Strategic human resource development in public libraries in Botswana

Priti Jain

University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

Abstract

Purpose – The broad objective of this study was to present a model for strategic human resource management through an effective staff performance appraisal system in Botswana Public Libraries in order to enhance the provision of delivery of information services.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper presents and discusses the partial findings of the study, which were revealed in an attempt to provide a strategic human resource management model for public libraries in Botswana. Public libraries aid the public as a whole, and they often lack funds and human resources. It is because of these constraints that the study was embarked on by the author.

Findings – From an empirical investigation the main critical qualities required to provide efficient public library services were revealed as: enthusiasm, positive attitude, innovative thinking, commitment. The other staff related and motivational issues were identified as: a sense of achievement, a feeling of self-worth, job-security, staff recognition, status, career development, good salary, effective communication, job satisfaction, delegation of authority, clear job description, performance feedback, conducive working environment. Some other strategic management issues were acclaimed as: organisational culture, transformational leadership, employee recognition and reward systems, performance measurement system, productivity improvement, and customer orientation.

Originality/value – This paper recommends a strategic human resource management model for the public libraries in Botswana, which may assist in enhancing the provision of library services to fulfil the aims of the Botswana National Library Service (BNLS) more efficiently and facilitate the strategic plan process of BNLS which is currently working on its strategic plan and human resource strategy.

Keywords Human resource strategies, Human resource management, Human resource development, Performance appraisal, Public libraries, Botswana

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Increasingly, the issue of strategic human resource management is gaining popularity. Whether service oriented or production oriented, the performance of any organization depends heavily on the performance of its human resources. Human resources are defined as "the available talents and energies of people who are available to an organization as potential contributors to the creation and realization of the organization's mission, vision, strategy, and goals" (Jackson and Schuler, 2000, p. 37). They can make the best use of all types of resources. "Finance and technology can bring advantage but are no longer capable of sustaining this advantage. Only the attitudes, skills and capabilities of people have the potential to create sustainable competitive advantage" (Gratton, 2000, p. 9).

Being the key resources of an organisation, human resources can make their organisations dynamic and grow faster, so competent and dynamic human resources

add value to the organisation. "If the human resources are functioning well, employee productivity rises (which lowers costs) and customer service improves (which raises perceived value), thereby enabling the company to create more value" (Hill and Jones, 2004, p. 86). That is why it is vital to manage and develop human resources effectively in libraries and information services. Armstrong and Baron (2002, p. 3) define strategic human resource management as a:

> ... strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets – the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives for sustainable competitive advantage.

Any organisation's excellent performance is the living result of its people's efficiency, effectiveness, commitment and potential.

Hence, today, all types of organisations are facing the challenge of how to develop and manage their employees strategically in order to achieve more with less and make optimum use of their potential. Botswana Public Libraries are in the same situation. Public libraries are found worldwide. Though, the varied contexts in which they operate to deliver services may vary, they normally have some common characteristics, defined as follows:

> A public library is an organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional, or national government or through some other form of community organization. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment (The Public Library Service, 2001, pp. 1-2).

The public libraries in Botswana are run by the Botswana National Library Service (BNLS) Headquarters situated in Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. The BNLS was established in September, 1967 by an Act of Parliament: National Library Service Act, No. 29 of 1967. It was officially opened on 8 April, 1968. The BNLS is one of the seven departments of the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (Botswana, 1987, Chapter 58.02).

Regardless of all the challenges, they are always striving to provide excellent services to their customers. The BNLS started with one public library – the Gaborone Public Library on 1 April, 1968. In the past 36 years, BNLS has grown rapidly and extended its services to most parts of the country, including all remote areas. Currently, BNLS runs 23 branch public libraries and three mobile libraries and also 70 Village Reading Rooms and the Book Box Service, which covers 286 primary schools (Modise, 2003). The Botswana National Library Service renders its services through nine major divisions: National Reference Library; Special Libraries; Educational Libraries; Public Libraries; Library Services for People with Disabilities (Botswana National Library Service, n.d.); Bibliographical; Support Service; Projects, Research and Publications (Modise, 2003).

The National Reference Library division is responsible for the compilation of the National Bibliography and for the country's bibliographical control. This includes receipt of locally published materials, prints and non-prints on legal deposit, and the acquisition of any materials published in and outside the country with Botswana as a subject. The National Reference Library also houses Africana, with a particular focus

on Southern Africa, United Nations Collections and World Bank Publications. This division gives professional advice to governmental and non-governmental departments which want to set up library and information centres (Modise, 2003).

Special libraries are situated in various government departments and they are intended to support these special departments. Qualified professional staff from BNLS are seconded to these departments to set up and run the libraries.

The educational library division offers professional direction and support to all college libraries and senior and community junior secondary school libraries. It involves visiting, and organising seminars and workshops for library personnel in both junior and senior secondary schools. The division also gives advice to all primary schools wanting to set up libraries and is responsible for the provision of the Book Box service offered to remote primary schools as well.

The public library division is responsible for the management of the branch libraries through out the country. Services that are provided by the public libraries include: a mobile library service, a postal service, a reference service, a community information service, a book request service, the village reading rooms service, and children's services which are all also free to members of the public.

Library services for people with disabilities are geared towards the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, the mentally and the physically handicapped. People with disabilities are assisted at this facility in gaining access to information materials relevant to their needs (Botswana National Library Service Information Brochure, n.d.).

Bibliographical Support Service division co-ordinates the selection, acquisition, processing and distribution of information resources for the public library system (Branch libraries, Reading rooms and the Mobile libraries).

Projects, Research and Publications Division implements the department's development's projects initiates and supervises research projects and co-ordinates the production of the department's publication.

Mission statement of Botswana National Library Service

The mission statement of Botswana National Library Service reads as follows:

> Botswana National Library Service provides the Nation with information and promotes its utilization for the purpose of education, research and recreation. The Department promotes literacy and the culture of reading. Provision of information services is through an efficient and effective network of Public, Educational and Special Libraries at national level (BNLS Draft Strategic Plan, 2001-2006).

Aims

- To develop an efficient information storage and retrieval system and provide a nation-wide library and information service in order to support and promote formal education and to facilitate recreation and cultural enrichment.

- To promote the preservation, conservation and usage of the national documented cultural heritage by developing a national bibliographic control system and service (Botswana National Library Service Information Boucher, n.d).

Public libraries serve the community at large and they are always under-funded and under-resourced, government and local authorities want to have an element of control over

them, pressures of technological change and the associated human resource implications are present as they are in every sector (Prytherch, 2000, p. 36).

The above facts and limitations motivated the author to conduct this study in order to recommend a strategic human resource management model for Botswana Public libraries.

Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the research was to present a model for strategic human resource management through an effective staff performance appraisal system in Botswana Public Libraries in order to enhance the provision of delivery of information services. To achieve this purpose the following main objectives were addressed:

- to collect bibliographic information about the libraries;
- to collect librarians' opinions on the staff performance appraisal;
- to collect library staff perceptions on strategic human resource management issues;
- to identify whether the public libraries have human resource strategies in their libraries or not;
- to identify the critical issues relating to staff motivation;
- to determine whether position, qualification and experience influenced the respondents' opinions about strategic human resource management or not; and
- to establish the extent to which the status of the library influences librarians' perceptions of strategic human resource management.

Value of the paper

This paper might contribute to the improvement of other libraries in the following ways:

- The other libraries can be benefited by having a SHRM model to manage their libraries human resources since there is a scarcity of SHRM model in library set-up. Most of the models are found in business.
- The findings will be relevant to other types of libraries because the similar situations are found in all types of libraries and everywhere.

Research methodology

The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire and the secondary data was obtained from a literature review. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used including a five-point Likert scale for SHRM. The Likert response format was composed of: "Most important"; "Critical"; "Important"; "Not very important"; "Not important". No sampling technique was used, every staff member who had any type of library qualification was allowed to participate in the study.

Target population

A list of staff was collected from the BNLS. The total target population included 71 library staff. Of this population, 54 were from public libraries and 17 from

headquarters. Table I presents the total number of library staff who work in targeted libraries.

Limitation of the research

Being a self-sponsored research this research had time and financial constraints. Owing to them it had the following limitations:

- This study was limited to the public libraries of Botswana.
- This study was limited to the BNLS Headquarters staff, who support, monitor and manage public library services.
- This study was limited to the library staff, who possessed any type of library qualification.

Data collection analysis

A total of 71 questionnaires were distributed and 66 were collected back. The data was collected using personal visits and postal questionnaires. The data from the personal visits obtained 100 per cent response rate and the postal surveys secured 86.4 per cent response. Overall data was collected with a response rate of 93 per cent.

The SPSS statistical package was used to analyse data. On the SPSS package the main techniques used were as follows:

Number of libraries	Name of the libraries	Number of staff
1	Bobonong Public Library	2
2	Francistown Public Library	4
3	Gaborone Public Library	3
4	Ghanizi Public Library	2
5	Kanye Public Library	2
6	Kasane Public Library	2
7	Lethakane Community College Library	2
8	Lethakeng Public Library	1
9	Lobatse Public Library	2
10	Mahalapye Public Library	1
11	Matsha Community College Library	2
12	Maun Public Library	2
13	Mochudi Public Library	2
14	Molepolole Public Library	3
15	Moshupa Public Library	2
16	Palapye Public Library	1
17	Ramotswa Public Library	2
18	Salebi Phikwe Public Library	2
19	Serowe Public Library	2
20	Shoshong Public Library	3
21	Thamaga Public Library	2
22	Tsabong Public Library	2
23	Tutume Community College Library	1
24	National Reference Library	6
25	Library services for people with disabilities	1
26	Headquarters	17
	Total number	71

Table I.
Target population (to whom the questionnaire got distributed)

- Chi-Square;
- cross-tabulation;
- frequencies;
- mean;
- percentage;
- standard deviation;
- *t*-test; and
- variable.

To get the two extreme measures the five-Likert scale was converted into two main categories: critical and not critical.

Hypotheses testing
The study tested seven research hypotheses and five null hypotheses as follows:

Research hypotheses

H1. The perception by respondents about the qualities required to provide efficient library services is independent of the status of the library.

H2. The opinion among respondents about the competencies required by staff during the next five years is independent of the status of the library.

H3. The belief by respondents about the impact of external factors is independent of the status of the library.

H4. The outlook held by respondents about the strategic human resource management is independent of the status of the library.

H5. The viewpoints on staff issues are independent of the status of the library.

H6. The concept of motivational factors is independent of the status of the library.

H7. The view regarding human resource strategy is independent of the status of the library.

Null hypotheses

H01. The position, experience and qualifications do not have any significant influence on the way the respondents perceived the qualities required to provide efficient library services.

H02. The position, experience and qualifications do not have any significant influence on the way the respondents observed the competencies needed by staff during the next five years to enhance library services.

H03. The position, experience and qualifications do not have any significant influence on the way the respondents viewed strategic issues.

H04. The position, experience and qualifications do not have any significant influence on the way the respondents articulated motivational factors in relation to their job.

H05. The position, experience and qualifications do not have any significant influence on the way the respondents expressed the issues related to the library's human resource strategy.

Major research findings and discussion

This study sought to discover what the main qualities required to provide efficient library services are. The findings of the study revealed that commitment received the highest response score of 91 per cent, the other critical qualities were: capability (79 per cent), innovative thinking (74 per cent), understanding of the library's aims and objectives (71 per cent), a positive work attitude (85 per cent), compliance with rules and regulations (52 per cent), enthusiasm (69 per cent), stamina (49 per cent), strategic approach and thinking (70 per cent) were also well perceived.

On looking at the above figures it is apparent that there is a discrepancy in participants' opinions. For instance, a majority of 71 per cent participants perceived "understanding of library aims and objectives" to be critical, but at the same time only 52 per cent felt that "compliance with rules and procedures" was critical. If they feel an understanding of library's aims and objectives is critical, one may ask why they do not think it is important to abide by those aims and objectives. It can be argued two-ways: either the staff do not understand what they are expected to be committed to and fail to comply with library aims and procedures or they feel it does not matter how well or badly they perform to meet library aims and objectives, it does not provide them with any extra recognition or benefits and therefore, they ask why they should put all their efforts into meeting these aims and objectives. Understanding of expectations and recognition both are essential to win employees' commitment.

Similarly, 85 per cent participants perceived a positive attitude as critical while enthusiasm was viewed as critical only by 69 per cent and stamina was further downgraded to 49 per cent. If staff feel that having a positive attitude is one of the critical qualities required to provide efficient library services, they should be full of stamina, even in negative situation, but it does not appear so. This is a further indication that the participants are lacking certain incentives. A majority of 91 per cent of staff professed commitment to be critical but capability and innovative thinking was seen as less critical in comparison. If they are not innovative and capable, how can they be committed to their work? This all suggests that there is a need for library management to identify how to develop and attract highly committed employees in order to manage library staff strategically.

According to Armstrong and Baron (2002, p. 152), the concept of commitment refers to "feelings of attachments and loyalty to the organisation and willingness to contribute to organisational objectives". "Committed employees are the keys to a firm's competitive edge" (Dessler, 1993, p. 5). When one is a member of the library staff, the first priority is an understanding of the library's rules and procedures; if one does not understand them, he/she will fail to abide by them. In such a situation, things are bound to go wrong, because the frustration and fear generally provoke the staff towards negativity. Here the author would agree with Armstrong and Baron (2002, p. 153) that "employees' commitment will only be gained if people understand what they are expected to be committed to. But management too often fail to pay sufficient attention to delivering the message".

The second area this study explored was the competencies required by staff during the next five years to enhance their library services. Leadership received the highest

response rate by a majority of 89 per cent of respondents. Perceptions were also sought on other competencies: the results indicated that facilitating and implementing change was critical for 80 per cent, team building for 71 per cent, coaching for 59 per cent, cross-cultural communication for 46 per cent, technical expertise for 61 per cent and mentoring for 52 per cent participants.

These figures make one wonder if leadership, facilitating and implementing change and team building were supported by a good number of participants, only 61 per cent supported technical expertise. If they do not think technical expertise to be as critical as leadership and other competencies, this seems to suggest that the participants want their leader to take care of technical issues, and if coaching was critical for 59 per cent and mentoring for 52 per cent, it shows that these competencies are not critical for a large percentage of respondents. Cross-cultural communication was seen as critical only by 46 per cent and coaching for 61 per cent, which implies that the participants want their leader to do everything, including establishing a professional network with various libraries for better information sharing. It could be concluded that a strong leadership is crucial to develop library staff who can appreciate the importance of various competencies, they identified critical for enhancing library services.

The success or failure of any manager is judged by his/her leadership style and people can exhibit their leadership in various ways, not necessarily by being a manager or a director of the organisation. For instance, participating in decision making is one form of showing leadership qualities and communicating effectively is another way of expressing leadership qualities. By supporting leadership with the highest percentage the respondents have articulated their concern about leadership. A library leader needs to be flexible in his/her approach and needs to be capable of accommodating changes as the time demands. It is a challenge for the leader to convince his/her staff, parent organisation and all the stakeholders about the strategies and the funds, the library requires to provide better services to its customers. Today there is a need of a leader, who can listen hard, talk straight, reward results, practice what is preached (Reichheld, 2001); there is a need for a leader, who can come up with innovative strategies and translate them into action. With this type of leadership a library manager can manage his/her staff strategically.

The third area this study investigated the impact of external factors. The participants' opinions were sought on various external factors. Information technology got the highest response rate of 91 per cent; the other external factors were changing employees' expectations (71 per cent); changing library customers needs (65 per cent); shrinking budget (78 per cent); global competition (64 per cent), and external environment (64 per cent). Information technology (IT) scores the highest rank in the external factors, which is an indication that the participants are well-aware of its importance.

Of course, IT is playing the most crucial role in this information age. This is evident from the fact that library customers' needs and expectations are changing because of the rapid changes in IT; global competition is increasing because of IT; the external environment is changing because of IT; and the shrinking budget is also exaggerated because of IT. It is used in organising, storing, retrieving and disseminating information and it has a great impact on a library staff's efficiency and effectiveness. IT skills and IT facilities equip a library staff to provide their customers with better, faster, more accurate and up-to-date information. It is with this valuable device library

staff can compete globally, survive shrinking budgets and co-op with rapidly changing customers needs. Hence, it is emphasised that IT infrastructure including IT training and IT expertise is essential for any type of library to manage human resources strategically.

Fourth, the study sought participants' opinions on some other strategic issues, and the findings indicated that customer orientation scored the highest support by the majority of 94 per cent of the respondents. This is an indication that the participants were aware of the increasing importance of this topical issue. Customer focus is one of the most critical strategic issues today, which is being taken into account by most organisations, whether service oriented or production oriented. One cannot exist in the market without customers and every day there are new entrants in the market, which makes it worse. All the time an organisation has to look for new ways and strategies to attract new customers and retain the existing ones.

Other strategic issues were recognised as: performance measurement systems (86 per cent); employee reward system (68 per cent); transformational leadership (78 per cent); and organisational culture (50 per cent). These are all important issues in terms of strategic management. Without an effective performance measurement system, staff performance cannot be monitored and improved; transformational leadership is good for strategic management. Transformational leaders are supposed to have sense of vision and mission and wins employees' trust, respect and confidence. They are inspirational and can give pep talks, increase optimism and enthusiasm and communicate the vision with confidence. They encourage a new look to old methods, fosters creativity, provokes rethinking of assumptions and contexts set in the past.

An employee reward system can be used as an important tool to gain their commitment and dedication for work. When the employees know that their hard work is being recognised by putting in place employee reward systems, they feel committed to their workplace. Organisational culture is another issue contributing to strategic management, if there is a culture in the library that customer comes first, each employee will make sure that he/she does not ignore the customer.

Hence, it is important that all the library staff should be trained in customer service, should be one to recapture old customers and retain the existing customers and at the same time attract new ones. Performance measurement systems, a proper employee reward system, transformational leadership, and organisational culture should be seen as an important aspect of library management.

Fifth, the study investigated was motivation. Participants' perceptions were sought on various motivational factors. The findings identified the main motivational issues: career development (88 per cent); sense of achievement (83 per cent); feelings of self-worth (81 per cent); recognition (72 per cent); performance feedback (91 per cent); conducive work environment (92 per cent); delegation of responsibility (76 per cent); effective communication (87 per cent); clear job description (95 per cent); job satisfaction (84 per cent); positive attitude (86 per cent); appropriate organisational goals (83 per cent) and participation in goal settings. All these findings are briefly discussed below:

> Motivation is the internal state or condition that activates and gives direction to our thoughts, feelings, and actions (Lahey, 1998, p. 370).

It is an integral part of leading. The key to a successful manager is to understand what motivates staff and then to influence their behaviour in the most desired way.

Career development provides benefits to both an organization and an employee. On organisational side it ensures required talent whenever the organisation requires and on employee side it provides immense happiness to the employee when he/she finds or develops career that allow him/her as the individual aspires for. BNLS has a "Scheme of Service" (Botswana. Directive of Public Service Management, 1993, p. 2). But library staff do not always seem to be happy with this Scheme of Service. It can be suggested hence, that Botswana public libraries should have a proper career development plan in place in order to attract and retain the most motivated and committed staff.

A sense of achievement gives an employee internal happiness and to keep happy the employee always strives to perform to the best of his/her abilities. Achievement-motivated people can be the backbone of most organizations (McClelland, 2004).

According to *Documentation Project's Management Guide* (Computer Technology Documentation Project, 2004) feeling of self worth comes from: being a contributing member of a productive team; the esteem in producing a quality product and belief that the organization cares about the employee and considers them valuable.

Recognition is perceptible respect of an individual's personal capabilities, which each individual wishes for. "One of the deepest emotional needs an individual possesses is the desire for recognition and approval by other people".

Providing performance feedback is one of the factors which motivates staff. According to the findings a majority of 91 per cent said that feedback is critical while only 36 per cent mentioned that they receive performance feedback. Here the author would agree with Byars and Rue (2000, p. 216) who state that "feedback facilitates employees' learning process. Keeping employees informed of their progress as measured against some standard helps in setting goals for what remains to be learned". Knowing about "well done" is as important as about "poorly done". Feedback on good performance boosts an employee's morale and feedback on poor performance provides an opportunity to improve on one's performance and develop oneself.

A conducive and growth-oriented working environment refers to a workplace where each staff member can afford to utilise his/her skill and knowledge to improve library productivity and effectiveness. In the presence of such an environment the management can derive the greatest benefits from its human resources. If the staff find their work place congenial they will be committed and dedicated to their jobs; they will have a drive to work in unfavourable conditions and they will generate a competitive edge through their strategic thinking and planning.

Delegation motivates and creates self-confidence, morale, initiative and self-esteem amongst subordinates:

> Being given additional responsibilities is perceived as trust in and respect for the individual's abilities. Increased status is further evidence of importance and worth to the organization. In the absence of this form of recognition managers are faced with the challenge of helping people to create a new type of vision. People still need to feel valued, trusted, and respected (Mendes, 1996, p. 32).

Delegation trains subordinates and consequently facilitates the growth and expansion of the organisation.

Effective communication skills are especially necessary for an information service manager and all the library staff because:

> ... information service personnel are required to communicate with all levels of staff within the organization as well as outside the organisation in order to disseminate, share, select, manage and disseminate information to meet customer needs (Bryson, 1999, p. 274).

Effective communication facilitates managerial performance; understanding and acceptance of work; leadership; public relations; job satisfaction; and unites all the library staff into a well-net and coordinated team and it is time effective. To sum-up, an effective communication is part and parcel of the overall library management.

Employee job satisfaction can be measured by employee retention and turnover. In general all type of organizations including libraries feel that salary increment is the most important job satisfaction means and employers try to win their employees with pay rise. But pay rise satisfies only lower needs. "Effective performance and genuine satisfaction in work follow mainly from the intrinsic content of the job. This is related to the fundamental concept that people are motivated when they are provided with the means to achieve their goals" (Armstrong, 2001, p. 492).

If someone has job satisfaction, he/she feels committed to the job and it becomes part and parcel of this employee. If one does not have this feeling, he/she cannot perform well.

Establishment of appropriate organisational goals and objectives is vital in order to let employees know what is expected of them. Similarly, employees' participation in goal settings produces a feeling of belongingness among employees and they feel that they are part and parcel of the plan, they participated in.

Based on the above findings it can be concluded that Botswana public library services can be enhanced with the better provision of library services if library management can pay more attention to employees' career development, sense of achievement, feelings of self-worth, recognition, concrete and constructive feedback, effective communication, delegation of responsibility and a conducive working environment.

The sixth main area this study sought to investigate was related to human resource strategy. The study's results revealed that alignment of human resource strategy with a strategic management plan got a 90 per cent response rate; generating competitive advantage through human resources 71 per cent; continuous education and development 71 per cent and motivation building among staff was supported by 83 per cent of participants. The study findings also indicated that 80 per cent of the respondents acknowledged that there is a need for human resource strategy in the public libraries of Botswana and their libraries had no human strategy plan. A majority of 77 per cent of the participants mentioned that such a strategy should be evolved immediately while 90 per cent expressed that alignment of human resource strategy with library strategic plan is critical.

The above findings seem to be supporting Mello (2002, p. 62) when he argues that:

> ... the central idea behind strategic human resource management is that all initiatives involving how people are managed need to be aligned with and in support of the organization's overall strategy. No organization can expect to be successful if it has people management systems that are at odds with its vision and mission.

The author is in accordance with Mello. Indeed, strategic human resource management is influenced by library strategy. For instance if a library formulates a strategy to provide unique services to its customers; it then has to plan to recruit more research oriented staff, who can always look out for what other libraries are not providing their libraries can provide those services and differentiate their services from other libraries. Additionally, a human resource strategy should be treated like any other strategy, such as new technology, customer focus, collections development and so on.

The importance of human resource strategy and its alignment with available facilities is further emphasised by (Chanda and Kabra, 2000, p. 41). These authors believe human resource strategy is "a long-term direction of the HR function in an organisation. It describes the best options suitable to an organisation for managing its human resources in line with the available systems and processes, resources and environment". So, for the success of a human resource strategy and its strategic focus it is important to align this strategy with the library's overall plan:

> If strategies are developed piecemeal, there will be a greater risk of a lack of fit between them, and in extreme cases we might even find strategies working against one another (Armstrong and Baron, 2002, p. 90).

It can therefore be concluded that a human resource strategy in public libraries in Botswana is vital and that should be aligned with the strategic plan of Botswana National Library Services (BNLS).

One other issue this study sought to discover, and which is appropriate to mention in this paper, was on strategic focus of staff performance appraisal. The findings revealed that the most obvious purpose of the staff performance appraisal in public libraries is a salary increment (88 per cent indicated); 93 per cent of the participants mentioned that their supervisors conducted this activity; the activity took place annually (89 per cent) by filling in a form only (62 per cent) and by both an interview and using a form (32 per cent).

A total of 58 per cent participants mentioned that they did not receive feedback about their performance appraisal; 63 per cent indicated that there was no proper implementation of the information received from staff performance appraisal; 61 per cent acknowledged that it was not linked with motivation; 52 per cent perceived that staff performance did not validate staff selection; 52 per cent expressed that it was not aligned with the library mission while 55 per cent pointed out that it was not aligned with staff promotions, consequently, 68 per cent were not happy with current staff performance appraisal. Based on the above findings it can be concluded that Botswana Public libraries' performance appraisal does not have a strategic focus.

Literature indicates that performance appraisal attains its fullest purpose and strategic values:

- When performance appraisal and individual goals are aligned with organisation goals too. In this way a staff performance appraisal can serve in two ways: first, improving job performance by directing employees' behaviour toward organisational goals and, second, monitoring employees' behaviour.
- When an effective performance appraisal is linked with an organisation's competitive advantage, by making the right decision about employees' promotions, training and salary increments. These types of positive decisions through staff performance appraisals provide a competitive edge to an

organisation. By doing so staff members' good performance is acknowledged, their morale is boosted and consequently, they perform better.

- When it is related to motivation. If it is not seen as a motivational tool, it loses its importance.
- When it is linked with staff selection. By appraising staff the management can verify whether the right staff member was selected to fill a position or not (Schuler and Jackson, 1996). So when public libraries develop their performance appraisal criteria they should reflect what libraries expect from their staff. If customer satisfaction is expected from staff, this should reflect in the performance appraisal.

It is identified that Botswana's public libraries and BNLS staff performance appraisal system is not aligned with library strategic goals and objectives, staff motivation and staff selection.

On the basis of the above findings and literature review, this paper recommends the following SHRM model for the public libraries in Botswana, which may assist in enhancing the provision of library services and fulfil the aims of the BNLS more efficiently by integrating all HR programmes and policies in order to accomplish its mission. It is hoped that this will facilitate the strategic plan process of Botswana National Library Service, which is currently working on its strategic plan and human resource strategy (see Figure 1).

Summary of the recommendations

- There should be conducive working environment in public libraries in Botswana.
- There should be a proper IT infrastructure for each library to equip the staff with modern technology to store, organise, retrieve, disseminate and share information with their customers, colleagues and other information professionals globally.
- The staff should be trained for excellent customer-service, who are able to trace their lost customers, maintain existing ones and attract new customers.
- There should be a reward based objective staff performance appraisal system, where the excellent performers can be rewarded and the poor performers can be developed to their optimum potential. It should be aligned with library mission, vision and individual goals.
- Library funds should be decentralised in order to empower each public library officer with responsibilities and authorities.
- A concrete feedback should be provided to each staff member about their performance followed up with implementation program.
- HR strategy should evolve in the libraries immediately.

Further research
The following are problem areas on which further research could be done:

- What employees perceive as meaningful rewards to motivate them.
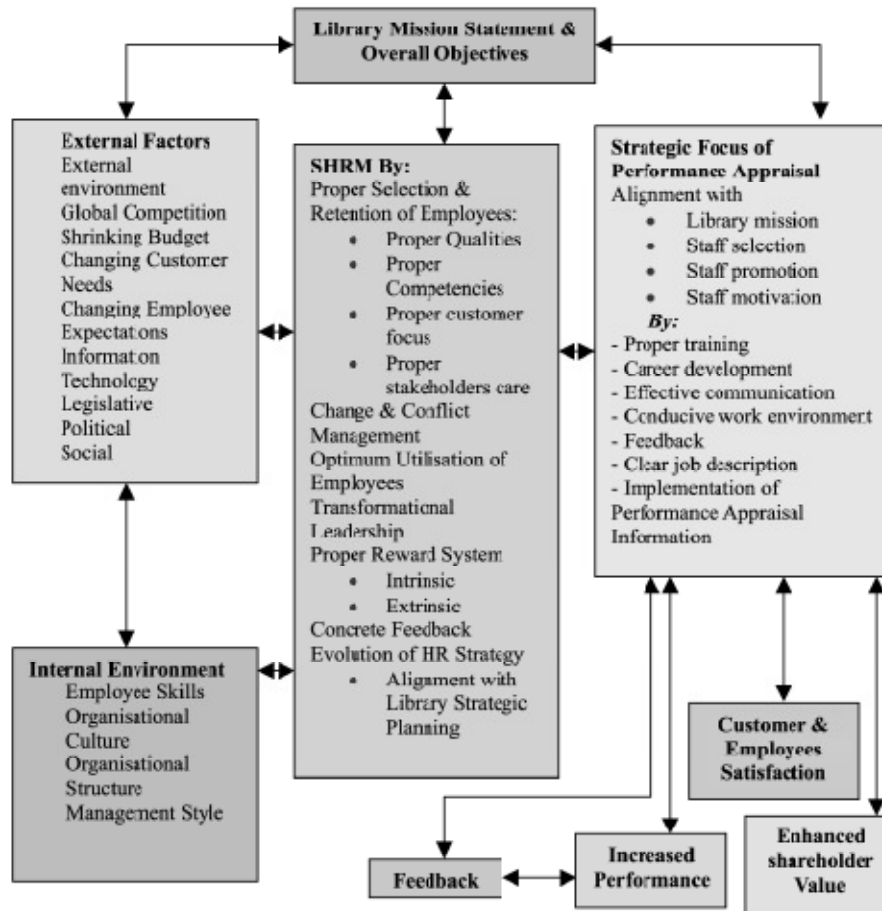- An environmental scanning to identify user and community needs.

Figure 1.
A recommended strategic
human resource
management model

Conclusion

This paper concludes with these final remarks. If any organisation or library aspires to be growth-oriented, people need to be trained, motivated, rewarded, recognised and empowered to perform to their optimum capabilities. If human resources are working well, library productivity rises, old customers are retained new customers are attracted, consequently, the library image is enhanced. This all can be accomplished by regular monitoring of human resources performance against pre-set performance objectives used periodically for formal evaluation and identifies employees' potentials for career advancement and weaknesses for self-improvement. To use performance appraisal strategically, it is vital to align performance appraisal with employees' motivation, promotion, selection and library mission. Concrete feedback to the employees about their performance along with proper implementation of information obtained from performance appraisal are crucial for an objective staff performance appraisal system. A human resource strategy must keep pace with the changing environment in terms of addressing changing needs and expectations of customers and employees.

References

Armstrong, M. (2001), *A Handbook of Management Techniques*, 3rd ed., Kogan Page, London.

Armstrong, M. and Baron, A. (2002), *Strategic HRM: The Key to Improved Business Performance*, CIPD, London.

BNLS Draft Strategic Plan 2001-2006 (n.d.).

Botswana Chapter 58:02 (1987), *The Laws of Botswana*, Botswana National Library Service, Gaborone.

Botswana, Directive of Public Service Management (1993), *Directive*, No. 35, Scheme of Services, Botswana, Directive of Public Service Management, Gaborone.

Botswana National Library Service (n.d.), *Information Brochure*, Botswana National Library Service, Gaborone.

Bryson, J. (1999), *Effective Library and Information Centre Management*, Gower, Aldershot.

Byars, L.L. and Rue, L.W. (2000), *Human Resource Management*, 6th ed., Irwin, Boston, MA.

Chanda, A. and Kabra, S. (2000), *Human Resource Strategy: Architecture for Change*, Response Books, New Delhi.

Computer Technology Documentation Project (2001), *Management Guide*, May, available at: www.comptechdoc.org/man/begin/manmotiv.html (accessed 5 November 2004).

Dessler, G. (1993), *Winning Commitment: How to Build and Keep a Competitive Workforce*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

Gratton, L. (2000), *Living Strategy: Putting People at the Heart of Corporate Purpose*, Prentice-Hall, London.

Hill, C.W. and Jones, G.R. (2004), *Strategic Management: An Integrated Approach*, Houghton, Mifflin Company, Boston, MA.

Lahey, B.B. (1998), *Psychology: An Introduction*, 6th ed., McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

McClelland, D.C. (2004), "Employee motivation, the organisational environment and productivity", available at: www.accel-team.com/ human_relations/ hrels_06_mcclelland. html (accessed 12 November).

Mello, J.A. (2002), *Strategic Human Resource Management*, Southwestern Pub., Cincinnati, OH.

Mendes, A. (1996), *Inspiring Commitment: How to Win Employee Loyalty in Chaotic Times*, Irwin, Chicago, IL.

Modise, C. (2003), personal interview, 14 June, Gaborone.

Prytherch, R. (comp.) (2000), *Harrod's Librarians' Glossary & Reference Book*, 9th ed., Gower, London.

(The) Public Library Service (2001), *IFLA/Unesco Guidelines for Development*, Saur, Munchen.

Reichheld, F.F. (2001), *Loyalty Rules: How Today's Leaders Build Lasting Relationship*, Harvard Business, Boston, MA.

Schuler, R.S. (1999), "Linking competitive strategies with human resource management practices", in Schuler, R.S. and Jackson, S.E. (Eds), *Strategic Human Resource Management*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 139-49.

Schuler, R.S. and Jackson, S.E. (1996), *Human Resource Management: Positioning for the 21st Century*, West Publishing, St Paul, MN.

Further reading

Cowling, A. and Mailer, C. (1998), *Managing Human Resources*, 3rd ed., Arnold, London.

Jain, P. (2004), "The role of performance appraisal in strategic human resource management in public libraries in Botswana", unpublished PhD thesis, UNISA (This paper is derived from a PhD research thesis, while the author was a student at the University of South Africa).