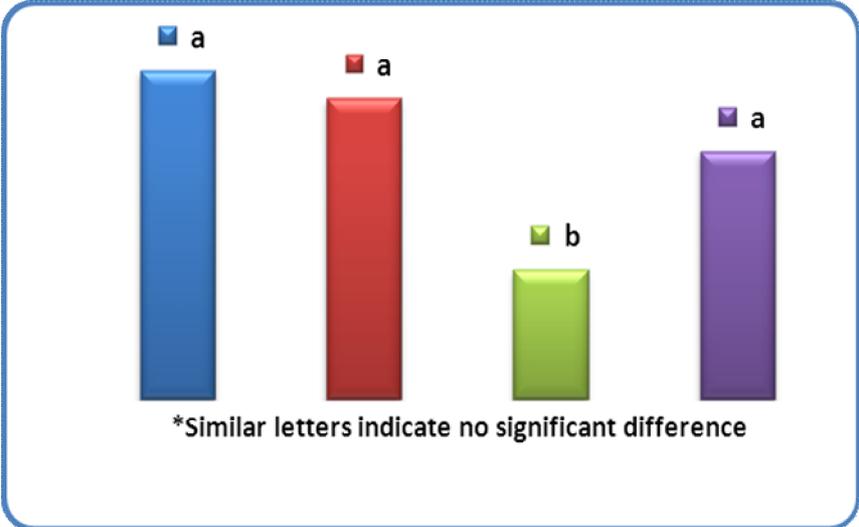**Figure 1: Duncan test results for moral value skills index**

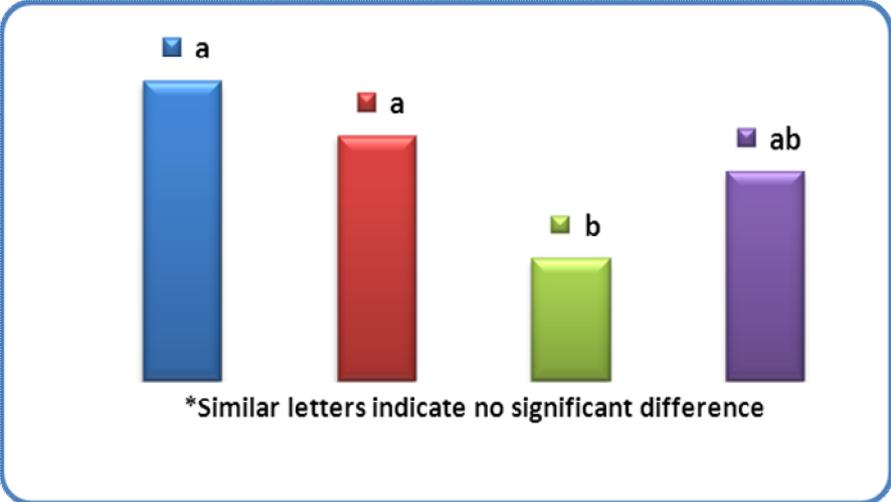**Figure 2: Duncan test results for functional skills index**

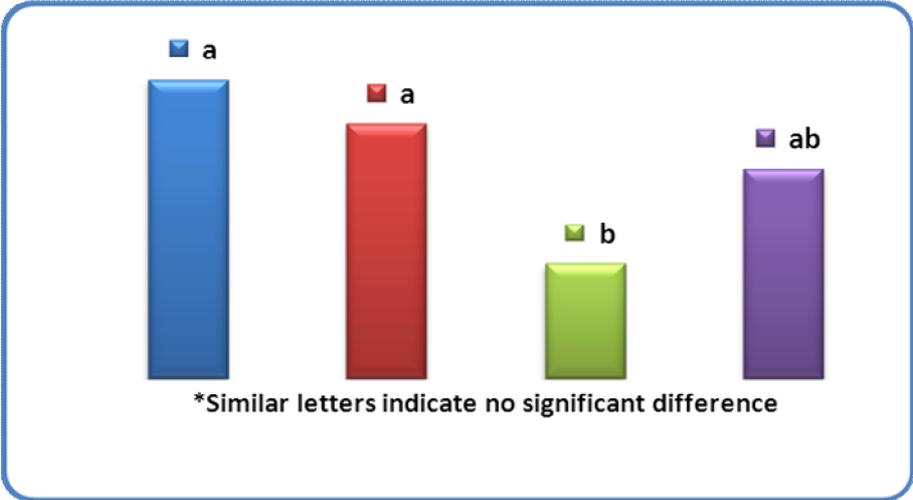**Figure 3: Duncan test results for process skills index**

Figure 4: Duncan test results for overall assessment of librarians

DISCUSSION

One of the key points in evaluating the performance using 360 degree feedback method is the identification of individual or appraiser himself/herself from others' appraisal toward himself/herself. An appraiser himself can be aware of others' opinions toward himself using this method and he will have a true understanding regarding his behavior and actions and will attempt to eliminate his defects. The performance evaluation using 360 degree feedback method will be useful for organizations with having significant advantages compared to other methods of evaluation. Organizations, through using it, can cause a boom in activities, clients and customers' satisfaction as well as efficiency and productivity in their organization. The research findings indicate that moral value skills of librarians in public libraries of Mazandaran are higher than average level and satisfactory. Faraj Pahloo (2012) has achieved the same result in this regard. This means that librarians, along with doing their tasks, try to observe ethical principles and value in their work and respect these principles. Librarians must be vogue and cheerful due to cultural and scientific environment in which they are working and try to behave respectfully in dealing with other people in order that clients could express their demands more easily.

Libraries must be a stress-free environment especially during peak times of work and librarians must be careful in these times to respect the rights of others in order to avoid tension. Librarians who are positive oriented and have a positive attitude toward affairs and are cautious at privacy of others become cherished among colleagues and clients and this can help proper implementation of affairs. Also, research findings suggest that functional skills of librarians in public libraries of Mazandaran have a Performance higher than average level and is satisfactory. Librarians should have a high speed in their work and this speed, especially in working pressure times, must be along with an accuracy. Librarians who have time management at their work, do their work on time and have enough time for their work. Occupational skills, familiarity with new information technologies, proficient in using the librarianship softwares, all are an indication of librarians' high performance in libraries. Librarians who are trying to be the best in their field, feel more responsibility in dealing with clients and colleagues and this shows their functional skills. Additionally, the research findings showed that processing skills of librarians of public libraries in Mazandaran is satisfactory and higher than average level. This means that Librarians who attend timely at their work,

have an interest and passion for their work and this discipline have had a positive effect at their work. Librarians, in order to have the ability to respond to clients, should always try to kept their occupational information up to date and transfer this knowledge to colleagues and others that the cooperation with colleagues is a team working and helps things go better. Librarians who have more flexibility regarding comments and suggestions of other people, accept opinions and include them in their work and establish a good relationship in dealing with people who have different thoughts and opinions and observe justice in providing services to their clients. This group of librarians enjoys high process skills, because firstly they know their abilities and their skills and are always volunteer in performing the great tasks and further responsibilities and do not have apprehension in presenting new recommendations in their working field. This will be their success factor in getting things done.

SUGGESTIONS

- According to the research findings concerning librarians' moral value skills, it is recommended that librarians respect the rights of others at doing their work especially in stressful times and increase positivism at themselves.

- According to the research findings related to librarians' functional skills, it is recommended that Librarians learn skills such as the use of librarianship softwares, familiarity with the new technologies of information and necessary knowledge at their working domain and strive to improve such skills.

- According to the research findings related to librarians' process skills, it is recommended that Librarians do more group work and have more flexibility on the comments and suggestions of other people.

- Librarians or statistical population, in any organization, should be taught before implementing the evaluation and be informed regarding the manner of implementing the process and the use of its results in order to obtain more credible results in response to the questionnaire.

- It is recommended to develop unit and standard indexes by librarianship associations or mother organizations for evaluating the performance of their staff.

- It is recommended to use previous studies for training and planning staff as well as applying the people based on their efficiency and experience

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