

SHIFT WORK, WORKLOAD, AND PROFESSIONALISM RELATED MOTIVATORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIANS

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Abstract: *In health care industry, satisfaction of employees of all categories (medical, paramedical, and non-medical) towards their work and organization is paramount, because it determines not only commitment, involvement, morale, and productivity of employees, but also decides satisfaction of patients and promotion of organization's reputation. Although all categories of employees contribute, in different ways, to the patient care activities, the contribution of medical laboratory technicians plays a crucial role in assisting doctors and surgeons to diagnose the underlying diseases of patients. Thus, medical laboratory technicians play a supplier role, and their primary duty is to satisfy the doctors and surgeons, who are actually their internal customers. Therefore, job satisfaction of laboratory technicians is paramount in bringing out right outcome from medical personnel. Lack of satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians would paralyse right diagnosis of the patients, which in turn not only endangers the life of patients, but also paralyses the reputation of organizations. In view of this concept, this survey, as a quantitative and empirical based descriptive research work, has been undertaken in Tirunelveli city of Tamil Nadu, India with the objective of analysing the perception of the medical laboratory technicians working at the private multi-speciality hospitals. The study has chosen 100 respondents using both convenience and judgement sampling techniques, and from the chosen respondents the primary data have been collected administering the structured self-made questionnaire. The secondary data have been collected from both books and journals. The study has used the tools – percentage, mean, standard deviation and co-efficient of variation – to analyse the primary data. The analysis of the data have discovered that majority of the respondents has perceived the following factors as “highly dissatisfied”: two-shift work system with 12-hour duty, equality in allocation of work load, unambiguous job description, and clarity of what management expects from employees, performing multiple tasks at the same time, respect from higher authorities and medical personnel, receiving orders from multiple sources bypassing the hierarchy. Similarly, most respondents have perceived the following factors as “dissatisfied”: fairness in the work schedule, fairness in changes made in the work, approach of the higher officials in front of patients and other staffs and performing non-professional tasks.*

Keywords: job satisfaction; medical laboratory technician; motivation; professionalism; shift work; workload.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the study

Medical laboratory technician. Medical laboratory technicians are paramedical employees who majorly assist to the medical officers (both surgeons and consultants) for the diagnosis of diseases, without whom a medical officer cannot begin the treatment. They play a crucial role in the health care industry by performing the following duties and responsibilities: collecting specimens such as blood, urine, sputum, fluids and skin for the purpose of analysis in the laboratory; preparing the result according to the analysis; maintaining the records of the patients in the computer system for the future references of the patients; taking care of the equipment and other resources used for diagnosis in the department. They always need to work very cautiously because they deal with the patients from ordinary cold symptoms to highly infectious conditions such as HIV/AIDS. Thus, throughout their working time, they need to work very cautious about both their safety and patients' safety. A small mistake they commit in the investigation result would turn the patients' treatment entirely wrongly. Hence, they have to be cautious and attentive to ensure accuracy of the results. Moreover, all hospitals involve in conducting medical camps as part of their corporate social responsibility function. In this course, the hospitals organize medical camps in many places: schools, colleges, villages, various factories and other government organizations in order to find the infectious conditions if common publics have any. In the camps organized by the hospitals, the role of medical laboratory technicians is paramount and huge because their basic investigations remain the fundamental aspect for further treatment. Therefore, more the numbers of patients arrive at medical camps, higher the workload and pressure are to medical laboratory technicians. In private organizations, employees cannot deny the work saying that it is not part of their work or it is not the work mentioned in their job description.

Shift work. Shift work, a method of work, employees undertake in a rotation manner, i.e. an employee needs to work both in morning and night shifts in alternative weeks respectively. That is inevitable in hospital sector because of its round a clock service nature. To employees who continue their studies in the part-time mode or evening-time mode, this shift system is so helpful because it assists them to do double shifts depending upon the manpower need of the organization and health condition of employees. On the other side, to those who like to earn can work with other organization also, after the shift work in one organization, if the organization's rules and regulation permits. On the negative side, shift work employees must undergo night shift even if the organization has a two-shift or three-shift work system. The night-shift work system has massive negative impacts on health because it disturbs the regular operational function of the body, because irregular and superficial sleep affects the physiological functioning of the body severely. The negative impacts of medical laboratory technicians can be made positive if the system of the organization is proper and leadership approach of the manager is fair without discrimination in the areas of shift schedule, motivation, financial and non-financial rewards, and paying attention to the health of employees. Since needs of medical laboratory technicians' service remain crucial for a round a clock service, the shift work for medical laboratory technicians is compulsory.

Workload. Workload is the volume of tasks allocated to employees. Workload brings both positive and negative effects as shift work does when it is allocated to employees unfairly, i.e. to some employee lighter workload and to some higher workload. Normal workload keeps employees engaged completely, which brings significant motivation. At the same time, low workload gets employees lazy and pushes them to involve in unnecessary office politics. Heavy workload gets employees so tired soon pushing them to cause imperfection in their work. It is not possible that an employee can always be assigned normal workload. Sometimes, he or she needs to be allocated heavy workload because in the health care sector it cannot be predicted when patient flow turns into high and when it turns into low. Hence, the workload of employees cannot be expected to remain the same always. The manager's ability, knowledge and leadership skills of running a department in a fair manner, getting the opinion of employees before allocating works, and communicating both the outcome of the works and its impacts to employees and organization equally decide the workload of employees. When the managers forcefully assign the work about which the employee have neither knowledge nor skills to perform it, he or she not only gets demotivated, but also gets mentally depressed and stressed. That itself becomes a heavy workload for them.

Professionalism. Professionalism refers to the way employees are treated, respected and dealt with in an organization. It is essential in the workplace that all employees must be respected without any discrimination in terms of age, gender and position. When employees are not respected according to their age, experience, education and position in which they are, it creates significant negative impacts: lack of interest and commitment in the work; no job satisfaction with the work and the organization; absenteeism

and employee turnover. In Indian medical sectors, doctors are dominant and principal personnel. Still it can be seen in many hospitals, a significant number of medical and paramedical employees do not treat non-medical employees with appropriate respect. Generally in India, the superior and subordinate relationship exists in a slavery manner. In many organizations, the Total Quality Management concepts such as team work, participative leadership style have not grown. And hence, the vertical hierarchy is still followed largely, as a result of which a significant number of medical, paramedical and administrative personnel wishes what they order to the subordinates; they should do it without considering their experience in the field, their skills and knowledge. Since in many hospitals medical laboratory technicians just serve as the technical level employees without ability to grow to the higher level positions (no matter how much experience they have acquired in the field and how greatly they have developed their skills and knowledge about the profession), their skills, knowledge and experience are not valued by the management and they are still considered as lower level employees.

Motivation. Motivation of employees is the central point around implementation of any changes: technological advancement, management policy, new product development or adding new service in an organization can be possibly introduced. Motivation brings positive energy to employees, and it is paramount for all kinds of employees without regardless of their types and levels. Without motivating employees, no organization can introduce any changes or upgrade current businesses or processes. Thus, motivation remains the part and parcel of any work an organization undertakes. In the hospital environment, the work volume of employees is uncertain. It cannot be predicted: when new patients arrive in; how many patients arrive in with severe injuries or accidents; when crisis situations occur such as machines stop functioning, patients lose their temper and become violent. Therefore, the nature of work of employees in the hospital environment is highly risky and stressful. Under these circumstances, it is the duty of the department's manager and top level managers of the hospital to keep employees highly motivated with appropriate instruments, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction, commitment and perfection in their work.

Job satisfaction. High satisfaction towards the job remains the essential factor among employees deciding not only their perfection in the work, but also determining their retention with the organization for a long period. The retention of employees for a long period actually assists an organization in the following ways: mentoring of junior employees, assisting top officials technically whenever crisis situations occur, growing the organization reputation among customers. Highly satisfied employees express high commitment towards the organization; respect superiors and seniors being regular to duties, being punctual; concern about organization properties; perform their duties and responsibilities in a fully pledged manner. On the other hand, lowly satisfied employees do not show any cooperation to the next level employees and superiors, do not complete work, do not respect seniors and superiors. They are absent from the duty intentionally, especially during emergency situations and during their need to the department. They perform the work in delay purposefully and do not communicate with coworkers, superiors and customers properly and respectfully. Besides, they do not give them enough information needed. Since medical laboratory technicians are strongly supporting medical officers to diagnose medical conditions of patients, the perfection in their work remains crucial; and retention of medical laboratory technicians for a long time is also highly necessary. All these are possible if medical laboratory technicians have high satisfaction towards their job and organization.

Shift work, workload and professionalism in the study area. Tirunelveli city has attained a tremendous development in the recent years. The number of hospitals, colleges, schools, hotels, transport sectors, diagnostic centres, textile industries, agriculture sectors, small and medium business sectors have grown remarkably. Besides, various government schemes were introduced to uplift the lower income people. Thus, downtrodden people have caused a profound impacts on the life style and economy of the people in the study area. Despite the abundant growth has taken place in the study area, an unhealthy shift work system with 12-hour working, low remuneration, insufficient facilities, autocratic leadership of managers toward their subordinates, inadequate concentration on employees' career growth, highly risky work environment without proper training and protective devices, inadequate communication, underemployment, improper treatment, huge discrimination in work allocation, transfer and promotion, absence of proper motivation due to unqualified managers are still highly prevalent in most hospitals. All these factors not only act as demotivating factors of employees, but also highly affect job satisfaction. Thus, continuing the work with less satisfaction would not only impair the productivity and work perfection of medical laboratory technicians, which consequently would affect the diagnosis of the patients, but also

would increase the employee turnover over the period of time. Thus, since job dissatisfaction occurring due to lack of motivation has the effect on both employer and employees, there is a strong need of analysing the factors which affect job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians. Hence, this research work has attempted to investigate how various factors associated with shift work, workload and professionalism affect job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians.

1.2. Statement of the problem. Satisfaction about the work remains an essential factor among all categories of employees regardless of type and level of employment deciding various outcomes: productivity, retention, commitment, discipline, teamwork, self-motivation, creativity, initiative, learning, morale, sense of belonging and sense of ownership. These outcomes of job satisfaction not only decide satisfaction of customers, but also determine the reputation, profit, customer retention and competitive advantage of any organization positively. Job dissatisfaction of employees brings about various negative outcomes: lack of discipline among employees; absenteeism; lack of concentration and imperfection in the work; irresponsibility or lack of responsibility and care towards customers and organization's properties; lack of cooperation and support to co-workers; wastage of organization's resources; lack of commitment and conflict with co-workers. All of that not only affects the satisfaction and retention of customers, but also, over the period of time, increases the employee turnover. It will increase recruitment and training costs. The effects also extend up to the damage of organization's reputation.

Medical laboratory technicians' work and their contribution remain crucial because output of their work remains the foundation for medical and paramedical employees to diagnose diseases and other ailments of patients. Their perfection and dedication in work remains imperative to satisfy both medical and paramedical professionals, who are their internal customers, in the hospital. Since their work consists of the blood, urine and sputum investigation to know infection and other diseases, their high level concentration towards the work, accuracy of the result, co-operation to co-workers, completing the work in time without delay, sending reports to the concerned departments and medical professionals determine their career growth in their field and their retention in the organization. If there is any lack in these works performed by them, the medical and paramedical professionals neither treat patients timely nor satisfy them completely (in most cases, doctors and nurses begin their work based on the result of medical laboratory technicians). Therefore, the result given by medical laboratory technicians should be accurate and perfect. The satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians towards their job decides their contribution towards accuracy of the investigation results provided by them.

The common motivation factors influencing job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians in the hospital industry are: decent salary; timely promotion; increment and no discrimination in these factors; supportive leadership; rich welfare facilities and safety devices. Although all these factors decide job satisfaction of all kinds of employees, there are some distinctive factors, which are specifically related to their profession, deciding job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians. They include: normal workload; professional approach and professional self-respect; fair shift schedule; nominal working hours; training to deal with risky situations; respectful treatment from both medical and paramedical professionals; facilities in the department to sit and work comfortably; control by the authorities; equality in work allocation; workplace safety in terms of devices; protection from sexual disturbances from male employees; respect for seniority; freedom to decide the lunch and rest hours; adequate rest; free medical check-up and vaccination. All these factors directly decide the motivation of medical laboratory technicians towards the job, which eventually decides their job satisfaction.

However, most private hospitals largely observe the two-shift work system with 12-hour duty against the government norms (which insists that 8-hour duty should be practiced); inadequate employees in the department; both rigid and unprofessional ways of treatment from the superiors, medical and other paramedical employees; inadequate training to deal with crisis situations (such as how to deal with emotional patients) and manage multiple assignments at the same time; no clear job description which opens ways to do multiple tasks that are not part of medical laboratory technicians; inadequate safety in workplace; lack of respect to the seniority; inadequate welfare facilities (such as no separate toilets and rest rooms for employees); inadequate rest and no fixed lunch break; absence of health insurance and no enough protection and prevention measures against the sexual harassment. Although these are the common situations in most hospitals, majority of employees still cope up with these situations and environment, and continue their work due to the large unemployment situation and huge financial needs. Most medical laboratory technicians come from the lower middle class or lower class family background, and to them the job remains crucial to run their family. Since medical laboratory technology is the technical course offered for

oneyear or twoyears, most lower and middle income people choose this course and get the job soon (although it is a technical course and salary for medical laboratory technicians is significantly less).

Moreover, since the study area is the second tier developing city, they do not have much scope to shift to another hospital or other field of work, because in all kinds of industry the salary level and working hours are the same. Considering these trends and unemployment in the industry, realizing the family commitment and financial needs, most of them unwillingly and forcefully stick to their job, although huge demotivating factors affect them in workplace. However, if they continue their work with low satisfaction in a long run, it will not only lower their commitment in their work, but also cause them to quit from the job. Thus, since low job satisfaction and employee turnover would not only affect the routine department functions, but also paralyze the organization reputation, the result would reflect on the satisfaction of patients and quality of the treatment given to them. Therefore, there is a strong need of research to discover various motivators affecting job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians and to rectify them in order to enrich their motivation and thereby enhance their job satisfaction. Hence, this empirical research has been attempted.

1.3. The study objective. The current research objective consists in analysing perception of medical laboratory technicians toward shift work, workload and professionalism related motivators affecting their job satisfaction.

1.4. The study scope. The study has focused on medical laboratory technicians, qualified with Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology courses (for one year or two years). They work for private multi-speciality hospitals in Tirunelveli city (capital of Tirunelveli District) located in south end part of Tamil Nadu State, India. The study has analysed the variables: work shift, workload and professionalism related factors associated with motivation and their impacts on job satisfaction.

1.5. The study significance. The research results would be useful to the hospital management in many ways. The variables analysed in this study, findings and interpretations would give a deep knowledge to the top level management to understand how and to what extent the unfair shift work system, heavy workload and unprofessional or lack of professional approach of the managers towards their subordinates affect their motivation and lower their job satisfaction. Deep insight obtained from the analysis and interpretations of this study would assist the top level management to make necessary policy related changes in their hospital with regard to altering shift work system and long working hours; reducing the heavy workload of employees by means of giving them awareness about types, skill sets and quantity of employees to be recruited to balance the heavy workload; determining ways to improvise professionalism either through leadership training to the managers or cultivating the culture of organization so that all employees can learn how to talk, mingle and behave in a professional way.

To managers of medical laboratory departments, this study assists in a useful way to enhance the motivation of technicians and thereby enrich their satisfaction towards their job. Since the middle level managers, like managers of medical laboratory departments, cannot involve in policy decision of the organization, they can think creatively at their level how to streamline the shift work system, long working hours and unprofessional practice in the department. It can be done via giving fair shift work to technicians by consulting with them before preparing shift schedule. Employees can swap the work when their health is weak and have personal work agendas. Besides, creation of the professional department culture is possible by instructing employees how to talk and respect with each other in terms of seniority, age and experience of employees; how to cooperate with others voluntarily and willingly without jealousy, egoism and prejudice. Training programmes may be offered to technicians in order to ease up and simplify their work (including health education and ergonomics). Self-analysis can be done about leadership approach, what sort of personality changes they should undergo themselves and what kind of external training and education they should take to motivate their employees and run the department professionally.

This study would be much more helpful to medical laboratory technicians to carry out self-assessment about their way of work, assertiveness and self-motivation. The findings and interpretations of this study would provide them with knowledge: how their way of performing the work is associated with their heavy workload if they are doing their work scientifically, if they both help and cooperate with co-workers to ease up the huge work when assigned, if they follow professional behavior within the department with co-workers, superiors and customers.

Similarly, this study will give an opportunity to assess about self-motivation, professionalism and assertiveness. Firstly, how assertively they deny the tasks assigned to them, which basically are not related to their job description. Secondly, how assertively they both participate in the meeting held in the departmental and organizational level and convey their views, ideas and opinions with regard to the work

and work processes to the superiors. Thirdly, how assertively they express their opposition when the higher officials talk to them disrespectfully or scold them in front of the other employees or customers. Fourthly, how assertively they show their opposition when the superiors practice unfairness in shift schedule and work assignments. Fifthly, how much knowledge they have and how many techniques they have known about the self-motivation.

The concept and type of this research, the used variables (both indirect and direct), the chosen study area, the determined population and sample size, sampling techniques and analysis tools would hugely assist the future research scholars by arousing their thought about the new directions and ways in which the future research should be conducted. Similarly, the results and findings of this study would be a great source of secondary data.

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition. Shift work is a method of organization of working time in which workers succeed one another at the workplace so that the establishment can operate longer than the hours of work of individual workers (International Labour Office, 1986). It is the organization of working hours to cover the time required for producing the required outcomes (Harma, 1993). It is the type of job performed outside the 7 am and 6 pm (Monk and Folkard, 1992). It consists of work system performed beyond the usual 8-hour duty.

The workload is quantity of activities involving knowledge, skills and proficiency, and that should be carried out within a certain period in both physical and psychological forms (Jalal and Zaheer, 2017). Workload is the period of time in carrying out work activities in accordance with the abilities and capacities of employees without showing signs of fatigue (Inegabedion et al., 2020). High workload has a negative effect on job satisfaction (Altaf and Awan, 2011). Daily workloads determine the job satisfaction of employees: lower the workload, higher the job satisfaction (Mustapha & Ghee, 2013). Workload should be allocated to each employee according to the physical abilities, cognitive abilities and human limitations (Munandar, 2011).

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines professionalism as “the conduct, aims or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person”; “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation”. Professionalism consists of number of different attributes: honesty, integrity, accountability, self-regulation, image. Together, these attributes identify and define a professional.

Motivation is a process by which a person’s efforts are energized, directed and sustained towards attaining a goal (Robbins and Coulter, 2014); it is an internal mechanism that guides behavior (Sansone and Harackiewicz, 2000). Job satisfaction is the calculation of emotional states and response of employees towards their work (O’Hara et al., 2019).

2.2. Previous studies related to motivation and job satisfaction. Maulana and Risal (2022) analysed the impacts of work motivation and workload on employee performance in regional research and development agency. They found that motivation influenced employee performance positively: if the workload is getting better or the workload is getting lower, the employees’ performance is getting higher. The study also detected that in the study area, appropriate workload such as sufficient numbers of employees, predetermined workload standards and clear work targets will improve employee performance in terms of timeliness and quality of work carried out. That means that if the given workload is low or in accordance with the provisions, the performance of employees at the study area will also increase. The study has observed that employee performance in terms of increasing quality, completion of work time is influenced by the motivation given by the leadership, employees obedient to the working hours and employees with many initiatives. The study suggested that work motivation need to be increased and workload need to be further improved so that the achievement of employee performance will improve better.

Inegabedion et al. (2020) studied how far workload of co-workers, educational specialization of employees and role allocation according to their competencies decide workload balance. The study followed two sampling methods. Firstly, alumni of University of Benin, Nigeria who completed MBA within the past 15 years. From them, the data were collected using the WhatsApp method. Secondly, respondents were met physically; the data were collected via questionnaires. Thus, the study focused on 764 employees from eight multinational companies and two private universities by the stratified random sampling. Positive association was found between employees’ workload with their colleagues’ workload and their workload balance. The aligned role and strength of employees in the organization influenced workload balance.

Harmen et al. (2020) discovered that when the workload and organizational commitment increases or decreases, the job satisfaction experience changes. As far as effect is concerned, workload does not affect employee satisfaction; organizational commitment influences employee satisfaction. Both workload and organizational commitment simultaneously influenced job satisfaction.

Ideiegbeyan et al. (2019) studied the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction of staff in private university libraries Nigeria from 361 library staff in the private university of South-West Nigeria. The objectives of the study were: to find out the level of job satisfaction; to establish the level of motivation; to determine the relationship between staff motivation and job satisfaction. The study result indicated that expected respect by the staff of private libraries was not accorded them; the work environment also was not conducive for the library staff; opportunities for promotions were high and promotion of library staff was regular in all the investigated universities. The study also found that library staff was more motivated intrinsically than extrinsically. The result also indicated that motivation correlated significantly and positively with job satisfaction of library staffs. The result also revealed that the level of job satisfaction among investigated library staff is low. The low job satisfaction is due to poor recognition and lack of conducive environment, lack of respect and denial of opportunity to use their initiative.

Jaradat et al. (2017) analysed the shift work, mental distress and job satisfaction among Palestinian nurses with the aim of examining gender specific association of shift work with mental distress and job satisfaction among nurses in Hebron DT, Palestine in 2012. The study considered 344 nurses. The result indicated that nurses working shifts reported higher mental distress and lower job satisfaction compared to non-shift workers. Women working shifts reported significantly higher level of mean mental distress and lower job satisfaction compared with women on regular day shifts (but this was not significant). There was no interaction between gender and shift work for mental distress or job satisfaction. Women reported more mental distress than men, but this difference was only evident for nurses' working day shift. No gender difference in job satisfaction associated with shift work was observed. Men with shift work schedules reported higher levels of distress and lower levels of job satisfaction compared with men with day work schedules.

Rajan (2016a) examined how motivation affects job satisfaction among pharmacists under such dimensions: organization structure and policy – working hours, shift, leadership style, work environment; pharmacist's specific factor – job description, workload, professionalism, etc. The result discovered that pharmacists working for multi and single speciality hospitals did not show any variation in their perception towards organization structure and policy and pharmacists' occupation related factors affecting their job satisfaction. Similarly, the perception of pharmacists towards the factors affecting job satisfaction was at the same medium level.

Rajan (2016b) compared how motivation affected the job performance of pharmacists working in multi and single speciality hospitals. The motivation was assessed under such criteria: organization structure and policy – working hours, shift, leadership style, work environment; pharmacist's specific factor – job description, workload, professionalism, etc. The result discovered that there is no much variation in the perception of pharmacists working in those two types of hospitals towards organization structure and policy and pharmacists' occupation related factors. Similarly, the result found that lack of motivation affects the work performance of the pharmacists in many ways such as lack of work involvement, impatience, committing mistakes and blaming others, etc.

Rajan (2015) examined the bond between motivation and job satisfaction among pharmacists. He found that most respondents were highly dissatisfied with availability of resources, freedom to decide rest hours, lunch breaks and work assignments, salary, freedom to meet top level authority and to pass their opinions, autonomy. Working hour and work shift were the foremost factors among organization structure and policy-related factors affecting satisfaction. Collaboration among co-workers and employees of other departments, regularity in work schedule, autonomy to meet doctors during crisis time, attitude of higher officials and continuous flow of medicines according to number of patients were the foremost factors among pharmacists' specific factors.

Moradi et al. (2014) investigated the prevalence of shift work disorder and its relationship with different aspects of quality life in the nurses serving in selected teaching hospitals of Ilam University of Medical Sciences. The result discovered that most complaints were leg and knee pain followed by pain in their back, shoulder or leg and knee. Emotional, mental, social life and digestive related disorder were prevalent highly. Sleep disorders were more prevalent in the staff working at night or on shift than those working a regular day time schedule. There was a significant correlation between voluntarily choosing of the shift work

system and satisfaction with it. The nurses who were satisfied with the shift working showed significantly lower personal life disorder compared to the dissatisfied nurses. There was a significant correlation between satisfaction with shift work and the time nurses spent with their families. Nurses who have voluntarily chosen shift work were more satisfied with their job compared to those who have obligated to work on shift. Shift working nurses were less satisfied with their daily sleeping.

Munandar et al. (2018) studied the effects of work stress, workload and work environment on job satisfaction and its implication on the employee performance of Aceh investment and one stop agency from 138 civil servants working in the public agency. He found that increased job satisfaction can have an impact on decreasing employee job satisfaction. Employees with high stress levels will tend to have low job stress. Conversely, when employees experience low stress levels, job stress will increase. Workload can encourage employees to work better. They are motivated to carry out tasks according to the given workload. When an employee has a little or no workload at all, the employees' performance will be low. The work environment can also encourage an increase in employee performance. Increasing the quality of work environment can directly improve employee performance. The result also detected that job stress has a negative impact on the performance of employees. Workload and work environment have a positive influence on the performance of employees. Job stress is positive and can significantly influence the performance of employees. The existence of job stress strengthens the effects of work stress on the performance of employees. The result also indicated that job stress is not able to strengthen the influence of workload on the performance of employees. Job stress cannot strengthen the influence of workload on employee performance.

Antrim (1984) investigated the connection between shift work schedule and job satisfaction of female nurses. Such variables were observed: seniority, age and gender, marital and paternal status, shift schedule, volume of required weekend and holiday, work schedule satisfaction, time available for social relation. The result found that employees taking morning shift workers were highly satisfied with their jobs than all other shift employees. Those who had children had higher satisfaction, but those who had more children had low job satisfaction. Daily shift schedule and sum of weekend work were connected with job satisfaction for all respondents. Those worked in some weekends had low job satisfaction. Those who spent a marked amount of time had moderate job satisfaction. Those who spend time with friends and had leisure period had moderate job satisfaction.

The reviewed sources show that notable studies have been carried out in the study area about organization structure and policy and pharmacists' work specific related factors. Besides, those studies did not focus on any other category employees in the hospital industry (such as medical laboratory technicians, radiographers and nurses, receptionists, administrative employees, sanitary workers, security guards and maintenance employees, medical officers, surgeons and consultants). Hence, wide space exists to analyse about motivation related study, about medical laboratory technicians. Therefore, this current study fills that gap.

3. Research methodology. This survey, as a quantitative and empirical based research, is descriptive in nature. It describes the perception of medical laboratory technicians towards shift work, workload and professionalism related motivators affecting job satisfaction. The element of this research work is medical laboratory technician working at the private multi-speciality hospital in Tirunelveli city (the study area). The study has focused on a total of 100 medical laboratory technicians who are qualified with Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology (DMLT – both one and two year courses) from the selected leading private multi-speciality hospitals in the study area using both convenience and judgement sampling techniques. From the selected respondents, the primary data have been collected via the structured self-made questionnaire. The questionnaire, based on Likert's five point scale, consisted of the following answers: Highly satisfied, Satisfied, Undecided, Dissatisfied and Highly Dissatisfied. Respectively, that was equated to the value of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. The questionnaire consisted of two major sections. Section A dealt with demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section B talked about perception of the respondents towards shift work, workload and professionalism related motivators. The researcher has collected secondary data from books and journals to add importance to this research. The researcher has used percentage method to analyse both demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perception towards motivators affecting job satisfaction. Also, the author used mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation to know in which order (rank) the shift work, workload and professionalism related motivators affect job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians.

4. Analysis and interpretation

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	27	27
	Female	73	73
Age	Below 30 years	26	26
	Between 30 and 35 years	28	28
	Between 35 and 40 years	26	26
	Above 40 years	20	20
Marital Status	Married	74	74
	Unmarried	26	26
Educational Qualification	DMLT (2-year course)	23	23
	DMLT (1-year course)	77	77
Year of working experience	Below 2 years	18	18
	Between 2 and 4 years	43	43
	Between 4 and 6 years	25	25
	Above 6 years	14	14
Salary (Rs)	Below 6000	17	17
	Between 6000 and 8000	42	42
	Between 8000 and 10000	23	23
	Above 10000	18	18

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Source: Primary data, 2021 (based on author's self-made questionnaires)

Table 1 reveals that 27.00% were male and 73.00% were female. Of them, 26% were below 30 years of age, 28% between 30 and 35 years, 26% between 35 and 40 years and 20% were above 40 years of age. Furthermore, among them, 74% were married and 26% were unmarried. Besides, of all, 23% were qualified with a 2-year course DMILT and 77% with a 1-year course DMLT. In all, 18% had below 2 years of work experience, 43% between 2 and 4 years, 25% between 4 and 6 years and 14% had above 6 years of work experience. Among them, 17% were drawing below Rs. 6000 of salary, 42% between Rs. 6000 and 8000, 23% between Rs. 8000 and 10000 and 18% of them were drawing above Rs. 10000.

Factors affecting job satisfaction	HS (%)	S (%)	UD (%)	DS (%)	HDS (%)
Shift work					
2-shift work system with 12-hour duty	0	0	0	5	95

Fairness in the work schedule	0	8	0	66	26
Fairness in changes made in the work	7	18	8	36	31
Workload					
Equality in allocation of work load	0	2	12	39	47
Unambiguous job description, clarity of what management expects from the employees	0	0	10	9	81
Performing multiple tasks at the same time	0	0	11	18	71
Professionalism					
Respect from higher authorities and medical personnel	0	10	16	35	39
Approach of the higher officials in front of patients and other staffs	0	6	25	43	26
Receiving orders from multiple sources bypassing the hierarchy	0	12	14	31	43
Performing non-professional tasks	0	15	25	33	27

Table 2: Perception of medical laboratory technicians towards shift work, workload and professionalism related motivators affecting job satisfaction

Source: Primary data, 2021 (based on author's self-made questionnaires)

Note: HS – Highly Satisfied; S – Satisfied; UD – Undecided; DS – Dissatisfied; HDS – Highly Dissatisfied

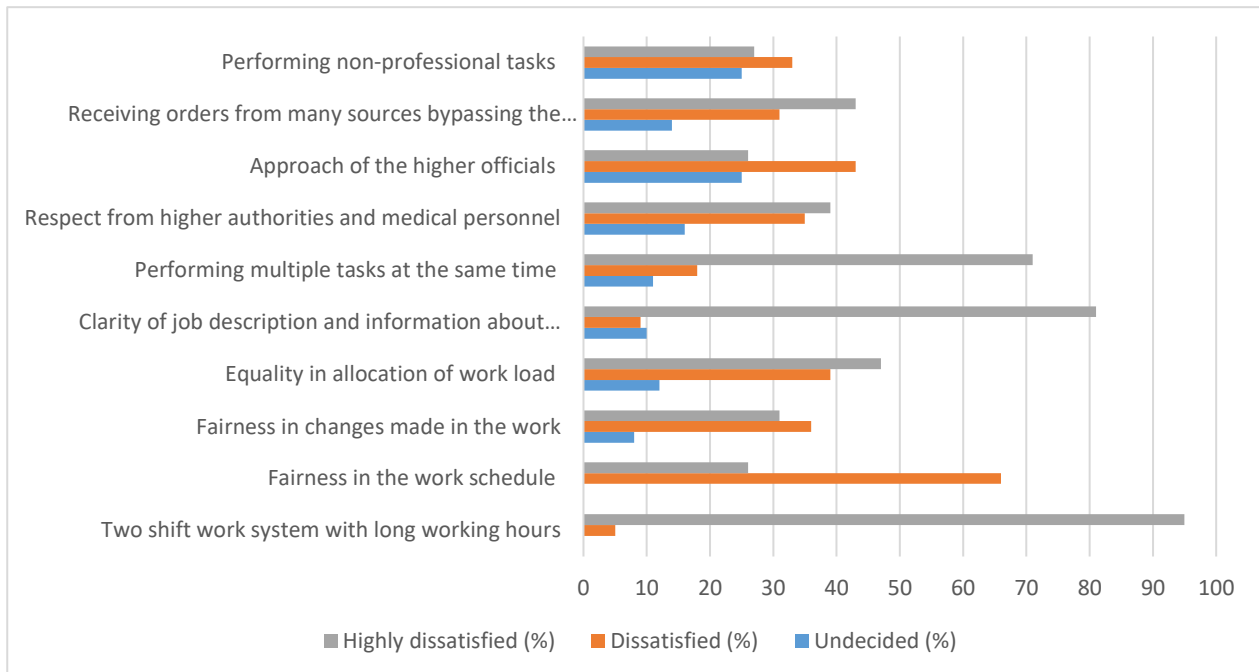


Figure 1: Perception of medical laboratory technicians towards shift work, workload and professionalism related motivators affecting job satisfaction

Source: Generated by author

The researcher has presented below the detailed interpretation for each variable (motivator) in Table 2. In order to give the appropriate significance to the findings, the researcher has incorporated his knowledge

(obtained through observation, personal discussion, interview and daily operational management in the field of hospital administration) against each variable in Table 2.

4.1. Shift work-related factors

Two-shift work system with 12-hour duty. Majority of the respondents reported that they are “highly dissatisfied” with the shift work system, discrimination shown in work schedule and changes made in the work. When interviewed, majority of them said: hospital follows two-shift work system with 12-hour duty; managers are not fair in allocating work shift (some employees are benefited through shift schedule and some are not). They also said: there is a huge partiality in job rotation, enrichment, enlargement and sharing. From these response, it can be understood that majority of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with the work schedule and shift pattern.

In the study area, in most hospitals, two-shift work with 12-hour duty system is in practice. This 12-hour duty system massively affects all kinds of employees who work under shift pattern in multiple ways. When there is 12-hour duty in practice, the hospital management should show some relaxations and flexibility in the hospital operation function in terms of handling employees’ attendance, arrival to the duty and exit from the duty. However, most hospitals remain very strict with attendance system. They deduct the salary of employees if they come to the duty late; hospitals are very rigid with work timing of employees. Since most medical laboratory technicians come from lower and lower middle class families, to them the salary remains a crucial factor. Therefore, if the salary is deducted, it would cause difficulty to them to run the family because most employees live in a rented house and they have to spend a significant amount for travel too. Moreover, due to 12-hour duty system, married employees are not able to pay a rich attention and care to their family members (especially, to their children). If morning shift ends at 8.00 pm, it will take them to reach the house at 9.00 pm if their house is close to the workplace or beyond 9.00 pm if they reside at long distance from the hospital. Thus, when they reach home, the children either are ready to sleep or have already fallen asleep. In most houses, if the spouse is not supportive, female medical laboratory technicians have to cook after they reach home. The same stress and protocols they have in the morning too. To reach the work spot, sanitary workers have to leave from their house very earlier (7.00 am or 7.30 am) in order to get to the workplace and avoid from salary deduction. Thus, 12-hour duty system remains a major demotivating factor affecting their job satisfaction highly. Therefore, the management should change the 12-hour duty into 8-hour duty with three-shift work system which has been prescribed by the government.

Fairness in the work schedule. Fairness in the work schedule and the work execution method should remain fair and honest. Workschedule is closely and majorly associated with daily life of employees because an employee cannot always work with routine schedule like a machine. However, when work schedule is rigid and partiality in nature, it becomes the factor that demotivates employees. Most respondents’ has fallen under the answer “Dissatisfied” towards the factors of fairness in the work schedule. When interviewed, majority of the respondents reported that their managers show discrimination in fixing work schedule. They also blamed that their managers sometimes act in favour of the particular employees who are either seniors in the department or those who are favourable to them or other top officials including medical officers.

In the study area, either a senior employee among existing employees or anyone who came from other hospitals with the recommendation of top officials or medical personnel is appointed as manager (in charge of the department). Most hospitals do not provide exclusive training to their employees; and the managers are not exempted from it. A significant number of staffs including those who are appointed as managers take their education from the study area (very rarely, few employees study in the other cities) which is not a big city; and hence, their leadership qualities and managerial skills are weak. Besides, hospitals need a person to run the department without problem; and hence, they do not bother about how managers treat employees.

Due to these factors, managers of most hospitals run the department very rigidly. They do not get the employees’ opinion or feedback before or while preparing work schedule. They autocratically prepare it and force employees to comply with the prepared schedule. In an organization which follows 12-hour duty, superiors have to discuss with employees and know their needs in terms of week off, leave, day shift and night shift in order to not only run the department smoothly, but also keep employees motivated and satisfied. For married employees, to fulfill their family commitments, they may need changes in weeks off or changes in night shifts. When employees among themselves agree and are interested to swap each other in such a way, the department function does not get affected. Managers should allow it without forcing them to

follow the schedule which the manager has already prepared. When manager does not allow employees to swap their duties among themselves, employees get demotivated. That lowers their job satisfaction.

Moreover, due to the lack of high level education (especially, about leadership), managers do not prepare duty schedule in a fair way. Instead, they allocate a too long day or night shift, against the policy of rotation duty on weekly basis, to those whom they like and want to assist. Due to this sort of discrimination, in order to cope up with employees, whom managers give a too long day or night shift to, some other employees also need to continue their duty either in the morning or night shift for longer duration. That affects not only their health but also their family life and social life.

Normally, those employees who are submissive in nature are highly forced to accept long day or night shift works to balance the shift work, which is given unfairly to some employees by managers. Seniority, assertiveness of employees, caste, religion background and support of higher officials (especially, doctors and surgeons) push managers to allocate duties to employees according to their need and wishes. Thus, when manager remains favorable to few employees, naturally other employees get affected. Practiced in a long run, over the time, it becomes a highly demotivating factor increasing their job dissatisfaction. Since two-shift works with 12-hour duty affect their health, productivity, family life and social life negatively (when managers, without showing fairness and honesty, prepare the shift schedule to employees in a highly biased way), it becomes a strong demotivation factor.

Therefore, managers should act very fairly in preparing shift schedule. They should give equal importance to employees' ideas, opinions and feedback (without any discrimination in terms of caste, community, religion and personal bias).

Fairness in changes made in the work. Normally, all categories of employees (not only medical laboratory technicians) want knowledge advancement, skills and abilities development in their field to enhance their market value and improve their future career: in private organizations, job insecurity is increasingly high. Therefore, in future, to get the job easily in other organizations, when they lose the job in the current organization, they need to have a strong occupation related knowledge, skills and attitudes sufficiently. To grow their carrier, employees need to take: job rotation, job enrichment, additional assignment, job sharing and variety of tasks and challenging tasks. When employees continually carry out monotonous work, definitely, not only their skills, knowledge and abilities would not develop, but also they would feel bored of job. Over the time, that gets them quit from the job.

It is responsibility of managers to fairly assign additional assignments, enrich tasks and rotate employees to different department sections to give opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in all areas. However, managers can act in a biased way: assigning additional challenging tasks to particular employees; rotating employees whom they like; providing assistance based on caste, community and superior's recommendation; assigning tasks which are not technically related to employees who are highly technically qualified. That would definitely create dissatisfaction and lack of sense of belonging towards the organization. This sort of biased approach and activities of managers not only demotivates employees, but also reduces their interest at work pushing them to work slowly purposefully, which eventually would cause undue delay in their work result.

Most respondents' answers have fallen under the scale of "Dissatisfied" for the question: "My manager remains fair towards the changes made in the work in terms of job rotation, enlargement, enrichment, sharing and variety in the task and challenging task".

However, few responses fell under the scale of "Highly satisfied" and "Satisfied". From these answers, it could be understood that in few organizations managers act fairly in making changes in their work. When interviewed, a significant number of the respondents said: "They have been doing the same work since the time they had joined". It explains that they are doing monotonous work for long time. This answer also proves that managers of the concerned organizations have lack of managerial abilities; they do not concern about developing employees' skills and knowledge in multiple areas.

This kind of leadership style of managers not only affects the employees' career development, but also deteriorates department function to run successfully in a long run (especially, when a group of employees quits from the organization, it would paralyze the department). New employees recruited to replace left employees would take time to learn the routine; and till that time the department would not function properly.

Hence, managers should develop managerial skills and act generously with objectives of growing all employees' skills and abilities in all work areas of the department. Hospital management should develop managers in the career development aspects of subordinates.

4.2. Workload related factors

Equality in allocation of workload. Equal workload to be allocated to employees by superiors without any discrimination on the basis of seniority, personal likeness and hate, caste, religion and recommendation of superiors play a crucial role in maintaining a high level motivation. To the question “My manager equally allocates workload to all employees”, most of them have answered “dissatisfied” and “highly dissatisfied”. When interviewed, majority of them said, their manager follows bias in allocating workload: the manager allocates lighter workload to some employees, heavy workload to others. They also said, seniors are given lighter workload and juniors are given heavy workload; seniors have a voice in allocating works to juniors, they influence managers to allocate works.

Senior workers, instead of mentoring and monitoring junior employees, dominate junior employees by pushing their work to juniors, which when junior employees do along with their own work, their work burden becomes double. Equality in allocation of workload is associated with working hours in which when managers show bias, it creates heavy workload to particular employees than others. In some hospitals, employees are given special permission to arrive at the duty late and leave earlier (even though it is justified that a long distance, family issues and special skills are regarded as reasons for their late arrival to the duty). Due to this reason, some other employees undergo heavy workload till they arrive at the duty late (and after they leave from the duty earlier). Therefore, their work should be carried out by some other employees because the work cannot be postponed for medical laboratory technicians.

A special permission is given to some employees who are department seniors. They have voice in the management or have close contact with superiors. Such persons increase the workload of other employees. Overtime, when it continues for long time, it will demotivate employees hugely leading to job dissatisfaction, which will cause them to quit the job.

Hence, the managers of the medical laboratory department should always be fair and unbiased in allocating the workload to their subordinates without listening blindly to the senior employees.

Unambiguous job description. Unambiguous job description (indicating what to do and what not to do) is the main instrument that limits employees from doing unwanted works that are not part of their duties. It saves employees from others who purposefully exploit people who are submissive and fear in nature by allocating their own works. Moreover, it clearly tells employees who they have to report to. It assists them to limit their reporting and communication with particular heads and not to answer to some heads who autocratically control employees by bypassing their authorities.

Not only clear job description but also continuous orientation and education about job description is crucial to remind what duties and responsibilities of employees are and to develop assertiveness among them. Either unclear job description or not given job description to employees not only push them to perform many tasks some of which are not really a part of their work, but also over time get them to take orders from different heads and employees besides their reporting officer.

To the questionnaire question “Clarity in the job description”, most respondents have answered they are highly dissatisfied. When interviewed, majority of them reported they were not given job description. When recruited, they were told about work and salary orally.

In most hospitals, the human resource management practice is neither complete nor practiced in a professional way. As a result of this unprofessional practice, employees are recruited and directly sent to the department without giving them proper orientation. Consequently, they do not know what their real duties and responsibilities are. Hence, they do all works which are assigned to them by not only their managers, but also other department employees: doctors’ assistants, nurses, other paramedical employees (with no rights to assign work and order directly).

This kind of practice not only enhances workload, but also erodes their values and respects: there is no limitation for them what they have to do and who they have to report to. Doing multiple extra tasks and reporting to many people becomes a heavy work burden. Over the time, multiple works become a big demotivating factor causing high job dissatisfaction.

Performing multiple tasks at the same time. Performing multiple tasks at the same time single handedly without errors is really an admirable skill. Simultaneously, lack of manpower or other employees not working intentionally are demotivating factors, which results in a poor quality of work.

Hospital is a place which deals with uncertain human beings. It cannot be predicted when many patients arrive at for treatment and when emergency situations arise. Therefore, at any point of time, workload of employees would increase suddenly (especially, with the highest admission of patients during festivals).

At that time, if management has not filled the vacancy fully or managers have given long leave to some employees, it would affect current employees and push them to inability of situation control. Normally, physicians do not know the exact state in the medical laboratory department about lack of manpower, absent employees or fault of machinery. They actually expect results in time: they neither make patients wait nor delay the treatment, which sometimes worsens the condition of patients and causes an uncomfortable crisis if patients are from elite group or emotional. Therefore, medical laboratory technicians are always under stressful conditions to complete the work in time and send the result to the concerned departments without any mistakes.

In some hospitals, there are no assistants (non-medical laboratory technicians) to help medical laboratory technicians in typing and sending reports to different departments. Still, in most hospitals, departments are not connected with the Internet or local area network. Reports are passed to departments manually. When assistants are on leave or those posts are vacant, medical laboratory technicians have to do those work which will not only increase their workload but also gets them tired soon.

Moreover, medical laboratory technicians receive work (e.g. blood collection requests of in-patients) from many departments. They must visit intensive care units, post-operative and private wards, out-patient and laboratory departments, emergency unit, dialysis and catheterization departments. Therefore, if there are no adequate employees according to the volume of patients, the workload of employees would definitely increase.

Although most medical laboratory technicians understand the situation of co-workers, who are on long leave and vacancies, they still continue their work willingly and completely without any bitter thought. However, when they go through the same situation for a long time without any motivation in the form of monetary benefit or flexibility in leave or work time, they will be highly demotivated. Over the time, that causes them to get dissatisfaction with their job.

Most hospitals do not appreciate employees properly with extra week offs or additional payments that are really compensatory instruments for extra work. Very few hospitals where managers are highly educationally qualified motivate employees with proper monetary and non-monetary benefits for additional work employees perform during absence of co-workers and until vacant positions are filled. Therefore, if employees are assigned many tasks (especially, in case of manpower lack and crisis situations), the hospital management should motivate them properly with appropriate measures to compensate extra work.

4.3. Professionalism related factors

Professional respect from higher authorities and medical personnel. Respect from higher authorities (department managers and administrators) and medical personnel (surgeons, consultants, duty medical officers) remain an important motivation factor for not only medical laboratory technicians but also for all other categories of employees. Unlike non-medical employees, medical laboratory technicians sometimes need to meet medical personnel. Managers of the medical laboratory department usually handle queries raised by the medical personnel. Sometimes, during the absence of managers or unavoidable situations, doctors need to talk to particular medical laboratory technicians who dealt with the investigation.

Although medical laboratory technicians are qualified with just a diploma qualification, their contribution plays a vital role and their work is highly caution oriented. Hence, their work is highly stressful because a minute mistake made by them would change the diagnosis and treatment.

In most hospitals, employees qualified with diploma courses are not given due respect by higher authorities. Among medical laboratory technicians, few employees are qualified with degree courses of medical laboratory technologies. Since employment opportunities are huge in medical field, a significant number of graduates after their degree programme study one-year or two-year paramedical courses (laboratory, radiography, operation theatre technology, dialysis, emergency, nursing) to get job as quick as possible. Thus, a significant number of technicians in the medical field are highly educationally qualified. Hence, they normally expect they need to be treated as respectful and professional as possible.

However, in most hospitals, paramedical employees are not given proper respect by medical officers and other higher officers. They are not given respect in accordance with their educational qualification, age and experience. Most doctors and other higher employees treat them just as technicians and paramedical employees with less values and weightage.

In some hospitals, despite higher age and vast experiences, many medical officers neither allow employees to sit on the chair (even when the conversation lasts for a long time) nor talk to them in a professional way. This manner of inferior treatment and valueless approaches by medical officers disappoint medical laboratory technicians and demotivate them hugely.

Managers of other paramedical employees (nursing, radiography and biomedical departments) and non-medical units (front office, maintenance, security, finance and other administrative heads) do not deal with medical laboratory technicians in a decent, respectful and professional way considering their educational background and importance in patients' treatment. Although managers of non-medical departments are considered as superior officials, the contribution and importance of medical laboratory technicians are higher than other non-medical employees because medical laboratory technicians come under line function comparatively with non-medical category employees.

In the study area, respect to not only laboratory technicians, but also all other categories of employees remains inadequate and inappropriate among general administration and employees who are closely associated with medical officers. When technicians approach the administrative personnel with the request of salary advance or any other assistance, the way the technicians are treated is not respectful and unacceptable in many hospitals. Low level of educational qualification of administrative employees and lack of employees' training in human relations are reasons for these sort of unhealthy approaches. Keeping technicians waiting intentionally, considering them as inferior and talking to them with a superiority tone are some of the examples.

Similarly, the assistant level persons (closely associated with medical officers) always exercise the power on medical laboratory technicians: calling over phone and demanding results and reports in authoritative and harsh manners. Not only medical laboratory technicians, but also all technical and non-technical employees are basically afraid of medical officer assistants and other higher officers. Some technicians assertively oppose harsh and authoritative talking. However, most employees behave submissively: assistants are closely associated with medical officers; if they do complaints, medical officers call technicians to their office and scold them. Similarly, maintenance employees and biomedical technicians behave in an authoritative way without respecting technicians and responding to them properly.

Moreover, in all hospitals, most medical laboratory technicians are females. Hence, administrative staff and assistants exercise their domination and power on laboratory technicians. These kinds of dominative behaviours disappoint and demotivate medical laboratory technicians resorting to lowering their spirit and work commitment. Such a bad behaviour gets them dissatisfied with work resorting to develop the thought of job quit.

Therefore, there is a strong need in the hospital that medical personnel and administrative officials should treat and talk to technical level employees in a respectful and professional ways. The top level management should continuously educate them about professional approaches to be followed in hospital facilities. Also, a strong culture of professionalism should be focused on.

Approach of higher officials in front of patients and other staff. Talking to employees respectfully and in an appreciating manner is really a motivating factor. It brings positive vibration among employees leading to work happily and enthusiastically. On the other hand, when higher officials talk to employees in disrespectful and harsh manners, criticize them to satisfy customers it causes negative effects: demotivation, job dissatisfaction and less work commitment.

The hospital is a field where doctors actually have a dominating role. They are line people and play a crucial role which cannot be replaced. In order to satisfy the patients, even though mistakes lie on doctors' side, they criticize other category employees in the hospital. Medical laboratory technicians are one category of employees among them to be blamed. If mistakes are with medical laboratory technicians, it is acceptable when they are scolded or warned. At the same time, when mistakes are not on their side, when they are humiliated in front of patients and their relatives, it is highly discouraged and need to be avoided.

To the question of higher officials' approach in front of patients and other staff, the usual answer of sanitary workers was "Dissatisfied", "Highly dissatisfied" or "No opinion". Because of equal percentage among replies "No opinion" and "Highly dissatisfied", most respondents are truly not satisfied with higher officials' approach (doctors, departmental managers, other administrative officers). In the discussion, most respondents reported that top officials usually speak angrily and with harsh tone in front of patients when there is a delay and other mistakes happen from the administrative side (in order to satisfy patients and their relatives).

Normally, doctors blame nurses, pharmacists or medical laboratory technicians when they forget doing their duties and delay happens on their side. It is not ethically right when employees are warned or scolded disrespectfully in front of others (even if there is mistake on their side, they should be advised or conditioned separately).

Some employees take the criticism of doctors or higher officials in a positive way and they ignore it simply. Somebody does not take it sportively; instead, they take it in an offensive way getting stressed and depressed themselves. In private Indian organizations, hurtful nature of comments from superiors is not uncommon. In some organizations, higher officials do it privately in an isolated manner (not in front of other employees and customers, but in some organizations). Higher officials can openly criticize, blame and scold employees in front of customers and other employees.

As far as medical laboratory is concerned, delay is common when: volume of patients is high; employees are on leave or absent from duty; machines are under repair. In such cases, delay usually happens and waiting time for patients increases. In order not to tolerate the delay, some patients directly go to the medical laboratory department and fight with employees. Some patients can talk politely and someone talk to technicians harshly, which disturbs the routine work of medical laboratory technicians.

In order to handle patients, managers show their anger to medical laboratory technicians. Some managers know how to handle emotional patients, but some do not know. Instead, they scold medical laboratory technicians in front of patients to pacify patients for delay. Some managers talk to employees later, after patients left, and get them understand why they shouted at them. Thus, they calm down their anger and disappointment, but some managers do not do it. It depends on the nature, personality, leadership style, maturity and experience of managers.

Sometimes, the harsh way of managers' talk without understanding the real situation in the department disappoints employees and demotivates them. Therefore, managers should learn how to deal with employees in a polite and professional way by managing their emotions intelligently.

Receiving orders from multiple sources bypassing the hierarchy. Most respondents' answered to the factor "Receiving orders not only from directors and consultants, but also from their family members bypassing the hierarchy" as "Highly dissatisfied". When interviewed, most said they face the same situation often. Also, they cannot deny it because the family members of directors and consultants would complain to directors or managers and it would be a threatening factor to their hospital employment.

In most hospitals, contacting employees bypassing the hierarchy commonly takes place. It happens not only within hospitals by higher officials but also from outside hospitals by relatives of higher officials (especially, relatives of director or directors who are hospital owners). During emergency situations or patient related issues, if medical officers contact laboratory technicians over phone or through other employees in hospitals and collect the result of patients, it is acceptable. However, those who are not part of hospital authority, when they contact medical laboratory technicians and collect the details of patients who may be their relatives or friends through phone, it puts laboratory technicians in danger.

As per medical ethics, laboratory technicians do not have to reveal investigation report results to anyone except for the concerned medical officer who referred the patient for investigation. Nevertheless, when close relatives of the chairman or directors ask about patient's result, laboratory technicians cannot say they are not allowed to disclose the results.

Due to huge diabetes issues, relatives of chairman, speciality doctors (consultants) and surgeons visit the hospital and ask laboratory technicians to test their blood or urine to know their sugar level. When doing this, they directly go to the laboratory department without paying fees and take their test. They also expect they should be given first priority in the laboratory no matter how many patients are already waiting. Also, they immediately expect the result. Thus, in order to satisfy them or finish their work, they have to get patients waiting, who in turn resort to get anger on laboratory technicians.

Thus, the routine department work gets collapsed because of the intrusion of relatives of higher officials. Sometimes, these relatives of medical officers or chairman contact medical laboratory technicians over the phone and try to know the result. At this time, laboratory technicians have to answer to them leaving the work which they are currently doing in the middle, and thus their routine work also gets disturbed. When the manager comes to know, sometimes they take it simply and casually, but sometimes get angry when laboratory technicians give more importance to relatives of higher officials leaving the routine work.

Therefore, the interruption of higher officials' relatives discourages laboratory technicians. When the same continues, over the period of time they get dissatisfied with their work. Hence, the top level hospital management should frame strict policies and rules with regard to approaching technicians for results of the investigation. Otherwise, it will destroy the organization ethics and brings unwanted issues to laboratory technicians.

Performing non-professional tasks. Many respondents have replied that they are dissatisfied with performing non-professional tasks. When interviewed, majority of them said: they are asked to do some

tasks which are neither part of their work (bringing tea for managers and doctors are some of the examples) nor professional in nature.

In the study area, it is a common practice that employees of the housekeeping department (sanitary workers) are used to bring tea, coffee and food from the canteen for higher officials: managers and medical officers. However, when sanitary workers are on leave or not available, managers use the medical laboratory technicians to do those works. Managers normally get junior employees to perform these works which are not related to their job. Without ability to assertively deny it, they perform all this work.

In some hospitals, it can be seen that even some senior employees do all these non-professional works in order that they can get some benefit in work schedule: long-day time work or long-night shift work beneficial for some employees. Despite new to organization and junior department employees, some laboratory technicians who have high personal values and come from highly reputed institutions (especially, those who study medical laboratory courses after the undergraduate or postgraduate degrees) feel highly demotivated and dissatisfied. That affects the work they do and subsequently they quit the job. If highly skilled and valued employees quit the job one after another, the organization loss will be huge, and the department will not have any skilled employees.

In some facilities, medical officers are in charge of the laboratory department (it should have at least two medical officers qualified with microbiology and pathology, respectively). They use medical laboratory technicians unethically and unprofessionally to carry out their personal work: to bring food from home, to book transport tickets, to drive a car, to bring their kids from school, to do some other small tasks for them and their family workers. Some employees accept these works willingly and wholeheartedly because they may receive extra monetary benefits from medical officers. When forced, some employees do not feel happy to do it, but still they have to do personal works assigned by medical officers because if they deny it assertively they cannot continue in job.

Thus, since medical laboratory technicians must perform the personal work of medical officers via compulsion, they are highly demotivated and dissatisfied with their work. However, they still continue their work with the organization because of family's financial conditions and the same culture practiced in most private organizations. And hence, medical officers and administrative employees should not assign their personal work and tasks which do not come under their job description unless it is an emergency. They have to learn to treat their employees with high professional and ethical values to keep them highly motivated and satisfied.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
Work shift	26.42	4.11	15.56
Workload	26.43	4.13	15.63
Professionalism	26.25	4.16	15.85

Table 3: Comparative analysis of variables affecting job satisfaction

Source: Computed from primary data

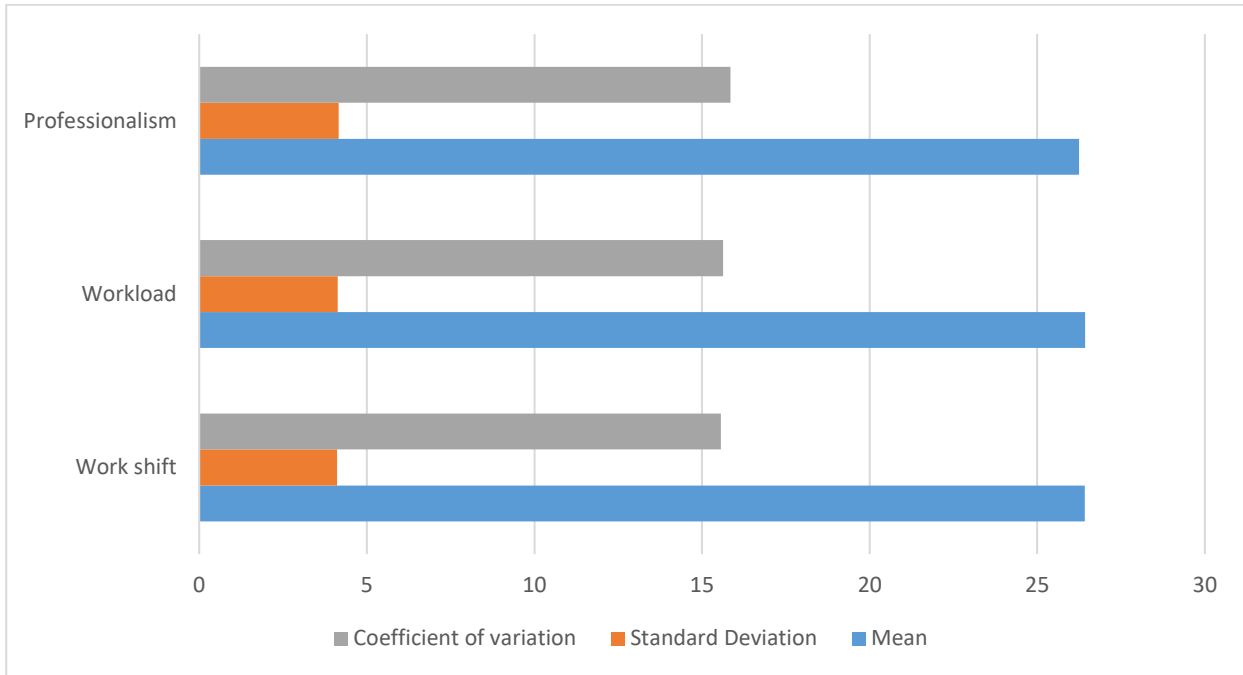


Figure 2: Comparative analysis of variables affecting job satisfaction

Source: Generated by author

From the mean analysis score, it can be understood that there is no much difference among variables (work shift, work load and professionalism) affecting job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians. Despite little difference, work shift related factors affecting job satisfaction stands first followed by workload and professionalism related factors.

5. Recommendation and conclusion

5.1. Recommendation. The researcher, based on the results and interpretation of this study, presents the following recommendations in order to enrich the shift work, workload and professionalism related motivators and thereby enhance job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians in the study area.

- Two-shift work system can be converted into three-shift work system with eight hours. Managers should be fair enough and straight forward in fixing shift schedules without showing any discrimination based on seniority, personal and higher officials' recommendations. Managers should allow medical laboratory technicians to give their grievances, conveniences and interests before fixing time and shift schedule. Similarly, managers should practice fairness, straightforwardness and transparency in job rotation, enrichment, sharing and assigning challenging tasks to employees in order to enhance motivation among them and thereby maximize their job satisfaction.
- Managers should take profound responsibility to convince top management to appoint sufficient numbers of employees in the department in order to normalize the workload among all employees equally. Besides, managers should be fair enough to allocate work assignments to all employees equally without discrimination. In the same way, managers should train employees in all work areas in the department so that they should be specialists in all works to meet emergency and crisis situations, which arise as a result of employee turnover and absenteeism of employees.
- The organization should create an environment in which all employees treat one another equally and respectfully without using any disrespectful and hurting words or showing unethical behavior. Also, the management should train and educate the supervisory, middle-level and top-level managers about how to treat employees respectfully, professionally and ethically. Besides, the management should strongly insist the managerial-level employees about how to treat and behave with subordinates in front of other employees and clients so that their self-respect does not get lowered and affected. Moreover, from the hospital side, it should be ensured that all employees are given a strong and appropriate job description followed by orientation about the hierarchy to observe. In the orientation programme, employees should be insisted to assertively deny some works which are not part of their job description when superiors and other departmental heads forcefully assign to them. Thereby, the professional culture in the organization can be grown.

- Managers should learn various motivation techniques, in addition to fair shift work, workload and professionalism, in order to always keep employees motivated highly and thereby maximizing their job satisfaction. Also, managers should teach self-motivation techniques to employees to keep them motivated and remain engaged all time.

5.2. Limitation of the study

The study has the following limitations. Firstly, the study area. The study is confined to Tirunelveli city only and it has not covered the entire district.

Secondly, the population. The study has analysed the perception of medical laboratory technicians working for limited private multi-speciality hospitals. It has not covered medical laboratory technicians working in all multi-speciality hospitals in the study area. Similarly, the study has not included medical laboratory technicians working in single speciality hospitals and diagnostic centres. In the same way, the study has not included any other occupational groups (paramedical: pharmacists, nurses, radiographers; non-medical: receptionists, administrative employees, housekeeping employees, security guards; medical employees: duty medical officers, consultants and surgeons) in hospital industries.

Thirdly, the sample size and sampling technique. The study has sampled only 100 respondents using the non-probability sampling techniques (convenience and judgement). No attempt has been made to use probability sampling techniques.

Fourthly, applied variables. The study has examined few variables (shift work, workload, professionalism) to assess how they are associated with motivation and eventually determine job satisfaction of respondents. It has not examined any other factors associated with motivation such as organization structure, resources, leadership styles, work life and family life balance, role and compensation.

5.3. Future research directions . This research provides a strong foundation for future research studies in many ways as follows.

Firstly, in the future research study, the same study can be undertaken more scientifically, by extending it to the whole district, other districts and the entire state rather than a particular city (as a large study adding large volume of respondents and applying probability sampling techniques).

Secondly, the future research can be done as a large study adding medical laboratory technicians working in single speciality hospitals, diagnostic centres and government hospitals. Similarly, a comparative study can be attempted to know similarities and dissimilarities in the perception of medical laboratory technicians working in these different institutions towards the shift work, workload and professionalism related factors and their impacts on job satisfaction.

Thirdly, the future research studies can be attempted to know how the variables used in this study can impact other categories of workers in hospital sectors such as pharmacists, radiographers, nurses, receptionists, administrative employees, housekeeping employees, security guards, duty medical officers, consultants and surgeons.

Fourthly, other indirect variables (besides shift work, workload and professionalism) such as organization structure, resources, leadership styles, work life and family life balance, role and compensation can be studied to analyse how far these factors are associated with motivation and thereby impact on job satisfaction of medical laboratory technicians and other categories of employees.

5.4. Conclusion. This survey (a quantitative and empirical based descriptive research work undertaken in Tirunelveli city of Tamil Nadu, India) had the objective of analysing the perception of medical laboratory technicians working at private multi-speciality hospitals.

The study has sampled 100 respondents using both convenience and judgement sampling techniques. From the chosen respondents, the primary data were collected administering the structured self-made questionnaire. These secondary data have been collected from books and journals. The study has used tools: percentage, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation to analyse the primary data.

The study results have discovered that the factors (two-shift work system with long working hours, equality in allocation of work load, unambiguous job description, performing multiple tasks at the same time, respect from higher authorities and medical personnel, receiving orders from multiple sources bypassing the hierarchy) are perceived by most respondents as “highly dissatisfied”. Some factors (fairness in the work schedule, fairness in changes made in the work, approach of higher officials in front of patients and other staffs, performing non-professional tasks) are perceived by most respondents as “dissatisfied”.

The study has recommended the following. The hospital management should provide two-shift work system with 8-hour duty, offer clear and healthy job description. Managers should give fair work schedule, allocate equal workload to employees without bias. Besides, the hospital management should create a

culture in which all employees, including higher officials, treat and communicate with others in a respectful and professional way. The organizational hierarchy should be observed properly to nurture the motivation of employees and thereby grow their job satisfaction. It eventually enhances both their productivity and commitment and consequently reduces the employee turnover of medical laboratory technicians.

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