

'The Value of Verbal Praise and Recognition amongst New Zealand Library Staff'

by

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Abstract

Research Problem

Today, more than ever, library and information centre managers are looking for the best way to motivate their staff and to keep them motivated. One of the easiest ways to do this is by verbally praising or recognising one's staff, but is it effective? This research report examines the extent to which New Zealand library staff are motivated by verbal praise and recognition from their manager. There is a significant amount of literature on the value of praise and recognition and on motivation of staff in general in other work sectors, but little in the library and information world. What does exist is mostly centred on North America, the UK and Europe. There appears to be no prior research on the value of praise and recognition amongst New Zealand library staff – a gap this research fills.

Methodology

This quantitative cross-sectional research was conducted by means of an online questionnaire during March 2012. 436 library staff, working under a manager, in a variety of libraries throughout New Zealand, responded. Some of the research sample was gathered by means of purposive convenience sampling, using contacts of the researcher. Other respondents were attained via random sampling. An incentive prize draw was offered to encourage New Zealand library staff to complete the questionnaire.

Results

The research found that while New Zealand library staff value verbal praise and recognition from their managers, they are more motivated by financial rewards, promotions and professional development opportunities. Words of thanks and acclaim from their manager are welcomed, but this needs to be followed up with something more tangible. When New Zealand library managers do verbally praise their staff, they should ensure that they are sincere in giving praise, and that the praise is timely and specific. They also need to be aware that some staff are uncomfortable with being praised or recognised in public. When praise is given appropriately, it has a significant impact upon many New Zealand library staff, motivating them to look for opportunities to grow in their work, to give more effort to their work and to develop a culture of appreciation in the workplace.

Implications

With increased knowledge about their staff, managers in New Zealand libraries can act in ways that will increase the motivation of their staff and lead to a positive result for all. This research assists New Zealand library managers better to understand the value of verbal praise and recognition for their staff. It also gives them important tips on how the verbal praise and recognition that they do give, can be most effective. To increase the knowledge bank of New Zealand library staff further, other researchers could do qualitative research to provide a more in-depth understanding of the value of verbal praise and recognition. It would also be interesting to focus on other ways New Zealand library staff are motivated and also to replicate the present research amongst library staff in other countries.

Introduction

For a library or information centre to succeed, it is highly desirable to have staff who are satisfied in their jobs and who are motivated to perform the duties required of them. This motivation usually comes from a combination of intrinsic motivation within each person and motivational circumstances, events or actions outside of the person (Plate & Stone, 1976, p. 159). Among the ways that managers can motivate their staff, verbal praise and recognition is easy to perform and often very effective. It usually has a positive impact on the recipient and yet it has no inherent cost (Craig, 2008, p. 31). Businesswoman Mary Kay Ash observes that “there are two things that people want more than sex or money... recognition and praise” (BrainyQuote, 2011, p. 7). Richard Branson says that “we all flourish with praise. Flowers do well when they are watered and shrivel up when they are not, and people are exactly the same” (Adair, 2006, p. 106).

This research examines the extent to which New Zealand library staff are motivated by verbal praise and recognition from their managers. Although many people like to be verbally praised or recognised, its impact on the motivation of any one person may well differ. There are often other extrinsic rewards that employees can find equally or more motivational – including unexpected financial bonuses, regular pay increases, professional development and training opportunities, positive work appraisals and opportunities for promotion and advancement. New Zealand library managers need to understand how motivational verbal praise and recognition may be for their staff, against these other possible ways to motivate employees.

It is also important to consider how employees of New Zealand libraries like to be verbally praised or recognised by their managers. This research looks at questions such as the need for sincerity in praise, the time period in which praise should be given, the need to praise something specific, and whether verbal praise should be given in public or private. Finally, it is assumed that managers would hope to see a positive result out of their verbally praising or recognising their staff. It is shown that New Zealand library staff have been motivated to do a wide range of things as a result of being verbally praised or recognised by their manager.

Rationale for this study

The literature provides evidence that praise is valued by staff across a wide range of employment sectors including medicine (e.g., Goode et al., 1993; Staff Recognition and Appreciation, 2007), dentistry (e.g., Miles, 1996), hospitality and tourism (e.g., Mancini, 2002; Praise benefits the bottom line, 2009), and the motor industry (e.g., Frederick, 2008). Considering that “employees want to be recognized as human beings who make worthwhile contributions” (Gill, 1994, p. 66), it follows that praise and recognition would also be valued by library and information staff. Some researchers have examined what motivates staff in the library and information world (e.g. Bakewell, 1993; Green, Chivers & Mynott, 2000; Olorunsola, 1992; Plate & Stone, 1976; Rooks, 1988; Topper, 2008) but this research is primarily centred on North America, the United Kingdom and Europe. There does not appear to be any research on how much New Zealand library staff value verbal praise and recognition – a gap this study fills.

Although there may be wider interest, this research will be of primary benefit to New Zealand library managers and leaders. Although there are many commonalities, staff in New Zealand libraries appear to have a few different motivational needs and wishes from their overseas colleagues. This research will help New Zealand library managers evaluate how important verbal praise and recognition is in keeping their staff happy and motivated.

Key Terms

Several key terms should be defined for this research. A good working definition of “praise” is “to express admiration or approval about the achievements or characteristics of a person or thing” (Praise, 2008). “Job satisfaction” is another important concept which Chapman and White (2011) describe well. “Job satisfaction is a measurable assessment of the degree to which an employee (or volunteer) feels satisfied in his or her current role in a work-oriented organization” (Chapman & White, 2011, p. 35). Ugah and Okpara (2008, p. 2) cite Mitchell in saying that “motivation” is the “degree to which an individual wants and chooses to engage in a certain specified manner”. Finally, the target respondents will be “New Zealand library staff”. For this research, this meant any staff member, who has a manager, working in a library of any nature in New Zealand.

Research Questions & Assumptions

Research Questions

Main Question:

To what extent are New Zealand library staff motivated by verbal praise and recognition from their manager?

Sub Questions:

- 1) How much does verbal praise and recognition from a manager motivate New Zealand library staff, compared to other extrinsic ways of motivating people?
- 2) How do New Zealand library staff like to be verbally praised or recognised?
- 3) How does being verbally praised or recognised by a manager impact the motivation and job satisfaction of New Zealand library staff?

Research Assumptions

- That being verbally praised or recognised by a manager has an impact on a person's motivation and/or job satisfaction.
- That employees' motivation and/or job satisfaction differs according to a range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.
- That having staff who are motivated and satisfied with their jobs will lead to libraries and information centres being more successful in their missions.
- That having staff who are motivated and satisfied with their jobs will lead to increased customer satisfaction.
- That having staff who are motivated and satisfied with their jobs decreases the possibility of staff turnover.
- That respondents were able to consider how much verbal praise and recognition motivates them, and what impact verbal praise or recognition has on them.
- That although generalisations can be made, motivation varies according to the individual.

Theoretical Framework

“The study of motivation is a candid search for answers to perplexing questions that revolve around human nature” (Olorunsola, 1992, p. 25). Numerous motivation researchers have gone on this search and have produced theories to help explain “what causes an individual to develop and sustain a particular mode of behaviour” (Jordan & Lloyd, 2002, p. 31).

Major motivation theories

In the early 20th century, Taylor’s “Scientific Management Theory” focused on financial gain as the primary way to motivate staff (Jordan & Lloyd, 2002, p. 33; Shields, 1988, p. 4; Wiley, 1997, p. 263). From the late 1920s, more “humanist” theories arose (Dutton, 1976, p. 130). Maslow promoted a five-step hierarchy of needs – physical needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization (Jordan & Lloyd, 2002, p. 41; Plate & Stone, 1976, p. 147; Shields, 1988, p. 5). Alderfer’s ERG theory reduced Maslow’s five-step hierarchy of needs to three categories – existence/survival (E), relatedness (R), and growth (G) (Shields, 1988, p. 5; Wiley, 1997, p. 265). Under McGregor’s “Theory X and Theory Y”, there are two different ways employers can view their staff (Jordan & Lloyd, 2002, p. 46). If managers have a “theory X” attitude, they believe that employees are “indolent, unambitious and resistant to change” and this has an impact on how they will interact with their staff (Shields, 1988, p. 5).

Other theories are regarded as process theories “because they deal with the process through which motivation comes about, rather than with inner needs which may activate motivation” (Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 27). One example is Adams’ Equity Theory which says that workers assess their effort and the benefits they get for it against others and are motivated by perceived inequity (Shields, 1988, p. 6; Ugah & Okpara, 2008, p. 3.; Wiley, 1997, p. 265). Vroom’s Expectancy Theory says that employees will be motivated to work harder if that extra effort is likely to increase the chance of getting a reward (Bourne & Bourne, 2009, p. 9; Ugah & Okpara, 2008, p. 3).

Framing motivation theories for this investigation

Two other major theories provide a framework for this research on verbal praise and recognition – one from each of the humanist/content and process orientations.

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman's "Motivation-Hygiene Theory"

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman used semi-structured interviews to get respondents to tell them about times they felt particularly good or bad in their job (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1993, p. 19; Plate & Stone, 1976, p. 149). From this, they analysed and categorised three parts of these stories. "First-level factors" described the sequences of events that caused good or bad feeling. "Second-level factors" described what it was that the respondents valued about these events. The "Effects" were what a person did or felt as a result (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 28). Through this analysis, it was found that some "first-level factors" are "motivation" factors – factors related to the actual job that increase a person's motivation and satisfaction with their job (Herzberg, 2011, p. 107; Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 59). Examples are achievement, increased responsibility, or advancement (Dutton, 1976, p. 133; Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 59-62, 81). If these "motivation" factors are not present, motivation levels of staff members will drop, but staff will not necessarily be dissatisfied with their work (Bernstein, 2011, p. 8; Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 111). Other factors are "hygiene" factors focusing on the context in which the job is done (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 63). Herzberg et al. (1993, p. 113) used this term because "hygiene operates to remove health hazards from the environment of man". In a similar way, "hygiene" factors improve the environment of a work situation. Examples are working conditions, salary, company policies and job security (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 60, 81). These "hygiene" factors are needed because if they are not present, employees may well be dissatisfied (Bourne & Bourne, 2009, p. 9; Dutton, 1976, p. 133; Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 113). "The satisfying of these factors, however, would not create a happy employee" (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 111). Bourne & Bourne (2009, p. 9) succinctly sum up Herzberg et al's theory in a triangle diagram with "hygiene factors" on the left-hand side and "motivators" on the right-hand side (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Herzberg's motivators and hygiene factors, by M. Bourne & P. Bourne, 2009, *Motivating people*. London, England: Dorling Kindersley, p. 9

This theory is important to the present study as one major "motivation" factor not previously mentioned is recognition (Herzberg, 2011, p. 107-108; Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 60). 33% of respondents in Herzberg et al.'s study mentioned being recognised as a positive "first-level motivator" that had a positive "effect" on their lives (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 60). Herzberg et al. (1993, p. 63-66), further note that recognition is of significant benefit in affecting short-term attitudes. The importance of recognition as a "motivation" factor is confirmed by later studies by researchers such as Goode et al. (1993) and Wiley (1997). According to Herzberg et al. (1993, p. 114) it is an excellent way to help satisfy "the individual's need for self-actualization in his work".

Skinner's "Reinforcement Theory"

The other theory framing this research is B.F. Skinner's Reinforcement Theory (also called Operant Conditioning Theory) (Boeree, 2006; Skinner, 1969, p. 109). This theory focuses purely on extrinsic motivation and says that if appropriate reinforcement is given, living things can be motivated to achieve a particular task (Skinner, 1969, p. 133-134; Wiley, 1997, p. 277). Equally, if reinforcement is taken away or negative consequences occur, a living thing will cease a particular behaviour (Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 28; WebCraft Inc., 2011). Skinner built on Thorndike's work that established a law of cause and effect (Skinner, 1963, p. 503; 1969, p. 105-106). In Reinforcement Theory, there are four main ways managers can impact the motivation of their staff.

- Positive reinforcement – giving a reward that the staff member wants, after they have exhibited a desired behaviour – e.g. praising a staff member for a good job
- Negative reinforcement – removing an undesirable factor from a staff member's work situation after they have exhibited a desired behaviour – e.g. a boss spending less time supervising a staff member's work
- Punishment – punishing a staff member or removing something desirable from a staff member when they have done something undesired – e.g. rostering a staff member on to a more mundane duty which they dislike.
- Extinction – consciously not reinforcing a behaviour with the aim of a staff member stopping an undesired behaviour – e.g. withholding praise from a staff member who has made a serious mistake. (Skinner, 1963, p. 506; 1969, p. 23, 54-55; Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 27-28).

The theory essentially says that "behaviour which is rewarded or which has positive consequences will be repeated while behaviour which receives either no rewards or negative consequences will cease" (Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 27). Managers have had the greatest success with plenty of positive reinforcement and as little punishment as possible (Hamner, as cited in Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 28).

The other important part of Skinner's theory is the timing and scheduling of reinforcements (Skinner, 1958, p. 96; 1969, p. 24). In terms of timing, Skinner says that it is ideal if a manager provides reinforcement as close as possible to when the staff member exhibits desired behaviour (Skinner, 1958, p. 94-95; Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 28). "Great work needs to be acknowledged as quickly as possible . . . expediency is everything" (Staff recognition and appreciation, 2007, p. 100). With regards to scheduling, it can be continuous, but this can be difficult for a manager to maintain and if reinforcement is not offered on any one occasion, it will be noticed and could lead to extinction of a desired behaviour (Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 28). The better option is intermittent reinforcement, determinant on either the number of times the person exhibits a desired behaviour or a period of time. This reinforcement can happen on a fixed schedule, but it will have a greater impact if there is no specific pattern (Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 29). This theory has relevance to the present study because this investigation evaluates

how the extrinsic reward of verbal praise and recognition affects the motivation of New Zealand library staff. Mark Twain once said “I can live for two months on a good compliment” (Smith, 2000, p. 19). Mancini (2002, p. 53) further notes that receiving a word of praise makes people act in ways that will earn them further commendation.

Literature Review

How exactly can managers increase the motivation of their staff? For many years, researchers have investigated ways managers can encourage staff members to perform to a level which causes their business or organisation to succeed. A common thread amongst these researchers is that organisations need to realise that their “employees are the true backbone of [their] firm” (Gill, 1996, p. 66).

The value of praise and recognition

Since the 1940s, researchers have shown that praise and recognition is a valued motivational tool. As Chapman and White (2011, p. 11) say, “something deep within the human psyche cries out for appreciation”. In 1946, Hersey and Blanchard conducted a survey of industrial employees where “appreciation of work done” was the top “job reward” factor (Wiley, 1997, p. 267). Kovach conducted similar research in 1980 & 1986 while Wiley conducted a “factors that motivate me” survey in 1992 (Wiley, 1997, p. 267). In these surveys, “appreciation of work done” lost its top spot, but was still the second most valued type of motivation (Wiley, 1997, p. 268). Wiley (1997, p. 273) found that women specially value being recognised for their work. As the majority of library staff are women, this is particularly illuminating (Golub, 2009; Goodson, 2008).

Hiam (1999, p. xiv) says that “lower key, more frequent individual recognition is the real key to motivation”. Praise is an excellent example of this. Financial reward is important, but much less so than appreciation (Crawford, 2006, p. 47; Kaufman, 2005, p. 52; Nelson, 1994, p. xv). Nelson (as cited in Staff recognition and appreciation, 2007, p. 100) found that many employees appreciate extra cash or a gift, but they also highly value praise. 99.4% of employees regarded praise as “extremely important, very important, or somewhat important”. Other researchers

say that praise can be more effective than tangible rewards in increasing intrinsic motivation (Carton, 1996, p. 238; Crow & Small, 2011, p. 6; Gill, 1994, p. 66). It is intrinsic motivation that enables people to be self-motivated (Hiam, 1999, p. 174). According to Goode et al. (1993, p. 68), “recognition makes people feel like valued, useful contributors rather than cogs”. Dorio & Shelly (2011, p. 71) further note that “rare is the employee who is completely self-motivated and constantly exceeds expectations solely to achieve personal satisfaction”. “A simple ‘thanks for the good job’ can have tremendous impact” (Gill, 1994, p. 66).

Gostick & Elton (2009, pp. 23-24) observe that “when recognition is applied to the basic four of good management (goal setting, communication, trust, and accountability), it serves as an accelerator of employee performance and engagement”. They call this the “carrot principle” and say that it works in every situation (Gostick & Elton, 2009, p. 24). It is also possible that praising staff may increase job satisfaction for managers as well (Pors & Johannsen, 2002, p. 204). In the library world, “library managers are at the heart of motivation in the library” (Green et al., 2000, p. 385). Employees today want to feel appreciated and valued as “human beings who make worthwhile contributions” (Gill, 1994, p. 66). Verbal praise and recognition may be one way to achieve this.

Praise and recognition’s economic value

In today’s economic climate, senior managers often need to see the return on investment of any activity engaged in. They feel that praise has little financial benefit (Chapman & White, 2011, p. 30). In response to this, several researchers have shown the value of praise and recognition in more economic terms. The key point is that employee turnover is expensive - financially, in time taken to find someone else, and in potential loss of experience and knowledge (Chapman & White, 2011, p. 35; Cohen, 2006, p. 10; Goode et al., 1993, p. 67). Other staff may also have to work harder to cover for a person who has left. This can reduce staff morale (Chapman & White, 2011, p. 35).

According to Smith (2000, p. 19) “statistics show that the number 1 reason people quit their jobs is a lack of recognition and praise”. Chapman and White agree. Their research found that just 12% of the employees they investigated left

to get a higher salary or more bonuses. 88% left for other reasons – notably for “not feeling trusted or valued” (Chapman & White, 2011, p. 33).

Successful teamwork, i.e. the ability for staff to work together in a team to achieve a common goal, is also an important means to economic success in many libraries. Cacioppe (1999, p. 325) makes the important point that “reward and recognition systems are one of the most important ways to foster positive interdependence and personal accountability” in teams. Praise and recognition also have no inherent cost (Goode et al., 1993, p. 67; Praise benefits the bottom line, 2009, p. 15; Wiley, 1997, p. 276). Furthermore, if clients see managers praising their staff, it may well improve the client’s opinion of the organisation (Mancini, 2002, p. 53). It is clear that employees want to feel valued and may leave companies that don’t appreciate them, which is the reason that Nelson (1994, p. ix) says “No longer can managers deny the power and practicality of praising”.

The best ways to give praise and recognition

The literature also has much to say on the best ways to give praise and appreciation to one’s staff. Managers need clearly to define what sort of behaviour is praiseworthy (Kaufman, 2005, p. 52), and give praise to employees who achieve it (Crow & Small, 2011, p. 6; Hiam, 1999, p. 85). Frederick (2008, p. 50) notes that “praise lets your staff know what you want from them”. Gostick & Elton (2009, p. 184) suggest that you should “tell the employee exactly what she did that was right, tell her what value or goal she achieved and say thanks”.

Praise given should be timely, individual and specific (Cohen, 2006, p. 10; Dorio & Shelly, 2011, p. 74; Nelson, 1994, pp. xv-xvi, 29). Taylor (1911, p. 46) says “A reward, if it is to be effective in stimulating men to do their best work, must come soon after the work has been done”. On a practical level, if a manager does not give praise within a short time frame of seeing a staff member doing something praiseworthy, there is a high chance that they will forget to recognise that staff member’s efforts (Gostick & Elton, 2009, p. 107).

Verbal praise and recognition must be sincere (Crawford, 2006, p. 47; Gill, 1994, p. 66; Tyler, 2010, p. 17). Craig (2008, p. 31) observes that insincere praise could lead your employees to believe that you have a hidden agenda. Managers ideally need to be altruistic in giving praise, recognising their employees as individuals who have emotional needs (Gostick & Elton, 2009, p. 56). Gostick & Elton (2009, p. 53-54) found that too many managers are “expectors”. Such managers see recognition as a “necessary means to do business”, and expect something in return (Gostock & Elton, 2009, p. 53-54).

Most researchers agree that praise is best when it is spontaneous (e.g. Crawford, 2006; Hiam, 1999) but others propose a more formal reward structure (e.g. Koning, 1993; Miles, 1996). Nelson (1994, p. 3) says that “the type of reward employees most prefer is personalised, spur-of-the-moment recognition from their direct supervisors”. Managers also need to consider how to give praise in the most appropriate fashion (Crawford, 2006, p. 47; Green et al., 2000, p. 383). People like to be recognised in different ways and what one person likes, may not please another (Chapman & White, 2011, p. 23; Crawford, 2006, p. 47; Dorio & Shelly, 2011, p. 227-228). Koning (1993, p. 22) says that “each type of recognition/reward must fit the individual employee to be effective”.

Some researchers promote praising in public (e.g. Craig, 2008; Hallam, 1996; Nelson, 1994) but it is important to do this with care, as staff who are not receiving praise may become envious (Craig, 2008, p. 31). One way to deal with this is to focus on praising the performance, rather than the person (Crow & Small, 2011, p. 6; Dorio & Shelly, 2011, p. 74; Hiam, 1999, p. 183, 191). Others then know that they have a chance of getting praise if they can perform. It is also important that praise is consistent (Craig, 2008, p. 31).

Praise must be merited, not withheld from someone because you don't like them (Cohen, 2006, p. 10; Crawford, 2006, p. 47). Praise should also be given often (Carton, 1996, p. 243; Gostick & Elton, 2009, p. 102). Tyler (2010, p. 17) says that “Praise should be like butter on toast – lavish and liberally applied”. Gallup's research (as cited in Gostick & Elton, 2009, p. 102) found that “for employees to feel valued and committed to a workplace, they need to receive

some form of recognition every seven days. Counting just workdays, that's thirty-five times a year". Hallam (1996, p. 53) suggests that you should praise at least four times for every time you punish or criticise.

For troublesome staff members, Hiam (1999, p. x) suggests that you should "praise the exceptions" – times when they have done as you asked. Kaufman (2005, p. 52) also makes an important recommendation - "Before rewarding people for a job well done, assure staff they won't be crucified if things somehow end up poorly or fail". "Although basic, recognition is important, instilling the employee with a feeling of respect that their work has been appreciated [and giving] them the motivation to improve" (Green et al., 2000, p. 384)

The New Zealand context

The majority of the literature is generic or based in a wide range of other industries, with relatively little research done on the value of praise and recognition in motivating library staff. The literature provides an excellent basis for understanding the importance of verbal praise and recognition, but it is centred on North America, the United Kingdom and Europe. This means that the common attitudes and beliefs in those cultures form a basis for research. Jordan and Lloyd (2002, p. 71) observe that the results of research into motivation "may not be transferable to other countries", therefore there is definite merit in evaluating how motivational verbal praise and recognition from a manager is for New Zealand library staff.

Research design & methodology

Research design

This research was conducted using a quantitative research strategy with a cross-sectional research design. To be able to make inferences about New Zealand library staff as a whole, data was collected from a wide range of staff, working in libraries throughout the country. This was achieved through use of an on-line self-completion questionnaire. This led to a more comprehensive, nationwide viewpoint. Qualtrics online survey software was used to create and manage the survey.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher gained approval from the School of Information Management's Human Ethics Committee, before embarking on data collection. In choosing to complete the online self-completion questionnaire, the respondents were able to remain anonymous. Participants were able to enter a prize draw to thank them for completing the questionnaire.

Collected data has been combined in this research report, so that no individual respondent can be identified. The collected data has only been viewed by the researcher and his supervisor. Any printed questionnaires or documents that may reveal information about a respondent will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years, and then disposed of. All electronic materials will also be deleted from computer storage after two years.

Questionnaire and Testing

A copy of the self-completion questionnaire is provided in Appendix A. It mostly consists of closed questions but includes two open questions – one to ask for examples where verbal praise or recognition from a manager has been particularly effective, and the other to enable respondents to comment further.

Pilot testing: Before submitting the questionnaire to target respondents, the researcher pilot-tested the questionnaire by asking five of his contacts to complete the survey and to comment on it.

Data Collection Period

The online self-completion questionnaire was open and completed by respondents over the period of 01 March-23 March 2012.

Sourcing of Sample & Data Collection

New Zealand library staff members were the focus of this research– that is, any person working in a library of any nature in New Zealand, and who has a manager. Potential respondents were not limited by age, gender, ethnicity, library type, library location, job level or experience.

The research sample was gathered through two means:

1) Purposive Convenience Sampling

The researcher made use of contacts he has at Unitec Institute of Technology Library and Auckland Libraries to get a base group of survey respondents. He wrote to the library directors of these organisations seeking permission to invite their staff to participate in the research by completing the self-completion questionnaire. This letter was sent out in mid-February 2012, together with a printed copy of the self-completion questionnaire (Appendix A), once ethics approval was given. (A sample copy of this letter is provided in Appendix C). Once the library directors gave their approval, the researcher contacted the staff of these libraries. This was done by email messages in the case of Unitec Institute of Technology Library staff, and by a senior library staff member placing posts on a staff intranet for Auckland Libraries staff.

2) Random sampling

The researcher also sought to get responses from library staff working in libraries outside of his contacts. Email invitations to participate in the research were posted on the following major New Zealand library email discussion lists:

nz-libs (a general library list)

ist-students (list for current information studies students at Victoria University of Wellington)

pubsig-L (list for public librarians)

TEL-SIG (list for academic librarians)

SLIS-NZ (list for special librarians)

The first email invitation was sent out on 01 March 2012 and included a one-page document explaining the research and its goals together with a link to the online questionnaire.

Follow up

Both sample groups were contacted twice more via email messages or intranet posts during the data collection period.

The researcher was also aware that some of the target sample, particularly junior staff, were unlikely to subscribe to any of these email discussion lists. In response to this, the researcher asked library managers and team leaders to promote the questionnaire to such staff in their teams.

Participation Incentive

The researcher offered research participants the chance to win a \$100 gift card from “The Warehouse” – a major department store chain with branches across New Zealand. To keep the survey anonymous, respondents who chose to enter in this draw clicked on a link on the last page of the survey. This linked through to a separate Qualtrics questionnaire, where participants were asked to enter their contact details.

Delimitations/Limitations

Delimitation

Any library staff member who has a manager, and is working in New Zealand, was invited to be a respondent for this study.

Limitations

- This research focuses on verbal praise or recognition from a manager. Other means of giving praise or recognition were outside of the scope of this research, except to establish the comparative value of verbal praise or recognition against these other ways to motivate staff.
- Verbal praise or recognition from customers, colleagues or other persons was outside the scope of this research.
- This research does not strongly represent the views of junior and more casual library staff due to difficulties in contacting such staff.
- The researcher was essentially dependent on the goodwill of respondents in completing the self-completion questionnaire.
- Findings are based on the self-reporting of respondents.
- Although representative, findings may not reflect the value of praise and recognition amongst all New Zealand library staff who have a manager.
- As the questionnaire was completely anonymous, it was not possible to measure response rates from individual institutions.

Data analysis

As data for this research was collected via a self-completion questionnaire, it was possible to pre-code most questions for later analysis. This pre-coding took place on all questions where respondents were asked to select one answer, or where they were asked to “select all that apply” (Bryman, 2008, p. 318). It was also important to include a code for missing data and any “not-applicable/don’t know” answers (Bryman, 2008, p. 318-319). The researcher used the Qualtrics survey software to do this coding, and to generate percentages and basic tables which were then manipulated using Microsoft Excel.

The various questions in the survey created a range of variables, with most variables being nominal/categorical (e.g. for what people most value out of praise being given) or dichotomous (e.g. for the gender of the respondents). To provide an overall perspective, the data for all respondents was analysed first. For this univariate analysis, i.e. analysis of one variable at a time (Bryman, 2008, p. 322), data have been presented through the use of column graphs, bar graphs and pie charts. Frequency tables also proved useful in analysing questions such as how often staff like to be praised.

Beyond this, the researcher was interested in analysing whether there were differences in responses according to gender, length of time working in libraries, type of library role and whether respondents regard librarianship as their long term career. The majority of variables were nominal, so for this bivariate analysis, contingency tables were used to present the data. In addition, for bivariate analysis on questions where only one choice could be selected by respondents, chi-square (χ^2) tests were used to highlight statistically significant relationships between variables.

Research sample

When the questionnaire closed on 23rd March 2012, a total of 436 respondents had participated in the research. This equates to 6.88% of people who indicated that they are a 'librarian' or 'library assistant' in the 2006 New Zealand population census (n=6336) (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). Of these respondents, 69 (15.83%) were male and 367 (84.17%) female. This is in line with the previously mentioned predominance of females in librarianship.

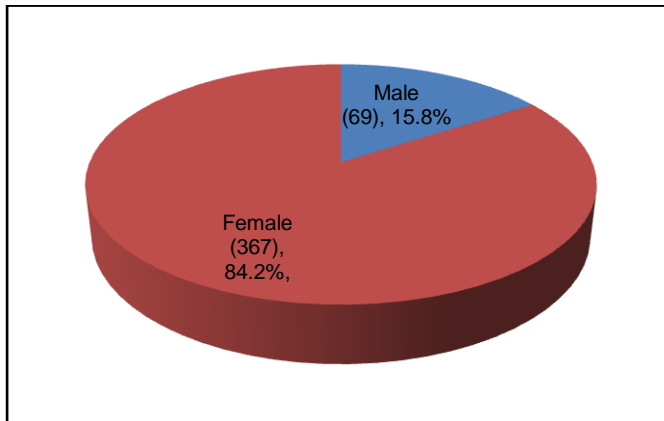


Chart 1: Gender of Respondents

Almost three-quarters of respondents had worked in libraries for at least five years. The largest grouping was those who have worked in libraries for 'Over 10 years, up to 20 years' (114 respondents, 26.1%), while there were about the same number of respondents in the 'Over 20 years' (98 respondents, 22.5%) and 'Over 5 years, up to 10 years' (99 respondents, 22.7%) categories.

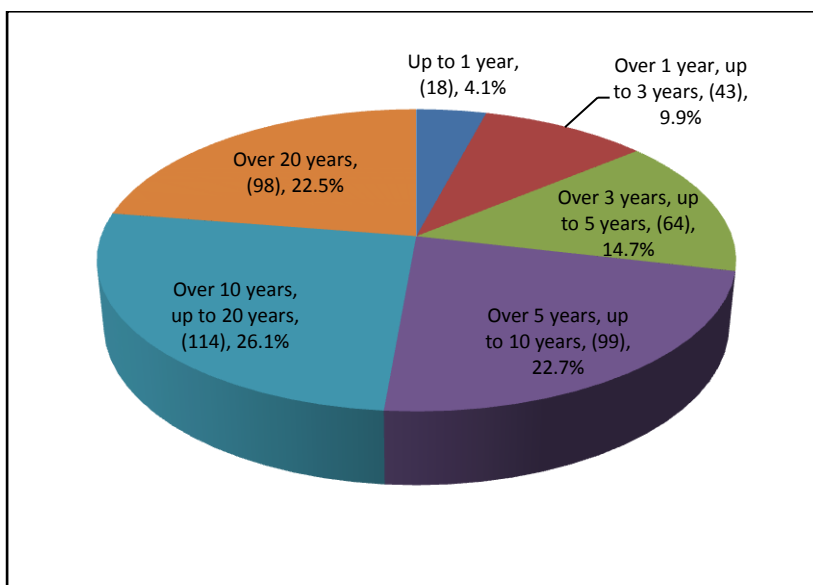


Chart 2: Time worked in a library

As expected, it was difficult to get responses from more junior staff. The largest groupings of respondents were ‘permanent library assistants’ (31.65%) and ‘non-managerial professional librarians’ (38.76%). This second category includes staff with job titles such as liaison librarians, cataloguers, collections management staff and acquisitions librarians.

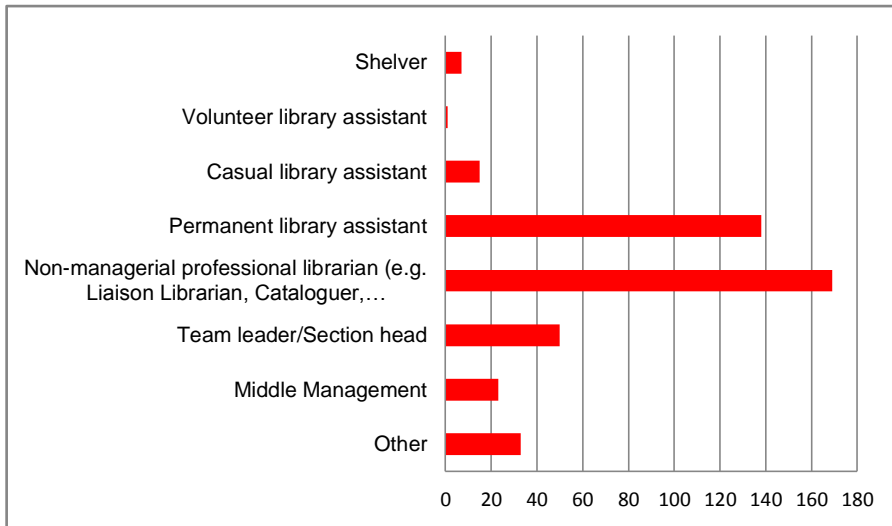


Chart 3: Type of job in library (number of respondents)

Some of the ‘other’ roles given include: library administrator, library web specialists, sole-charge librarians, library web/technology experts, children’s & teens librarians, an outreach librarian and senior management.

With the high number of respondents at a permanent library assistant role and above, it was not surprising that a high percentage of the respondents regard librarianship as their long-term career.

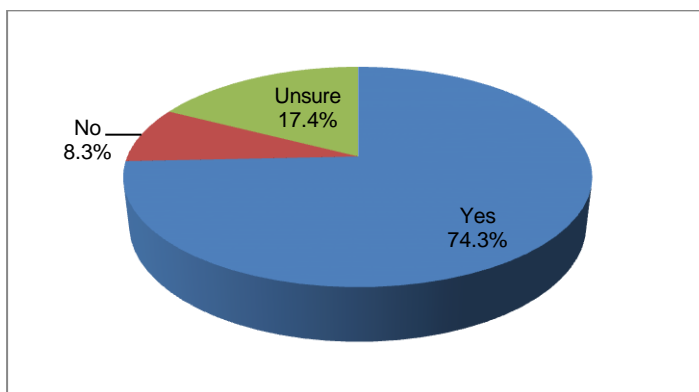


Chart 4: Do you regard librarianship as your long term career?

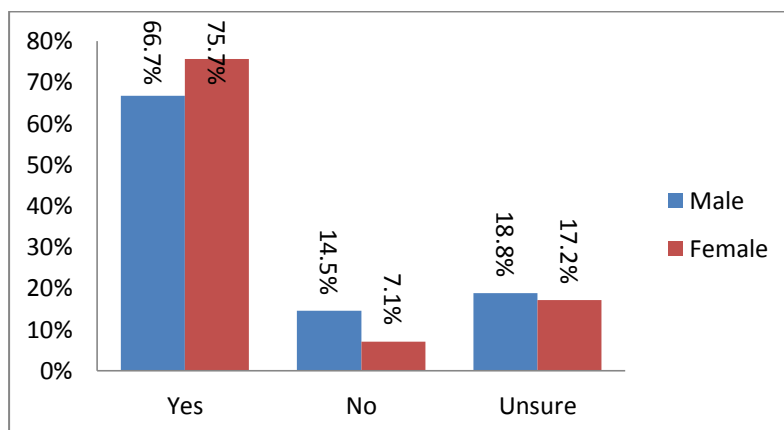
Interestingly, amongst this group, 53.3% of the casual library assistants regard librarianship as their career path. This suggests that these staff may want to move into permanent positions, or may have been in permanent positions in the past. For example, one respondent indicated that in her semi-retirement, she had dropped down to casual hours, after working full time for many years. Those in 'other' roles are notably less sure than other permanent staff about librarianship as a career path, but it may be that some of these people do not consider themselves librarians. Looking at all job types, there is a statistically significant relationship between job type and whether people consider librarianship to be their long term career with a chi-square test result of $\chi^2=0.000000103$ (at a statistical significance level of $p < 0.05$).

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Yes	28.6%	0.0%	53.3%	64.5%	85.8%	86.0%	74.0%	60.6%
No	42.8%	100.0%	26.7%	10.1%	3.0%	0.0%	4.3%	24.2%
Unsure	28.6%	0.0%	20.0%	25.4%	11.2%	14.0%	21.7%	15.2%
Total	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.000000103$ $p < 0.05$

Table 1: Is librarianship your long-term career? (by job type)

It is also worth noting that 14.5% of men indicated that they have another career path in mind, against 7.1% of women.



Note: $\chi^2 = 0.100324$ $p < 0.05$

Chart 5: Is librarianship your long term career? (by gender)

Findings

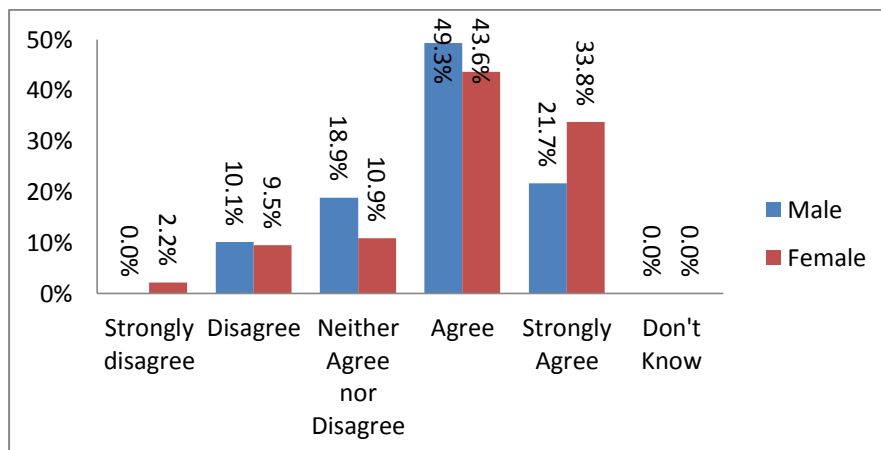
PART ONE: The current situation

Based on the 436 participants involved in this research, New Zealand library staff are already fairly satisfied in their current jobs. 76.4% of respondents (n=333) ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that ‘they experience a high level of job satisfaction in their current position’, with just 11.4% (n=50) ‘disagreeing’ or ‘strongly disagreeing’.

	Number of responses	%
Strongly disagree	8	1.8%
Disagree	42	9.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	53	12.2%
Agree	194	44.5%
Strongly Agree	139	31.9%
Don't Know	0	0.0%

Table 2: I experience a high level of job satisfaction in my current position (overall)

There is little overall difference in job satisfaction by gender, although females ‘strongly agreed’ to high job satisfaction more than males.



Note: $\chi^2=0.107163$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding “don’t know” answers)

Chart 6: I experience a high level of job satisfaction in my current position (by gender)

Respondents who have worked in libraries for ‘Over 1 year, up to 3 years’ (‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ – 81.4%) and ‘Over 20 years’ (‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ – 80.6%) are the most satisfied, while those in their first year of work are least satisfied (‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ – 61.1%).

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	2.3%	3.1%	2.0%	1.7%	1.0%
Disagree	16.7%	2.3%	7.8%	15.2%	7.9%	9.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.2%	14.0%	14.1%	10.1%	13.2%	9.2%
Agree	44.4%	53.5%	42.2%	41.4%	43.0%	46.9%
Strongly Agree	16.7%	27.9%	32.8%	31.3%	34.2%	33.7%
Don't Know	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.807699$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 3: I experience a high level of job satisfaction in my current position (by time worked in libraries)

Looking at job type, the least satisfied with their jobs are shelvers (n=7) with only 42.8% of them agreeing or strongly agreeing to high job satisfaction. At least 70% of respondents in all other job categories are satisfied with their jobs.

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	1.8%	2.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Disagree	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	13.0%	8.3%	12.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28.6%	0.0%	20.0%	15.2%	10.0%	6.0%	8.7%	15.2%
Agree	14.3%	0.0%	60.0%	47.1%	46.2%	32.0%	52.2%	39.4%
Strongly Agree	28.5%	100.0%	20.0%	23.2%	33.7%	48.0%	39.1%	33.3%
Don't Know	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.179492$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 4: I experience a high level of job satisfaction in my current position (by job type)

Understandably, job satisfaction is high for those who regard librarianship as their long-term career, but interestingly, over half of the respondents who don't regard librarianship as their long-term career or are unsure, are still satisfied with their jobs. Perhaps not surprisingly, whether respondents regard librarianship as their long-term career has a statistically significant relationship on a person's level of job satisfaction with a chi-square test result of $\chi^2=0.0000580$ (at a statistical significance figure of $p < 0.05$).

	Yes	No	Unsure
Strongly disagree	2.2%	0.0%	1.3%
Disagree	8.6%	19.4%	9.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.3%	25.0%	22.4%
Agree	43.5%	38.9%	51.3%
Strongly Agree	37.4%	16.7%	15.8%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	324	36	76

Note: $\chi^2=0.0000580$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 5: I experience a high level of job satisfaction in my current position (by whether librarianship is a long-term career)

When asked if they receive sufficient verbal praise and recognition for their work now, 52.3% of all respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'. 29.4% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'.

	Number of responses	%
Strongly disagree	33	7.6%
Disagree	95	21.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	79	18.1%
Agree	171	39.2%
Strongly Agree	57	13.1%
Don't Know	1	0.2%

Table 6: I believe that I receive sufficient praise and recognition for my work now (overall)

The newest New Zealand library staff most strongly 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they get sufficient praise and recognition – i.e. 61-65% of those who have worked for up to 3 years in libraries.

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	2.3%	7.8%	6.1%	8.8%	11.2%
Disagree	33.3%	14.0%	17.2%	20.2%	26.3%	22.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.6%	16.3%	15.6%	24.2%	18.4%	16.3%
Agree	50.0%	53.5%	40.6%	36.4%	35.1%	37.8%
Strongly Agree	11.1%	11.6%	18.8%	13.1%	11.4%	12.2%
Don't Know	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.524444$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 7: I believe that I receive sufficient praise and recognition for my work now (by time worked in libraries)

The one volunteer library assistant and most of the casual library assistants (n=15) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they get enough praise and recognition, with around half of the shelvers, permanent library assistants, team leaders/section heads & middle managers also expressing satisfaction. Only 36.4% of those who described their role as 'other' feel that they are sufficiently praised or recognised. This group includes people who are in sole-charge positions or in situations where their manager is not on site, which may explain some of these responses.

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.7%	9.5%	6.0%	0.0%	6.0%
Disagree	42.8%	0.0%	6.7%	18.1%	22.5%	26.0%	26.1%	27.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	21.0%	16.0%	12.0%	21.7%	30.3%
Agree	28.6%	100.0%	53.3%	39.1%	39.6%	40.0%	43.5%	27.3%
Strongly Agree	28.6%	0.0%	26.7%	12.3%	12.4%	16.0%	8.7%	9.1%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.654784$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 8: I believe that I receive sufficient praise and recognition for my work now (by job type)

It would appear that for those who are unsure if librarianship is their long-term career, a lack of praise and recognition could be a factor. Only 38.2% of these people felt that they get sufficient praise and recognition now.

	Yes	No	Unsure
Strongly disagree	7.7%	5.5%	7.9%
Disagree	20.1%	25.0%	27.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.4%	16.7%	26.3%
Agree	40.7%	41.7%	31.6%
Strongly Agree	14.8%	11.1%	6.6%
Don't Know	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	324	36	76

Note: $\chi^2=0.256784$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 9: I believe that I receive sufficient praise and recognition for my work now (by whether librarianship is a long-term career)

PART TWO: The value of verbal praise and recognition

Verbal praise and recognition is valued by New Zealand library staff. 85.8% of all respondents (n=374) said that they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that they like to receive regular verbal praise and recognition from their manager.

	Number of responses	%
Strongly disagree	8	1.8%
Disagree	17	3.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	37	8.5%
Agree	185	42.4%
Strongly Agree	189	43.4%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Table 10: I like to receive regular verbal praise and recognition for my work from my manager (overall)

Unsurprisingly, new staff (under one year in libraries) particularly like to receive verbal praise and recognition (94.4% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’) (see Table 11). A lower need for verbal praise and recognition from managers was seen amongst middle managers (see Table 12) and those who do not regard librarianship as their long-term career (see Table 13). However, even in these groupings, over 69% value praise and recognition.

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	3.0%	1.8%	2.0%
Disagree	0.0%	2.3%	3.1%	2.0%	7.9%	3.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.6%	14.0%	4.7%	7.1%	10.5%	8.2%
Agree	61.1%	46.5%	32.8%	36.4%	39.5%	53.0%
Strongly Agree	33.3%	34.9%	59.4%	51.5%	40.3%	33.7%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.102354$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding “don’t know” answers)

Table 11: I like to receive regular verbal praise and recognition for my work from my manager (by time worked in libraries)

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	2.2%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	4.7%	10.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.2%	0.0%	13.3%	7.2%	8.9%	2.0%	26.1%	6.1%
Agree	42.9%	100.0%	26.7%	39.1%	43.2%	54.0%	30.4%	48.5%
Strongly Agree	42.9%	0.0%	53.3%	49.3%	41.4%	34.0%	43.5%	39.4%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.285311$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding “don’t know” answers)

Table 12: I like to receive regular verbal praise and recognition for my work from my manager (by job type)

	Yes	No	Unsure
Strongly disagree	0.9%	5.6%	4.0%
Disagree	4.0%	5.6%	2.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.4%	19.4%	7.9%
Agree	44.8%	36.1%	35.5%
Strongly Agree	42.9%	33.3%	50.0%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	324	36	76

Note: $\chi^2=0.051845$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 13: I like to receive regular verbal praise and recognition for my work from my manager (by whether librarianship is a long-term career)

Praise and recognition also has an important role to play in recognising excellent work. 318 out of the 436 respondents (72.9%) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they feel frustrated if they have worked hard and do not receive praise or recognition for it. One respondent commented, "I don't require constant praise but appreciate it when it is deserved – especially if I have gone "above and beyond" in the line of duty.

	Number of responses	%
Strongly disagree	4	0.9%
Disagree	46	10.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	66	15.1%
Agree	205	47.0%
Strongly Agree	113	25.9%
Don't Know	2	0.5%

Table 14: I feel frustrated if I have worked hard and do not receive praise or recognition for it (overall)

Being recognised for hard work through praise or recognition was particularly important for the shelvers, the one volunteer library assistant, the permanent library assistants and the non-managerial professional librarians. Over 74% of respondents in each of these groups said that they get frustrated if they work hard and do not receive praise or recognition. Team leaders/subject heads & middle managers were less worried about this issue, as were the casual library assistants. Still, over 56% agreed that they like to be praised or recognised when they have worked hard.

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.2%	0.0%	4.4%	0.00%
Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	8.7%	7.7%	22.0%	13.0%	15.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	15.9%	11.8%	16.0%	26.1%	18.2%
Agree	85.7%	100.0%	33.3%	47.1%	50.9%	44.0%	34.8%	36.4%
Strongly Agree	14.3%	0.0%	26.7%	27.6%	28.4%	16.0%	21.7%	27.3%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.437209$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 15: I feel frustrated if I have worked hard and do not receive praise or recognition for it (by job type)

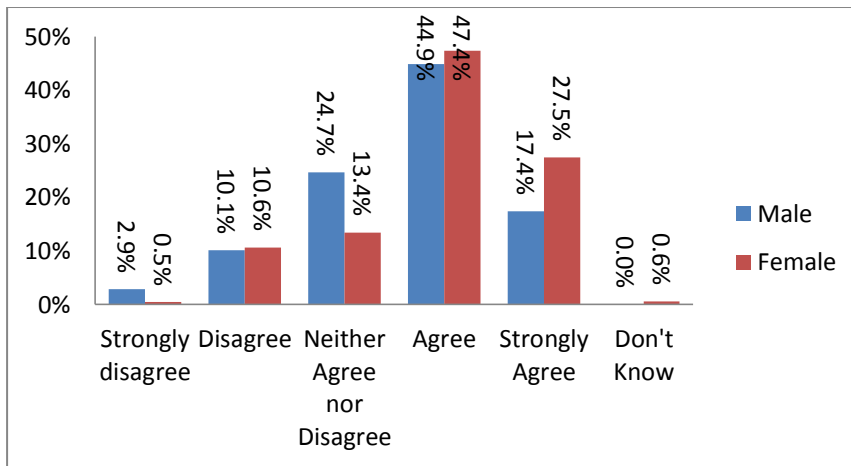
Staff who have worked in libraries for 1-3 years and the most experienced staff had the lowest need to be praised or recognised for hard work, although over 59% of these respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' to this need.

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	3.1%
Disagree	22.2%	13.9%	7.8%	9.1%	7.9%	13.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.6%	18.6%	7.8%	17.2%	11.4%	22.4%
Agree	33.3%	44.2%	57.8%	45.4%	52.6%	38.8%
Strongly Agree	38.9%	23.3%	26.6%	27.3%	28.1%	20.4%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.113782$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 16: I feel frustrated if I have worked hard and do not receive praise or recognition for it (by time worked in libraries)

The need to be praised or recognised for one's efforts was also felt more strongly by female staff (74.9% 'agree' or 'strongly agree') than male staff (62.3% 'agree or 'strongly agree'). Excluding those respondents who answered "don't know", chi-square test result of $\chi^2 = 0.029122$ shows that there is a relationship between one's gender and this need to be praised for one's efforts (at a statistical significance level of $p < 0.05$).



Note: $\chi^2=0.029122$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Chart 7: I feel frustrated if I have worked hard and do not receive praise or recognition for it (by gender)

If verbal praise or recognition is lacking, it would appear to have a moderate influence on New Zealand library staff seeking other employment. 37.4% of all respondents indicated that they were very likely or quite likely to seek other employment if they were not verbally praised or recognised, with a further 32.8% of respondents indicating that this lack of verbal praise and recognition would have some influence.

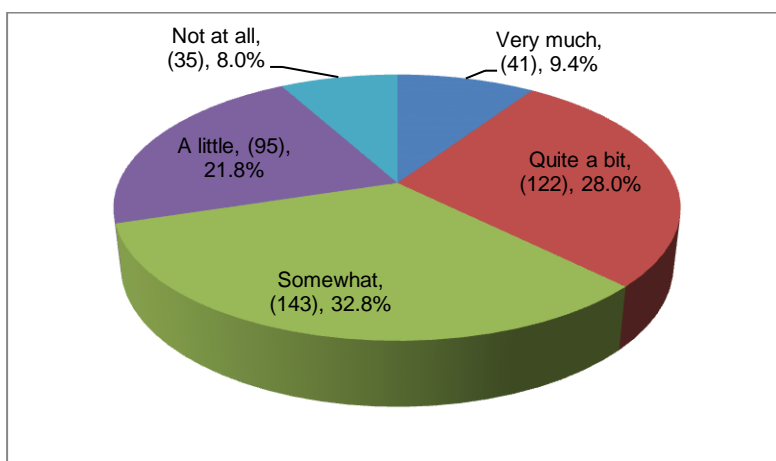
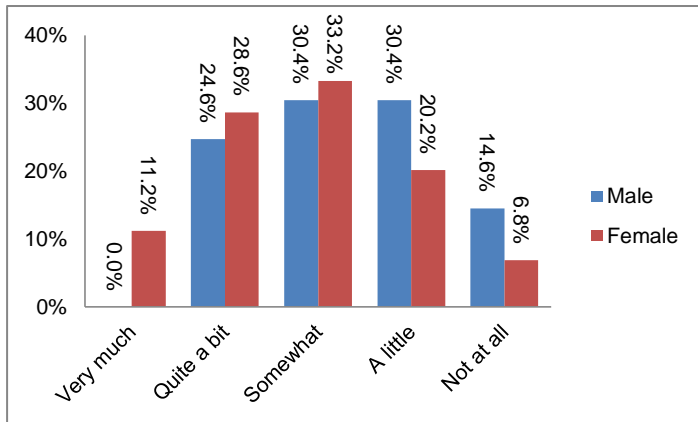


Chart 8: How much would a lack of verbal praise and recognition influence you to seek other employment? (overall)

Again, verbal praise and recognition seems to be more important to female library staff than male staff. 39.8% of female respondents said that a lack of verbal praise and recognition would be very or quite influential on their seeking other employment. Amongst male staff, only 24.6% indicated that it would be quite influential, with no-

one indicating that a lack of verbal praise and recognition would be very influential in their seeking other employment. The chi-square test result of $\chi^2 = 0.000000000000000061$ at $p < 0.05$ shows that one's gender is a strong influencer on this issue.



Note: $\chi^2=0.000000000000000061$ $p < 0.05$

Chart 9: How much would a lack of verbal praise and recognition influence you to seek other employment? (by gender)

Verbal praise and recognition as an incentive to stay in one's job is also quite important for staff members who have worked in libraries for 3-10 years. 45-51% of these library staff indicated that a lack of verbal praise and recognition would be very or quite influential on them seeking other employment. Overall, like gender, time worked in libraries has a statistically significant relationship to the likelihood that someone will look for other employment if they don't get enough praise. The chi-square test result for this data is $\chi^2=0.037138$ $p < 0.05$.

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Very much	16.7%	2.3%	17.2%	10.1%	6.1%	9.2%
Quite a bit	22.2%	25.6%	34.4%	35.3%	26.3%	20.4%
Somewhat	38.9%	39.6%	23.4%	29.3%	39.5%	30.6%
A little	11.1%	20.9%	23.4%	19.2%	22.8%	24.5%
Not at all	11.1%	11.6%	1.6%	6.1%	5.3%	15.3%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.037138$ $p < 0.05$

Table 17: How much would a lack of verbal praise and recognition influence you to seek other employment? (by time worked in libraries)

42.2% of permanent library assistants (see Table 18) and 44.7% of those who are unsure if librarianship is their long-term career (see Table 19) said that a lack of

verbal praise and recognition is very or quite influential on them seeking other employment.

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-M P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Very much	0.0%	0.0%	18.7%	9.3%	11.9%	4.0%	8.7%	3.0%
Quite a bit	25.0%	0.0%	6.3%	32.9%	25.0%	26.0%	26.1%	33.3%
Somewhat	62.5%	100.0%	25.0%	37.1%	28.4%	40.0%	30.4%	33.3%
A little	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	16.4%	28.4%	18.0%	17.4%	15.2%
Not at all	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	4.3%	6.3%	12.0%	17.4%	15.2%
Respondents	8	1	16	140	176	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.104544$ $p < 0.05$

Table 18: How much would a lack of verbal praise and recognition influence you to seek other employment? (by job type)

	Yes	No	Unsure
Very much	9.3%	5.6%	11.8%
Quite a bit	26.8%	27.8%	32.9%
Somewhat	33.0%	30.5%	32.9%
A little	23.8%	19.4%	14.5%
Not at all	7.1%	16.7%	7.9%
Respondents	324	36	76

Note: $\chi^2=0.418556$ $p < 0.05$

Table 19: How much would a lack of verbal praise and recognition influence you to seek other employment? (by whether librarianship is a long-term career)

The respondents were asked to rank from 1-10 the level to which they were motivated by ten different incentives. From these rankings, a mean score for each incentive was ascertained. Although New Zealand library staff do value verbal praise and recognition from their managers, the staff who participated in this research indicated that there are other extrinsic rewards that motivate them more. Such things as regular or unexpected salary increases, promotion & advancement opportunities and professional development opportunities are more highly valued than spontaneous verbal praise from a manager. In fact, spontaneous verbal praise was only the seventh most motivating thing amongst the ten choices that respondents were offered (see Chart 10). Professional development and training opportunities were shown to be much more important for female staff (7.76 mean; 1st= most motivational thing) than male staff (6.78 mean; 5th most motivational thing). Male staff seem to be more focused on money with a 'regular pay increase', 'unexpected financial bonus' and 'promotion' being significantly more motivational than other rewards (see Chart 11).

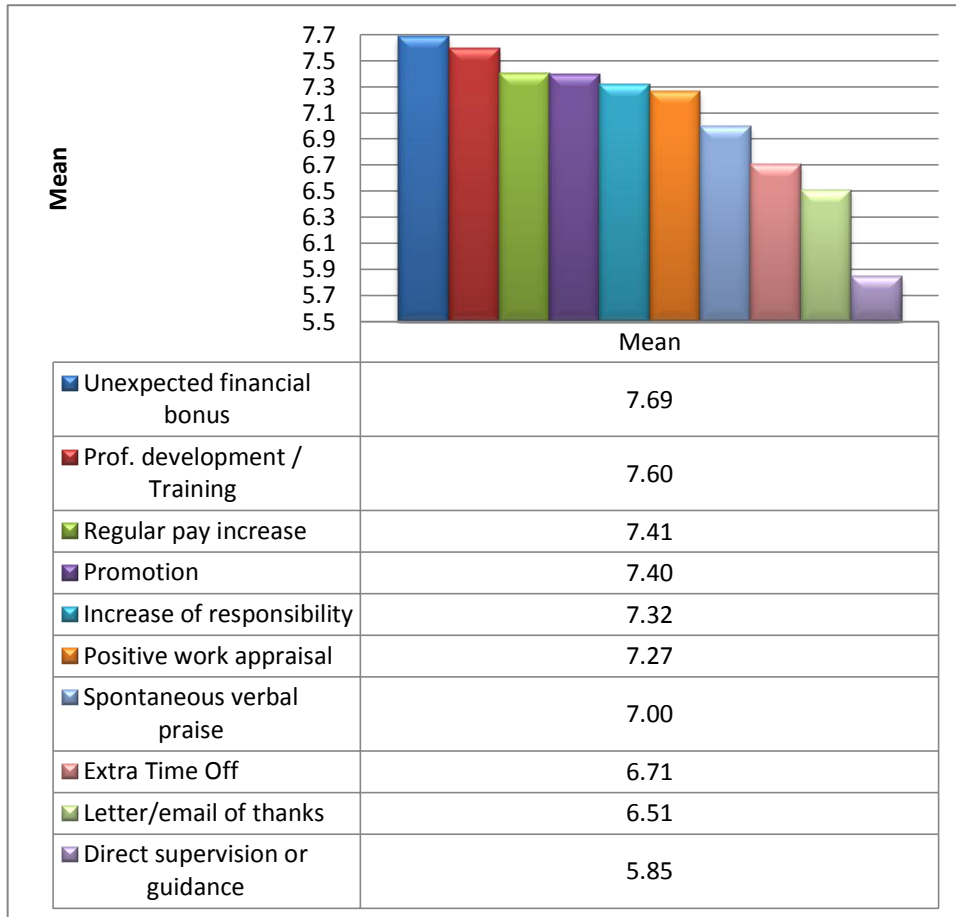


Chart 10: The level to which NZ library staff are motivated by different things (on a scale of 1-10, showing means) (overall)

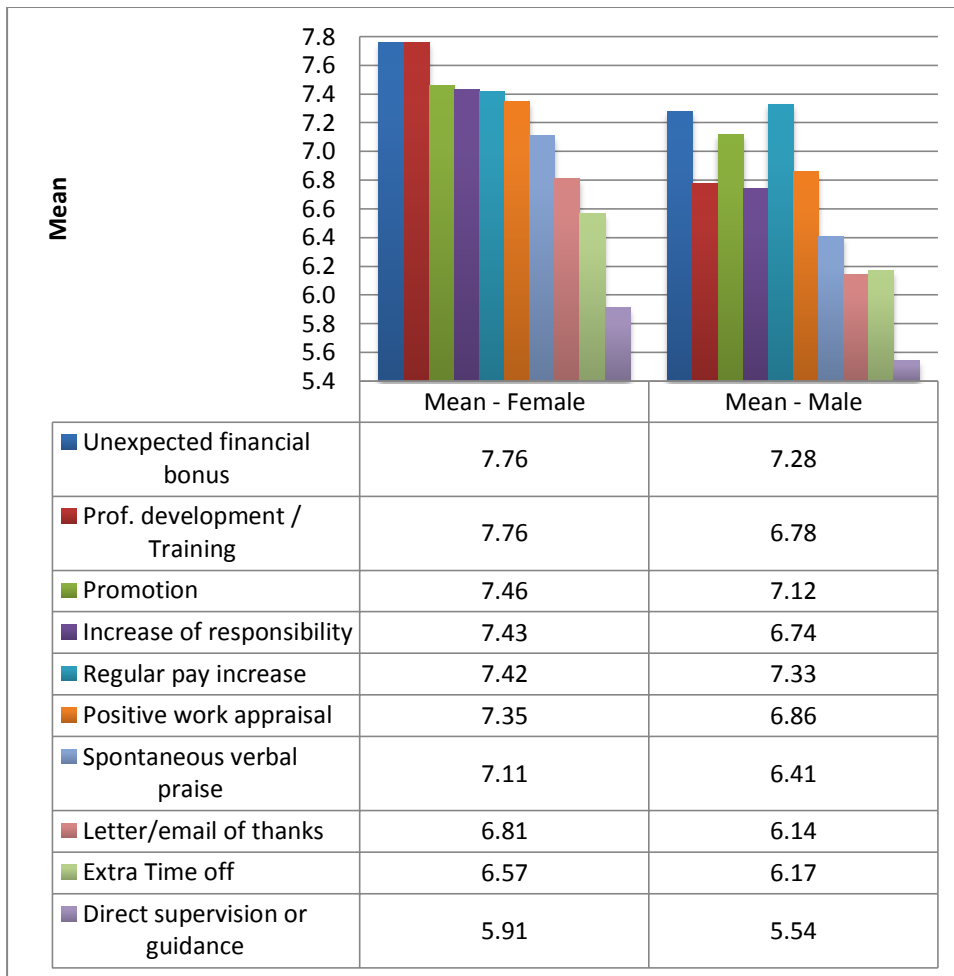


Chart 11: The level to which NZ library staff are motivated by different things (on a scale of 1-10) (by gender)

Going against the trend, spontaneous verbal praise was the third most motivational thing for casual library assistants. Permanent library assistants declared a 'regular pay increase' to be the most motivational while team leaders/section heads, middle managers and those in 'other' library positions valued an 'unexpected financial bonus' most highly (see Table 20). An 'unexpected financial bonus' was also most motivational for those who do not regard librarianship as their career and those who are unsure (see Table 21). Professional development and training was most highly valued by casual library assistants & non-managerial professional librarians (see Table 20) and those who are in their long-term career (see Table 21).

Means

INCENTIVE	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
(a)	7.29	9.00	8.13	6.90	7.17	6.74	6.70	6.48
(b)	6.71	9.00	7.73	6.78	6.85	6.32	5.96	6.21
(c)	6.86	9.00	7.47	7.33	7.42	6.88	6.91	7.03
(d)	6.57	9.00	7.47	5.80	5.61	5.96	6.22	5.85
(e)	7.57	1.00	7.60	7.73	7.33	6.82	7.70	7.24
(f)	8.43	1.00	8.40	7.67	7.59	7.30	8.70	7.88
(g)	9.00	1.00	8.80	7.49	7.79	7.06	7.65	7.30
(h)	9.00	1.00	8.00	7.38	7.42	6.76	7.00	7.12
(i)	9.00	1.00	7.33	7.35	7.42	7.22	8.04	7.24
(j)	6.71	1.00	5.60	6.36	6.72	6.42	6.78	6.52

- (a) Spontaneous verbal praise from your manager
- (b) A letter/email of thanks from your manager
- (c) A positive formal work appraisal
- (d) Direct supervision or guidance from your manager
- (e) A regular pay increase
- (f) An unexpected financial bonus
- (g) Professional development or training opportunity
- (h) Increase of responsibility
- (i) Promotion
- (j) Extra time off

Table 20: The level to which NZ library staff are motivated by different things (on a scale of 1-10) (by job type)

Means

INCENTIVE	Yes	No	Unsure
(a)	7.06	6.78	6.84
(b)	6.74	6.72	6.54
(c)	7.40	7.03	6.84
(d)	5.89	5.81	5.71
(e)	7.42	7.22	7.46
(f)	7.65	7.81	7.79
(g)	7.69	7.00	7.50
(h)	7.37	7.11	7.20
(i)	7.50	7.06	7.13
(j)	6.56	6.25	6.43

- (a) Spontaneous verbal praise from your manager
- (b) A letter/email of thanks from your manager
- (c) A positive formal work appraisal
- (d) Direct supervision or guidance from your manager
- (e) A regular pay increase
- (f) An unexpected financial bonus
- (g) Professional development or training opportunity
- (h) Increase of responsibility
- (i) Promotion
- (j) Extra time off

Table 21: The level to which NZ library staff are motivated by different things (on a scale of 1-10) (by whether librarianship is a long-term career)

PART THREE: How verbal praise and recognition should be done

So when New Zealand library staff get verbally praised or recognised, how do they like it be done? What increases its power to be motivational?

First and foremost, New Zealand library staff insist that praise must be sincere. 97.5% of respondents (n=425) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' to the importance of sincerity in praise, with 71.6% 'strongly agreeing'.

	Number of responses	
	Number	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	4	0.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7	1.6%
Agree	113	25.9%
Strongly Agree	312	71.6%
Don't Know	0	0.0%

Table 22: Praise is only meaningful if it's sincere (overall)

This was particularly strongly felt (100% agreement) by those in their first three years of work in libraries (see Table 23) and by the shelvers, casual library assistants and the one volunteer library assistant (see Table 24).

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	1.0%	0.9%	0.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	3.0%	0.9%	1.0%
Agree	22.2%	34.9%	31.3%	22.2%	22.8%	26.5%
Strongly Agree	77.8%	65.1%	62.5%	73.8%	75.4%	72.5%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.594888$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "strongly disagree" (0 expected result) & "don't know" answers)

Table 23: Praise is only meaningful if it's sincere (by time worked in libraries)

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.2%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	2.0%	8.7%	3.0%
Agree	28.6%	0.0%	20.0%	27.5%	25.4%	28.0%	17.4%	27.3%
Strongly Agree	71.4%	100.0%	80.0%	69.6%	73.4%	68.0%	73.9%	69.7%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.847013$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding “strongly disagree” (0 expected result) & “don’t know” answers)

Table 24: Praise is only meaningful if it’s sincere (by job type)

Over 75% of respondents like praise to be for something specific (see Table 25). Those who have worked in libraries for 1-3 years particularly agreed with this (86.1% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’) (see Table 26), as did the middle managers (87% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’) and the casual library assistants (86.7% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’). The shelvers did not mind so much, with only 42.9% ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ to the need for praise to be specific (see Table 27).

	Number of responses	%
Strongly disagree	2	0.5%
Disagree	48	11.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	58	13.3%
Agree	156	35.8%
Strongly Agree	172	39.4%
Don't Know	0	0.0%

Table 25: Praise, when given, needs to be for a specific reason, not general (overall)

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	1.0%
Disagree	11.1%	4.6%	17.2%	12.1%	7.9%	12.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.7%	9.3%	12.5%	14.1%	14.0%	13.3%
Agree	22.2%	44.2%	34.4%	29.3%	38.6%	38.8%
Strongly Agree	44.4%	41.9%	35.9%	44.5%	39.5%	34.7%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.278003$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding “don’t know” answers)

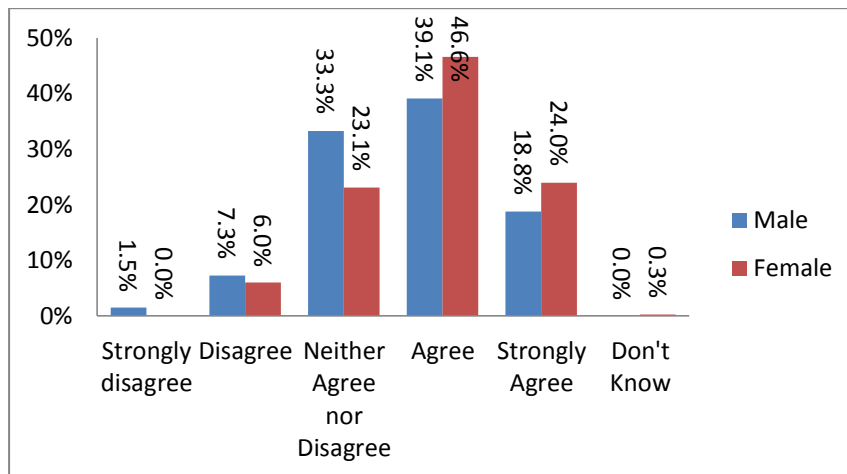
Table 26: Praise, when given needs to be for a specific reason, not general (by time worked in libraries)

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disagree	14.3%	0.0%	13.3%	11.6%	10.7%	12.0%	0.0%	15.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	42.8%	0.0%	0.0%	12.3%	12.4%	20.0%	13.0%	12.1%
Agree	14.3%	100.0%	40.0%	31.9%	37.3%	36.0%	34.8%	45.5%
Strongly Agree	28.6%	0.0%	46.7%	43.5%	39.6%	30.0%	52.2%	27.3%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.661831$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 27: Praise, when given needs to be for a specific reason, not general (by job type)

70.6% of female staff 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they like to get praise quickly after they have earned it. This is a notably higher percentage than for male staff (57.9%).



Note: $\chi^2=0.054775$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Chart 12: I appreciate being praised more if it is given quickly after I have earned it (by gender)

Respondents who had worked in libraries for 1-3 years and over twenty years were also not so worried about getting praised near to the time they earn that praise.

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disagree	11.1%	13.9%	6.3%	4.1%	5.3%	5.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.2%	23.3%	23.4%	23.2%	21.9%	31.6%
Agree	50.0%	46.5%	45.3%	51.5%	43.9%	39.8%
Strongly Agree	16.7%	16.3%	25.0%	20.2%	28.9%	22.5%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.663904$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 28: I appreciate being praised more if it is given quickly after I have earned it (by time worked in libraries).

Overall, 68.6% of respondents 'agreed' or strongly agreed' that they appreciate being praised more, if they are praised quickly after they have earned it.

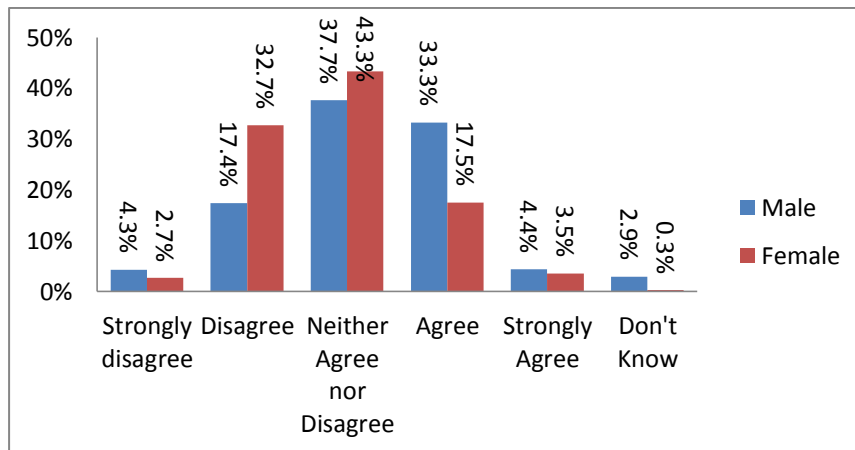
	Number of Responses	%
Strongly disagree	1	0.2%
Disagree	27	6.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	108	24.8%
Agree	198	45.4%
Strongly Agree	101	23.2%
Don't Know	1	0.2%

Table 29: I appreciate being praised more if it is given quickly after I have earned it (overall)

Some interesting results were seen when respondents were asked whether praise should be given in private. Overall, the respondents were fairly neutral on this topic. 42.4% had no strong feelings on the issue, while a further 33.3% said that they do not mind receiving praise in front of their colleagues. This still means that 24.3% of respondents prefer not to be praised in public or are unsure (see Table 30). Intriguingly, a notably higher percentage of men than women 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they do not like receiving praise in front of their colleagues (37.7% against 21%) (see Chart 13). This gender difference is statistically significant, with a chi-square test result of $\chi^2=0.011776$ (at $p < 0.05$).

	Number of Responses	%
Strongly disagree	13	3.0%
Disagree	132	30.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	185	42.4%
Agree	87	19.9%
Strongly Agree	16	3.7%
Don't Know	3	0.7%

Table 30: I don't like receiving praise for my work in front of my colleagues (overall)



Note: $\chi^2=0.011776$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Chart 13: I don't like receiving praise for my work in front of my colleagues (by gender)

Half of those who have worked in libraries for less than one year said that they are not embarrassed about being praised in public (see Table 31), together with 40% of the casual library assistants and 42.4% of those in 'other' library jobs (see Table 32). However, it is an issue for 25-28% of respondents who had worked in libraries for more than five years (see Table 31) and a third of those who do not regard librarianship as their long-term career (see Table 33).

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	4.0%	2.6%	3.0%
Disagree	50.0%	32.6%	32.8%	28.3%	32.5%	23.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.8%	48.8%	48.4%	39.4%	39.5%	44.9%
Agree	22.2%	16.3%	9.4%	22.2%	21.0%	24.5%
Strongly Agree	0.0%	2.3%	3.1%	4.0%	4.4%	4.1%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.711332$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 31: I don't like receiving praise for my work in front of my colleagues (by time worked in libraries)

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	2.9%	0.6%	10.0%	4.3%	3.0%
Disagree	14.3%	100.0%	33.3%	29.0%	31.9%	22.0%	30.5%	39.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	71.4%	0.0%	33.3%	47.8%	39.1%	46.0%	34.8%	36.4%
Agree	14.3%	0.0%	20.0%	17.4%	21.9%	22.0%	26.1%	15.2%
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	6.5%	0.0%	4.3%	3.0%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.333211$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 32: I don't like receiving praise for my work in front of my colleagues (by job type)

	Yes	No	Unsure
Strongly disagree	2.8%	2.8%	4.0%
Disagree	31.8%	19.5%	28.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	41.0%	44.4%	47.4%
Agree	20.7%	25.0%	14.5%
Strongly Agree	3.4%	8.3%	2.6%
Don't Know	0.3%	0.0%	2.6%
Respondents	324	36	76

Note: $\chi^2=0.569157$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 33: I don't like receiving praise for my work in front of my colleagues (by whether librarianship is a long-term career)

Finally, the respondents were asked whether it is inappropriate to praise an individual when many library employees work in teams. Half of the respondents who have worked in libraries for under one year and 43.4% of those who had worked for 5-10 years 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that it is most appropriate to praise the team.

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Strongly disagree	0.0%	4.6%	4.7%	7.1%	5.2%	4.1%
Disagree	33.3%	32.6%	32.8%	25.2%	28.1%	26.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.7%	23.3%	23.5%	20.2%	31.6%	31.6%
Agree	33.3%	27.9%	35.9%	33.3%	24.5%	27.6%
Strongly Agree	16.7%	11.6%	3.1%	10.1%	8.8%	10.2%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	1.8%	0.0%
Respondents	18	43	64	99	114	98

Note: $\chi^2=0.796807$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 34: We work as a team. It is inappropriate to praise one individual too much (by time worked in libraries)

The shelvers strongly agreed with this (85.8% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree') together with 38-43% of the permanent library assistants, non-managerial professional librarians, the team leaders/section heads & those in 'other' library jobs. The casual library assistants, the one volunteer library assistant and the middle managers did not agree so much. This could be because these people either do not feel part of a team, or, in the case of middle managers, they are now working on their own. Middle managers may also feel that they have worked hard to get to their position and deserved to be individually recognised for that.

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	4.4%	5.9%	4.0%	0.0%	6.0%
Disagree	0.0%	100.0%	40.0%	28.3%	27.2%	30.0%	47.8%	18.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	24.6%	27.8%	26.0%	34.8%	36.4%
Agree	42.9%	0.0%	26.6%	31.9%	26.6%	34.0%	17.4%	36.4%
Strongly Agree	42.9%	0.0%	6.7%	10.1%	11.3%	4.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Don't Know	14.2%	0.0%	6.7%	0.7%	1.2%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Respondents	7	1	15	138	169	50	23	33

Note: $\chi^2=0.103374$ $p < 0.05$ (excluding "don't know" answers)

Table 35: We work as a team. It is inappropriate to praise one individual too much (by job type)

PART FOUR: The impact of verbal praise and recognition

Research participants were asked to describe a time when being verbally praised or recognised by their manager had increased their motivation. The range of things that people were praised for included:

- * Praise for being competent at their jobs
- * Praise for excellent work leading to advancement
- * Praise for improving work processes
- * Praise for successfully completing a project
- * Praise for exerting extra effort
- * Praise for solving problems or challenges.

A couple of participants further noted that they got praised more when their manager changed.

Participants were also asked what being verbally praised by their manager motivates them to do. Amongst the suggested ideas, respondents were most motivated to "Look for opportunities to grow in my work" (338 respondents, 77.5%),

“Give more focus to my work” (319 respondents, 73.2%) and “Work better as a team member” (281 respondents, 64.4%). That New Zealand library staff might be motivated to “Turn up to work on time” and “Avoid unnecessary absences from work” were also suggested as options, however verbal praise seems to have little impact on these things. Several respondents said that these are things they do anyway.

	Number of Responses	%
Give more focus to my work	319	73.2%
Work better as a team member	281	64.4%
Try to avoid mistakes	202	46.3%
Look for opportunities to grow in my work	338	77.5%
Turn up to work on time	114	26.2%
Avoid unnecessary absences from work	128	29.4%
Other	69	15.8%

Table 36: When I am verbally praised by my manager, I am motivated to: (Overall)

Female respondents overall indicated that they were more motivated to do all of these things than male respondents, and were particularly motivated to seek opportunities to grow in their work as a result of being verbally praised.

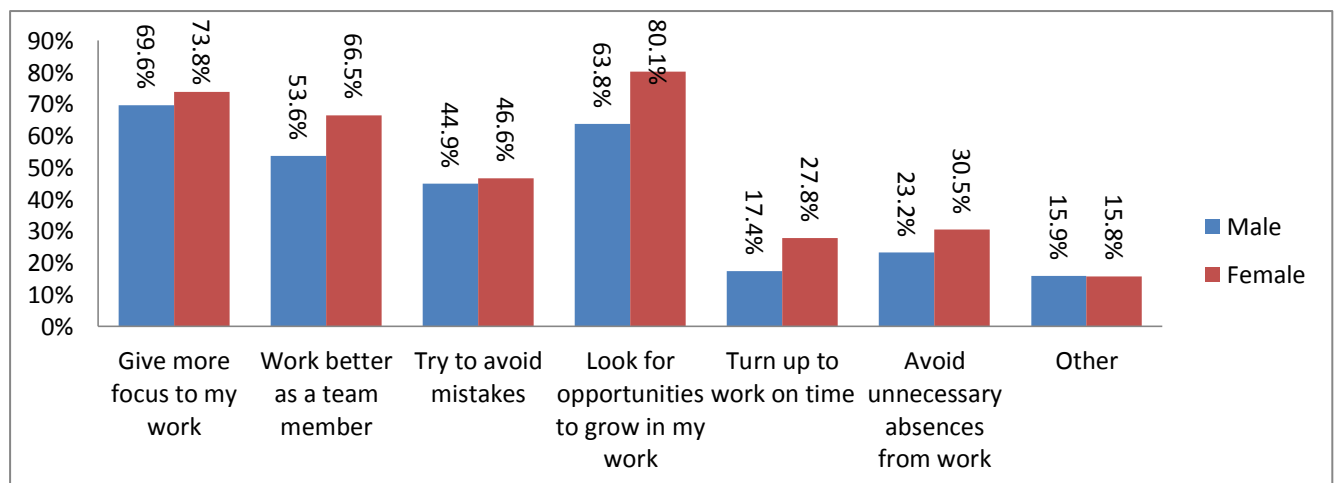


Chart 14: When I am verbally praised by my manager, I am motivated to: (by Gender)

Those in their first year of library work were particularly impacted to “work better as a team member” as a result of being praised (83.3%), while those who have worked in libraries for 3.5 years were strongly motivated to look for opportunities to grow in their work (85.9%) (see Table 37) as were the non-managerial professional

librarians (81.3%) (see Table 38). “Giving more focus to their work” was a strong result of being praised amongst the shelvers (85.7%) (see Table 38).

	< 1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20+ yrs
Give more focus to my work	77.8%	72.1%	79.7%	72.7%	67.5%	75.5%
Work better as a team member	83.3%	62.8%	75.0%	57.6%	63.2%	63.3%
Try to avoid mistakes	50.0%	44.2%	60.9%	45.5%	40.4%	44.9%
Look for opportunities to grow in my work	77.8%	76.7%	85.9%	78.8%	78.1%	70.4%
Turn up to work on time	11.1%	34.9%	40.6%	23.2%	23.7%	21.4%
Avoid unnecessary absences from work	22.2%	32.6%	50.0%	25.2%	25.4%	24.5%
Other	0.0%	9.3%	9.4%	18.2%	17.5%	21.4%

Table 37: When I am verbally praised by my manager, I am motivated to: (by time worked in libraries)

	Shelver	VLA	CLA	PLA	N-m P.L.
Give more focus to my work	85.7%	100.0%	80.0%	68.8%	75.0%
Work better as a team member	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	70.3%	64.8%
Try to avoid mistakes	71.4%	100.0%	73.3%	50.0%	46.6%
Look for opportunities to grow in my work	71.4%	100.0%	73.3%	76.4%	81.3%
Turn up to work on time	42.9%	0.0%	53.3%	34.3%	23.9%
Avoid unnecessary absences from work	42.9%	0.0%	53.3%	37.1%	26.1%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	18.6%	14.8%

	TL/S.H.	M.M.	Other
Give more focus to my work	78.0%	60.9%	78.8%
Work better as a team member	60.0%	30.4%	57.6%
Try to avoid mistakes	38.0%	34.8%	39.4%
Look for opportunities to grow in my work	74.0%	78.3%	75.8%
Turn up to work on time	6.0%	13.0%	27.3%
Avoid unnecessary absences from work	14.0%	21.7%	24.2%
Other	20.0%	17.4%	12.1%

Table 38: When I am verbally praised by my manager, I am motivated to: (by job type)

Participants also volunteered other things they are motivated to do when they are verbally praised by their manager. These included:

- Look for opportunities to recognise the staff who report to me
- Pick up things outside my job description/Attempt new tasks
- Make suggestions for improving the service in my department
- Try new ideas
- Continue on with the good work that has been noticed
- Be loyal to my manager
- Share my experience with others.

It is also important to recognise that a number of respondents indicated that they don't get verbal praise from their managers. Verbal praise and recognition is commonly valued by New Zealand library staff, so such managers should consider further how they can verbally motivate these staff members. Furthermore, some library staff indicated that they do not need verbal praise to be motivated to work hard in their job. As one respondent said "I have never based my motivation on praise from my manager". Managers also need to consider that they can take things too far. An excess of verbal praise and recognition can put undue stress on an individual. As one respondent said "the more praise I get, the harder I feel I have to work in order to get things done and continue to appear efficient".

Discussion

This research has shown that verbal praise and recognition from a manager is highly valued by New Zealand library staff. It plays a significant role in rewarding extra effort and hard work, with most respondents saying that they like to be verbally acknowledged, especially when they have put in extra effort. A few respondents were keen to point out that managers need praise from their staff as well. Respondents gave a wide range of examples of how verbal praise and recognition from their manager motivated them to try harder, to test out new ideas, to make suggestions for improvement and to look for opportunities to grow in their work. When it is not present, it is certainly noticed. One respondent commented, "it doesn't matter how little or how long you have been in a job, a little sincere, honest and deserved praise goes a long way". Another survey participant said that praise gives meaning to the work that she does. "It means to me that my job actually contributes to the organisation and other people's work".

The findings of this research support Skinner's theory that positive extrinsic motivation carries with it a positive reaction in the recipient. As the literature states, verbal praise and recognition requires little effort on the part of the manager, yet it can be very effective (Craig, 2008, p. 31). It has no cost, and is something that managers can do regularly to maintain higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction in their staff (Goode et al, 1993, p. 57). Consistent with

Wiley's (1997) "factors that motivate me" investigation, verbal praise is particularly valued by female staff and staff who are new to the profession.

In their research, Smith (2000) and Chapman and White (2011) both found that a lack of praise and recognition in a workplace was a major factor in employees deciding to leave a particular organisation. This lack of praise and recognition could be unintentional or it could be an act of what Skinner (1963, p. 506; 1969, p. 23, 54-55) describes as 'punishment' or 'extinction'. In the New Zealand context of this research, 72.9% of respondents indicated that they feel frustrated if they work hard and are not praised for it. New Zealand library staff want recognition for their efforts. However, a lack of praise only had a moderate impact on respondents looking for employment in other libraries, with 37.4% of all respondents saying that they would look for another job if they were not verbally praised. The relatively small size of the library industry in New Zealand and a general desire to 'hold on to one's job' at a time of economic uncertainty could be factors in this response. A further factor mentioned by one respondent was the need to stay working in a particular town as her husband has a good job there.

As much as the respondents indicated that they like their manager to verbally praise or recognise them, its power to motivate New Zealand library staff pales compared to financial rewards, opportunities for professional development and opportunities for advancement. Verbal praise is a powerful motivational tool, but respondents said that financial rewards have a stronger power. As one respondent said, managers should not "underestimate the value of monetary recognition".

Some of the respondents indicated that their salary does not match their work output. One respondent expressed frustration that they are doing the same work as a trained librarian but they are not paid at that level. In discussing financial incentives, it is important to differentiate between salary and extra financial rewards. Salary, i.e. being paid a fair amount for the amount of work one does, is undoubtedly a "hygiene factor" as per Herzberg et al's concept.

However, respondents in this research indicated that unexpected financial bonuses and promotions with the promise of higher earnings can be motivational in nature. Taylor (1911, p. 59) promotes the value of paying a staff member “a large bonus, or premium, each time that he succeeds in doing his task in the given time”. While New Zealand library staff don’t expect a monetary gift each time they perform to expectations, they value financial bonuses when they have done work that is exceptional or beyond the “call of duty”. Words of thanks and acclaim are welcome, but this needs to be followed up with something tangible. One respondent concisely summed up a common view in saying, “praise and pay should go hand in hand. It is too easy for some of our managers to just give lip service to this important facet of working life”.

Opportunities for advancement, growth and achievement were also shown to be important for New Zealand library staff, agreeing with what Herzberg et al. (1993, p. 59-62, 81) found. This is particular the case for female library staff, casual library assistants, non-managerial professional librarians and those who regard librarianship as their long-term career. One respondent commented, “praise is great to receive, . . . but then not to be given opportunities to grow as a librarian or take my suggestions into account simply negates praise”. As Herzberg et al (1993, p. 59-62, 81) say, staff members often place significant value on doing interesting work. Dorio & Shelly (2011, p. 90) agree, saying that “some employees will be motivated by increased responsibility and challenge”. This can be achieved through managers altering job descriptions, allowing increased flexibility and through enabling staff to complete further training. One survey participant said that she loves it when her manager trusts her to do a job that the manager might otherwise do.

Many respondents to this research indicated that they value professional development opportunities as they are a means by which to gain the knowledge and experience to take on higher levels of work, to take on new projects and to learn more. For example, one respondent said that managerial praise led her to give a conference presentation, which she would not have done if she was not encouraged by her manager. Most New Zealand library staff want verbal praise, but they also want opportunities to grow and tangible recognition for their efforts.

A further part of this research was to establish how New Zealand library staff like to be verbally praised and how this compares to people in other countries and other professions, as recorded in the literature. New Zealand library staff strongly agree with Crawford (2006, p. 47) and Gill (1994, p. 66) that verbal praise from a manager must be sincere. They also generally agree that verbal praise should be given for something specific, as per Cohen (2006, p. 10)'s recommendation. As Gostick & Elton (2009, pp. 104-105) say, general praise such as "keep up the good work" has no effect and may even negatively impact staff. The one group who didn't feel a need for specific praise strongly were the shelvers. The fact that shelvers essentially only have one job and tend to work alone could be a reason for this.

Whether praise should be given in public or privately was an area of disagreement among respondents. Around 40% of respondents had no strong feelings, but surprisingly, almost 38% of male staff said that they don't like to be praised in front of others. One possible factor in this is the "tall poppy syndrome" which is reasonably strong in New Zealand (Mouly & Sankaran, 2001, p. 1). One respondent confirmed this, saying "I think you are up against a cultural thing. Kiwis think praise is phony and they are embarrassed both in the giving and the receiving". This syndrome essentially says that individual people don't like to be seen to be superior to their group, and members of a group may attempt to bring high achievers down to their level (Feather, 1989, p. 242; Mouly & Sankaran, 2001, p. 2). It stems from a strong sense of collectivism and egalitarianism in New Zealand (Feather, 1989, p. 242-243).

An individual staff member's tendency to be introverted or extroverted could also be a factor for managers to consider in deciding how, when and where to praise a staff member. As one long-term supervisor said, "not everyone likes a fuss". Furnham, Forde & Ferrari's (1999) study of 92 job applicants found that extroverted people are more attracted to what Herzberg calls "motivation factors", and are more sensitive to praise and recognition than introverts (p. 1041). Similarly, McCord & Wakefield (1981, p. 150) discovered that, in the school setting, "in those classrooms in which teacher-presented reward largely predominates . . .

extroverts can be expected to be better achievers". In classrooms where "the ratio of reward to punishment increases", extroverts lose some of their achievement edge over introverts (McCord & Wakefield, 1981, p. 150). Under Gray's *Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory*, extroverts are motivated by the promise of earning a reward, while introverts are motivated by avoiding possible punishment (Corr, 2002, p. 1248; Furnham, 1999, p. 1041). Managers need to know their staff and their personalities well, to give them praise appropriately.

Staff members who traditionally work in teams in libraries, such as shelvers and staff in their first year of work, generally felt that the team should be praised, not the individual. More senior staff, who more commonly work alone, did not agree with this. Team recognition is different from individual recognition and can be difficult, as commonly, the work outputs of individual team members is not the same (Nelson, 1997; Smells like team spirit, 2006). Praising everyone equally can frustrate some harder working staff (Nelson, 1997). One solution is to give individuals in a team "group-centric individual goals", and get the team leader to recognise them for the level to which they contribute to the combined team goal (Nelson, 1997). Through such a method, everyone in a team can feel they have contributed and feel worthy of team recognition. In this environment, you can profitably praise or recognise the team as a whole (Shaw & Schneier, 1995, p. 48).

Several respondents also described situations where someone else was credited with doing a job that they had actually done. This is likely to be demotivating for many staff.

Finally, with regards to timing, almost 70% of all respondents said that they like to be praised as close as possible to when they do something praiseworthy. This is consistent with Skinner's (1958, p. 94-95) and Taylor's (1911, p. 46) findings and suggests a preference amongst New Zealand library staff for spontaneous praise or 'intermittent reinforcement' as Skinner calls it (Villere & Hartman, 1991, p. 29). In all, the ways New Zealand library staff like to be praised are very similar to staff in other countries or in other jobs.

Verbal praise and recognition usually makes people feel good, but unless it has a positive impact on the person being praised, then managers may feel that it is a waste of their time. Respondents to this research were able to describe a wide range of things they were motivated to do and other ways their motivation increased after they had been verbally praised by their manager. These things centred around staff looking for opportunities to grow in their work, looking for new learning opportunities, and being willing to “go the extra mile”. A few respondents also said that they looked for opportunities to “pay the praise forward” and that their loyalty to their manager increased as a result of the verbal praise. While there were a small number of respondents who said that verbal praise and recognition from their manager has no impact on them, the majority of New Zealand library staff put significant value on being praised by their manager.

New Zealand library staff want their managers to verbally praise and recognise them in combination with giving them financial increases and offering them professional development opportunities. However, at the time of the survey, only just over half of the respondents felt they get sufficient verbal praise and recognition from their managers. It would appear that New Zealand library managers need to praise their staff more to meet their staff members’ wishes. To do this effectively, some respondents said that managers need further training and guidance. Gostick & Elton (2009, p. 53) agree with this, saying “few organisations give their managers the tools and training they need to provide recognition to their people”.

New Zealand is still in the grips of an economic recession (Weir, 2012, p. 9) and some New Zealand libraries are facing cutbacks in funding, particularly those in the public sector (e.g. Schaumann, 2011, p. 9-10). This restricts the ability of managers to give their staff financial rewards or fund professional development opportunities. Verbal recognition and appreciation is “the cheapest, easiest and quickest [reward] to implement” (Hutchinson, 2009, p. 43). The cost-effectiveness of a well-timed word of praise cannot be ignored. 85.8% of New Zealand library staff who participated in this research indicated that they strongly value being verbally praised or recognised by their manager. The wise manager will make the most of this effective motivational tool.

Future research opportunities

Following on from this research, there are a number of further possible areas of investigation for future researchers. In using a quantitative research strategy, this research has provided a “big picture” viewpoint on the topic. There would be distinct value in looking at this topic from a qualitative perspective, conducting interviews with individual library staff or focus groups. Verbal praise and recognition impacts the emotions of an individual. Qualitative research on this topic would enable a researcher to explore these emotions, in the context of previous experience, and to consider the interactions between staff member and manager. The researcher would also be able to examine how managerial praise and recognition interacts with other factors that are part of a person’s total motivation. These include a staff member’s intrinsic motivation, their level of seniority and their personality. Quantitative research presents the facts of a situation well, but qualitative research is useful for examining why such facts are present. Conducted after a quantitative analysis, qualitative research is also a useful way to test the validity of the quantitative findings.

It would also be interesting to investigate how other types of extrinsic incentives impact the motivation of New Zealand library staff. In line with the findings of this research, it would be useful to further investigate the motivational power of financial incentives and professional development opportunities for New Zealand library staff. Research could also be done on the relative impact of extrinsic incentives and intrinsic motivation on New Zealand library staff’s output.

The theories of Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman and Skinner acted as a framework for this research. More investigation could be done on the level to which salary and extra financial rewards are ‘motivation’ factors or ‘hygiene’ factors according to Herzberg et al.’s theory. Other researchers could look at how other motivational theories impact the behaviour of library staff in New Zealand. Finally, this research is on New Zealand library staff, filling a gap in the literature on praise and recognition. There are library managers with staff in many other countries around the world who would value further investigation on the value of praise and

recognition in their setting. Thus, future researchers could replicate this research in other countries.

Conclusion

This research project has investigated the extent to which New Zealand library staff are motivated by verbal praise and recognition from their managers. The participants in this research indicated that, indeed, they do highly appreciate verbal praise and recognition from their manager/s. However for many staff this is not enough. They truly feel valued when their hard work is acknowledged through financial bonuses and incentives, opportunities for promotion and professional development opportunities. When budget restrictions limit these options, verbal praise and recognition is a powerful way for managers to appreciate their staff.

The way that New Zealand library staff like to be praised is essentially the same as in other countries and in other industries. However, some staff expressed a reluctance to be praised in public. For praise to be most appreciated it must be timely, sincere and specific. When they are verbally praised, staff are prepared to put more effort into their work. Many staff are also motivated to try new things, to grow in their career, and to facilitate a spirit of appreciation within their libraries.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of Self-completion Questionnaire

This questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes of your time to complete. There are 20 questions to complete.

Questions

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. How many years have you worked in a library?

- Up to 1 year
- Over 1 year, up to 3 years
- Over 3 years, up to 5 years
- Over 5 years, up to 10 years
- Over 10 years, up to 20 years
- Over 20 years

3. At what level is your current library position?

- Shelver
- Volunteer library assistant
- Casual library assistant
- Permanent library assistant
- Non-managerial professional librarian
(e.g. Liaison Librarian, Cataloguer, Collections /Acquisitions Librarian)
- Team leader/Section head
- Middle Management
- Other _____

4. I regard librarianship as my long-term career.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

For the next questions, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the given statements.

5. I experience a high level of job satisfaction in my current position.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

6. I like to receive regular verbal praise and recognition for my work from my manager.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

7. The best part of being praised or recognised is that my manager has noticed me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

8. Praise, when given, needs to be for a specific reason, not general.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

9. Praise is only meaningful if it is sincere.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

10. I appreciate being praised more if it is given quickly after I have earned it.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

11. I don't like receiving praise for my work in front of my colleagues.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

12. We work as a team. It is inappropriate to praise one individual too much.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

13. I feel frustrated if I have worked hard and do not receive praise or recognition for it.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

14. New and lower level staff need praise and recognition more than experienced staff.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

15. I believe that I receive sufficient verbal praise or recognition for my work now.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Don't know

.....00000000000.....

16. On a scale of 1-10, how much are you motivated by the following?

(Please circle ONE number)

(a) Spontaneous verbal praise from your manager

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(b) A letter/email of thanks from your manager

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(c) A positive formal work appraisal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(d) Direct supervision/guidance from your manager

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(e) A regular pay increase

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(f) An unexpected financial bonus

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(g) Professional development/training opportunity

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(h) Increase of responsibility

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(i) Promotion

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(j) Extra time off

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17. When I am verbally praised by my manager, I am motivated to: (Please tick all that apply)

- Give more focus to my work
- Work better as a team member
- Try to avoid mistakes
- Look for opportunities to grow in my work
- Turn up to work on time
- Avoid unnecessary absences from work
- Other

18. How much would a lack of verbal praise and recognition influence you to seek other employment?

- Very much
- Quite a bit
- Somewhat
- A little
- Not at all

19. Please give an example of a time when your motivation increased as a result of your manager praising you.

20. Do you have any further comments to make?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

To enter the draw to win a \$100 gift card for “The Warehouse”, click this button



Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

INFO 580 Study on the extent to which New Zealand Library Staff are motivated by verbal praise or recognition from their manager

Researcher: Adrian Jenkins, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

I am a Master of Information Studies (MIS) student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree, I am undertaking an INFO 580 research project to complete my studies. The project will investigate the extent to which New Zealand Library staff are motivated by verbal praise and recognition from their managers. It will specifically examine how much verbal praise and recognition from a manager motivates New Zealand library staff, compared to other ways people are motivated. It will also examine how being verbally praised or recognised by a manager impacts the motivation and job satisfaction of New Zealand library staff.

This research project has been approved by Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Committee.

To participate, please go to this link and complete the online questionnaire. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. To thank you for participating, I am offering you the chance to enter a draw to win a \$100 gift card for "The Warehouse". To enter this draw, please click on the link on the last page of the online survey. This will take you to a separate file where you can enter your contact details.

By submitting the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this research. The questionnaire has been designed to be anonymous. Any information that you supply that could reveal who you are or where you work will be anonymised to ensure privacy. Data from individual questionnaires will be combined to get an overall picture. All materials collected will be kept confidential. No other person but myself and my supervisor, Dr Philip Calvert, will see the questionnaires. This research project will be submitted to the School of Information Management in early June 2012 and a copy will be placed in the University Library's institutional repository. It is further possible that the findings of this research will be published in one or more scholarly journals or presented at a conference. All questionnaires and related data will be destroyed and/or deleted from computer storage after 2 years.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me on You can also contact my supervisor, Dr Philip Calvert, at the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington,

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY.

Adrian Jenkins

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Appendix C: Sample letter to library managers



(Date)

.....
Manager – Library

.....
.....

Dear,

Request to invite your staff to participate in a study on the value of Verbal Praise and Recognition from Managers amongst New Zealand Library Staff

Researcher: Adrian Jenkins, School of Information Management, Victoria
University of Wellington

I am a Master of Information Studies (MIS) student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree, I am undertaking an INFO 580 research project to complete my studies. The project will investigate the extent to which New Zealand Library staff are motivated by verbal praise and recognition from their managers. It will specifically examine how much verbal praise and recognition from a manager motivates New Zealand library staff, compared to other ways people are motivated. It will also examine how being verbally praised or recognised by a manager impacts the motivation and job satisfaction of New Zealand library staff.

This research project has been approved by Victoria University of Wellington’s Human Ethics Committee.

I would particularly like to invite your staff to participate in this research, as I have a special connection to your organisation. Data for this quantitative research will be collected via an on-line self-completion questionnaire. A print copy of the questionnaire is enclosed with this letter.

I am requesting your permission to either email your staff or place posts on your staff intranet, inviting your staff to complete the questionnaire, and so participate in my research.

The questionnaire has been designed to be anonymous. Any participant-supplied data that may reveal details of participants or their workplaces will be anonymised to ensure privacy. However, I am offering participants an incentive to be involved in this research. This incentive will be the chance to enter a draw for a \$100 gift card from “The Warehouse”.

Participants who wish to enter this draw will be able to click through to a separate file on the last page of the online survey, to enter their contact details.

The questionnaire will also be placed on various library email discussion lists.

All materials collected will be kept confidential. No other person but myself and my supervisor, Dr Philip Calvert, will see the questionnaires. This research project will be submitted to the School of Information Management in early June 2012 and a copy will be placed in the University Library's institutional repository. It is further possible that the findings of this research will be published in one or more scholarly journals or presented at a conference. All questionnaires and related data will be destroyed and/or deleted from computer storage after 2 years.

After the research is completed, I will send you a summary of the findings.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me on You can also contact my supervisor, Dr Philip Calvert, at the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington,

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Jenkins

Adrian Jenkins

Student # 300127166

Word Count: 11,395 words (including In-text citations, excluding Tables, Charts & Appendices)