

Library Staff Work Adjustment during the Covid-19: Implications to their Job Involvement

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ABSTRACT: *Given the expanding trends and shifting work habits in libraries, where librarians have a variety of responsibilities, knowledge of the factors affecting work adjustment and job involvement is crucial for both employers and employees. The study aimed to examine the library staff's work adjustments during the new normal and its implications on their job involvement. An adapted research questionnaire was utilized which was distributed to ninety-five (95) library staff of a state university library in Mindanao and selected private and public libraries in the Islamic City of Marawi and Iligan City. Using the descriptive correlational research design, the study utilized descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to organize the data on the participants' work adjustment and job involvement and regression analysis to ascertain if there is a significant influence of work adjustment on their job involvement. Findings show that the level of work adjustment and job involvement among library staff members was generally high during the new normal. The library staff's level of adjustment significantly influenced their job involvement implying that library staff who have higher work adjustments also tend to have higher job involvement. In light of these findings, this study points to the need to conduct empirical studies concerning types of library processes that have been redesigned technology and automation are being leveraged, how the library staff are adjusting, and how the community is responding.*

KEYWORDS: work adjustment, work capacity, work objective, job involvement, library new normal, Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

The success or failure of an organization depends on its human resources. To satisfy the growing and expanding demand for librarianship, especially in the new normal, it is vital to understand the

unique abilities of library staff, the requirements of the working conditions, and, the rewards of the work environment that fit the specific requirements, otherwise known as work adjustment. However, when people have a sense of contentment and satisfaction in their work environment, they are more likely to become involved and participate in their work and this is known as job involvement (Jyoti et al., 2021).

With their work modifications, librarians have faced difficulties. Some of the librarians struggle with a lack of technology equipment at home, a lack of personnel, senior staff members who are computer illiterate, poor internet connections, and issues with intranet access using an IP address because the intranet can only be utilized on school property. The researcher has noted that some librarians have had to make the following adjustments to their work environments: reducing service hours, using a skeleton workforce, working from home, social distancing, and always donning a face mask. Other adjustments include focusing on using technology to serve while maintaining connections with library users and coworkers. Notably, technology is one of the best communication methods, particularly in distance learning, and for carrying out library tasks both inside and outside of library buildings.

This work adjustment has a significant effect on job involvement. Chaudhuri et al. (2015), as cited by Gong et al. (2018), concluded that librarians should form imaginary creativity from social and cultural value, experience accumulation, and preference, and constantly present active interaction with the library environment to form working meaning, which should then be transferred into librarians' work value and form the work adjustment for job involvement and performance. A study conducted by Fatmawati (2021) found that the main purpose of upgrading the library environment was the convenience of working. Working from home or the office may also lead to increased job satisfaction and enhanced work-life balance.

This aforementioned recent finding prompted the researcher to investigate whether the work adjustments of the librarians during the new normal influence their level of job involvement. Thus, this current study examined the influence of work adjustment on their job involvement to measure the capabilities, identify the support needed by the library staff to enhance their skills and maximize their involvement in times of crisis.

Furthermore, understanding the relationship between employees and their environment is largely underexplored, and this study would be a contribution to this gap in the local literature. This is supported by Nykolaiszyn (2022) that the library and information science literature give a good idea of how university libraries work and what their plans are for the future. However, it doesn't go into detail about how employers or employees can improve a person's daily work environment. The result of this study shed light on the need for a road map to promote gradual and structured work adjustment for library staff and encourage organizations to consider correspondence between individuals and jobs to increase library staff job involvement.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study investigated the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of library staff. Specifically, it examined whether the adjustment of the library staff influenced their job involvement in the new normal. This assumption is based on The Theory of Work Adjustment by Dawis and Lofquist (1964) postulating that work is conceptualized as an interaction between an individual and a work environment. The work environment requires that certain tasks be performed, and the individual brings skills to perform the tasks. The environment and the individual must continue to meet each other's requirements for the interaction to be maintained. The theory is structured around the concepts of satisfaction, satisfactoriness, abilities, needs, ability requirements, reinforcer systems, correspondence, and tenure. The first claim is that an individual's work adjustment at any given time is defined by his concurrent levels of satisfactoriness and satisfaction. The tenure is a function of satisfactoriness; as tenure increases, so does the correspondence between the individual (abilities and needs) and the environment (ability requirements and reinforcer system), (*The Career Group – University of London, 2019*). To continue the dynamic process of library operations and services during the new normal, there must be a link between the library staff's skills and knowledge and the needs of the library's function during the new normal. On the other hand, job involvement with the library staff depends on the reinforcement provided by library administrators. Understanding and satisfying their needs tends to increase their job involvement.

The concept of work adjustment is defined as “the continuous and dynamic process through which the individual seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence with the work environment” (Michel et al., 2009). In such a manner that the more closely a person's talents (skills, knowledge, experience, attitude, behaviors, and so on) match the needs of the function or organization, the more likely they are to do a good job and be considered suitable by the employer. Similarly, the more closely the role or organization's reinforcers (rewards) match the values that a person strives to satisfy through their work, the more likely the individual will find the job rewarding.

On one hand, six essential values that are being sought out have been identified; these include Achievement, Comfort, Status, Altruism, Safety, and Autonomy. Achievement can be described as things that energize success and growth, whereas Comfort is concentrated on reducing distress. Status implies obtaining recognition and prestige, Altruism emphasizes harmony and helping others; safety involves ensuring predictability and dependability, and Autonomy stresses individual control and independence. The idea recognizes that the match between person and environment may not be perfect. Even the best correspondence might deteriorate over time. Because of non-work responsibilities, the person's talents may increase to the point where they outgrow their function, or their priorities may shift. The nature of the employment or the kind of benefits that an employer can provide may also change (*The Career Group – University of London, 2019*).

Based on theories and research on workplace learning, work adjustment, and work design, Ruysseveldt et al. (2020) developed the self-initiated work adjustment for learning (SIWAL) scale, which measures the adjustments that employees make in their work to enhance learning. The study discovered that the Self-Initiated Work Adjustment for Learning (SIWAL) scale demonstrated good psychometric characteristics in both studies, including a clear two-factorial structure and internal reliable sub-scales. The results revealed convergent, divergent, and concurrent validity. It implies that organizations might attempt to improve their employees' self-initiated work adjustment through organizational policies such as supportive leadership and a learning environment.

Relating the theory to the present study, Guan et al. (2015), along with the theory of work adjustment by Dawis and Lofquist, defined work adjustment as the interaction between an individual and his or her environment, and individual development includes work capacity and work objectives that are covered in this study.

Work Capacity. This variable refers to the ability to accomplish the actual job and the ability to meet the criteria of the working environment. On the other hand, an individual's ability sets and measures satisfaction with his or her working environment. Guan (2015) posits that work capacity relates to an individual's physical and mental abilities, as well as his working habits and interpersonal relationships in his workplace. Working habits are a behavioral model, and interpersonal relationships are the appropriate response to supervisors as well as getting along with partners and coworkers. Work ability must be assessed to determine whether it is high or low. Several studies have shown that, even among senior workers, work competence may be sustained. Those with inadequate job abilities require measures aimed at recovering their ability to work. Periodic health tests or other screening procedures (to alleviate musculoskeletal problems and manage body mass index), constant motivation, and efforts to improve mental capacity will all help to improve work ability (*Indian Journal Occupational Environmental Medicine, 2016*).

Work Objective. These are important tools in any organization, providing clarity, focus, and structure to the way employees work. When set correctly, work objectives help define the main goals of a job role, support the organization's mission and values, and enable employees to identify and prioritize workplace responsibilities. This helps create a road map that employees can use to measure their progress and strive towards their objectives. In the same vein, introducing work objectives as a core component can help an organization maximize efficiency, increase employee morale, and improve overall results. Furthermore, it provides a guide for the employee to do their duties following the organization's aims and objectives. Work objectives can help employees understand what is expected of them, assist in fiscal year planning, and motivate employees. When designing a working target, the goal must match the worker's personality and capacity. At each level, a helpful balance system is established, and other systems change when one of them occurs. Gong et al. (2018) revealed that librarians should positively regard the job as their career and keep good work value. For instance, objective value refers to librarians being able to acquire the spiritual

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rewards of intelligent stimulation, altruism, independence, aesthetics, achievement, and creativity. Instrumental value refers to librarians being able to acquire a sense of stability, e.g., economic rewards, safety, and working environment.

Another variable ascertained in this study is job involvement. Shim et al. (2015) mentioned that job involvement contains the following dimensions: job identification, work concentration, and work involvement. However, job identification and work concentration were only considered in this study. Job Involvement is defined as an individual's physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement with the job and work role (Jiang et al., 2014). This engagement with job activities is evidenced by worker commitment, active participation, and increased effort in job duties. Job involvement also includes employee's investment in their job and their relationships at work. Job involvement is believed to be a key factor in increasing work satisfaction and influencing organizational commitment (Jiang et al., 2014).

Moreover, studies have evidenced that a person's job involvement is strongly associated with various job characteristics such as job satisfaction, stress, commitment, job authority, job enrichment, task identity, mental health, age, tenure, job anxiety, quality of life, and burnout. Sharma (2016) further discovered that job involvement and career commitment both individually and collectively mediate the relationship between P-J fit and organizational commitment. Lanfranchi and Pekovic (2012) likewise posited that employees who work for companies that have achieved registration for environmental-related standards are more likely to have positive attitudes toward their jobs, to be actively involved in their jobs, and to donate effort.

Job Identification. There are various types of information in job identification. The job title is specified by the position title. The department and location are also mentioned, as well as the immediate supervisor's title (Johanim and Yahya, 2016). Job identification, according to Guan (2015), is an individual's level of agreement with the duties and responsibilities imposed by the working environment in which he or she would be employed. Job identification is the process of determining a job's duties and skill requirements, as well as the type of person who should be hired for it. Job analysis is the process of determining the duties and nature of jobs, as well as the types of people who should be hired to accomplish their goals (Job Analysis in HRM – Economics Discussion, 2018).

Work Concentration. The employee can concentrate on his work. Furthermore, work attention is critical to workplace success. The higher the quality of work one generates, the more time and concentration one can commit to it. An individual will not only do things faster but he or she will also ensure that these are error-free. The working atmosphere must be devoid of noise and distractions, and it must be beneficial to learning and working. Guan (2015) defines work concentration as an individual's attitude and approach to job activities. The act of focusing one's attention is known as concentration. When one concentrates, he or she tends to direct the mental energy toward a single subject, thought, or object. They tend to exclude any unrelated feelings,

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK thoughts, ideas, or sensations while doing so. Learning how to concentrate at work is critical for professional success (Lanfranchi and Pekovic, 2012). Simon & Berry (2005), furthermore, found that 99 percent of the participants of their study said that various components of workplace noise, particularly telephones left ringing at vacant desks and people talking in the background, interfered with their concentration. There was no evidence of habituation to these noises.

This study focused on the influence of work adjustment on their job involvement. The stated ideas, theories, and studies gave the researcher new insights and ideas that will help her with her research process.

Purpose of the Research

The study examined the library staff work adjustments during the new normal and their implications on their job involvement. Specifically, the study aimed to determine if the participants' work adjustment significantly influence their job involvement.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. This design is used for analyzing data and understanding the relationships of the study (Creswell, 2012). This was deemed appropriate for the study since it aimed to determine the influence between work adjustment and job involvement among academic library staff during the new normal. Using a purposive sampling method, the participants of the study were the ninety-five (95) library staff of a state university library in Mindanao and selected private and public libraries in the Islamic City of Marawi, and Iligan City. They were chosen because they were the most accessible research population for the researcher.

The instruments used in this study are a researcher-made questionnaire adapted from various research instruments most of which were based on Barker's (2007) book. The survey questionnaire consists of two parts. Part one of the research instruments is the item on work adjustment, which consists of two parts: work capacity and work objective. Part two of the research instrument is job involvement. It was administered for two weeks; one week was administered in Iligan City and another week was in Marawi City.

After obtaining the certificate of approval from the LC Research Ethics committee, the researcher obtained permission from the various heads of the different sections and departments at a state university in Mindanao as well as selected private and public libraries in Marawi City and Iligan City. After approval, the proper protocols for administering questionnaires were observed. The questionnaires were distributed face-to-face to the library staff and retrieved after they completed the instrument.

The participants were assured that the questions would not affect their job performance or their relationship with their colleagues. Informed consent was collected from them, signifying that their participation was voluntary. They were assured that the response would be treated with utmost confidentiality. They were also informed of the purpose of the questionnaire and the importance of genuine efforts and honest answers to ensure the validity of the responses. The research participants were also informed that they would not receive any compensation for participating in this study. They were, thus, requested to fill out or answer the questions with all honesty in order not to deviate from the purpose of the research. After all questions were answered, the questionnaires were retrieved and tallied for statistical treatment and analysis.

The following statistical tools were used in this study to organize and analyze the findings. For Problems 1 and 2, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to present the participants' work adjustment and job involvement. For Problem 3, multiple regression was utilized to determine whether the library staff's work adjustment significantly influenced their job involvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 depicts the frequency, percentage, and mean distribution of the summary of work adjustment. Data show that overall the library staff had high work adjustment as indicated in the overall mean of 4.24 with work objective as the highest (M 4.39) and work capacity as the lowest yet still interpreted as high (M 4.09).

Table 1. Summary Table of Work Adjustment

Work Adjustment Components	M	Interpretation	SD
Work Objective	4.09	High	0.57
Work Capacity	4.39	High	0.43
OVERALL	4.24	High	0.44

This finding implies that librarians are capable of meeting the changing demands in library and information science as well as the library's requirements. Through the continuous education of librarians supported by their institutions while others initiate further studies on their own, they are capable of handling the complexities of work adjustment in their working environment. Their work objectives are also high denoting that librarians are well-guided by the goals and objectives of the library. They are likewise aware of their roles, duties, and responsibilities, which motivates them to embrace changes and handle crises with utmost professionalism.

Such a finding is in line with Onwubiko and Chidiadi (2019) who claimed that an employee who understands the dynamics of business and can fine-tune the organizational environment, resulting in a holistic development in the overall performance thereby exercising flexibility and adjustment in the organization.

Table 2 shows that the participants had a high job involvement as indicated in the overall mean of 3.55. This indicates that librarians are well-versed in libraries and have a good awareness of their roles, responsibilities, and tasks. They also make sure that the services offered by the libraries meet the demands of all of their users. Additionally, librarians were able to work with individuals with a variety of requirements and experiences. This finding aligns with the study of Paterson (2022) espousing that COVID-19 forced librarians to rethink their work which pushed them to exercise utmost creativity and collective efforts to continue the library operations making them highly engaged in the workplace while maintaining their health and safety. The pandemic forced librarians to consider what was essential, and what was unnecessary.

Table 2: Summary of the extent of the library staff's Job Involvement

	OVER-ALL MEAN	Standard Deviation (SD)	INTERPRETATION
JOB INVOLVEMENT	3.55	0.50	HIGH

Table 3 shows the regression analysis of the influence of the library staff's work adjustment on their job involvement. Findings reveal that the whole model is significant ($F = 20.23, p = .000$). Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Library staff who have higher work adjustment also tend to have higher job involvement. However, only 29 percent of the variability in their job involvement can be accounted for by a combination of the components of work adjustment (Adjusted $R^2 = .290$). The remaining 71 percent may be attributed to other factors not covered in this study.

Specifically, it is work objectives and work capacity that came out as having significant influences on their job involvement, indicating that for every unit increase in their work objectives, there is a corresponding .347 increase in their job involvement ($B = .347, t = 3.83, p = .000$) and for every unit increase in their work capacity, there is a corresponding .272 increase in their job involvement ($B = .272, t = 2.29, p = .025$).

This result shows that work capacity and work objectives have a considerable effect on job involvement. Librarians who have a sturdy work capacity would probably possess a higher level of job involvement. Job involvement is an essential factor while judging an employee's work performance and agrees with the research of Rizwan (2011) who posited that employees who are vested in their jobs produce greater results than those who lack enthusiasm. Along with this, Permarupan et al. (2013) highlighted that things like working atmospheres, possibilities, and the

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conditions of the work environment have a strong impact on both job involvement and affective commitment.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the Influence of the Library Staff's Work Adjustments on their Job Involvement

WORK ADJUSTMENT	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	.940	.456		2.064	.042
Work Capacity	.272	.119	.234	2.29*	.025
Work Objectives	.347	.091	.392	3.83**	.000

Model Summary
R = .553 R² = .305 Adjusted R² = .290 F = 20.23** p = .000

**significant at 0.01 level

*significant at 0.05 level

Furthermore, the result demonstrates that librarians who are well-versed in their respective fields invest more effort in their work. During the height of the pandemic, various initiatives were developed in library services and operations. This demonstrates librarians' and library support staff's knowledge and skills in the field of library and information science, particularly in the application of emerging technologies in the delivery of library services. For instance, librarians are highly involved in webinar training and updates on how libraries effectively serve their users.

According to Agadi et al. (n.d.), librarians will evolve as information engineers and specialists in the twenty-first century, with a more specialized agenda for knowledge dissemination. The entire world is undergoing an IT revolution, and technology is becoming more sophisticated as time passes. Librarians will be unable to provide users with necessary and sufficient information if they do not participate in the race. Librarians should be aware that training in an IT environment is now a requirement for library and information science professionals because the utilization of manpower in the IT environment has now become critical.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that librarians apply work adjustments from an entirely novel perspective during the new normal. Librarians are highly engaged and offer effective services in the era of the new normal because of their knowledge and skills, especially in the use of technology. The library staff's adjustment to their work in the new normal had a significant bearing on how they perform their jobs. This finding holds to the theory of Dawis and Lofquist (1964) that the more closely a

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person's talents (skills, knowledge, experience, attitude, behaviors, and so on) match the needs of the function or organization, the more likely they are to do a good job and be considered highly functional by the employer. Library staff are more responsive to organizational change, and their work adjustment has an essential effect on the performance of the library. Moreover, appropriate organizational strategies and development between managers and librarians are vital for better outcomes.

Finally, it should be noted that having a solid understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and requirements of the library promotes an employee's involvement on the job because they are prepared to handle any circumstance that arises. Professionalism, courtesy, and the ability to support their coworkers in carrying out their jobs should all be traits that librarians possess, for them to be able to perform efficiently and effectively under pressure.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher presents the following recommendations:

Library administrators may continue to:

1.1. provide in-house training on computer skills and online databases so that librarians will be able to meet the needs of library patrons, especially through continuous education, so that they will increase their job involvement enabling them to respond to whatever crises may occur.

1.2. provide support and resources to help librarians cope with the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This may include access to additional staffing, secure funding, digital technologies, and mental health programs. Additionally, libraries may also continue creating awareness programs emphasizing the importance of staying vigilant and proactive during public health crises in general.

1.3. invest in further assisting their librarians with technological learning and continuous professional development to better serve library customers.

The Human Resource Development Office (HRDO) may immediately respond to the crisis that threatens the organization and its employees. They may make decisions and widely disseminate the information so that the employees can cope with the environmental changes and find ways to deal with any situation. Further, they can make decisions that are free from bias and politics

Librarians may continue to:

3.1. practice of in-set participation in decision-making to contextualize and identify their problems and needed support that exist in their respective area to prevent the stagnation of work in one department or section of the library and improve their working condition to maximize their skills,

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK strategies, and techniques that will promote an environment in which they are more effective, productive, and motivated to help others achieve the organization's goals and objectives.

3.2. adopt strategies to maximize the effectiveness of their work adjustments to facilitate a smooth work life during crises. Additionally, library leadership should be encouraged to provide professional development opportunities as well as training resources to equip librarians with the necessary skills needed to make necessary work adjustments and to sustain library operations effectively.

4. *Future researchers* could investigate the possible variables related to initiatives and knowledge gleaned from other studies concerning libraries' new normal, such as the types of library processes that have been redesigned—how technology and automation are being leveraged, the implementation of safety protocols, how library staff are adjusting, and how the community is responding, to ascertain the benefits of library operations and services.

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