

Professionalism and Employee Outcome – A Comparative Analysis of Three Districts in Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Professionalism is considered as a prerequisite for effectiveness of any successful system including a government department. Outcome gives an insight to the departments to identify where change is desired. It provides a rationale for government output. A major question emerges as to whether (there is a relationship) professionalism influences employee outcome. This study is carried out to study the relationship between professionalism and employee outcome. Besides this, the paper also carries out a comparison amongst three selected districts of Arunachal Pradesh with regards to level of professionalism and employee outcome in the Department of Rural Development. The study reveals that there is a strong positive relation between the two variables. Besides, the paper also highlights that almost 50 percent of the employees have never undergone any training. It is also found out that the level of employee commitment of the particular department is low which may be considered as one of the factor for low employee outcome.

Key words: Arunachal Pradesh, Employee Outcome, Professionalism, Rural Development, Training.

Introduction

The idea of rural development is considered as an improvement in the economic and social conditions of the rural people, it is a total process of economic, social and human development (Gill, 1999). Yet for developed plans to be implemented, the organization needs employees who have the necessary commitment, concern and competency (Bacwayo, 2002). In Arunachal Pradesh 80 percentage of the population is still living in rural areas whose main source of living is agriculture. The key weaknesses of the state which are adding to sluggish development are: extensive dependence on central government assistance funding of the state plan, lack of accountability, corruption, lack of technical manpower along with skilled workers (Tsering, 2011). According to Singh factors like accountable political leadership, enlightened policy-making and a civil service filled with professional ethos leads to good governance (2013). Professionalism increases the awareness of significance of public services and accordingly reinforces confidence in institutions (Mcguigan, 2011). The performance of public service depends on its professionalism (Yi-Armstrong, 2000). Outcomes are the projected effects for effectiveness and quality of service (Webber, 2004). Various studies have established that job satisfaction, psychological health and organizational commitment are key employee-centered variables (Yousef, 2000) particularly in the public sector (Mikkelsen, 2000) for improved outcome. Therefore it is pertinent to explore this area more so as to bring in the much needed professionalism in public sector employees for better outcome.

Literature review

The public service department of any country is considered as a transformational institution because of its eternal responsibility of implementing public policies and programmes and rendering of essential services to the general masses, which means the activities of government employees and institutions aims at formulating and implementing governmental policies and programmes for the interests of the public (Agba. M. S., 2013). Several public service professions exist in a state of crisis due to various factors that bring into question the knowledge, skills, education, and responsibilities of the employees therein (Mcguigan, 2011).

Professionalism is not only seen as a prerequisite for effectiveness of the civil service (Gebrekidan, 2011), but it is also considered as the required attribute for a successful system (Alagh, 2013). Professionalism reflects in the public service employees' behavior at work, their constant effort to improve, reinforce and updating of knowledge and refining the skills that are necessary for carrying out tasks and enhancing their output and productivity (Ogunyemi, 2005; Ssonko, 2010). Professionalism in the public service is the capability and practice of performing a function in a systematic manner with commitment, selflessness, and concern for the general interest, agreeing to fundamental principles and values, laws, rules and regulations, to present the best possible efficient, effective and innovative public services to the public every time (Kauzya, 2011). Mat and Zabidi describes professionals as those who take pride in their work and show a commitment to quality, look for responsibility, foresee the needs of others and set off action. Therefore, professionals are always viewed as people who are honest, trustworthy, loyal and keen to learn and are also team players (2010). Generally outcome is defined as a 'state or condition of society, the economy, or the environment; and ... includes a change in that state or condition' (Lewis, 2007). According to Cropanzano, outcomes are of two forms, they are economic outcome and socio-emotional outcome, where the latter are those that concentrate on one's social and esteem needs and signifies that a person is valued or/and treated with dignity (2005). Employee outcome is an emotion based on individual's own conception of justice (Cook, 2003). Employee outcomes are the results or impact of activities or services, often expressed in terms of an increase in understanding, and improvement in desired behaviors or attitudes of participants and therefore, outcomes hold more qualitative characteristics and are more multifaceted in their composition (Lewis, 2007). This study comprises of three components of employee outcome – Motivation, Commitment and Job Satisfaction. Public service motivation (PSM) is defined as “an individual's orientation to delivering service to people with the purpose of doing good for others and society” (Hondeghem A., 2009). Generally commitment refers to the attachment, both emotionally and functionally, to one's work (Koslowsky, 2001). Commitments to the organization are based on emotional attachment (affective commitment), a feeling of obligation to the organization (normative commitment), and perception that the costs of leaving the organization either social or economic are prohibitively high (continuance commitment) (N. Meyer, 1991). Job satisfaction focuses on employees' response to the experience of their job (Mowday, 1982). Job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from employees' appraisal of their jobs (Locke, 1976). Thus this study will try to find out the relationship between professionalism and employee outcome.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the level of professionalism across three districts.
2. To find out the level of employee outcome across three districts.
3. To find out the relationship between professionalism and employee outcome.

Research Methodology

This paper is descriptive and explorative in nature. Questionnaire and focus group discussion were used as a tool for collecting primary data. Secondary data had been used from sources like books, websites and journals etc. The sample size of the respondents was 70 officials from the Department of Rural Development, Arunachal Pradesh. For this study three districts of Arunachal Pradesh were selected, namely, Lower Subansiri, Papumpare and Upper Subansiri. Officials represent the Group A & Group B categories of the employees of Papumpare district working in the Department of Rural Development, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Census method was used to select the officials from the Department in the Head offices. Focus group discussion was also carried out at the village level in order to know their opinion about the officials of the department and also to gain some suggestions for the improvement of the department. In order to find out the level of professionalism and employee outcome, five point likert scale questionnaire was used where a score of 5 was assigned to strongly agree, 4 to agree, 3 to neither agree nor disagree, 2 to disagree and 1 to strongly disagree. However for the statements which were in reverse order the scores were also assigned in reverse, for example 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. The mean value of the five point Likert scale was divided into three levels

Table 1: Score Interpretation

Mean	Level
< 3	Low
3 - 3.99	Moderate
4 - 5	High

Source: Kraetschmer et al. 2004

Then the average for each statement is calculated that will give us the mean for each component as well as the total average. SPSS 16 software was used to analyse the data collected and correlation technique was tested to find out the relationship between professionalism and employee outcome.

Analysis and Findings

The level of professionalism across the three districts was found out by using Hall's Professionalism Scale (modified by Snizek) with some modifications. Besides the five original dimensions of Hall's Professionalism one more dimension "Expertise" has been included in the scale as it is an important attribute for professionalism (Howell and Dorfman, 1986; Wilson et al., 2013; Kolsaker, 2014). Thus Professionalism in this study was measured through six dimensions viz. (a) Expertise (b) Professional Community Affiliation (c) Social Obligation (d) Belief in Self Regulation (e) Professional Dedication and (f) Autonomy.

Using Likert scaling, Richard Hall developed an attitude scale to measure the degree of professionalism among practitioners of various occupations like physicians, nurses, accountants, teachers, lawyers, social workers, stock brokers, librarians, engineers, personnel managers and advertising executives. This scale is the most common scale used in the field of study and has been used in many studies.

Table 2: Levels of Professionalism across Three Districts

Districts	Papumpare	Lower Subansiri	Upper Subansiri	Total Average
Level of Professionalism	3.79	3.82	3.87	3.83

Source: Primary data

From the above table it can be seen that the officials have average level of professionalism across these districts with an average of 3.83 score. On breaking down the score it was found out that there were variations in the sub-variables. So the next table presents a comparison among the three districts and also a comparison between different variables.

Table 3: Analysis of Professionalism

Variables for Professionalism	Statements	Mean (All responses were provided on a five point Likert Scale)		
		Papumpare	Lower Subansiri	Upper Subansiri
1. Expertise	I hold a lot of expertise about my job	4.07	3.74	4.15
	High level of specialised expertise is required in my job	4.07	4.37	4.18
	I feel I am very skilled at my job	4.07	3.77	4
	I have a lot of experience	3.93	3.77	4.30
	I apply my expert judgment a lot at work	4	4	3.56
	I feel my colleagues recognize my expertise	3.6	3.47	3.52
2. Professional community affiliation	I keep myself updated about my profession by reading journals and other professional publications	4.07	3.74	3.63
	I regularly attend and participate in meetings of the Rural Development	4.27	4.21	4.44
	I often engage in interchange of ideas with my colleagues and supervisor	3.87	3.89	4.56
3. Social Obligation	I think that my profession is more essential for society than any other profession	3.67	3.63	4
	I believe that it is our duty to work for the welfare of society	4.67	4.63	4.49
	Doing Public service gives me immense pleasure	4.6	4.37	4.41
4 .Belief in self-regulation	Employees of the Rural Development Department who violate professional standards should be judged by their professional peers	4.2	4.26	3.70
	My colleagues have a pretty good idea about each other's competence.	4	4	4
	We have no way of appraising each other's competence.	3	3.42	2.96
5. Dedication to the Profession	I am satisfied when I see the dedication of my fellow employees	4.2	4.47	4.67
	I am dedicated to my job	4.67	4.21	4.51
	It is hard to be passionate about the kind of work I do	2.73	2.89	2.74
	I am disappointed that I ever joined this job	3.06	3.68	3.70
	I would carry on my work even if I am paid less	2.87	2.68	3.70
6. Autonomy	People who work in the DRDAP generally have a lot of freedom	2.87	3.42	3
	I am free to decide on what is to be done in my work	3.06	3.89	2.70
	I feel I am entirely appraised by outputs	3.73	3.47	4
Total Average		3.79	3.82	3.87

Source: Primary data

From the above data it can be seen that Upper Subansiri (3.87 mean score) scored the highest mean for professionalism followed by Lower Subansiri (3.82 mean score) and lastly Papumpare (3.79 mean score). If we analyse the table closely we will find that for the component dedication to the profession, Papumpare and Lower Subansiri scored less in case of rendering service regardless of payment as compared to Upper Subansiri. Also in case of autonomy we can see that the employees do not have enough freedom to carry out their job across three districts. Level of employee outcome was found out using three variables namely public service motivation, commitment and job satisfaction. Each variable comprises of various statements which are in five point likert scale.

Table 4: Level of Employee Outcome across Three Districts

Districts	Papumpare	Lower Subansiri	Upper Subansiri	Total Average
Level of Employee Outcome	3.51	3.61	3.77	3.64

Source: Primary data

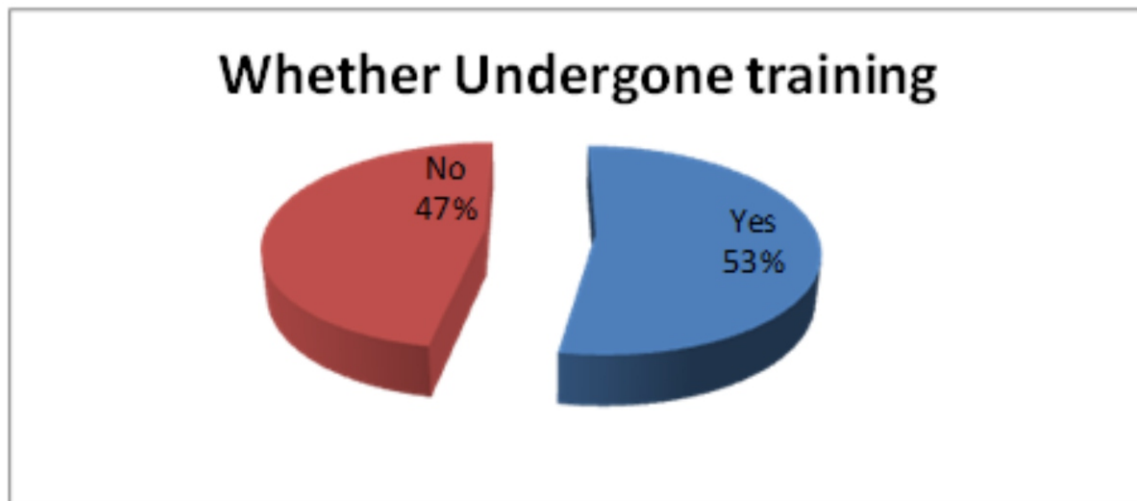
The above result reveals that level of employee outcome is average as they scored only 3.64 mean. The employee outcome is highest in Upper Subansiri (3.77 mean score) followed by Lower Subansiri (3.61 mean score) and Papumpare (3.5 mean score). The table below shows the result of the analyses of the variables separately.

Table 5: Analysis of the Components of Employee Outcome

Variables for Employee Outcome	Mean (All responses were provided on a five point Likert Scale)		
	Papumpare	Lower Subansiri	Upper Subansiri
Motivation	4.03	4.16	4.33
Commitment	3.18	3.28	3.30
Job Satisfaction	3.42	3.45	3.72

Source: Primary data

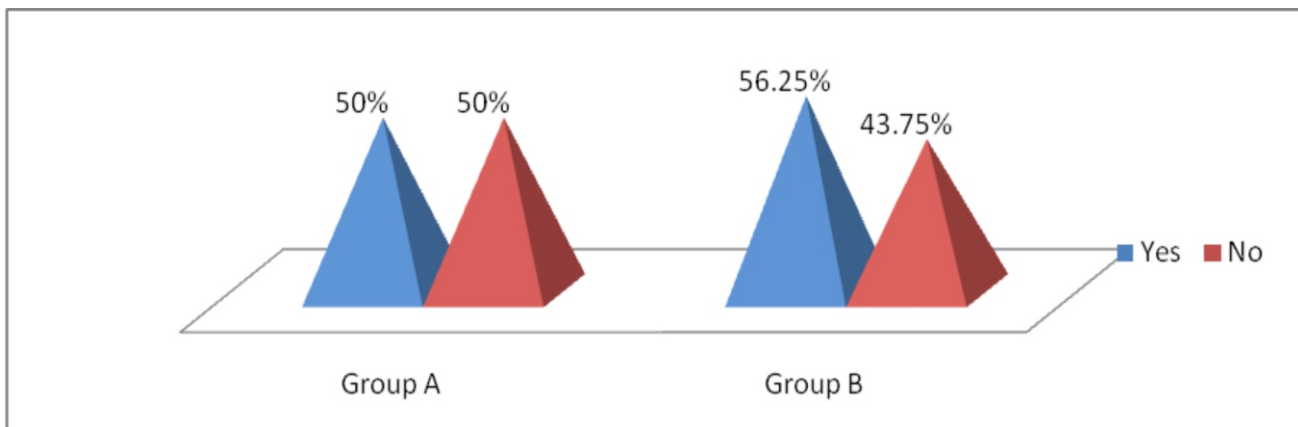
The result from the above table shows us that the motivation level of the officials is high as all the three districts scored above 4 mean score. However when it comes to the level of commitment we can see that the score is average where the lowest is scored by Papumpare (3.18 mean score), followed by Lower Subansiri (3.28 mean score) and Upper Subansiri district (3.30 mean score). Also when it comes to the level of job satisfaction the mean score is medium for all the three districts viz. Papumpare (3.42 mean score) and Lower Subansiri (3.45 mean score) and Upper Subansiri district (3.72 mean score). Thus we can see that the level of commitment of the employees is low as compared to motivation and job satisfaction. From this result we can interpret that the employees are highly motivated but their level of commitment and job satisfaction need an extra effort to increase the overall employee outcome. Training is a very important factor for any organization for effective and efficient performance. Therefore an effort was made to find out whether enough training is imparted to the employees of the Department of Rural Development. From the figure below it is very clear that a very high percentage of the employees have not undergone any training. This is a very discouraging result because without proper training an employee may not be able to fulfill his responsibility effectively.



Source: Primary data

Graph 1: Whether Employees Underwent Training

If we further break down the above statistics it will help us to find out which group, either Group A or Group B, of the Officials had undergone frequent training.



Source: Primary data

Graph2: Training Undergone by Different Groups

The above table reveals a surprising result that higher percentage of the Group B employees has undergone training as compared to Group A. From the above data it can be interpreted that only 50 percent of the Group A employees had undergone training as compared to that of Group B which is 56.25 percent. The relationship between professionalism and employee outcome was found out by using Pearson correlation technique between the two variables. Thus a null hypothesis was also formulated for the purpose.

H0 = There is no relationship between professionalism and employee outcome of the officials of the Department of Rural Development.

Table 6: Correlations between Professionalism and Employee Outcome

	Professionalism	Employee Outcome
Professionalism Pearson Correlation	1	.770**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	70	70
Employee Outcome Pearson Correlation	.770**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	70	70

Source: Primary data

The result shows us that the correlation is significant at 0.01 level and so the null hypothesis is rejected. Data can be interpreted that there is a strong positive relationship (0.770) between professionalism and employee outcome which means that if one variable increases the other variable also tends to increase.

Discussion

Thus from the results it can be said that professionalism is very important for better employee outcome of any organization. Same can be said for the Department of Rural Development, Arunachal Pradesh where the correlation is found to be positively high. However the level of commitment is low which can be improved by encouraging culture sincerity, punctuality, public relations and proper training. Adequate training on rural development and office management is required for better outcome of the employees. As the result shows that almost 50 percent of the employees has never undergone any training. Therefore it is high time that training should be provided due importance which will lead to better outcome. One should work for the betterment of public and so the relationship between the organization and public should be kept transparent and clear. From the group discussion it was found out that people's participation was more prevalent in Upper Subansiri district as compared to Papumpare and Lower Subansiri districts. Also the common people of Upper Subansiri were aware of more number of rural development schemes as compared to the other two districts thus corroborating the result that the level of professionalism of the officials of Upper Subansiri district is higher than the other two. The programmes of rural development would yield more result if training is provide to the People's representatives as well as to the rural youths which can be fulfilled by introducing training institutes even in district level. Besides training, proper monitoring of the schemes by the implementing Agencies is required for better implementation of the scheme. For all the activities of the department the superiors need to encourage the employees in putting forward their best foot which will boast their motivation level adding to their efficiency at work.

Conclusion

According to Singh, the Indian administrative sight is marked by few successful innovations and practices in public service delivery and a large number of pitiable performances (2013). Therefore we require employees who exhibit professionalism in every part of their job. Employee outcomes are the results or impact of activities or services, often expressed in terms of an increase in understanding, and improvements in desired behaviors or attitudes of participants (Lewis, 2007). From this study it can be concluded that professionalism and employee outcome go hand in hand. Therefore if the level of employee outcome is to be increased then the professionalism has to be pushed higher. All these can be possible if proper training is provided to the employees that will lead to increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees.

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