

Developing Managerial Skills for College Library Staff with Special Reference to Affiliated Colleges under Mizoram University

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Abstract

The paper discusses the managerial skills of library professionals. Its purpose is to assess the various managerial skills of library professionals of Mizoram, and to determine the various areas which need special training and orientation. A questionnaire was developed to collect data which was designed on the basis of literature review. The targeted population was the library professionals who are working at college libraries whose institutions are affiliated to Mizoram University. Questions were asked to self-assess the proficiency level of managerial skills of library professionals. The questionnaire was sent to the sample of 51 library professionals, and total 50 responses were received from 22 Librarians, 4 Deputy Librarians, 4 Assistant Librarians, 1 Library and Information Officer, 1 Professional Assistant, 1 Semi-Professional Assistant and 17 Library Assistants, which give the total response rate of 98%. The present study found out that majority of the library professionals under investigation have strong managerial abilities in a variety of domains. According to the current survey, the most essential managerial trait that requires further training and orientation is time management. The study examines the managerial abilities required of library and information professionals and the findings will help them understand their current status in the field of library management which will help in improving their skills in offering high-quality library services to the users.

Keywords: Managerial Skills, College Library Professionals, Academic Libraries, Mizoram Colleges, Managerial Competencies, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

1. Introduction

Information is treated as an economic resource, a marketable commodity in the current electronic information age. The tremendous growth of ICT has resulted in a radical shift in the way information is organised and managed. Libraries are facing new challenges and issues, higher demands and expectations, and are expected to provide wider range of information services from the users. The library professionals need to know how to work with new technology for information gathering, processing, and dissemination. They play an active and vital role in the process of transformation as a societal asset (Mazumdar, 2007). It is essential for library and information professionals to embrace digital technology in the digital age. To achieve the objectives and goals specified by the libraries, there is a need to apply management techniques in which the library and information professionals are able to effectively manage the ever-increasing flow of information and can handle the worldwide information resources (Tamhane & Ganesan, 2019).

A number of challenges situations occurred due to the proliferation of new technologies in libraries. An inadequate skill of the library professionals is one of the most important factors which effect the whole operations of the library. The library professionals must possess advanced Information & Communication Technology (ICT) skills along with various managerial skills and competencies to manage all the technology and techniques as well as the subordinate staff and various activities of the library (Kattimani& Ramesh, 2013).

2. Affiliated Colleges/Institutions of Mizoram University and their Library Staff Position

Mizoram is located in the north-eastern region of India with Aizawl as its capital. In 2001, Mizoram University was established by an act of Parliament, and in a short period of time, it has now 36 colleges and institutes having their own libraries which provide various services to the users. A good number of library professionals are working in these libraries. Their skills and competencies greatly affect the quality of library services provided to the users. The development of college libraries depends upon the development of its parent institutions. The technological advancement that significantly changes the operations of libraries around the world also changes the environment of the college libraries in Mizoram. This advancement in ICT has an impact on various college libraries of Mizoram which resulted to the beginning of library automation (Ralte, 2019). To meet the current challenges, the LIS professionals should possess certain types of skills which include managerial skills that would be required to carry out plans and policies of library. The present Library staff position of colleges and institutes affiliated to Mizoram University are highlighted below:

Table - 1: List of colleges and present staff position under study

S. N.	Name of the College/Institution	Number of Professionals
1	Pachhunga University College	4
2	Lunglei Govt. College	1
3	Govt. Champhai College	1
4	Govt. Serchhip College	2
5	Govt. Aizawl College	1
6	Institute of Advanced Study in Education	2
7	Govt. Saiha College	1
8	Govt. Kolasib College	1
9	Govt. Hnahthial College	2
10	Govt. Hrangbana College	2
11	Govt. Lawngtlai College	1
12	Govt. ZirtiriRes.Science College	2
13	Govt. Mamit College	2
14	Govt. J. Buana College	1
15	Govt. Mizoram Law College	2
16	Govt. Saitual College	2
17	Govt. Khawzawl College	1
18	Govt. Zawlnuam College	1
19	Govt. Aizawl North College	2
20	Govt. Aizawl West College	1
21	Govt. T. Romana College	1
22	Govt. J. Thankima College	1

23	Govt. Kamalanagar College	1
24	Govt. Johnson College	1
25	RIPANS	2
26	NIELIT, Aizawl	1
27	Mizoram College of Nursing	1
28	HATIM	2
29	Aizawl City College	NIL
30	Divine Mercy College	NIL
31	St. Xavier's College	1
32	Helen Lowry College	1
33	DIET, Aizawl	1
34	DIET, Lunglei	1
35	SCERT	1
36	Zoram Medical College (ZMC)	4
	TOTAL	51

3. Review of Literature

Mazumdar (2007) emphasized time management as one of the most important managerial skills required for a successful librarian. He further stressed that Total Quality Management (TQM) of a library mostly depend on the managerial skills of the librarians. Gaud (2018) discussed all the important aspects of management skills and competencies, and highlighted the managerial skills identified by Social psychologist Robert L. Katz, which are essential to successful management which deals with the requirement and importance of human skill or interpersonal skill, conceptual skill and technical skill. Balagopal (2019) stated that development of managerial skills lead to the efficiency of library services and products. To save the time of the users and to provide quality services, time management skill can be utilized. He further emphasized that Decision Implementing Skill should be encouraged among the library staff, and considered skills to work as a Team Member essential for the same. The abilities needed to be a manager are the basic functions, which are planning, organising, leading, controlling and decision-makings. Tamhane & Ganesa (2019) emphasized that technical, human, and conceptual skills are all important managerial qualities for librarians. Technical skills are understanding of a process or technique as well as competency in a certain subject. Human abilities include the ability to communicate effectively with others. Conceptual skills include the ability to see the organisation and its future in broad terms, the ability to think abstractly, the ability to analyse the forces at work in a situation, the ability to be creative and innovative, and the ability to assess the environment and the changes that are occurring in it. Chawner and Oliver (2013) identified the most noticeable changes in the skills where the respondents felt which would be needed in the future for the library professionals, which are in the general qualifications, skills and knowledge, while personal skills are the most stable.

Arokyamary & Ramasesh (2013) highlights ideal LIS professionals' various skills, among which management skill is one of them. They further stressed that the key success factor of performing the role of information support system for the whole of society lies within a library system and its personnel. Due to lack of funds and motivation, the LIS professionals do not have the chance to make use of various programs such as workshops, trainings and conferences. They suggested that the institutions should encourage and motivate the professionals to attend such programs keeping in mind that the investment in such training

will always profit the institution, and by this, the libraries can effectively participate in demonstrating high level entrepreneurship responding to faster changing needs of library clientele. Singh and Pinki (2009) summarized different set of skills under three broad categories i.e., generic skills, managerial skills and professional skills which are required by LIS professionals to manage the contemporary change brought up by technology driven environment. The authors stressed on the need to equip the LIS professionals with core competencies and emerging skills required for the service delivery in electronic information environment, where these skills are also related to understand how to utilize with a proper blending of traditional library skills for providing information with a single click in order to fulfil Ranganathan's Fourth law of library science, i.e., "Save the time of the user". The authors also opined that apart from the traditional and ICT skills, LIS professionals must possess generic skills which must be continuously updated so as to meet the need of changing service delivery mechanism. Morgan (1996) highlights three areas of management which will be important for the academic librarian which are management of change, financial management and strategic awareness.

4. Objectives of the study

The present study is confined to the area of managerial skills of college library professionals of Mizoram. The objectives of the study are:

- i) To assess the various managerial skills of college library professionals of Mizoram.
- ii) To determine which areas of managerial traits require special training and orientation.

5. Methodology

A questionnaire was developed to collect data which was designed on the basis of literature review. The targeted population was the library professionals who are working at college libraries whose institutions are affiliated to Mizoram University. The study population comprised of library professionals of different designations which include Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Library and Information Officer, Professional Assistant, Semi-Professional Assistant and Library Assistant. In this study, the questionnaire was designed based on the literature review and broad areas of managerial skills and competencies were identified from various sources. They were then categorised under 10 areas of managerial skills that include vision and initiative, decision-making, risk-taking, time management, change management, team work, motivating others, reaction to failure, goal-setting skills and conflict management skills. Questions were asked to self-assess the proficiency level of managerial skills of library professionals. The questionnaire was sent to the sample of 51 library professionals, and total 50 responses were received from 22 Librarians, 4 Deputy Librarians, 4 Assistant Librarians, 1 Library and Information Officer, 1 Professional Assistant, 1 Semi-Professional Assistant and 17 Library Assistants, which is very high 98.04% response rate.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

A four-point Likert scale was employed to assess the level of proficiency with the first point being 'poor', the second point being 'satisfied', the third point being 'very good' and the fourth point being 'excellent'. The collected data was analysed using MS-Excel for

appropriate statistical analysis and description. Table 2 highlights the library professionals' proficiency level of managerial skills.

Table - 2: Managerial skills of library professionals

S.N.	Managerial skills	Excellent	Very good	Satisfied	Poor	No Response
1	Vision and initiative	28 (56.0)	17 (34.0)	2 (4.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)
2	Decision-making	20 (40.0)	18 (36.0)	5 (10.0)	6 (12.0)	1 (2.0)
3	Risk-taking	22 (44.0)	6 (12.0)	12 (24.0)	9 (18.0)	1 (2.0)
4	Time management	24 (48.0)	18 (36.0)	2 (4.0)	4 (8.0)	2 (4.0)
5	Adjustment to change	17 (34.0)	21 (42.0)	8 (16.0)	3 (6.0)	1 (2.0)
6	Teamwork	14 (28.0)	36 (72.0)	-	-	-
7	Motivating others	32 (64.0)	8 (16.0)	10 (20.0)	-	-
8	Reaction to failure	29 (58.0)	10 (20.0)	10 (20.0)	1 (2.0)	-
9	Goal setting	23 (46.0)	17 (34.0)	7 (14.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)
10	Managing conflict	28 (56.0)	6 (12.0)	8 (16.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)

Note: Figures given in brackets shows percentage.

Vision and Initiative

Library professionals need to have certain abilities in order to create a vision for the future, a proper action plan, and take actions to carry out plans. The management abilities of library professionals in relation to their vision and aspirations for the library are shown in Figure 1. The graph shows that the majority of library professionals (56%) have exceptional skills, have great future visions, and take initiative to carry out plans. A sizable percentage of respondents (34%) have very good skill. Only 4% of respondents have skill levels that are appropriate, and 2% of those with low skill levels lack vision and never take initiative on their own. There are no responses from 4% respondents.

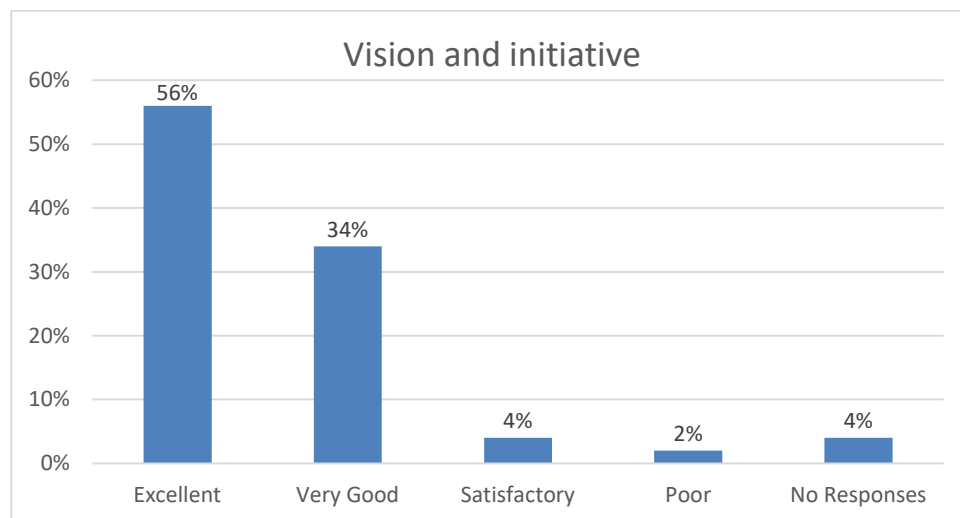


Figure - 1: Vision and initiative

Decision-making

Making decisions is a critical skill for those working in libraries. In order to administer the library's various sections and activities, the library professionals should be able to make decisions. They should make sound decisions quickly to create a highly quality workplace. Figure 2 shows that 20 library professionals have excellent decision-making skills, followed by 18 respondents who are very good decision-makers, 5 respondents with adequate skills, and another 6 professionals just follow decisions and instructions given to them and claim that they are poor in decision-making skills. 1 respondent does not respond regarding this question.

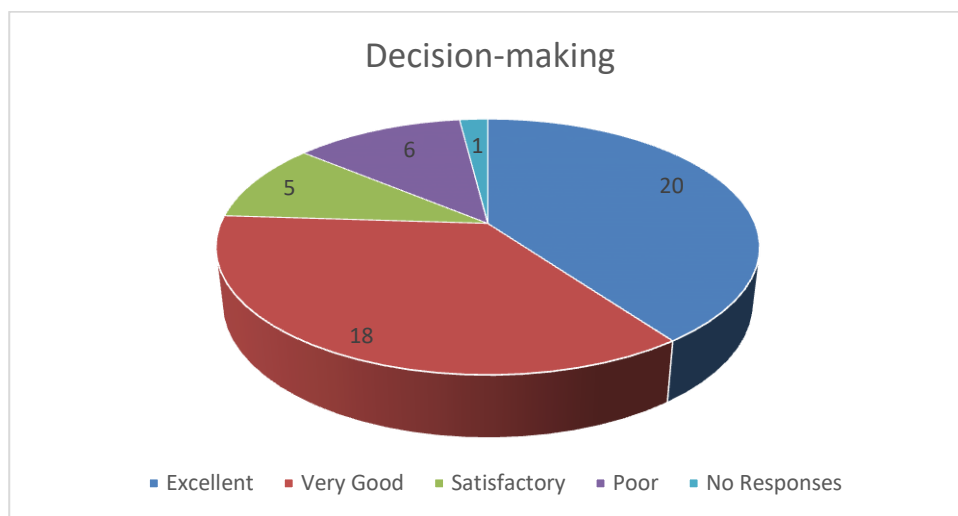


Figure - 2: Decision-making

Risk-taking

There is a chance that a decision could lead to failure or a poor outcome. Risk taking is one of the major aspects of managerial work in library profession. Figure 3 shows that, when it comes to taking risks in the library, a maximum of 22 respondents have great risk-taking abilities, while 6 have very good skills. 12 have adequate skills, 9 have poor attributes, and 1 respondent does not provide any responses relating to this.

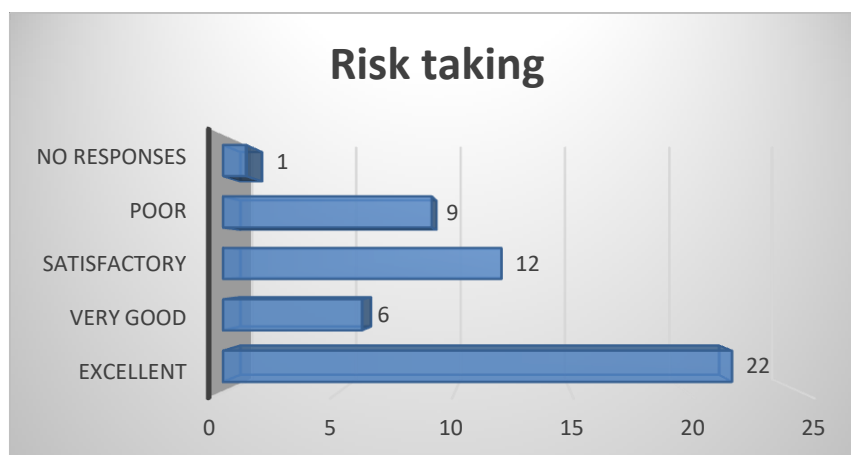


Figure 3: Risk taking

Time management

Time is another crucial component in providing the user with better or more effective services. To complete all the various activities in libraries on time and, most importantly, to save the time of the users, effective time management is essential. Figure 4 demonstrates that a maximum of 24 respondents have excellent time management skills. 18 respondents have very good abilities, 2 have satisfactory skills, 4 respondents claim that they are poor in managing their time while there are no comments from 2 respondents.

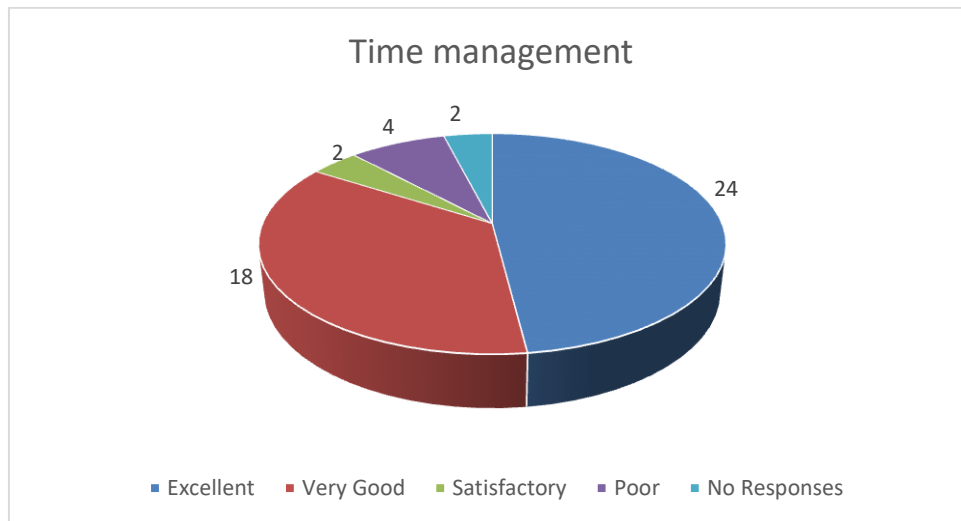


Figure - 4: Time management

Adjustment to change

The development of technology has made a significant impact on how the library operates and provides services to its users. Therefore, library professionals must be able to accept change and make necessary adjustments. 17 of the respondents have excellent skill in adjusting themselves when there are changes in libraries. 21 respondents have very good skills, 8 have adequate skill, and 3 are less adept. 1 respondent does not provide responses relating to this question (Figure 5).

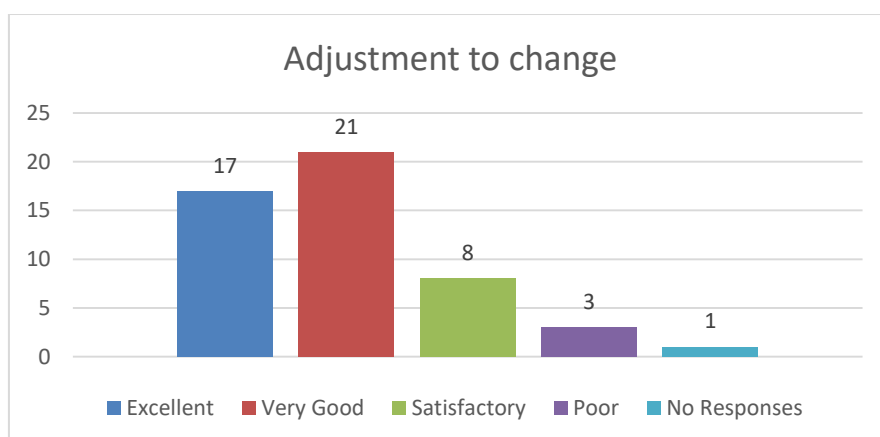


Figure - 5: Adjustment to change

Team work

Teamwork is the ability to create working relationships with others, define, share, and delegate tasks within a group, and encourage people to work effectively in groups. In the absence of teamwork, an organization's performance will be hampered and may possibly end. Increased productivity and happier employees are results of teamwork. When a group of people pool their talents and resources to collaborate and accomplish a common objective, this is known as teamwork (Mackall, 2003). The library task requires a team work. So, working in team and coordination within groups is necessary. Figure 6 shows that 14 respondents have excellent skill in working as a team, while the majority of respondents (36 respondents) have very good teamwork skill.

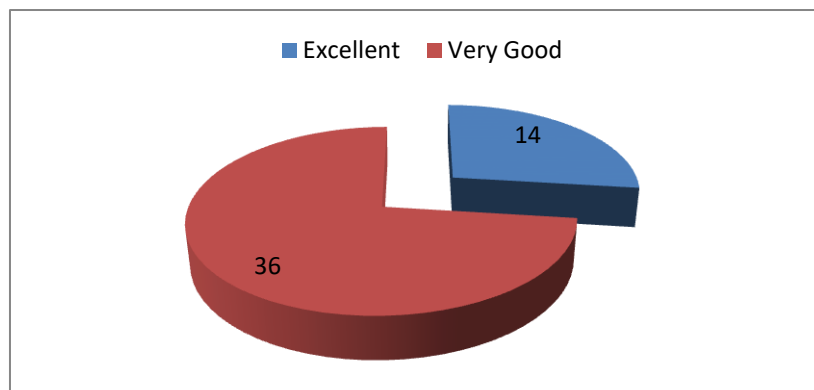


Figure - 6: Team work

Motivating others

Persons become motivated when they consciously or intuitively become aware of an unmet need. When a need arises, a goal is set, and action is then performed when it is anticipated that the goal will be achieved. Motivating others is to make other people desire to accomplish something. It is influencing others to work which leads to actions. Figure 7 demonstrates that the motivational abilities of 32 respondents are very high. When it comes to encouraging others, 8 respondents say they are very good at it, while 10 say they are adequate.

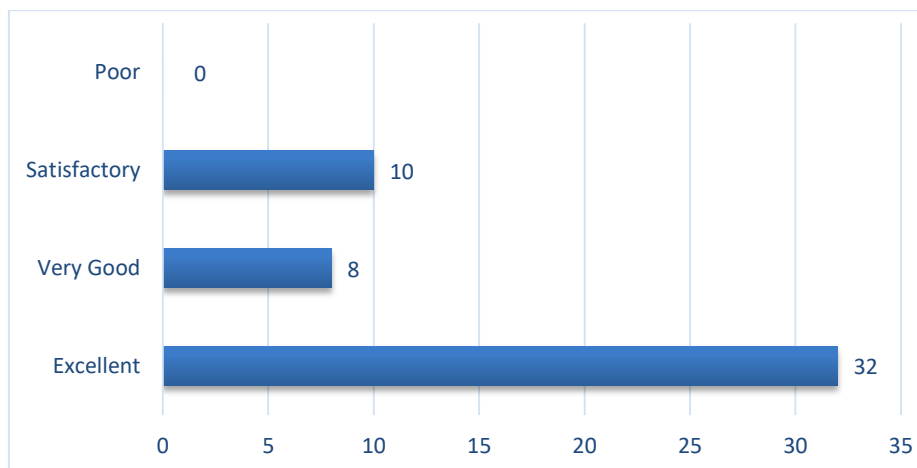


Figure - 7: Motivational Skills

Positive reaction to failure

When failure occurs, it is critical to respond positively because this is essential for the organization's success. Figure 8 demonstrates how most library professionals respond favourably when there is a failure in the library, which is a crucial component of one of the managerial skills. The Figure shows that when there is a failure, 29 respondents have very good positive reactions. One respondent does not answer while 10 shows good skill, another 10 have adequate skill, and 1 demonstrate a poor positive response to failure (Figure 8).

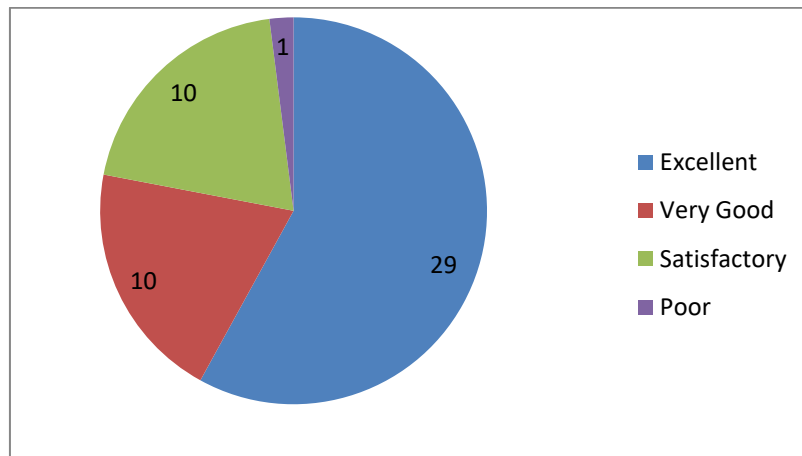


Figure - 8: Positive reaction to failure

Goal setting

Setting goals is a great way to get motivated. It entails making future plans, and it is the method by which we accomplish these objectives. It has been found to increase organizational commitment and staff motivation. Goals also have an impact on how strongly we feel and act; the harder and more important the goal, the stronger our efforts will be to reach it, and the greater success we will feel once we do. Setting goals and objectives is an important part of library's planning and administrative procedures. Figure 9 shows that 23 respondents are very proficient goal-setters in terms of goals and objectives, 17 respondents have strong skill, 7 have adequate skill, and 1 respondent has poor skill whereas 1 respondent does not provide responses relating to goal setting.

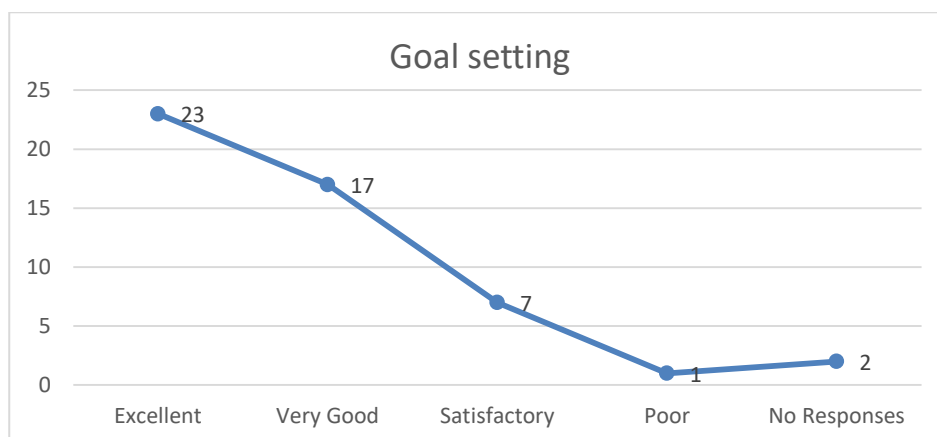


Figure - 9: Goal setting

Managing conflict

When a large number of people work together, conflicts are unavoidable. Effective conflict resolution is necessary. Not only is it crucial to find a solution to the disagreement, but it is also crucial to make sure that none of the persons involved experience undue emotional stress when the matter is being resolved. In every organization, there is conflict between two parties which becomes an obstacle to work. So, it is necessary to solve these conflicts and library professionals should have the ability to manage conflicts and disputes within the libraries. Figure 10 shows that when conflict arises in libraries, 28 respondents are extremely skilled at resolving it, followed by 6 respondents who are very skilled, and then 8 respondents who are satisfactory. While there are 6 respondents who do not reply, 2 respondents have inadequate conflict and disagreement resolution skills.



Figure - 10: Managing conflict

Required special training and orientation on managerial traits

Library professionals need further instructions and orientations in a number of managerial skills. The respondents identify the areas where they need more instruction and guidance. According to Table 3, the majority of respondents need specialised training and orientation, particularly in the areas of time management (50.0%), conflict management (28.0%), disaster management (10.0%), and stress management (8.0%).

Table - 3: Managerial traits which required special training and orientation

Areas	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Conflict management	14	28.0
Stress management	4	8.0
Disaster management	5	10.0
Time management	25	50.0
No Responses	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

7. Findings

The findings of the study show that the vast majority of respondents have very good competence in a variety of managerial attributes. They thrive at taking initiative to carry out their vision's goals, making outstanding decisions, and a majority of respondents have excellent risk-taking abilities in the library. They also excel at time management and have a strong ability for inspiring and motivating others. When failure occurs in the library, the majority of respondents exhibit supportive behaviours that are crucial for the success of the library. Additionally, the study shows that the majority of respondents are skilled goal-setters and are capable of handling conflicts when they occur in the library. However, the library professionals need further training and orientation and identify the areas that include conflict management, stress management, disaster management and time management.

8. Conclusion and Suggestions

Developing and enhancing professional skills go together with library professions. To satisfy Dr. S.R. Ranganathan's Fifth law 'The library is a growing organism', the library professionals should also grow in various aspects and enhance their professional skill and ability to provide excellent services to the users (Balagopal, 2019). Library professionals are managers in their own way since they manage libraries and provide services to users. They acquire and develop managerial characteristics as a result of their career, which is their primary tool for managing library operations and services (Pandita, 2012). Various issues have arisen as a result of the application of ICT in libraries, which has led to changes in management techniques. As a result, library professionals must possess a variety of managerial abilities and competencies in order to cope with and manage the changing circumstances (Kolle & Parameshwar, 2014). The present study shows that Mizoram college library professionals are highly skilled in a variety of managerial attributes. There are more key skills that library professionals should possess in addition to the managerial attributes covered in the present study. However, it is suggested that library professionals should strengthen their managerial skills by attending more specialised training and orientation, seminars and workshops, etc. in order to function successfully and efficiently. They should also take initiatives and develop their skills through self-learning.

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