

## **دراسة الرضا الوظيفي والخصائص التنظيمية في المكتبات الخاصة ومراكز المعلومات بدولة الكويت**

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**ملخص:** تبحث هذه الدراسة الرضا الوظيفي في المكتبات الخاصة ومراكز المعلومات بدولة الكويت لقيمته وعلاقته الوثيقة بالأداء التنظيمي والإنتاجية، فتم دراسة عدد من الخصائص التنظيمية لأهميتها وارتباطها المباشر بالرضا الوظيفي مثل الإشراف على الموظفين، والعمل الجماعي، وظروف العمل، والاستقلالية الذاتية في العمل، وكذلك الفرص المتاحة للتقدم الوظيفي. وتم جمع البيانات من خلال استبانة وزعت على 70 من أمناء المكتبات يعملون في 10 مكتبات خاصة ومراكز المعلومات بدولة الكويت. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الإشراف على أمناء المكتبات الخاصة ومراكز المعلومات بشكل منضبط، وذلك من خلال العمل الجماعي والظروف التي يعمل فيها الأمناء، والاستقلالية الذاتية في عملهم، والفرص المتاحة لهم للتقدم الوظيفي - أسهم بشكل كبير في تحقيق الرضا الوظيفي بينهم. واعتماداً على نتائج هذه الدراسة قدم الباحثان عدة توصيات تساعد على تحقيق الرضا الوظيفي بين الموظفين في المكتبات ومراكز المعلومات.

**المصطلحات الأساسية:** الرضا الوظيفي، العمل الجماعي، ظروف العمل، الاستقلالية الذاتية، التقدم الوظيفي، تطوير الموظفين.

# A Study of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Characteristics In Kuwaiti Special Libraries and Information Centers

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**Abstract:** Job satisfaction has been studied for its value and association with organizational performance, productivity, and profitability. A number of organizational characteristics have been examined for their central position in organizational behavior and human resource development in organizations. For this study, the following organizational variables were selected to examine their association with job satisfaction: supervision, teamwork, working conditions, autonomy, and opportunities for career advancement. Data was collected from seventy professional librarians working in eleven special libraries and information centers in Kuwait. A questionnaire was administered by managers of these libraries. A typical respondent was a young graduate, Kuwaiti national, with an experience of about 8-10 years. Pearson correlation coefficient was computed and it was found that all the five organizational variables were significantly correlated with job satisfaction.

**Key words:** Job satisfaction, Teamwork, Working conditions, Job autonomy, Career advancement, Staff development.

## Introduction

Job satisfaction is a significant measure that has been a subject of extensive study and research. A large number of studies have been conducted on job satisfaction and its relationship with organizational profiles and characteristics. The relationship of job satisfaction with

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performance and commitment has been widely examined (Christen, Iyer, & Soberman, 2006; Cohrs, Abele, & Dette, 2006; Rayton, 2006). On the administrative level, job satisfaction may provide valuable information for decision makers that will help in creating better working conditions for employees (Edwards & Walton, 2000; Farley, Broady-Preston & Hayward, 1998). Most importantly, job satisfaction is essential for employees because they spend most of their time in the workplace, which in turn affects their personal lives and success in organizations (Judge and Watanabe, 1994; Granny, Smith, & Stone, 1992; Judge and Watanabe, 1994).

## **Problem**

Librarians have a key role to play in the performance of special libraries. A need was felt to examine job satisfaction of these librarians in Kuwaiti special libraries and information centers in relation to selected organizational variables that directly influence their performance. Five organizational variables were selected for this purpose: supervision, working conditions, teamwork, autonomy, and career advancement.

## **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was formulated for this study:

Job satisfaction of special Kuwaiti librarians is significantly related to selected organizational characteristics.

The following five sub-hypotheses were derived from the main hypothesis:

1. Job satisfaction of special Kuwaiti librarians is significantly related to the supervision they receive.
2. Job satisfaction of special Kuwaiti librarians is significantly related to the working conditions of their organization.
3. Job satisfaction of special Kuwaiti librarians is significantly related to the situation of teamwork in their organization.
4. Job satisfaction of special Kuwaiti librarians is significantly related to the amount of autonomy enjoyed by the employees of the organization.
5. Job satisfaction of special Kuwaiti librarians is significantly

related to the career advancement opportunities provided in the organization.

## **Literature Review**

Job satisfaction has been defined as “how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs” (Spector, 1997). It is also a state of mind that results from an individual’s needs or values being met by the job and its environment (Hopkins, 1983).

Several theories have analyzed job satisfaction. According to Herzberg (1966), there are lower-level needs such as having a good salary, good working conditions, and a good relationship with co-workers. These lower-level needs are called the "Hygiene" factors. There are also higher-level needs which include the nature of work, responsibility, and recognition of superiors. These higher-level needs are called the "motivation" factors. Herzberg suggests that employees do not achieve satisfaction by fulfilling the hygiene needs that merely function as a way to decrease dissatisfaction, but rather by fulfilling the motivation needs.

The Hygiene and motivators or the two-factor theory has received some criticism regarding the separation between satisfaction and dissatisfaction and placing them on different planes. Another reason for criticizing the theory is that workers usually tend to blame outside factors for their dissatisfaction and give themselves the credit regarding satisfaction (King, 1970).

Another theory related to job satisfaction is McClelland’s (1961) acquired needs theory. The theory suggests that each individual acquires three types of needs. Individuals with the need for achievement feel the desire to succeed and accomplish things. The need for affiliation makes individuals desire acceptance and friendship of others. Finally, those who have the need for power feel that they must control their environment and influence others.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs classifies the needs of individuals into five levels. In order to reach the highest level of the hierarchy, one needs to fulfill the lower levels of needs first. The physiological needs like air, water and food are the most basic needs for human beings and are at the bottom of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. They are essential not only for

sustaining individuals' lives, but also for motivating people to seek the higher needs. There is also the safety needs (job security, health insurance, etc.), Social needs (friendship, giving and receiving love, etc.), esteem needs (self-respect, recognition, accomplishment, etc.), and finally, self-actualization (wisdom, development of abilities, etc.), which is at the top of the hierarchy. Managers need to be aware that in order to motivate their employees to advance in their jobs, their lower needs must be fulfilled first.

Van Ham, et al. (2006) examined the reason why employees felt overworked and burnt out. Based on their extensive review, they noted that one of the factors that caused burnout was the job satisfaction that employees experienced. They found that the factors that increase job satisfaction were mentioned more than twice including diversity of work, relations and contact with colleagues, and being involved in teaching. However, factors that decrease job satisfaction were: low income, too many working hours, administrative burden, heavy workload, lack of time, and lack of recognition. Aspects of job satisfaction concerning the content of the profession seemed to increase job satisfaction, and aspects concerning employment conditions seemed to decrease job satisfaction.

Ballard and Blessing (2006) carried out a study at a large university and examined how an employee orientation program, based on the belief that early socialization contribto the success of new employees, was a significant factor in employee satisfaction. They found that if an orientation model included a focused orientation session, a checklist, and individual meetings with key library faculty and staff, employee adjustment shall be enhanced, and eventually satisfaction shall be fulfilled in an organization. Pertinent aspects of the orientation focused heavily on socialization factors such as understanding the mission and values, meeting key people within the organization, and becoming acquainted with other new colleagues.

Cardina & Wicks (2004) noted that the concept of change had become a thoroughly familiar theme in librarianship. This may cause a buildup of stress that could produce eventual dissatisfaction at work. This could lead to negative physical and emotional health, tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover, and may eventually result in complete burnout.

Leysen & Boydston (2009) examined job satisfaction among catalogers at ARL member libraries in the United States. Eighty-eight percent of the catalogers studied were satisfied with their current job and the majority would make the same career choice again. Job facets that catalogers found most important were the benefits package, relationships with coworkers, and opportunities to learn new skills. Catalogers wanted to be treated fairly, to be consulted about issues directly related to their work, and to be informed about current activities in their organization.

Lim (2008) examined job satisfaction of library information technology (IT) workers in relation to demographic, socioeconomic, and work-related variables, such as a sense of belonging, faith in wanting to belong, a feeling of acceptance, paying dues, job autonomy, the broker's role, and promotion opportunities. A total of 443 mail surveys were sent to a sample of IT workers at 30 member university libraries of the Association of Research Libraries in the United States. A total of 202 surveys were returned, resulting in a 45.6% response rate. This study found that salary, an MLS degree, a sense of belonging, faith in wanting to belong, a feeling of acceptance, job autonomy, and promotion opportunities were related to job satisfaction of the library IT workers. This study also explained why some IT workers were more satisfied with their jobs than others, thereby contributing to the improvement of the quality of their work lives.

Poole & Denny (2001) studied library professionals in 2-year colleges with regard to their satisfaction in handling techno-stress and other changes in the environment. They noted that, by and large, professionals were satisfied in their transition, yet greater attention needed to be directed toward improving their inclusion in decision-making, revising job descriptions, and experimenting with alternative reward systems.

Using the Employee Satisfaction Inventory (ESI), Togia, Koustelios, & Tsigilis (2004) investigated job satisfaction among academic librarians in Greece. The instrument assessed six dimensions of job satisfaction: working conditions, pay, promotion, job itself, supervision, and the organization as a whole. Greek academic librarians were most satisfied with job itself, supervision, and working conditions and less satisfied with pay and promotion. Prior working experience contributed negatively to the prediction of satisfaction with working conditions,

supervision, and organization as a whole, whereas participation in decision-making positively influenced job and organization as a whole.

Cullen (2001) examined the perspectives of job satisfaction. Cullen found that academic and research libraries faced major threats of global digital environment and increasing competition. They must improve the quality of their services in order to survive. They found a relationship between service quality and job satisfaction. The respective model demonstrated that satisfaction could be seen at both a micro-level and macro-level as an outcome of service quality. Suggestions were offered about ways in which library and information service providers could make better use of performance and satisfaction evidence.

Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) noted that organizational effectiveness was related to the performance and satisfaction of human resource. In order to make employees satisfied and committed to their jobs in academic and research libraries, they found a distinct need for strong and effective motivation at various organizational levels.

Imran, et al. (2014) investigated the impact of job satisfaction and job performance on organizational commitment. A sample of 200 employees was selected from different public and private educational institutions. Regression analysis was used to test whether a positive relationship existed between job satisfaction and performance, and between organizational commitment and positive performance. It was found that organizational commitment had a significant effect on job satisfaction.

Kossek, Ellen, and Ozeki (1998) examined the relationship among work-family conflict, policies, job and life satisfaction. The meta-analytic results showed that regardless of the type of measure used, a consistent negative relationship existed among all forms of work-family conflict and job-life satisfaction. This relationship was slightly less strong for family to work conflict. Although confidence intervals overlap, the relationship between job-life satisfaction and work-family conflict was stronger for women than men.

Finn (2001) conducted a quantitative study ( $n=178$ ) in a teaching hospital in Australia and found that autonomy was the most important job component for registered nurses' job satisfaction. The actual level of satisfaction with autonomy was 4.6, on a scale of 1-7. The mean for job

satisfaction was 4.3, with the job components, professional status, and interaction adding most substantially to the result. There was discontentment with the other two job components, which were task requirements and organizational policies. Demographic comparisons showed that nurses who were preceptors had significantly less job satisfaction than the other nurses at the hospital.

Arches (1991) studied two hundred and seventy five randomly selected social workers to better understand burnout and job satisfaction. The findings from hierarchical multiple regressions revealed that perceived lack of autonomy and the influence of the funding sources were major contributors to burnout, and perceived autonomy and bureaucratization were major contributors to job satisfaction. The findings challenged the assumption that bureaucracy is the most efficient form of organization and questioned the ideological and social control functions of organizations.

Landry (2000) found that Job satisfaction at the reference desk was an important consideration. It not only affected quality of life and the overall level of life satisfaction experienced by the reference staff, it also affected reference work. Satisfied employees engaged in activities conducive to reference service effectiveness. Life satisfaction and job satisfaction were related in a reciprocal manner, with life satisfaction having the stronger effect. There was a moderate positive relationship between life satisfaction and job satisfaction; however, a moderate negative relationship was found between life satisfaction and the desire to find a comparable job in another library.

Trying to discover what satisfies or dissatisfies people about their jobs could be a difficult task. People have different priorities. Accordingly, there could be many factors that affect job satisfaction. Those factors would either make people feel happy or unhappy about their jobs.

## **Supervision**

Maintaining a good relationship between employees and superiors is crucial to the survival of the work because both sides depend on each other. The quality of management can affect satisfaction either positively or negatively. Leysen and Boydston (2009) indicated that 88% of catalogers felt that trust and maintaining a good relationship with management is very important.

## **Working Conditions**

Saari and Judge (2004) emphasized the importance of working conditions such as nature of work and compensation programs. They mentioned that the managers needed to pay attention to other attributes of the job that the employees would find desirable such as the job being interesting and challenging. This indicates that the employees are not just interested in the salaries. Managers need to fulfill the employees desire for self-actualization which is as important as the rest of the job attributes.

## **Staff development**

The chance for professional development plays an important role in affecting satisfaction among employees. Professional development includes many activities, such as reading journal articles, attending conferences, joining professional training classes and so on. In his study about job satisfaction among South African librarians working in an academic library in transition, Hart (2010) reported that chances for personal development were rare. Therefore, the staff of the library felt dissatisfied.

## **Autonomy**

Autonomy is another important variable of job satisfaction. Bauer (2004) pointed out that many organizations are changing into high performance 'Workplace Organizations (HPWO)', which is a switch from the Tayloristic to the Holistic Organization Model.

## **Teamwork**

People spend much time working alongside their co-workers; the nature of their relationship greatly effects their satisfaction. Leysen and Boydston's (2009) noted that it was important to have a good relationship with co-workers. They noted that 64% of the participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with their co-workers.

## **Librarians and Job Satisfaction**

Library and Information professionals work in different units and perform different tasks. These differences in tasks and nature of job have created different reactions towards job satisfaction. According to Lynch and Verdin (1987), LIS professionals who have experienced highest levels of satisfaction are professional librarians, heads of departments, first-

level supervisors, and reference librarians. Chwe (1978) reported that catalogers are less satisfied with the nature of their job compared to reference librarians who experience more creativity, variety, and social interaction in their jobs.

**Procedures**

A survey method was used for this study. An instrument was administered to library and information professionals working in Kuwaiti special libraries and information centers. Table 1 gives names of participant libraries, number of professionals to whom the instrument was administered, and the number of filled-in responses.

**Table 1  
Participants in the Study**

<b>Names of special libraries</b>	<b>Total li- brarians</b>	<b>Total re- ceived</b>
Arab Institute of Planning (AIP)	6	4
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	8	6
Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization (KIMS)	2	2
Kuwait University special libraries	20	18
Public Authority for Applied Education and Training special libraries	9	7
Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR)	8	8
State Audit Bureau of Kuwait (SAB)	6	6
Arab Open University (AOU) special library	3	3
Gulf University for Science & Technology (GUST) special library	5	4
Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry	4	3
Ministry of Education (libraries department)	14	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>70</b>

Response rate was found to be 82.4%. High response rate was due to the fact that a direct personal contact was made with the managers of these special libraries requesting their personal intervention in collecting

the responses from the professional librarians. Also, the managers were requested to administer follow-up after first administration of the questionnaire. The responses were collected personally from the managers. This strategy for data collection was effective in view of the close proximity of these libraries and the small distances in the cities of the State of Kuwait.

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. For each organizational variable, five statements were used. For job satisfaction, a cumulative measure was obtained from the instrument. The instrument had been pre-tested and the statements were comparable with similar studies. Five statements for each organizational measure were converted into cumulative score for the purpose.

All those individuals who had a minimum of a Bachelor Degree and had served in professional positions in eleven libraries were considered eligible to participate in the study.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The participants of the study were of both genders with a relatively equal percentage: male 45.7% and females 54.3%. Seventy percent of them were Kuwaitis and 30% were foreign nationals. With regard to their academic qualifications, 77.1% of the participants had a Bachelor's Degree and 22.9% had a Master's Degree.

With respect to the age category of the participants, it was found that more than half of the respondents were in the range of 20-40 years of age. About one-third of them (34.3%) were in the age group of 41-50 years. Only 11.4% were older than 50.

61.4% had an experience of 1-10 years. Eleven of them had worked for 20 years or longer. The remaining 22.8 percent reported that their experience was in the range of 11-20 years. It appears that an average respondent was a Kuwaiti national around 30-35 year old with an experience of about 8-12 years, having a Bachelor's Degree, and belonging to either of the two genders.

## **Hypotheses Testing**

The primary purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis that employees' job satisfaction was significantly correlated with five organizational variables. For this purpose, we conducted a Pearson

Correlation Coefficient test. Results of the test are given in Table 2. For each test of organizational variables, the value of coefficient and its 2-tailed significance are given.

**Table 2**  
**Results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient**  
**N = 67**

		Supervision	Working Conditions	Teamwork	Autonomy	Career Advancement
Overall Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.771**	.865**	.670**	.838**	.583**
	Sig. 2-tailed	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	67	67	67	67	67

It was found that overall job satisfaction was correlated with the five variables at .000 level of significance, which is statistically significant in relation to the criterion of .01. Hence, the primary hypothesis of this study was supported, proving strong association between the five variables and overall satisfaction.

The first sub-hypothesis was related to supervision (coefficient: .771, significance: .000). It means that those organizations, where the professional librarians are satisfied with the supervisory role, are having a higher level of satisfaction. This sub-hypothesis was supported.

The second sub-hypothesis was that positive and favorable working conditions are positively correlated with the satisfaction of employees. This was found to be statistically significant with the coefficient value of .865, which is significant at .000. Working conditions have their vitality. These are related to space, physical conditions, ergonomic sensitivities, provisions for socio-cultural interactions, and a comfortable work atmosphere. These conditions are essential for having a satisfied workforce.

The third sub-hypothesis provided that a significant relationship existed between teamwork and employees' job satisfaction. The coefficient value was found to be .670 with the level of significance

of.000, indicating that it is statistically significant. The sub-hypothesis was thus supported. Teamwork is vital for the success of every organization. Work in sections, divisions and projects is always organized and conducted through teams. Cohesive and effective teams are favorably regarded for creating sentiments of contentment and accomplishment.

The fourth sub-hypothesis, related to policies and practices of autonomy, provided to employees was significantly related to the job satisfaction of librarians. The coefficient value was found to be.838, statistically significant at.000. In autonomous conditions, employees are given the opportunity to create their own space, set their own priorities, and perform in accordance with their operational and tactical preferences. Autonomy is positively related with job satisfaction in organizational setting in this study.

Career advancement opportunities are considered an important factor in motivating employees for better and efficient performance, resulting in a higher degree of satisfaction. In this study, we confirmed that opportunities for career advancement were statistically significant in their association with job satisfaction. The correlation coefficient found was.583, which was significant at.000. This sub-hypothesis was hence supported.

## **Conclusions**

This study has brought forth significant findings for organizations. Libraries, as organizations, create tall and firm structures where employees are given defined and specific roles for performance. Roles of librarians are compartmentalized across functional and professional domains. Job satisfaction becomes more important in library organizations.

This study has signified the contribution of supervision, teamwork, working conditions, autonomy, and career advancement in libraries. Each of these factors requires development and enforcement of such policies that make these elements core values in organizational culture. These results are consistent with the findings of similar studies in this area (Cardina & Wicks, 2004; Van Ham, et al., 2006)

Almost all libraries included in this study belong to the public sector. This is typical for most corporate organizations in the country. In

Kuwait, civil service regulations prevail in all the matters of human resources management for these library organizations. Salary structure, promotions, monetary rewards, and career opportunities are administered in strict accordance with civil service provisions. Most libraries are denied the opportunity to employ Master Degree holders as the entry-level requirement is a Bachelor's Degree. There is little incentive provided for higher qualifications and better performance in the existing civil service system. In this scenario, these organizational characteristics can provide much-needed incentives for librarians in these libraries that are otherwise governed by the civil service system.

If library management improves supervisory conditions and creates congenial working conditions where these professionals can create physical and socio-cultural conditions for themselves, it would serve as an important facilitator toward better performance and productivity of librarians. Lysen&Boydston (2009) had reached the same conclusion when they studied the satisfaction of catalogers.

Library management can also provide opportunities for job autonomy for these professionals. They should have freedom in the design and conduct of their jobs. Lim (2008) urged the need for creating work conditions where the professionals have the freedom to design their work. We also found that the librarians should have the opportunity to develop connections with other professional colleagues inside and outside the library.

One of the strongest incentives is encouraging professionals to explore and exploit career advancement opportunities they may find inside and outside Kuwait. These libraries should provide continuing development of professional competencies by conducting formal and informal staff development programs and other outlets for continued growth and advancement of library and information professionals.

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